



***Olympic, WEG & World Cup rider returns as the star of May 4 Equinesta fundraiser for youth dressage opportunities.***

*by Kim F. Miller*

U.S. Olympic and World Equestrian dressage medalist Kasey Perry-Glass hasn't spent much time in her Northern California hometown of Orangevale since her international odyssey launched about six years ago. She's happy to be making up for that on May 4 as the featured guest, along with her equine partner Goerklintgaards Dublet, at Equinesta. The event is the brainchild of 16-year-old Joulle Kimura and is a fundraiser for the California Dressage Society's Foothill Chapter and its youth dressage programs.

It will be held at the Perrys' beautiful private farm in Orangevale.

Supporting youth programs is a cause near and dear to Kasey's heart. She started riding in the Sierra Gold Pony Club and, when she began to zero in on dressage, found a cherished home with the Foothill CDS chapter. "Any time I was showing, I felt really comfortable," she recalls of her youth in dressage. Lifelong friendships launched through Pony Club, shows at the Rancho Murieta Equestrian Center and the coaching of Gina Duran are stand-out memories. Gina "continues to be like an aunt to me, and she still works with young riders (and amateurs) and does a great job really getting them to love the sport." (Carmela Richards and Gina Miles also coached the future Olympian in her early riding days.)

## April 2019 - The Gallop: Kasey Perry-Glass Homecoming

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Along with helping raise money for youth scholarships, Kasey wants to promote more awareness of the many USEF and USDF programs that already exist. Lendon Gray's Dressage4Kids and the USEF's Emerging Dressage Athlete program are a few of the excellent paths she wants more young riders to know about. The national organizations "have many different ways for youth to get involved and connecting with them is a big advantage."

Along with her excitement about helping a great cause, Kasey is very happy to come home for several months. When she began ascending the national dressage ladder, Kasey worked with coach Christophe Theallet in Spokane, WA. She then spent time in Sun Valley, ID, working with Debbie McDonald, who is now the dressage team's chef d'equipe. Based in Florida for the last few years, Kasey plans to stay in California through the summer and likely into the fall. Dublet will get a big break from competing, but she has up and comers to campaign through the summer.

The Adequan West Coast Dressage Festival CDIs in November are targets for getting Dublet back in action for a hopeful 2020 Olympic bid, Kasey explains. "I've always said we'll take things one day at a time, and now that Dublet is getting older, I try to limit him a little. He does not need a whole lot of work. I would really love to take a shot at Tokyo, so I'm going to keep him happy and healthy and see where it goes."



"I'm so excited about coming home and about how much outreach can be done there," Kasey continues of her homecoming. Also, California's summer climate is far preferable to Florida's, she adds.

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Being based in Florida, Kasey has gained an interesting perspective on the California dressage scene. “What I hear the most is the hope that the West Coast starts to thrive,” she explains. “We really want to see them do well and see the California circuit grow and the quality of horses grow, too. The riders are amazing and it may be a matter of being in a little transition period.”

Any sense of a rivalry between the East and West coasts is a misperception, she stresses. “We just want to support them. There is so much talent over there. They need to get show entries and sponsorships up and we know they are working on that. I’d say, the East Coast riders are all supporting the West from afar.”

Kasey’s second World Cup Finals appearance awaits April 3-7 in Gothenburg, Sweden. Her first Final, in Omaha in 2017, “was one of my favorite events,” Kasey says. “I loved being in team competition, and the World Cup is just a little bit less stressful because it is an individual championship. You go out there, do your best and really have fun.”

Dublet is ready, too. “I’ve always said he is the best horse in the world, and he’s shown that he is a contender for the podium.” While reviewing their freestyle shortly before leaving for Sweden, Kasey was playing their music while the 16 year old Danish Warmblood stood nearby in the crossties. “He completely perked up and started looking over at the arena,” she recounts. “He loves his Freestyle!” A few tweaks to it are specifically designed to give the pair an edge against tough competition including Germany’s Isabell Werth and Kasey and Dublet’s U.S. teammates Laura Graves and Verdades.

After the Finals, Dublet will return to Florida for a few weeks to break up the travel before crossing the country to the Perrys’ home farm. It’s been a long time gone for both. “My family has been following me around the country and the world for a while,” Kasey says. “It’s going to be great being with them and having us all in the same city.”

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