



SHOW REPORTS & PHOTOS

Alliston, Bouscaren & Braitling take top honors.

As Galway Downs celebrates 20 years of equestrian competition, their stage was set for an exciting weekend of three-day eventing. The 2017 Galway Downs International Event was held Nov. 2-5 in Temecula, complete with award-winning food and evening entertainment including LeAnn Rimes. The show began with horses and riders dressed to the nines for the horse inspection. The Ground Jury approved 61 international pairs and all 29 Training Three-Day (T3D) competitors to begin competition, which got underway in the dressage arenas.

Despite being at home in Temecula, Erin Kellerhouse's afternoon certainly did not go to plan when her 6-year-old Irish Sport Horse, Woodford Reserve, sent her flying out of the tack in warmup; but undeterred, she kicked on to set herself in the leading CCI1* position for the day with a score of 41.

"It felt really good because I think he should win every time because he's amazing, but we've just had little stupid mistakes here and there. I was really happy that it all came together, and it was just funny that I got bucked off right before it," Kellerhouse said. "When I got back on, he felt good. He was right with me. He just needed to buck I guess!" she said, grinning.

Jordan Linstedt of Redmond, Washington, led all T3D competitors on the first day aboard Janine Jaro's 8-year-old Hanoverian, Staccato, with a score of 27.1, in just his second T3D.

"I wanted him to finish off the year just really confident going into next year. I'm really excited about his future, but I want him to be confident going up the levels," she explained.

Happenstance's relaxed disposition served Great Britain's James Alliston well on the second day of riding as chilly weather descended on the Temecula Valley. While cool breezes spooked a few of his CCI3* competitors, the 11-year-old Holsteiner owned by Mary McKee remained calm earning a score of 43.3.

"When I cantered around the arena, he was definitely a little sharper than I expected; but when he went in the ring to do his test, he relaxed and felt really, really good," Alliston said. "He's quite a relaxed horse in the dressage in general. He knows his job, and he's normally pretty workmanlike when he gets in the boards."

In their first CCI3* as a pair, Robyn Fisher of Moorpark and her Holsteiner mare, Betawave, posted a result of 46.9 – their first time breaking into the 40s at an international event – earning second place for the day.

"I am on cloud nine," Fisher beamed. "She's been a really tough young horse to bring along, and today she showed that she is the horse we all thought she could be. There were still moments where she could've been steadier and more connected, but overall I'm just thrilled."

In their very first CCI2*, Jessie Hargrave of Temecula and her 10-year-old Trakehner, Regenmann, took the lead after dressage. "He's a good horse in the dressage usually, but he was extra good today," Hargrave smiled. "He's a spooky horse, so a couple of flowerpots got him, but overall he was really, really good."

On the third day of competition, experience served the CCI3* riders well as they battled the cross country course. Alliston stayed firmly in control of the three-star division after a faultless run.

“He felt really good. It was a strong course – a lot of angles, a lot of hard jumps really. I was delighted with how it went,” he said. “I think I probably went a little too quickly which I shouldn’t have done. I think I was too far inside the time. I think I got a bit panicky because I started quite slowly, and I was down a little bit on my minute markers, and it was quite open at the end of the course. He was full of running. I let him go, and he is quite fast.”

The course was designed by Eric Winter, his first in the U.S. He has designed courses for such prestigious events as the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials and SsangYong Blenheim Palace International Horse Trials. Lisa Marie Fergusson and her 11-year-old Welsh Sport Horse, Honor Me, having traveled from Canada, were one of many pairs who sought the track laid out by Winter.

“I thought it was a great course, and that’s why I came out here, to ride Eric Winter’s course. I’d ridden Derek di Grazia a bunch and Mike [Etherington-Smith] and Ian Stark, and I love them all, but I wanted to do something a little different. He laid out a great course and Tally just ate it up,” Fergusson said, sharing her intentions of competing at Badminton’s CCI4* next year.

The T3D concluded Saturday as riders tackled Marc Donovan’s show jumping course. Overnight leaders Jordan Linstedt and Staccato left all the rails in their cups to seal the deal on their wire-to-wire win of the division.

“This solidifies my plans of him coming out in the spring and going Preliminary and the track that I have for him to do a one-star,” Linstedt affirmed. “You want them to feel really easy before that move up. I came to give him the confidence before next year, and I think I did exactly that. He felt like a horse that came out each day better and better.”

As the final day of showing came to a close, it was Alliston and Happenstance who held onto the lead in the CCI3* division with a final score of 48.3. Helen Bouscaren and Ebay earned the blue in the CCI2* division with their score of 49.9, and Rebecca Braitling aboard Santana II won the CCI1* division with a 43.7 final score.

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