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Judges Impressed by Quality Rides On Second Day of Great American/USDF Region 7 & California Dressage Society Championships



Jackie Ahl-Eckhaus and Si Donna MVS were one of several Great American Insurance Group/USDF Region 7 Champions crowned on the second day of the 2014 CDS Championship Show. Photo: Jennifer M. Keeler

By Yellow Horse Marketing for the California Dressage Society

The California sun was hot and so were the scores as six rings of championship dressage competition continued Friday at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center in Burbank, Cal. for the 47th Annual California Dressage Society Championship Show, held in conjunction with the Great American Insurance Group/USDF Region 7 Dressage Championships, September 25 - 28, 2014.

One of many champions crowned was Jackie Ahl-Eckhaus of Sanger, Cal. with Si Donna MVS. After showing in-hand and earning the Mare Championship in yesterday's Great American Insurance Group/USDF Breeders Championships - West Coast Final, Ahl-Eckhaus saddled her four-year-old Oldenburg to top twenty other entries in the Open Training Level Regional Championship with a score of 78.300%. Meanwhile, for Adult Amateurs, the smallest entry earned the biggest scores as the New Forest Pony stallion Brando carried owner/rider Karen Erickson of Clovis, Cal. to top the leaderboard with 74.100%. In just his first year of showing and at only four years old, Brando proved he could handle the championship atmosphere well. "Even though he's still learning, he settled right in. He's so fun and easy to ride," said Erickson. "I was so happy with him, he's a little rock star."

After winning several championship titles in 2013, Riana Porter of Santa Rosa and Kathy VanCamp's Oldenburg gelding Dax once again found success at the Region 7 Championships by winning this year's Open Second Level title with 71.607%. Meanwhile, Lisa Bradley (Aliso Viejo, CA) rode her own Oldenburg mare Finesse to a solid score of 70.000% for the win at Second Level for Adult Amateurs. Sabine Schut-Kery of Thousand Oaks piloted the stunning black PRE gelding Tardon AS to the winner's circle, earning the Open Intermediate B Championship for owner Margaret Carrera with 66.905%, and the Dutch gelding Tibet carried owner Brianna Dutton of Walnut Creek, Cal. to a winning score of 62.381% in the Intermediate B Adult Amateur division. Rounding out the day's Regional Championship classes were the Grand Prix Freestyles, where Olympian and perennial CDS champion Hilda Gurney of Moorpark rode Wintersnow to a winning score of 74.063%.

Thousands of dollars in prize money and awards were on the line for several hotly-contested CDS Horse of the Year divisions. Emerging as the decisive victor from a competitive field by more than six points in

the \$1,000 CDS Horse of the Year Open Prix St. Georges class to claim the Bent Roswall Memorial Trophy was Leslie Webb of Bakersfield, riding Harmony Sporthorses' Dutch mare Harmony's Armani with 75.987%. In the \$1,000 Adult Amateur division, Adrienne Bessey (Thousand Oaks, Cal.) rode her own Danish mare Dido to win the Imaging Perpetual Trophy on a score of 70.263%. At the Grand Prix level, Hilda Gurney once again partnered with Wintersnow to earn their second championship of the day and claim the Sherry de Leon Memorial Trophy and CDS Horse of the Year title on a score of 69.250%.

In the CDS Four-Year-Old Futurity, 25 talented youngsters impressed the judges throughout a two-test battle to the finish. "I would say the quality was quite above normal for what I would expect to see for a large group of four-year-olds," said judge Brenda Minor. "They were wonderful, and I was very impressed not only with the quality of the horses but also of the riding." Fellow judge Mike Osinski added, "We thought the quality was so high that we didn't know how to separate them. The entire field was of such a consistently high standard." But it was Nikki Taylor-Smith's lovely Oldenburg gelding Rosalut NHF (Rosentahl x Legacy by Salut, bred by North Hill Farm) who trotted away with the champion's trophy after decisively winning both Training Level tests for an overall combined score of 75.230% with rider Carly Taylor-Smith of Malibu, Cal. In the Adult Amateur division, it was all about pony power as the New Forest Pony stallion Brando (Orlando x Elvira by Justice H.R., bred by G. Timmer) carried owner/rider Karen Erickson of Clovis, Cal. to their second straight victory by earning an overall two-test average of 73.027%.

Championship competition continues Saturday, including the five- and six-year-old divisions of the CDS Young Horse Futurity, a multitude of Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championships and CDS Horse of the Year classes, and evening entertainment including a special career celebration of U.S. Team superstar Rafalca. Complete daily results, schedules, and additional competition information about the California Dressage Society Championship Show is available on the CDS website, www.california-dressage.org.

The California Dressage Society, formed in 1967, is a non-profit organization devoted to furthering interest in dressage. It is one of the largest dressage organizations in the nation with more than 4,000 individual members in its 36 Chapters and a rich history of equestrian sport on the West Coast.