



North American League News

Winter 2014

The North American League offers Series in five divisions – Adult Jumper Presented by SmartPak, Children's Jumper Presented by EquiFit, Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Presented by UltrOZ, Adult Hunter and Children's Hunter.

The Series includes classes held at hundreds of horse shows across the United States and Canada. The North American League (NAL) gives riders in these divisions a chance to ride in year-end finals at two major indoor shows – The NAL National Finals at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show at Harrisburg in October and the NAL West Coast Finals at the Las Vegas National Horse Show in November.

All riders in the Finals received a commemorative NAL Finals stall plaque and the winners of this year's five Finals received an NAL coolerette, and gift certificates from SmartPak, EquiFit, and Signature Spurs in addition to a trophy. Every rider competing in the Finals received a gift bag with an assortment of gifts from the NAL.

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



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North American League News

The North American League season concluded on August 31, and the top finishers in each of the league's five divisions qualified to compete in the NAL National Finals at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show and the NAL West Coast Finals at the Las Vegas National Horse Show. Each winner received a commemorative backpack.

In the National standings, the winners in the five NAL divisions were Brook Cole (Adult Hunter Division); Alyssa Scholefield (Children's Hunter Division); Nancy Hooker (Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak); Taegan Long (Children's Jumper Division Presented by EquiFit); and Cloe Hymowitz (Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Division Presented by UltrOZ).

Winners of the West Coast standings in the five NAL divisions were Melanie Jeanes (Adult Hunter Division); Sarah Portell (Children's Hunter Division); Emily Straw-Colella (Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak); Tyler Mayer (Children's Jumper Division Presented by EquiFit); and Emma Sargent (Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Division Presented by UltrOZ).

2014 Final Results

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National Finals at Pennsylvania National

Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper, Presented by UltrOZ

Sheer Levitin Wins \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final, Presented by UltrOZ

Sheer Levitin of Delray Beach, FL, and her own *Nabuco* rode to victory in the \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Finals presented by UltrOZ.

A competitive field of 25 riders attacked the 1.30m course, but only eight riders made it through to the jump-off, which produced only three clear rounds. Levitin and *Nabuco* produced the fastest round, stopping the timers in 37.293 seconds to clinch the win. "It's an honor just to get a ribbon!" exclaimed Levitin. "I came here just thinking I was going for a nice clear round, and I really didn't think I would make it, but here I am!"



An eighth grader at Palm Beach International Academy, Levitin, who has only been riding for four short years, trains with Katie Prudent and Plain Bay Farm. Levitin's horses are located at Stransky Mission Farm, where she rides for the Step By Step Foundation which helps underprivileged children by creating and supporting health, nutrition, water, and education.



Levitin prides herself on riding as often as six days a week, as seeing an improvement in her horses' performance is one of her biggest joys. Her goal is to one day become a successful Grand Prix rider, and represent her country of Israel in the Olympics, which she acknowledges as challenging but attainable.

"I got him about a year and a half ago and he was my children's [division] horse, then we realized he could do the bigger stuff," Levitin said of her horse, *Nabuco*. "My favorite part of the horse show is of course the winning and the jump-offs. They're so fun with him!"

"Just being able to qualify for the NAL Finals is an amazing honor," Levitin said. "To actually win, that is one of the most memorable experiences I've had in my riding career." Previously, Levitin rode with renowned equitation star turned judge, Cynthia Hankins. "She always told me, 'Practice does not make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect.' I still think about that all the time," Levitin said. "It makes me try harder every time I get on a horse."



National Finals at Pennsylvania National

Adult Jumper, Presented by SmartPak

Lindsey Tomeu Wins \$10,000 NAL Adult Jumper Finals, Presented by SmartPak

Lindsey Tomeu of Wellington, FL, and *Bonapart*, owned by Dogwood Hill LLC, won the \$10,000 NAL Adult Jumper Finals Presented by SmartPak, in a very exciting finish.



A total of 12 riders made it through to the jump-off out of the original 29 entries who qualified nation-wide for the Final, but it was Tomeu and *Bonapart* who laid down a fault-free round in 30.839 seconds to claim the victory.

Tomeu, who has been with Michael DelFiandra, and Shane and Ali Sweetnam for the better part of 16 years, began showing in the NAL at the age of 14, and then became a member of the League shortly thereafter. Making it to the

Finals for the first time was a big accomplishment, and winning was the biggest of them all. "Simply amazing – it's what I came here to do," said Tomeu following her win.

Tomeu was unable to hide her joy with her victory and her horse, hugging *Bonapart* constantly. "I got "Bonno" in the middle of the winter. We hit a bit of a rough patch, but he has been the best thing that's happened to me," she explained. "I really love him so much. I've ridden plenty of adult jumper horses and he's the best of them all. He was making better decisions than I was!"



Tomeu credits her trainers with her success in the ring.

She states that they are the biggest influences in her life, and that they are like family to her, with her best interest at heart. Out of the show ring, Tomeu enjoys hanging out with her friends, and going out on her family's boat. She hopes to graduate from college, and continue to ride in the Amateur-Owner divisions.



National Finals at Pennsylvania National

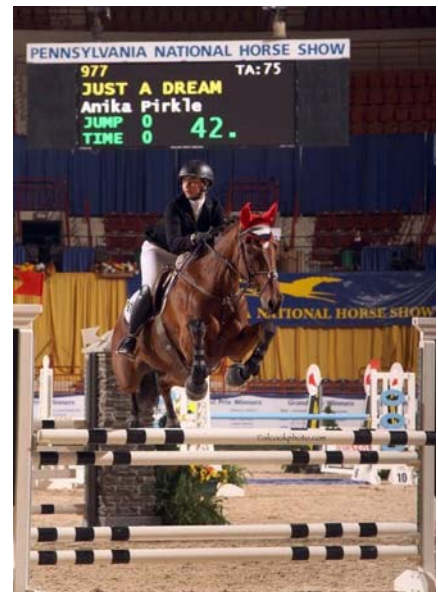
Children's Jumper, Presented by EquiFit

Anika Pirkle Wins \$10,000 NAL Children's Jumper Final, Presented by EquiFit

Anika Pirkle, of Carmel, IN, and *Just a Dream*, won the \$10,000 NAL Children's Jumper National Final, presented by EquiFit. Out of the field of 30 riders, only eight made it through to the jump-off. Sixth into the ring, Pirkle pulled out all the stops and produced a clear round in a blazing time of 31.350 seconds to clinch the victory.

The 11-year-old Pirkle, who has never ridden in the NAL before, considers this win her most impressive feat. "It's a huge honor to get to the NAL Finals," Pirkle said. "This was my first time here, and it was great that I did so well on my first try!"

Pirkle has been riding with trainers Dave Dorner and Skip Masten for six years. Pirkle originally rode in the hunters, and Dorner had to convince her to do the jumpers. "I've learned almost everything I know from him," she commented. Dorner especially taught her how to ride her horse, *Just a Dream*, whom she has been partnered with for less than a



year. "The journey has been a little up and down for me. I've had some good rounds, and I've had some rails and fallen off in a few places," Pirkle said with a grin.

Pirkle, who tries to ride every day, began riding Western at the age of four, and switched to English at around six years old. These days, she is showing at venues such as HITS Ocala, which she says is her favorite show because of the warm weather and ideal riding accommodations.

Winning her first national final at the age of 11, Pirkle has high hopes for herself. She wishes to one day represent her country in a national or international riding competition, and compete in a Grand Prix. Currently a student online at the Laurel Springs School, Pirkle would like to be a veterinarian.

"I really want to thank my trainers, Dave Dorner and Skip Masten, for all of the training they have given me the past few years," Pirkle said. "I could not progress as fast as I am now without them, and I can't thank them enough for taking the time to teach me."



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National Finals at Pennsylvania National

Adult Hunter

Chelsea Ireland Wins \$10,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final

Chelsea Ireland of Chesapeake, VA, and her horse *Surely* claimed victory of the \$10,000 North American League Adult Hunter Final against a very competitive field of 29 entries.

Ireland and *Surely* produced a smooth first round over the 10-fence course which scored 84.00 points. The pair produced an even better ride during the second to score an 86.00, giving them a total score of 170.00 which shot them straight into the winner's circle. In addition to a victory, Ireland also received the Lisa A.H. Cudahy Perpetual Trophy.



"It feels great to win!" said Ireland. "My horse has been such a good girl ever since we've had her. I'm excited for her to get a blue ribbon. She just came back from being injured, and the win made it even more exciting because we didn't get to practice much this year."



Ireland, who has been riding since the age of 10, credits her trainer Peg Seals, and her mother for being her biggest influences both in and out of the ring, stating that they both put her riding as their top priorities. "Without the support of Peg and my mom, I wouldn't have achieved this with my crazy schedule," Ireland said.

Winning the NAL Finals this year is among Ireland's greatest accomplishments, followed by placing third at the 2007 NAL Adult Hunter Finals, and being named Reserve Champion at the Washington International Horse Show in 2012. Her win has also made the Pennsylvania National Horse Show her favorite event to attend because the venue now holds such fond memories for her and *Surely*.

Ireland is an eighth grade English teacher, and a full-time graduate student. Outside of work, school, and riding, she enjoys fishing, reading, and exercising. She hopes that she can be someone that her students can look up to, and also be successful in the Amateur-Owner divisions with her horse.

"I will never forget this wonderful experience," exclaims Ireland. "Thanks to my trainers, Peg Seals and Laura Wright, and to my mom for making this happen. Most importantly, I am incredibly grateful for my horse of a lifetime, *Surely*!"



National Finals at Pennsylvania National

Children's Hunter

Lauren Watts Wins \$10,000 NAL Children's Hunter Final

Lauren Watts, of Sparks, MD, rode her own horse *Fenway* to first place in the \$10,000 NAL Children's Hunter National Final over 30 other horse-and-rider combinations.



"I feel great. I've worked so hard to get to this point," Watts said of her win. "*Fenway* is my first horse, and accomplishing this with him feels so amazing!"

Watts also won the Laura Palmer Pickett Memorial Perpetual Trophy donated by Annie & Barbara Friedman.

Katie Francella, with whom Watts has trained for "what seems like a long while" to both ladies, was thrilled for the pair. "I'm so proud of them," said Francella. "She identified this goal at

the beginning of the year, and she made it happen."

The competition was fierce, as the top 30 qualified riders from across the nation competed against each other in the first round. The top 12 from that round then proceeded to the second round. Scores from both rounds were then combined to determine the placings and winner. Watts scored an 86.00 in the first round which put her in first place going into the second round. In the second round, she received another 86.00 which gave her a combined total of 172.00 points.

Watts, who started riding at the age of five, only just joined the NAL this year. She considers winning the NAL Finals at Harrisburg her biggest accomplishment in riding to date. She had made it a goal to qualify earlier in the year, but didn't imagine winning the Final.



Although she rides between five and six days every week, which includes going on long trail rides with *Fenway*, Watts enjoys 'hanging out' during her free time. A freshman in high school, Watts would like to learn everything there is to know about the art of riding, and the management and care side of the equine industry as well.

"I would not have had this experience without my trainers and parents," Watts said after her win. "They made all of this possible for me, and I can't thank them enough."

This show offers one or more classes that are recognized by the

North American League



In order for riders to receive credit, they must be a current member. Membership is valid for the qualifying year and entitles the rider to earn points on one or more horses shown in accredited classes.

National Finals are held at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show.

West Coast Finals are held at the Las Vegas National Horse Show.

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West Coast Finals at Las Vegas National

Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper, Presented by UltrOZ

Hannah Von Heidegger Wins

\$5,000 NAL West Coast Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final, Presented by UltrOZ

Hannah Von Heidegger of Chatsworth, CA, on Cavallo Farms, LLC's *Gucci* won the \$5,000 NAL West Coast Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final Presented by UltrOZ.



Her win came immediately after winning The Show Jumping Hall of Fame Jumper Classic Series West Coast Final about an hour earlier.

At the age of three, Von Heidegger began riding horses, but did not enjoy it and decided to pursue gymnastics. At the age of eight, changing her mind again, Von Heidegger began riding again when she realized she had a passion for it, and just this year she began showing in the NAL.

Will Simpson, Von Heidegger's trainer is one of her biggest influences in riding. "He has really molded me into the rider I am today," Von Heidegger said of Simpson. "I have learned about the horses themselves, and the care behind them. As an Olympic Gold Medalist, he is a huge role model and inspiration for

me."

When asked what her fondest NAL memory was, Von Heidegger responded, "Winning the finals on *Gucci*!" Admiring the 15-year-old gelding for his heart, Von Heidegger said she feels as though *Gucci* is just starting his career. "He always tries to give you his best, and he really wants to win."

As for a lifetime accomplishment, Von Heidegger won the \$25,000 GGT Footing Grand Prix Series Final at the Del Mar National Horse Show, which was her first ever Grand Prix win. She said the win was especially memorable because *Geledimar*, the mare on which she won, was the very same horse she rode in her first Grand Prix. "It was a major stepping stone in my riding career," Von Heidegger said. "I definitely did not think my first Grand Prix win was going to be against such talented riders in such a big class."

What keeps Von Heidegger going in such a competitive sport? A quote from her grandfather that reminds her daily to work hard and go for her dreams, "Nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever should."



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West Coast Finals at Las Vegas National

Adult Jumper, Presented by SmartPak

Sara Guren Wins \$5,000 NAL West Coast Adult Jumper Final, Presented by SmartPak

Sara Guren of Boulder, CO, and her own *Gold Strike* were the big winners in the \$5,000 NAL West Coast Adult Jumper Final Presented by SmartPak.

Growing up on a farm, Guren has been riding for most of her life, sitting on her first pony at the age of one. After college, she became increasingly more competitive on the show circuit, and she began riding in the NAL at the age of 26. Currently, Guren rides with Mark Mead and JJ Atkinson-Mead with whom she has been riding for nearly two years. "The combination of both of them is really amazing," Guren said of her trainers. "They have really allowed my riding to take off."



Guren tries to ride at least four to five times per week, and when she does, she makes every second count. She enjoys collecting and extending the canter to give herself a feel of her horses' power and where it comes from, and she loves doing gymnastics to slow down the motion of jumping. Guren said she likes knowing how her horses' bodies move, and how she can assist and better her riding for them.



Guren, who has never been to an NAL final before, said, "Is it fair for me to say winning the NAL finals this past weekend," when asked what her biggest riding accomplishment was. "I don't think I have anything else in my memory that even comes close to that."

Aside from being a passionate horsewoman, Guren is a professional photographer, Montessori Adolescent educator, and a stay-at-home mom. When she isn't at the barn, Guren enjoys running, going to the park and farmers market, road biking and skiing. She stated that "if it is outside and my family is there, you can find me."

Outside of her riding career, Guren stated that her biggest accomplishment in her life is her daughter. "She grows and changes so much every day," she said of her almost three-year-old daughter. "It's a challenge I look forward to taking on even when things are hard, as the end result is so rewarding.

"I really want to thank Dariush Elghanayan of D.E. Show Stable with whom I rode for 6 years before moving," Guren stated. "He imported Gold Strike in 2008, and he really shaped the team we have become."

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West Coast Finals at Las Vegas National

Children's Jumper, Presented by EquiFit

Hollie Allen Wins \$5,000 NAL West Coast Children's Jumper Final, Presented by EquiFit

Hollie Allen of Las Vegas, NV, and *Derby County*, owned by Claire Gallagher, won the \$5,000 NAL West Coast Children's Jumper Final Presented by EquiFit. Allen also placed fourth on *Sharp Dressed Man*.

"This is the first year that I've won an NAL Final, and I placed on two horses!" Allen declared. Riding in the new indoor arena at Las Vegas was a thrill for Allen, and she hopes to return next year to take the finals by storm again.



Riding with Blue Ribbon Hunters and Jumpers since the age of seven, Allen's love of horses came from riding her bike past a ring of jumping horses, ever since then, her life has been surrounded by them.

Annette Spinetti and Missy Corbin are Allen's biggest influences in the ring. "I really respect their decisions," Allen said. "I couldn't ask for better trainers." Additionally, Allen looks up to Susan Hutchison, a renowned show jumping rider who has achieved great success in this country and riding internationally for the United States. One day, she hopes to

ride like Hutchison, focusing more on accuracy and precision than speed.

A sophomore at West Tech Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas, NV, Allen is studying to become a veterinarian. "I have done a lot of volunteering at our local vet," she stated. "Watching all of the great work they do makes me even surer of my decision and educational path."

Although Allen shows in a saddle, her favorite thing to do is ride bareback. Feeling connected to her horse and having the opportunity to bond with them is a high priority for her, and she says bareback gives her the chance to do that. "Being successful in the ring is based on the bond you create with your horses," Allen said. "I make the time to create that with them."

Allen also makes time for family and friends when she isn't at the barn riding. "My family goes camping in Utah a lot, and I love playing volleyball," said Allen, "although I actually stopped playing because I loved horses way more!

"My goal is to keep riding and become one of those riders that everyone wants to clinic with," Allen explained of her goals moving forward. "I also want to be in my first grand prix by 18 years old, and win the Talent Search Jumper Medal and a few other big equitation classes."



West Coast Finals at Las Vegas National

Adult Hunter

Stephanie Goodson Wins \$5,000 NAL West Coast Adult Hunter Final

Seventeen starters took part in the \$5,000 NAL West Coast Adult Hunter Final, and it was Stephanie Goodson of Beverly Hills, CA, who came out on top, clinching both first and second places aboard her own horses *Poetic* and *Leonetti*.

Goodson began riding in the NAL in 2011 in the Adult Amateur Hunters and has had a great track record. In her first year at the NAL Finals, Goodson and *Leonetti* placed third in the Adult Hunters, and also placed second with the same horse in 2013 and 2014. "Of course winning this year!" Goodson exclaimed, when asked what her favorite NAL memory was. "Although a close second are my performances in past years, and watching my good friend Chelsea Samuels win in 2011."

The Las Vegas National Horse Show is among Goodson's favorite venues and events. "It is an incredibly unique experience," she explained. "Staying in the same hotel that your horses and arena are in is cool. We get dressed for dinner, play the penny slots, and then go watch the World Cup Qualifier!" Goodson said the Las Vegas National Horse Show is the perfect way to celebrate the end of the show season.



Playing the penny slots with Goodson is trainer Kate Considine. "She has an amazing way of connecting with the horses," said Goodson. "She really takes the time to create personalized and individual programs for them."

A senior media production student at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA, Goodson enjoys baking in her free time. "I'm a terrible cook, but my cheesecake is legendary," she joked. "On the rare occasion that I'm not at a horse show on the weekends, I like hanging out with my friends by the pool and relaxing."

"My goal in life is to tell stories through media," Goodson explained. "I would like to be a producer, director or writer. As a rider, I would like to move into the Low Amateur-Owner divisions and I would also like to be competitive in the equitation." Among her biggest riding accomplishments are her NAL Finals placings, a year-end award at the Pacific Coast Horse Show Association, and year-end awards for Zone 10.

"It was an amazing experience," Goodson stated of the NAL Finals West Coast. "Hunters on the west coast rarely show indoors. It's unique, and I love it."



West Coast Finals at Las Vegas National

Children's Hunter

Amy Coretz Wins \$5,000 NAL West Coast Children's Hunter Final

Amy Coretz of Tulsa, OK, won the \$5,000 NAL West Coast Children's Hunter Final aboard Eighteen Acres Farm's *EAF Wollie*, and also took second place on Eighteen Acres Farm's *Sweet Potato Pie*.

Coretz began casually riding at the age of four to pass the time while her sister took lessons. At the age of eight, it became a more serious pastime. While she has been riding in the NAL for almost four years and accumulating enough points each year to attend finals, conflicts have always kept her away. This year, Coretz finally made the trip to Las Vegas, and it paid off.



"My biggest accomplishment was winning (and placing second) at the West Coast NAL Finals this year," Coretz said. "*Wollie* is such a special horse to me. He's a once-in-a-lifetime type of horse." She also learned much of what she knows from her older sister, Mindy.

"She really showed me the ropes of riding since day one," Coretz said of her sister. "It's safe to say I learned from the best." Coretz also learned the ropes from lifetime trainer Libby Barrow from Farewell Farm in Tulsa, OK. "She has been my trainer since the first day I sat on a horse," she exclaimed.

Riding six days every week, Coretz loves learning new things to become the best rider she can for the sake of her horses. "I spend most of my time between shows focusing on dressage," Coretz said of her riding. "The emphasis on flatwork has made a huge difference in my horses and my riding." Coretz takes dressage lessons with Laurie Hedlund who is also based out of Farewell Farm.

As a junior in high school, Coretz doesn't have much time out of school and the barn; however she has recently become interested in photography. She enjoys taking pictures of her friends riding and candid photos of the horses around the farm.

"I am making it a goal to qualify and attend the NAL Finals again next year," Coretz stated. "I want to thank my whole team at Farewell Farm for making my successes at the NAL Finals possible. I'm so lucky to have you all surrounding me."

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