



# North American League News

## Year-End Review 2020

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The North American League (NAL) concluded its 2019-2020 season with National Finals held this year during the Capital Challenge Horse Show at the World Equestrian Center in Wilmington, OH.

Finals were held in each of the League's five divisions – Children's Hunter presented by Copper Fox LLC, Adult Hunter presented by Monkey Business LLC, Children's Jumper presented by EquiFit, Adult Jumper presented by SmartPak and Low Junior/Amateur Jumper presented by Horseflight.

The NAL offers year-long Series in each of these five divisions. Those who accumulate the most points in their divisions over the course of the season earn the right to ride in the year-end Finals as well as recognition as the season's Division champions.

Each of this year's Finals featured \$10,000 prize money and all participants received gift bags. Each winner received additional prizes including gift certificates generously donated by EquiFit, SmartPak and The Clothes Horse, NAL coolerette and a commemorative glass bowl. The Finals' hunter courses were designed by Ken Krome and jumper courses were designed by Joe Carnicom.

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# Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Division Presented by Horseflight



## *National and West and Finals Champion Dominic Gibbs*

Dominic Gibbs had a highly successful 2019-2020 NAL season, riding Douwe to the top of both the West and National standings in the Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Division Presented by Horseflight, and then adding a win in the NAL Finals at the Capital Challenge. Just a few weeks after his win in the Finals, Dominic ended his year with a win in the ASPCA Maclay National Championship!



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Dominic, a high school senior at Score Academy who started riding at age 10, has been with Douwe for two years. Owned by his coaches, Katie and Henri Prudent, the 12-year-old, KWPN gelding is, “The fastest jumper I’ve ever ridden. He has barrel racer turns!

“The win in the NAL Finals was really exciting. It was my last show on him before my sister took over the reins so I wanted to make it meaningful. It was such a competitive jump-off. It had some of the best horses in the country, but I knew I had one of

the fastest. I knew I could take a chance and take some tough inside turns that maybe some of the other horses and riders wouldn’t be able to do. Douwe makes my job really easy and fun!

“I owe so much to my parents because they believe in me unconditionally. My mom has the attitude that anything is possible. My dad has a work ethic like no one else, and with that he’s achieved great things.

“I’d also like to thank Katie and Henri for allowing me to ride Douwe, and their endless patience in bringing me along through the lowest levels to where I am now, in just two years. I also thank them for introducing me to Stacia Klein Madden, who has also shaped and changed my life. My coaches have opened doors for me, found horses for me and always believed in me even when mistakes are made. Nelson Mandela’s saying that, ‘You either win or learn’ is something I say to myself everyday!”



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# Adult Jumper Presented by SmartPak

## *\$10,000 Finals Champion Ellen Halle*

Emerging victorious in the NAL Adult Jumper Final Presented by SmartPak, was Ellen Halle of Upperco, MD, with Iggy Pop, who completed the jump-off in a time of 34.01 seconds. Ellen topped the field of 27 entries and took on the short course with nine other competitors, ultimately taking home the horse show's Leading Adult Jumper Rider title, as well.

“The jump-off was icing on the cake for me,” Ellen said of her win. The winning pair were matched together in March of this year, and this was Ellen's first ever Final. “I took a long time off from riding – probably ten years – and really only started showing competitively again this year. I spent some time living abroad, where I did ride which was quite the experience. Now I'm doing my MBA and Master's in Public Policy and am in my final year.

“This was definitely worth the trip, and I was super grateful to be there and to be part of a competition with such high caliber athletes,” added Ellen who trains with Troy Hendricks of Kimber View. “They really went the extra mile to make it a great experience for all the exhibitors.”



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# Adult Jumper Presented by SmartPak



## *National Standings Champion Stephanie King*

Stephanie King rode Lexus to first place in the National Standings of the NAL Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak.

Stephanie, who began riding at a young age, has had great success in the NAL. This year marked her 4<sup>th</sup> time competing in the NAL Finals and the second consecutive year that she was the year-end high point winner. She accomplished the feat last year on Co-Starr before doing it this year on Lexus, the 16-year old, Swedish Warmblood gelding whom she owns. “He’s probably the most genius horse I’ve ever ridden,” Stephanie said. “We swear he reads the numbers on the jumps!”



Stephanie trains with Brooke and Chad Watridge of Ridgewater Show Stables based in St. Augustine, Florida. “I’ve been with them now about five years and they are truly the best friends, horse managers, and trainers one could ask for.”

Stephanie typically rides her three horses six times a week when home and she loves, “taking on new challenges. Each of my horses is different and needs different types of exercises and rides to keep them at their best. I enjoy being able to adapt and adjust to their needs while learning new skills along the way.

“I really have to thank my mom, Pam Allen, who was a trainer and who was always a huge influence on me growing up. She has always had impeccable horsemanship and I try to follow in her footsteps in that regard.”

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# Children's Jumper Presented by

EquiFit, inc.

## *\$10,000 Finals Champion Leigh Nanda*

In the NAL Children's Jumper Final presented by EquiFit, Leigh Nanda dominated the competition with her horse El Casper, accomplishing a perfect show after also taking the win in the Welcome the day before.

Leigh, who trains with Lance Williamson of Gurney, Illinois, emerged victorious in every class of the week, also earning the horse show's Leading Children's Jumper Rider award.

The 15-year-old from Wilmette, IL, bested a 21-horse jump-off, crossing the timers in 31.488 seconds. Twenty-nine riders took on the course, with 16 jumping double-clear efforts which meant that time was going to be the deciding factor.

"I took a stride out in the first line and the last line, so I think that really did it for me," Leigh said of her winning round. "Casper takes a lot of leg; he looks and feels deceptively slow, but he's got a really big stride. He's really smooth if you meet all the jumps in stride. My trainer

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"He's a really sweet horse," Leigh added about her 13-year-old partner with whom she's been paired for less than four months. "After I ride him, he gets a little pumped up!"

# Children's Jumper Presented by

EquiFit, inc.

## *National Standings Champion Gabriella Curry*

Gabriella Curry rode Chaviana to the top of the National standings in the NAL Children's Jumper Division Presented by EquiFit.

The eighth grader from Plantation, Florida turned in an amazing season on her 14-year old KWPN mare owned by Alex Jayne of Our Day Farm. Among her year's highlights with Chaviana were winning the last Classic at the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, finishing as Reserve Champion there in the High Children's Jumper Division (14 and under) and riding in last summer's Equifest Series at Lamplight in Wayne, Illinois where they were fault-free and the top 3 in every class over three weeks!

Gabriella has been training with Erica Robson at Competition Farm in Southwest Ranches, FL ever since she started riding at age 5. She has been competing in NAL



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classes for the last two years and competed in her first NAL Final this year. She is always trying to learn and constantly watches videos of herself and well-known riders competing in high-level and technical classes.

Gabriella rides six days per week and loves jumping big jumps. "I like jumping bigger but I also enjoy using certain techniques while practicing smaller jumps," she said. "My goals are to experience the higher levels of hunters, equitation and jumpers and being competitive in all divisions."

"I'd like to thank my trainer, Erica Robson, and my parents, Michael and Maribel Curry, as well as my horse, Chaviana, for helping me fulfill a goal and have an amazing experience. I look forward to competing in the Junior Jumpers this coming season."



# Children's Jumper Presented by

EquiFit, inc.

## *West Standings Champion Bryce Bowen*

Bryce Bowen rode Candelia 2 to the top of the West standings in the Children's Jumper Division Presented by EquiFit.

Bryce started riding when she was 7-years old in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She got serious about riding when her family moved to The Woodlands, TX when she was 10. She has trained with Kendra Harnch of Houston for the last two years. She has been with Candelia 2, a 10-year-old, Grey, Dutch Warmblood mare since she was seven.



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Bryce, who rides six days a week, was accepted into Auburn University after graduating last spring. "I decided to delay entry into Auburn till the fall of 2021 so I could focus on becoming a better rider," she said. "Taking a gap year was a big decision and I am very grateful to my parents for allowing me to pursue my riding dreams for another year.

"I moved to Wellington, Florida this summer so that I could better focus on my riding and be around the best

riders in the world. That transition out on my own, a long way from Texas has really been eye opening and exciting."

Bryce has competed in NAL classes for a few years but this was the first year she was able to compete in the Finals. She looks forward to someday competing in the High Amateur jumpers and then her first Grand Prix. "I would also like to complete my degree at Auburn and pursue a graduate degree that leads me to a job in sustainability."





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# Adult Hunter

## Presented by Monkey Business LLC

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### *\$10,000 Finals Champion*

### *Kendall Meijer*

Kendall Meijer of Grand Rapids, MI, rode Elliot to the win in the NAL Adult Hunter Final presented by Monkey Business LLC. A field of 28 contested the Final, with the top 12 returning in reverse order of their standings to jump a second round.

A score of 87 in the first round put Kendall and Elliot at the top of the leaderboard; a second-round score of 84.75 for a 171.75 total cemented the pair's victory.

"Each course rode really smoothly, and I thought the jumps were beautiful. They were not too exotic, so they really gave the chance to show the smoothness and quality that a good adult hunter is supposed to have. It's so fun; I've done this class the last 10 years or so, and I was always a bridesmaid," said the 28-year-old who trains with Cathy and Hilary Johnson. "I made the top 12 a few times, but to get a win on my seven-year-old was really special."

Kendall has had Elliot for the past year, and she jokes that the seven-year-old, grey, Selle Français gelding is, "Seven going on 17. I like a horse that's quiet and easy going, and he's just those things. He's very quiet which always works for me."



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# Adult Hunter

## Presented by Monkey Business LLC

### *National Standings Champion*

### *Betty Oare*

Betty Oare rode Sidenote to first place in the NAL National Adult Hunter Division. A mainstay on the hunter-jumper circuit, Betty is well-respected and loved by all.

Betty has been riding, “all my life!” She only started doing the NAL classes a few years ago as she “felt like it was time to go to the Adults where most of my friends were showing – along with some new friends too! The NAL presents very competitive classes with very good riders. We all have to ride up!



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“I was lucky to go to the Finals last year (2019) at Harrisburg and that was my first time. My horse was great and he carried me to the win. ‘Ted,’ as we call him, is a 10-year-old Oldenburg. A very good friend in Virginia was responsible for putting us together — first as a fox hunter with the Warrenton Hunt. A little later I needed something to show so Ted it was! I started going over to the Barracks in Charlottesville and having a few lessons with Maria Shannon; and Ernie and I schooled him at home. I am just so lucky to have him!”

Betty’s love of horses and riding goes back to her Dad. “Bucky helped me for many years after Dad passed away and with him I realized many dreams of special wins. We recently lost my unbelievably great mare, Estrella, who took me to many Championships including Washington, The National, and Devon and who was just elected to the National Show Hunter Hall of Fame.

“I am riding older than most and am so lucky to be able to do the Adults and the NAL Classes. I am honored to have been successful in the NAL and I thank to the NAL for giving all of us this wonderful competition!”



# Adult Hunter

## Presented by Monkey Business LLC

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### *West Standings Champion*

### *Sandra Bierman*

Sandra Bierman rode Indian Ocean to first place in the NAL West Adult Hunter Division. She has had great success with Indian Ocean, a 9-year-old, bay, Dutch Warmblood gelding, winning this year's Circuit Championship at HITS Ocala in the 46-55 Adult Hunters. Helping her to that title was a win in an Adult Hunter Classic with over 40 entries. "It was very exciting!"

Sandra, an attorney with Blue Cross Blue Shield, started riding horses when she was 8-years old and she started riding in the NAL Adult Hunter classes in 2019. At home, her trainer is Sherry Templin with whom she has been riding since about age 10. At the shows, her trainers are Craig Allen and Don Sheehan from Wayside Farm, located in Tennessee in the summer and Ocala in the winter. She has been training with them since 2017.

Sandra, who won the 2004 USEF National Horse of the Year title in the 3'6" Amateur-Owner (36 & over) division with her horse Rumors, usually only gets to ride once a week due to work obligations. She loves it and says, "My goal in life is to retire early enough to still be able to ride competitively. It is my goal to be able to compete successfully in the NAL and WIHS Finals in 2021 and work towards moving up to the AO 3'3" division with Indian Ocean.



"I really want to thank my parents, who always told me you can accomplish anything if you work hard enough, as well as Don, Craig, Sherry and all my friends for all their support without which I could not be a part of the sport!"

# Children's Hunter Presented by Copper Fox LLC

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## *\$10,000 Finals Champion Luke Rinehart*

Luke Rinehart of Westfield, IN, rode Cavalli, a 15-year-old Hanoverian gelding owned by Taylor Johnson, to the win in the NAL Children's Hunter Final presented by Copper Fox LLC. Luke was one of 29 to contest the class and the 13-year-old from Indiana led the class from beginning to end after earning a score of 86.50 in the first round and an 86.00 in the second round, for a 172.50 total.

"I did not think coming in that I would be first!" said Luke, who trains with his parents, Richard and Catherine. "I thought I'd get more like the top 12 – maybe sixth or seventh – so I was very excited about how it turned out. It feels fantastic. I thought my first round was probably the better of the two rounds. It was a good, solid round, and I was a lot more nervous coming into the second round.

"Cavalli's a great horse," he continued. "He has a lot of professional training and experience. I've had him for a while now, between two and three years. My small pony got lame and Taylor was looking to lease him, so we got him and we were very excited. I'm so lucky to have him. I'm really thankful for him, for my family and for everyone who helped out – the Johnson family, Taylor, and all my horse show friends!"



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# Children's Hunter

## *National Standings Champion Reagan Williams*

Reagan Williams rode Sienna to the top of the National standings in the NAL Children's Hunter Division.

The high school senior had an outstanding season with her 18-year-old Dutch warmblood mare owned by Anchorage Sport Horses, LLC., topping the standings in only her second season competing in rated shows. She also rode in NAL classes last year, capping off her first year by reaching the Finals and finishing ninth!



Reagan started riding when she was 8-years old and has been training with the team at Rolling Acres in Brookeville, MD (Patty Foster, Marylisa Leffler, Ashley Foster, and Sheryl Sutherby) for about three years.

Reagan rides anywhere from two to five times a week depending on her show schedule and just loves being in the saddle, "Especially when I'm on Sienna, because she's so willing to do whatever I ask. Sienna has given me the confidence I needed to reach the next level."

Reagan plans on attending Mississippi State University next Fall where she wants to major in Agriculture Business/Pre-law and be part of their equestrian team. She hopes to become an equine attorney and, "Continue riding and showing with Rolling Acres!"

"I would like to thank Patty Foster and the entire Rolling Acres team for their training and all the encouragement they give me as well as the Hogan family for giving me the opportunity to lease such an incredible horse. Above all, I want to thank my parents, Dion and Susan Williams, and my whole family for their dedication and support in helping me accomplish my goals!"

# Children's Hunter

## *West Standings Champion Lillie Parr*

Lillie Parr rode Act of Valor to the top of the NAL West Coast standings in the Children's Hunter Division. The 11<sup>th</sup> grader from Marshall, Texas had an outstanding season on her 14-year-old grey gelding owned by Pinecone Farm.

Riding since age 6, Lillie has been competing in the NAL for two years. "I have been so grateful to be able to compete in the NAL," she said. "The classes are so meaningful. My favorite NAL memory is when I won my Classic at the Winter Equestrian Festival. I had recently started riding my horse and I was still getting to know him. I was really proud of how well we did and scored an 86!"

Lillie has trained with Kristen Collins for 9 years, ever since she was doing the walk trot. She rides 5 or 6 days a week; "as often as I can to improve my riding!"

Her favorite thing to do when riding is to practice courses with lots of interesting turns and rollbacks. "It forces me to think quick and put my focus out in front of me! My coaches have inspired me to become the best version of myself.

"I really want to thank everyone on the team at Pinecone Farm and especially Kristen Collins and my very supportive parents! They always keep me motivated to achieve the goals I set for myself which include earning a top ribbon at a big equitation final, competing at Prix de States, and competing in my first Grand Prix within the next couple of years, as well as my life goals which include attending a top college and pursuing a law degree."



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