



# The "Race for the Cup" is On!

By Amy J. Daum

**Now in its fourth year, the "Race for the Cup" is a hot one, with some of the country's top horses and riders jockeying for position in what looks to be the most competitive Adequan USEA Gold Cup Series to date.**

## *The Series*

The Adequan USEA Gold Cup Series is modeled somewhat after other successful sports series such as NASCAR. The Series runs at the Intermediate and Advanced levels, and is based on a cumulative points system, with horse/rider pairs earning points at the 12 premier USEA recognized competitions that host Gold Cup divisions throughout the year. Competitors are also rewarded with additional points on the leaderboard for going double clear in cross-country and/or show jumping.

This December at the USEA Annual Meeting and Convention in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the horse/rider pair with the most points on the leaderboard at each level will be honored. The champions at the Advanced level will receive a check from the USEA for \$6,000, and the Intermediate champion will take home a check for \$4,000. Both will take home an impressive list of prizes. The second place rider at Advanced will win a \$3,500 Bit of Britain gift certificate, and their Intermediate counterpart will receive a \$2,500 gift certificate.

## *Red Hills Horse Trials* [www.rhht.org](http://www.rhht.org)

The Series kicked off in Tallahassee, Florida at the Red Hills Horse Trials, March 9-11. The weather, which could not have



ABOVE: Alyssa Gleason, of Luitpold, makers of Adequan—the Gold Cup Series title sponsor—gives Lion King a congratulatory pat after he and Jonathan Holling won the CIC3\*-W at the Red Hills Horse Trials. PREVIOUS PAGE: Lion King II and Jonathan Holling look textbook perfect as they gallop their way to the top of the Advanced Gold Cup leaderboard early in the 2007 season.

been more spectacular for all three days with sunny skies and temperatures in the 70s, certainly played a part in bringing out a record number of spectators, who were welcomed by 450 knowledgeable and friendly volunteers. This was the event's first year without founders Sallie Ausley and Sylvia Ochs (affectionately known as "Salvia"), who officially retired last year after nine years at the helm, developing the competition from a horse trials to an FEI World Cup Qualifier.

Sallie and Sylvia were both on hand for the competition though, showing moral support and having a chance, for once, to relax and enjoy the activities, and to watch the new organizing crew of Jane Barron, Terrie Brooks, Marvin Mayer, and Colin Phipps proudly continue their legacy.

On the competition front, it came down to the last show jumping round to decide the winner of the CIC3\*-W, which served as the Advanced division of the Adequan USEA Gold Cup Series. Two-day leaders, Darren Chiacchia and Windfall II, had less than a rail in hand when an unlucky eight penalties dropped them into third for a final score of 57.1. This left last year's winner, Phillip Dutton, in his second place spot with Shannon Stimson and Annie Jones' ten-year-old Thoroughbred gelding (and 2006 USEA Horse of the Year) Tru Luck with 54.3, and rewarded Jonathan Holling and Lion King II with the win after a double clear show jumping round bounced them from third into the top spot with 52.

"This was Simba's first win at a three-star," Holling said. "We were in first at Fair Hill [the CCI3\* Fall Championships]

over the tightly wheeled and challenging John Williams-designed course. They moved up to finish in second after they posted a double clear show jumping round and Will Faudree and Antigua pulled two rails to drop from second to fourth. Kristin Bachman and Gryffindor moved up to finish in third.

In the CIC2\* Phillip Dutton and Nina Gardner's Loose 'N Cool dropped the second-to-last fence, but had enough of a lead after cross-country that they had another rail to spare for the win. Local trainer Holly Hepp and Anne Hennessy's Benwald put in a double clear round to finish second, followed by another local celebrity, Olympian Robert Costello, aboard Bobby Stephens' Alcibiades.

Gardner, who had only recently purchased the eight-year-old Australian Stock Horse gelding, commented that he is still green and needs more experience at intermediate, but that she looks forward to his promising future.

Hepp was ecstatic with Benwald, who only moved up to intermediate last fall. "Our relationship has really bloomed," she said. "He has handled the move up and the questions so well."

### *Galway Downs Horse Trials* [www.galwaydowns.com](http://www.galwaydowns.com)

The Cup moved 3,000 miles west two weeks later to Temecula, California for the first event of the Pacific division at



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**ABOVE: Galway Downs organizer Robert Kellerhouse presents 18-year-old Tiana Coudray, who's only been eventing for the past five years, with her Gold Cup trophy and awards. LEFT: With Tiana Coudray as his pilot, the talented Irish Sport Horse gelding King Street exhibits his tremendous scope over a wide oxer in the CIC3\*-W division at Galway Downs. He left all the rails in their cups to clinch the win .**

the Galway Downs Horse Trials, March 30 – April 1. Organizer Robert Kellerhouse and his crew welcomed almost 300 entries, from novice through the CIC3\*-W, to the premier West Coast facility.

Eighteen-year-old Tiana Coudray of Carmel Valley, California, continued her trajectory to the top ranks of the sport with a win in the CIC3\*-W aboard Jatial, Inc.'s 12-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding King Street. This pair made their debut at the intermediate level just over two years ago, and astoundingly finished the 2005 Adequan Gold Cup Series as Intermediate reserve champions. That feat was especially impres-

sive considering Coudray had only been eventing for three years at the time, and didn't even have a full-time coach!

That changed last year when she left home to work full time with Derek and Bea di Grazia, whose guidance helped her and King Street make the move up to advanced, and then prepare for their four-star debut at the Rolex Kentucky CCI4\* a few weeks later.

West Coast riders have had much success in the Series, including the CIC3\*-W's second place finishers, Kelly Prather and Andrea Pfeiffer's eight-year-old Irish Sport Horse mare, Ballinakill Glory. This pair finished 2006 as the Adequan Gold Cup Series Intermediate division reserve champions, and look to make a similar or better mark in 2007, this time on the Advanced leaderboard.

Debbie Rosen of Calabasas, California, also no stranger to the Series (she was the 2005 Intermediate champion), made her move on the Intermediate leaderboard with a win in the CIC2\* aboard The Alchemyst, her eight-year-old Canadian Sport Horse gelding. The pair started in fourth after dressage, moved into second after a double clear cross-country round, and then took the top spot after posting another double clear in show jumping, putting the pressure on leaders Hawley Bennett and Splendorofthesun who knocked one rail to drop into second.

### *The Fork Horse Trials* [www.forkstables.com](http://www.forkstables.com)

The last of the spring Series events took place at Jim Cogdell's breathtaking Fork Stables in Norwood, North Carolina. It was another unseasonably cold and blustery weekend, though thankfully dry, with temperatures in the mid to low 20s to start each day, making for some tense early morning dressage tests—with a few notable exceptions, including Kim Severson and long-time partner Winsome Adante, the first to go down centerline of the entire competition, at 8 a.m. Thursday morning.

The pair set the tone, putting in their signature test—precise and fluid—and earning a score of 40.3. They would go on to win the event on that same score, a perfect prep for their trip across the Atlantic to compete in England's prestigious Badminton CCI4\*, a challenge neither has yet attempted, and where they placed an impressive third (see story on page 70).

Severson commended Cogdell and his staff for the expert attention given to the 1,300-acre state-of-the-art equestrian center which is home to Cogdell's Irish Draught Sport Horses as well as abundant wildlife. The

Fork staff maintained excellent care of the courses and footing, frequently watering and aerating the soil in order to limit the pounding on the horses' legs. "Jim's done a great job with producing such a wonderful event," Severson said. "He's managed to bring together all the important parts to make this event a success. This event is such a necessity. It's really important to have these CICs."

Closest to Severson in the final standings of the CIC3\*-W and impressively moving up from tenth after dressage were Will Faudree and his 18-year-old Thoroughbred gelding Antigua, affectionately known as "Brad." The pair, who competed on the 2006 World Equestrian Games team and won team gold as part of the 2003 Pan Am

squad, ran double clear in cross-country and pulled off a faultless show jumping round on Sunday to finish on their dressage score of 48.4.

Faudree agreed that the farm's attention to detail was first class. "The crew was amazing in maintaining this facility. It's incredibly hard to keep this clay soil from being rock hard, and I can't imagine the time and effort it took to make this event as successful as it was."

Their second place finish at The Fork earned Faudree (and all other who place second in Series divisions) a gift certificate for \$75 worth of products from World Equestrian Brands, a pair of front and hind Nunn Finer brushing boots, and No Bow wraps from Back on Track.



Kim Severson and long-time partner Winsome Adante looked back on track for a successful season after adding a win in the CIC3\*-W division at The Fork Horse Trials to their resume. USEA, Inc. CEO Jo Whitehouse praises the pair for their commendable efforts and Bit of Britain owner and USEA sponsor John Nunn presents Severson with their Advanced Gold Cup trophy.