



North American League News

Summer 2016

As summer draws to an end, riders working to qualify for the North American League's two year-end Finals are giving their best efforts with the hopes of earning a place to compete in one or both of the Finals.

The NAL hosts National Finals at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show in Harrisburg, PA, October 13-22, and West Coast Finals at the Las Vegas National Horse Show in Las Vegas, NV, November 15-20.

Both Finals include the following five divisions – Children's Hunter, Adult Hunter, Children's Jumper Presented by EquiFit, Adult Jumper Presented by SmartPak, and Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper.

"Even though the end of the season is drawing near, there is still plenty of time to accumulate points and qualify for the Finals," said Annette Longenecker of Ryegate Show Services, Inc., which administers the North American League. "Please make sure your NAL memberships are up to date, so you receive points to qualify for one, or both, of the Finals."

The NAL qualifying period runs September 1 through August 31. NAL competitions are open to all who wish to compete, however points are only awarded to current members. Now is the time for those wishing to qualify for Harrisburg and Las Vegas to join the North American League and help secure their spots in the Finals!

For more information regarding the North American League, please call (717) 867-5643, email to NAL@Ryegate.com or visit www.ryegate.com. Follow us on Facebook.



NAL Adult Hunter Division

Melanie Jeanes and Carrera lead the National and West Coast Adult Hunter Divisions



Melanie Jeanes of Dallas, TX, and *Carrera* currently lead both the Adult Hunter Division and the West Coast Adult Hunter Division with 2,672 points.

Jeanes' favorite horse has to be her mare *Carrera*, who has been dubbed with the nickname Beyoncé for her sassiness and large presence. The team has been together for two years and Jeanes says she has never felt as connected to any other horse before. "As weird as it sounds, I feel like I know her soul," she said of *Carrera*. Becky Gochman's late horse *Sambolino* was also one of her favorite horses to watch in the ring. "He was a true hunter, and he was so fun to watch."

Jeanes first sat on a horse at Merrywood Ranch Day Camp in Dallas and has been hooked on horses since. At the age of 12, she began showing on the A circuit, and began competing in the NAL in 2014. She said her goal in life is just to be happy, and she is happiest when around horses. She also hopes to one day be a renowned Amateur rider and compete in hunter derbies.

One of Jeanes' biggest influences is her trainer, Peter Pletcher of PJP Farms. "It is nearly impossible to be in a bad mood around him," she said of Peter. "You can have a bad ride, and he just chuckles and shakes his head. He really takes a lot of the pressure off my shoulders. I stress myself out a lot, and he calms me down." She has been riding with PJP Farms for four years, and says that joining the PJP team has been the best thing ever to happen to her.

"I would love to thank my parents and my trainer," she said. "My mom is so supportive, and works so hard to allow me to have these amazing opportunities. Peter and PJP Farms are incredible at what they do and I couldn't be happier with where I am. I am the luckiest girl in the world."



NAL Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak

Olivia Lawton and Cassandra Dreams lead in the Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak

Olivia Lawton of Burr Ridge, IL leads the Adult Jumper Division, Presented by SmartPak, aboard *Cassandra Dreams* with 7,485 points.

Lawton has been riding since she was 12 and began competing in the NAL in 2013. She has been training with Lynn Jayne of Elgin, IL for the past two and a half years. She rides 5-6 days a week and her favorite thing to do when she rides is flatwork and gymnastics.

Lawton said her biggest influences are her parents. “My parents are my greatest influence both in and outside of riding due to their positive outlook on life and their perspectives which have led them to be successful in life. My greatest riding influences are McLain Ward and my trainer Lynn Jayne because of their experiences and success in the show ring and their relationship with the horse.”

When asked about her favorite NAL memory Lawton said it was winning multiple Classics at Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington this past winter on her mare, *Cassandra Dreams*.

This fall, Lawton will be attending the University of Georgia and will be a member of their equestrian team. Her goal is to get her business degree and move up in the jumper ring. Outside of riding, she likes to bake and hang out with her friends.

“I would like to thank my parents and my trainer, Lynn Jayne, for allowing me to reach heights that I never thought were possible,” said Lawton.



Caitlyn Epperson and Au Girl lead the West Coast Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak

Caitlyn Epperson of Houston, TX and *Au Girl* lead the West Coast Adult Jumper Division, Presented by SmartPak, with 2,398 points.

Epperson is currently taking online classes at Lone Star College in Tomball, TX which allows her to attend college while showing.

Since 2010, Epperson has been training with Trapp O'Neal at TKO Sport Horses in Magnolia, TX. "Trapp is an exceptionally talented young professional and has always found amazing horses for me to ride," Epperson said. "He has taken me from 2.6' hunters to equitation finals, to my first Grand Prix."

One of the horses Epperson is competing in the NAL with is *Au Girl*, a seven-year-old, off-the-track Thoroughbred mare that was found on Craig's List in 2013. In 2014, Epperson began working and showing *Au Girl* in the 1.05 Adult Jumper Division and the Take Two Thoroughbred Division. By June 2015, the pair moved up to the 1.10 Adult Jumpers and was consistently in the ribbons. In November 2015 they won their first NAL Jumper Classic in Katy, TX. "It was such a rewarding feeling to know that I was on a young horse I had only been working with for 14 months," Epperson Said. "She has a huge heart and is really smart! I love riding her."

Epperson began riding when she was seven after a friend invited her to go to a local barn. She began showing in the North American League when she was in high school and competing in the 3.6' equitation medals. Epperson rides six days a week, riding four to five horses a day. Her favorite thing to do while riding is to hack outside in the field. "It's very pretty and peaceful; just me and the horse," Epperson said.

Epperson's goal as a rider is to become a professional and show consistently in Grand Prix classes. "I've had the opportunity over the past few years to work with young horses and have really enjoyed it," she said. "I'd like to continue to develop young horses in the future."

When asked if there was anything else she would like to add, she said "Show jumping is a competitive sport and it's easy to get caught up in trying to beat other riders. I really try to just focus on my riding and always trying to better myself, instead of focusing on what others are doing. I always want to do better than I did the day before."



NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Division

Jazz Merton and Ahaveros lead the Low Junior/Amateur Owner Jumper Division

Jazz Merton of Oldwick, NY, and Ahaveros, are currently leading the Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Division with 8,120 points.

Merton has owned Ahaveros, also known around the barn as Freddy, since December 2014 and he has been a great match for her. “He takes very good care of me in the ring and we spoil him rotten at home on our family farm,” Merton said. “He has completely earned permanent residence in our barn, where he will become my daughter’s Children’s Jumper, very soon, I hope.”



Merton has been riding since she was four years old and hasn’t looked back. She trains with Jeffrey Wells and is a Joint Master at the local Foxhound pack, The Essex Fox Hounds. Her riding goal is to get around the High Amateurs at the Hampton Classic Horse Show all while having fun at the same time. When asked about her favorite place to show she said, “I love showing on the field at Old Salem and the Lake Placid Horse Shows. Sometimes it seems easier to ride in a big open field than in a ring.”

Merton’s biggest influence is her friend, Sandy Lobel, who has taught her to ride and who she has trained with for many years. Merton said, “She’s fiercely passionate about horses and riding. She never accepted the words, ‘I can’t’.”

“I enjoy checking out the NAL standings and seeing the top riders and horses bounce back and forth in the top spots,” Merton said. “The competition is exciting and it makes me want to get better. I just can’t believe I’ve done as well as I have in this division; I’m very lucky to have such a nice horse and so many caring people to help me.”



Savannah Barry and Cocu lead the West Coast Low Junior/Amateur Owner Division

Savannah Barry of Woodside, CA, and Cocu, lead the West Coast Low Junior/Amateur Owner Division with 2,832 points. The pair has been leading the division standings since April and have put themselves over 1,000 points ahead of the second place team.



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NAL Children's Hunter Division

Nicole Dorwart and Rittani lead the NAL Children's Hunter Division

Nicole Dorwart of Dover, PA and *Rittani* are leading the Children's Hunter Standings with 2,589 points. Dorwart has been riding since she was a toddler but didn't start taking lessons regularly until she was 7 years old.

Dorwart has been training with Jill Shull of Equi-Comp Inc. in York Springs, PA since February and rides 3-5 days a week depending on her schedule. If she is busy, her mom helps her ride *Rittani*. Her favorite thing to do while riding is to go on trail rides after lessons or just hack around.



"My biggest accomplishment in my riding career would have to be when I won at the Lexington Horse Show and got my highest score of an 86," said Dorwart. "Or when I got champion at HITS Ocala which was also my first show with my new trainer, Jill Shull."

This is her first year competing in the NAL and so far, one of her favorite memories has been placing second out of 25 riders at the Brandywine Horse Show.

"One of my biggest influences would be by my mom," said Dorwart. "She has done so much for me and there aren't enough thank yous in the world that I owe to her. She has helped to get me through some tough decisions in not only my riding career but also in my personal life as well and she has influenced me to make the right decision every time."

Heading into her sophomore year at Red Land High School, Dorwart said that her main goal in life is to get good enough grades so that she can make it to Penn State main campus and start a career as a landscape architect.

One of Dorwart's favorite quotes is, "The color of the ribbon doesn't matter, I know we did our best, and all that matters is that we tried our best and reached our goal of working together."



CeCe Siegfried and Finally Found lead the West Coast Children's Hunter Division

CeCe Siegfried of Tulsa, OK and *Finally Found* are leading the West Coast Children's Hunter Standings with 1,908 points. Siegfried has been riding horses for four years and has been competing in the North American League since 2014.



"My favorite horse show is probably Summer in the Rockies in Parker, CO because I think the show grounds are absolutely gorgeous," she said. "I love that you can see a bunch of different mountains in the background. I always have so much fun when I go there!"

Siegfried said that her biggest influence is Mindy Coretz, winner of the 2013 NAL West Coast Adult Hunter Final. "I feel as though she has been successful in the horse world with her buying and selling business. She is also one of the nicest people you will ever meet. She is always encouraging everyone at her barn and helping everyone stay on track. You can always talk to her if you need a little confidence booster or just want to talk to a fun person!"

Siegfried has been riding with Libby Barrow at Farewell Farm out of Tulsa, OK for the past three years and rides 5-6 days a week depending on her schedule. She said that her goal in riding is to do the big equitation and the jumpers.

When asked about her horse she said, "My horse's name is Finley aka Finally Found and he is a 15-year-old Hanoverian. I have owned him for 2 years and we show in the children's hunters. He is such an amazing horse and you can always count on him to take a joke!"

Siegfried will be an 8th grader in the fall at Holland Hall in Tulsa, OK. When she isn't riding, she likes to spend her free time hanging out with her friends.



NAL Children's Jumper Division, Presented by EquiFit

Phoebe Alwine and Zenith Dance lead the Children's Jumper Division Presented by EquiFit

Phoebe Alwine of Delray Beach, FL, and Zenith Dance lead the NAL Children's Jumper Division presented by EquiFit with 5,422 points. Alwine started riding when she was four years old on Long Island, NY. When she was eight, her family moved to Florida and she began competing at the Winter Equestrian Festival.

A senior at Saint Andrews School in Boca Raton, FL, Alwine hopes to ride for a Division 1 equestrian team at the NCAA collegiate level.

For the past two years, Alwine has been training with Jane Fennessy and Vinissa Blann from Carriage Hill Farm out of Delray Beach, FL. She rides almost every day and while riding, she loves to do grid work and gymnastic courses. "I'd like to thank my horses Zenith Dance and Zenja for helping me get to the NAL Finals in my first year of competing in the jumpers," said Alwine.



"The person who has influenced me the most is Liza Boyd because when she won on Brunello she talked about overcoming her fear and focusing on the course," Alwine said. "This resonated with me because fear is sometimes hard for me to look past as well."

When asked about which show is her favorite, Alwine said,

"Kentucky Summer because of the cross country field there. It is so fun to have the open space to ride."



Madison Myro and Q Royal Palm Z lead the West Coast Children's Jumper Division Presented by EquiFit

Madison Myro of Henderson, NV and *Q Royal Palm Z* lead the West Coast Children's Jumper Division presented by EquiFit with 2,515 points.

Myro started riding Dressage and Western when she was four-years-old but once she tried jumping, she was hooked! She now competes in equitation and jumpers and said she loves the precision of equitation and the same discipline helps her when she is in the jumper ring.



As of January 2016, Myro has been training with Mavis Spencer who has helped her with her riding, understanding and experiencing top levels of training and competition. Prior to January, Myro trained with Judy Nielson and Nikki Yurek of Aspen Hill Farm and Dan Silverstone for nine years. She is also a working student at Neil Jones Equestrian. "I would like to thank the Neil Jones Equestrian Team for the opportunity of a lifetime," Myro said. "Thank you for taking the change with me and allowing me to ride, work, and travel, and be a part of the Neil Jones Equestrian Family. I am truly blessed to have such an amazing support system."

Myro is currently attending Nevada Connections academy, an online high school. When she isn't at the barn, Myro enjoys taking self-defense classes called Krav Maga, running and staying fit. She also enjoys spending quality time with her friends and family.

One of her biggest accomplishments to date is her success as a rider. "Throughout my years competing in both the equitation and jumpers, I have qualified and placed in several medal finals, and have won and placed in many team and individual jumper competitions, all while training my own horses to do jobs that they have never done."

Myro has been competing with *Q Royal Palm Z*, also known as Q, since February 2016. "She is such a competitor and gives 100% every time she steps in the ring," Myro said about Q. "Q always looks forward to the jump-off! I am so blessed to have had the privilege of riding such an amazing horse. She is by far one of my favorites!"

When asked who her biggest influences are, Myro said her parents. "They have encouraged me to follow my dreams and have never given up on me. My parents have taught me that with hard work and a positive attitude I could achieve anything I put my mind to."