

# Galway Bay

## King Street helps Coudray step into Kentucky with victory

BY JOANIE MORRIS

Since 18-year-old Tiana Coudray took King Street to Galway Downs as a stepping stone to



Rolex Kentucky – her first four-star – winning wasn't really on her mind. Funny how sometimes things don't go to plan. Coudray and her Irish-bred bay took the CIC\*\*\*-W held in Temecula, Calif., and can take a little extra confidence to Lexington.

Tied for fourth after the dressage with Jolie Sexson on Killian O'Connor and behind leader Gina Miles and the Badminton-bound McKinlaigh (who withdrew after the first phase) Coudray smiled at the effort put forth by

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the 10-year-old gelding, even though the dressage test at Galway wasn't her priority.

"It was a test that we hadn't practiced much," said Coudray. "We've been busy with the four-star test. This event was more just a bump in the road on the way to Kentucky but I was quite pleased with him."

King Street cruised around the cross-country course within the optimum time in a round that inspired plenty of confidence in the young rider.

"He was pretty stellar," she said. "He'd been around parts of the course before but he had no issues, it was an encouraging round – I feel ready to go East."

Sexson also jumped clean and under time so the pair remained tied – but moved to the top of the leaderboard. Sexson was six seconds closer to the optimum, which meant that if she and Coudray ended on the same score, Sexson would win. Coudray went first into the showjumping arena, where no one had jumped a clean round in the division.

"I knew I needed a clean round," she said. "To have a shot at winning I had to put the pressure Jolie. He really felt fantastic."



Tass Jones

King Street and Tiana Coudray jump perfectly, on the way to a win at Galway Downs in California and a trip to Rolex Kentucky.

King Street obliged and left all the poles up, which meant that Sexson's round would determine the winner. Sexson added 13 in the ring to leave Coudray the clear winner over Kelly Prather and Ballinakill Glory. Jennifer Wooten and The Good Witch took third, with Sexson winding up fifth.

King Street flew to Lexington April 18, and Coudray has finally allowed herself to get excited.

"I was being too superstitious before," said Coudray. "I'm not quite finished feeling like that . . . but I'm not really nervous because there are no expectations. I'm certainly not expected to do super well. I just want to get around and get some miles – that's the main goal."

The pair finished 28th at Fair Hill International CCI\*\*\* last fall and was fourth in the Advanced at Ram Tap in February. The Young Rider of the Year in 2005, Coudray and King Street have a firm partnership that will face its toughest test at Rolex Kentucky.

"He's an incredibly down-to-business type of horse," said Coudray. "He's not incredibly social, he doesn't like to be disturbed when he's sleeping. We call him Seabiscuit because he likes to sleep so much. He'll go and

do dressage and then come back and sleep. He loves having a job, his whole world shuts down when he's not doing anything."

Coudray is based in Carmel Valley, Calif., at Derek and Bea di Grazia's Stillwater Farm. And although she's a high-school senior, Coudray doesn't often see the inside of a classroom, getting her education online so she can focus on her riding.

he's also bringing along a young horse, Ringwood Magister, by the same sire as King Street.

- Debbie Rosen and The Alchymest turned in an immaculate score sheet in the CIC\*\* to take first by less than a point over Hawley Bennett and Splendorofthesun.

Bennett led after the first two phases but used a rail she didn't have in hand in the showjumping and settled for the runner-up spot. Andrea Baxter and Estrella were third.

Based in Callabassas, Calif., Rosen has forged a quick partnership with the 7-year-old Canadian Sport Horse. Started by Buck Davidson and further produced by Doug Payne, The Alchymest has been in her barn for less than a year. Rosen aims for the Twin Rivers CCI in May.



Tass Jones

King Street and Tiana Courdray receive their awards after the Galway Downs victory.

## Buck Davidson

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