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## United States Para-Equestrian Association



### For Immediate Release:

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## Para-Equestrians Prepare for Houston Dressage Society Spring Classic I & II CPEDI3\*

**Katy, TX - April 25, 2012** - In two months United States Para-Equestrians will be vying for a spot on the United States Paralympic Equestrian Team heading to the London Games. With the United States Team qualified, Para-Equestrians have traveled to Houston, Texas for their last opportunity in the United States to qualify as an individual. The Houston Dressage Society (HDS) is pleased to host the Spring Classic I & II CPEDI3\* sponsored by The COR Group at the Great Southwest Equestrian Center. Running concurrently with the CPEDI3\* will be the CDI3\* and CDI1\* sponsored by North Texas Equestrian Center and \$10,000 HDS Dressage Derby. Fifteen Para-Dressage horses and rider combinations will

compete over three days including riders from the United States and Canada.

On Thursday, April 26, 2012, Para-Equestrian horses and riders will present their mounts for the exciting FEI Jog. On Friday, April 27, 2012, Para-Dressage competition will kick-off with the Team Test, followed by Saturday's Individual Test, and finishing with the musical Freestyle Competition and awards ceremony. Although many of the equestrian athletes have already earned their qualifying score for the 2012 USEF Paralympic Selection Trials, this will be one last opportunity to compete under international ground jury Kathy Amos Jacob (FRA), David Schmutz (USA), Kristi Wysocki (USA), and Carlos Lopes (POR). Lopes has been selected as part of the judging panel for the 2012 London Paralympics making this competition even more interesting.

Competitors at the CPEDI3\* will include hometown Para-Equestrian and 2011 USEF Para-Equestrian National Champion Grade Ib rider Jonathan Wentz (Wylie, TX). In Grade II will be 15 year-old Sydney Collier (Ann Arbor, Michigan) who will not be able to qualify due to her not reaching her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday before the London Paralympics. Collier has recently excelled in multiple international competitions traveling to Florida and California. Grade II rider Kim Jones (Georgetown, South Carolina) who is a veteran Para-Equestrian is looking forward to competing in her last CPEDI3\* before the Selection Trials. Rounding out the Grade II division will be Gold and Silver Medal Para-Dressage rider and Four-Star Parelli Professional from Canada, Lauren Barwick.



*Lauren Barwick and Off to Paris from Canada*

Traveling from California is Grade II rider and Hollywood stunt woman Barbara Adside. This will be Adside's second international competition as a Para-Equestrian. After assisting multiple Para-Dressage athletes in California talented dressage rider Iana Gonzalez (San Diego, CA) will be competing for her first time as a Para-Equestrian during the Houston Dressage Society CPEDI3\*

In Grade III, Wendy Fryke (Parker, Colorado) and her trusty Westphalian Stallion, Lateran will be showcasing their spectacular extensions and lateral work.



*Wendy Fryke and Lateran in Saugerties, NY 2011*

In Grade Ia Donna Ponessa (New Windsor, NY) will be competing against fellow Grade Ia Laura Goldman of Highland Heights, OH. After much success in Florida and earning some of the highest scores at the Jim Brandon Equestrian Center Canadian Grade Ia rider Jody Schloss has traveled to Texas with her partner Inspector Rebus to gain additional international experience.



*Laura Goldman and VPRH Pegasus com Niehaus-HOF*

The final Para-Equestrian competitor is talented Olympian Courtney King-Dye. Each of the Para-Equestrian athletes have amazing stories to tell and have achieved much success despite the many physical challenges they incur in everyday life. The range of disabilities and diagnoses include Multiple Sclerosis, limb loss, Lupus, Cerebral Palsy, brain and spinal cord injuries, and many other diagnoses. In 2010 Olympian Courtney King-Dye had a riding accident while not wearing a helmet resulting in a traumatic brain injury. Courtney spent four weeks in a coma before awaking having to re-learn how to walk and talk. She is now a tireless proponent of helmet safety receiving national recognition for her efforts. Courtney's dedication to the sport she loves and competitive drive to be a top athlete has brought her to Houston where she will compete internationally for the first time since her accident.

Due to the range of disabilities, Para-Equestrians are divided into five grade levels including Grade Ia, Ib, II, III, and IV. Grade Ia is the most severely impaired while Grade IV is the least impaired. Each grade competes alongside riders that have comparable inabilities. The Grades are not determined on skill level but are determined by an international classification process. Classifications are performed at each international competition by trained physical therapists or physicians who perform strength, range of motion and/or coordination tests on the athletes to assess their functional ability and approve them for adaptive equipment. Adaptive equipment is allowed as needed such as modified saddles, additional whips, rubber bands, looped reins and other aids to help compensate for a rider's

disability.



Donna Ponessa and Otto

To compare each Para-Equestrian Test to able-bodied Dressage levels Grade 1a is equivalent to Introductory Level, Grade 1b is equivalent to Training Level, Grade II is equivalent to First Level, Grade III is equivalent to Second Level and Grade IV is equivalent to Third Level. Competitions continue to be made possible for riders in each of the Grades through sponsorship and large financial dedication.

Sponsoring the Spring Classic I & II Houston Dressage Society CPEDI3\* is Leslie Rohrer from The COR Group. The COR Group offers advertising and marketing solutions to small and medium size businesses. Leslie Rohrer is not only a member of the Houston Dressage Society but she is also on the board for 2012. She noted, "Years ago when my daughter was showing I was given my first glimpse of the Para-Equestrian discipline. Local rider Jonathan Wentz came to a show with North Texas Equestrian Center's Kai Handt and truly amazed me. I was in awe of this impressive young man who has dedicated himself to achieving the highest of his sport. I have heard this story that when Jonathan came to Kai he was unable to walk and Kai told him if he could walk then he could ride. Within a short time Jonathan was riding for North Texas Equestrian Center and competing as a Young Rider Para-Equestrian. I marveled at what he could accomplish then and I am impressed by what each of the Para-Dressage athletes have accomplished along their own journeys. Speaking on behalf of the Houston Dressage Society we are very excited to help each Para-Equestrian achieve their goals and earn a spot on the 2012 Paralympics team for their country."



Jonathan Wentz and NTEC Jabriel

**For more information about the** Spring Classic I and II CPEDI3\* Hosted by Houston Dressage Society please visit [www.HoustonDressageSociety.org](http://www.HoustonDressageSociety.org). To view the prize list or show results please visit [www.ShowSecretary.com](http://www.ShowSecretary.com) or contact the Show Secretary Susan Peacock phone (405) 749-9777 or email [susan@showsecretary.com](mailto:susan@showsecretary.com).

***Fast Facts: Spring Classic I CPEDI3\* Hosted by Houston Dressage Society***

**What:** Spring Classic I and II CPEDI3\* Hosted by Houston Dressage Society

**CPEDI3\* Name Sponsor:** The COR Group - Leslie Rohrer

**Where:** Great Southwest Equestrian Center  
2501 South Mason Rd.  
Katy, TX 77450  
281-578-7669  
[www.gswec.com](http://www.gswec.com)

**Schedule:**

Thursday, April 26, 2012 - 4:00 p.m. F.E.I CPEDI3\* Jog

Friday, April 27, 2012 - 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m Para-Equestrian Team Competition  
Saturday, April 28, 2012 - 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Para-Equestrian Individual Test  
Sunday, April 29, 2012 - -9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Para-Equestrian Freestyle Test  
**Awards Ceremony will occur after Sunday's Freestyle Competition**

**Contacts at Show:**

*Show Secretary:* Susan Peacock, 837 Glenlake Drive, Edmond, OK 73013, Phone: (405) 749-9777, [susan@showsecretary.com](mailto:susan@showsecretary.com), Fax: 866-487-6624

*Assistant Secretary:* Chris Federer, (513) 833-5081, [chrisfederer10@gmail.com](mailto:chrisfederer10@gmail.com)

*Show Manager:* Ed Lavalley, 300 Cedar Ridge St., Wylie, TX 75098, (214) 336-7125, [ejlava@sprynet.com](mailto:ejlava@sprynet.com)

*Licensee Contact:* Kathleen Jones, Houston Dressage Society,  
[kkj3156@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kkj3156@sbcglobal.net)

**About the FEI:**

International level competition is governed by the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland. Both able-bodied and Para-Equestrian riders compete under special FEI rules. Judges are licensed by the FEI to officiate at international competitions around the world. Equestrian sports are the only Olympic sport where men and women compete directly against each other.

**Photo Credit:** Photograph Taken of Jonathan Wentz and NTEC Jabriel. Photo taken in Wellington, FL at the Wellington Sunshine Challenge CPEDI3\*. Photo © 2012 Lindsay Y McCall for the USPEA.

**About United States Para-Equestrian Association:**

The USPEA is a network of riders, judges, national federation board members, and equestrian enthusiasts. The association gives athletes the ability to get involved and expand their knowledge and experience in the Para-Equestrian sport. The USPEA encourages para-athletes to participate in all disciplines under the para-equestrian umbrella.

The USPEA is a recognized affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) which serves as the National Governing Body for the equestrian sport. This relationship between the USPEA and USEF is to encourage para-equestrian competitors, leisure riders, coaches, fans and enthusiasts to network and get involved with the entire equestrian sport.

Ultimately the goal of the USPEA is to foster growth in the para-equestrian discipline. From growth in the number of participants to growth as a team, and growth in the experience and knowledge of all involved. From local horse shows to international Olympic Games, the USPEA will provide para-equestrians the knowledge of what they need to succeed. The USPEA connects with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the United States Dressage Federation (USDF), and USEF

which provides Para-Equestrians the top equestrian resources.

In June 2010, the USPEA earned its 501 (c)(3) status which has encouraged supporters to help supply funding to the Para-Equestrian Team as a recognized affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation(USEF).

For more information about the USPEA please visit [www.USPEA.org](http://www.USPEA.org) or contact USPEA President: Hope Hand by e-mail: [Wheeler966@aol.com](mailto:Wheeler966@aol.com) or by phone: (610)356-6481.

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