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United States Para-Equestrian Association



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2012 London Paralympic Equestrian Competition Begins at Greenwich Park

London, England, United Kingdom-August 29, 2012 - Every tear shed, every mile traveled, and every salute in the show ring over the last few years have now led to this moment at the 2012 London Paralympic Equestrian competition held in Greenwich Park. Before riders and coaches could breathe a sigh of relief seventy-eight horse and rider combinations stepped forward for the official horse inspection. Each team and individual presented their mounts at a trot in front of the competition officials including the veterinary commission and ground jury. Each horse was carefully examined before being given the official nod to compete in the 2012 Paralympic Equestrian Games scheduled for August 30th through September 4th. The horse inspection began in alphabetical order according to the International Paralympic Committee abbreviations. Henceforth, the United States watched 74 horses approach horse inspection before Lord Ludger, NTEC Richter Scale, Western Rose, and Bonifatius were given the salute to continue on to the first day of Para-Dressage competition.

Four dashing United States members dressed in exquisite Ralph Lauren red, white, and blue attire formally presented each United States' equine. These handlers included: United States Paralympic Equestrian Chef d'Equipe Missy Ranshousen presenting Lord Ludger for United States Team Captain Rebecca Hart; owner Kai Handt leading NTEC Richter Scale for Jonathan Wentz; owner Wes Dunham of Western Rose for equestrian Donna Ponessa; and groom Meagan Szarek presenting Bonifatius for rider Dale Dedrick.



Wes Dunham owner of Western Rose ridden by Donna Ponessa for the United States

Meagan Szarek noted, "The whole Paralympic experience has been wonderful. It really gives a humbling prospective about what able-bodied individuals take for granted on a daily basis. It is very motivating watching and working with each of these athletes on the United States Para-Equestrian Team. I am honored to be a part of it all and share this experience with so many talented Equestrians from around the world."

Out of the 78 horses from 26 nations only two horses were asked to return for additional inspection. These two horses will be evaluated further before the competition begins on Thursday. Grade II will be the first Grade in the incredibly designed Greenwich Park Arena to show in the Team Test competition. The first horse will enter the ring at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday with the final Grade II trotting down centerline at 12:35 p.m. Grade Ib will begin at 14:15 p.m. and the last Grade Ib athlete will finish at 16:35 p.m.

United States Para-Equestrian Dressage Grade II rider Dale Dedrick and Bonifatius of Ann Arbor, Mich. will compete at 9:30 a.m in the Team Test competition while Grade II Rebecca Hart aboard Lord Ludger of Unionville, Penn., will compete at 10:30 a.m. Jonathan Wentz and NTEC Richter Scale of Richardson, TX will compete at 4:15 p.m. in Grade Ib and final United States Para-Equestrian Donna Ponessa and Western Rose of New Windsor, NY will compete in the Team Test on Friday.



NTEC Richter Scale (ridden by Jonathan Wentz of the USA) and owner Kai Handt

The Overall Team Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals will be determined based on the top three rider's percentage scores for their country. Each rider will compete in the Team Test and his or her score will be combined with the Individual Test for an overall percentage score. The top three rider's scores from each country will be compared for the final score for the Team medals.

The Individual Medals will include a Gold, Silver, and Bronze for each of the five grades (Grade Ia, Ib, II, III, and IV). These medals will be determined based on each rider's individual performance score on the Individual Test. The Freestyle Medals will also include a Gold, Silver, and Bronze for each of the five grades.

This week Rebecca Hart was nominated as the Team Captain of the United States Paralympic Team. This is an honor for her as she adds her name to the list of team captains before her. Rebecca commented, "This has been a really fabulous experience not just for our team but for Para-Equestrian Dressage. London is the birthplace of the Para-Equestrian sport and it feels great to represent our country in this wonderful city. As we watched each of our horses jog in the horse inspection we were impressed with the beauty of the backdrop of the equestrian venue at Greenwich Park, The Queen's House.



Lord Ludger (ridden by Rebecca Hart of USA) and Chef d'Equipe Missy Ranshousen

Donna Ponessa agreed, "It makes me really proud to be an American and represent our country in the birthplace of the Para-Equestrian movement. I am also really proud to have made this journey with my support staff and team. We have accomplished a lot in a relatively short amount of time and I am pretty overwhelmed about being here."

The Paralympic Equestrian Competition begins on August 30 and concludes on September 4th.



Bonifatius and Meagan Szarek ridden Dale Dedrick of the USA

THE UNITED STATES PARALYMPIC EQUESTRIAN TEAM NOMINATED BY THE UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION

Rebecca Hart, 27, of Unionville, Penn. and Jessica Ranshousen's Holsteiner gelding Lord Ludger
Jonathan Wentz, 21, of Richardson, Texas and Kai Handt's 18 year-old NTEC Richter Scale
Donna Ponessa, 51, of New Windsor, N.Y. and Wesley Dunham's Oldenburg mare Western Rose
Dale Dedrick, 56, of Ann Arbor, Mich. and her 14 year-old grey Hanoverian Bonifatius

Team Staff:

Missy Ranshousen (Unionville, PA)- Chef d'Equipe
Jim Wolf (Lebanon, NJ)- Chef de Mission
Pam Lane (Gladstone, NJ)- Team Leader
Stacey Kent (Cochranville, PA)- Team Veterinarian

2012 Paralympic Equestrian Schedule at Greenwich Park

August 30, 2012

Grade II Mixed Team Test 9:00 AM -12:15 PM
Grade Ib Mixed Team Test 2:00 PM -5:00 PM

August 31, 2012

Grade IV Mixed Team Test 9:00 AM-11:30 AM
Grade III Mixed Team Test 1:15 PM-3:45 PM
Grade Ia Mixed Team Test 3:45 PM-6:15 PM

September 1, 2012

Grade II Mixed Individual Championship Test 9:00 AM - 12:15 PM
Medal Ceremony Individual Championship Grade II 12:30 PM-12:45 PM
Grade Ib Mixed Individual Championship Test 2:30 PM-5:30 PM
Medal Ceremony Individual Championship Grade Ib 5:45 PM -6:00 PM

September 2, 2012

Grade IV Mixed Individual Championship Test 9:00 AM-11:30 AM
Medal Ceremony Individual Championship Grade IV 11:45 AM-12:00 PM
Grade III Mixed Individual Championship Test 1:45 PM-4:14 PM
Grade Ia Mixed Individual Championship Test 4:15 PM-6:45 PM
Medal Ceremony Individual Championship Grade III 7:00 PM-7:15 PM
Medal Ceremony Individual Championship Grade Ia 7:15 PM-7:30 PM

September 3, 2012

Grade II Mixed Individual Freestyle Test 9:00 AM-11:30 AM
Medal Ceremony Individual Freestyle Grade II
Grade Ib Mixed Individual Freestyle Test 2:15 PM-5:00 PM
Medal Ceremony Individual Freestyle Grade Ib 5:15 PM-5:30 PM

September 4, 2012

Grade IV Mixed Individual Freestyle Test 9:00 AM-11:30 AM
Medal Ceremony Individual Freestyle Grade IV 11:45 AM-12:00 PM

Grade III Mixed Individual Freestyle Test 1:45 PM-3:45 PM
Grade Ia Mixed Individual Freestyle Test 3:45 PM-6:00 PM
Medal Ceremony Individual Freestyle Grade III 6:15 PM-6:30 PM
Medal Ceremony Individual Freestyle Grade Ia 6:30 PM-6:45 PM
TEAM MEDAL CEREMONY 6:45 PM-7:15 PM

September 9, 2012
Closing Ceremony

Information on Live Streaming Paralympic Coverage at Paralympic.org and Television Coverage at NBC Sports Network (information about coverage below was provided by the International Paralympic Committee and was not written by USPEA)

By creating original video content for the US Paralympics YouTube channel, YouTube.com/USParalympics, while also partnering with NBCUniversal and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), US Paralympics will provide the American public with more coverage of the US Paralympic Team than any previous year.

Beginning on 29 August and continuing through the conclusion of the Games on 9 September, US Paralympics will provide 10 daily video highlights packages via its US Paralympics YouTube channel.

In addition to the online content, NBC Sports Network (NBCSN) will air one-hour highlight shows on 4, 5, 6 and 11 September at 7 p.m. EDT. Following the Paralympic Games, on 16 September, NBC will broadcast a 90-minute special from 2-3:30 p.m. EDT. All NBC and NBC Sports Network Paralympic highlight shows and specials will re-air on Universal Sports Network and UniversalSports.com.

During the Games, which start on 29 August, the IPC's website will have five channels broadcasting live sport each day. Four channels will have English commentary whilst a fifth channel will be available in Spanish.

The website will also feature a revolutionary new SMART player which has been developed by the IPC's worldwide IT partner Atos. The player uses innovative technology that will enable those watching live swimming and wheelchair basketball on www.paralympic.org to view real-time results tickers, statistics, biographies, news and social media - all in one integrated and synchronized window. It also simplifies the user's interests and gives specific and relevant results per sport, similar to the ones available to commentators inside the venues.

Direct Link: <http://www.youtube.com/paralympicsporttv>
U.S. Paralympics website (<http://www.usparalympics.org>),
U.S. Paralympics Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/usparalympics/>)
U.S. Paralympics Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/usparalympics/>).

For more information about the United States Equestrian Federation please visit www.USEF.org

For more information about the Para-Equestrians heading to London please visit <http://www.fei.org/events/games/paralympic-games/london-2012>

To view more about the London 2012 Paralympics please visit the official Paralympic website at

<http://www.london2012.com/>

ABOUT THE EQUESTRIAN PARALYMPICS (courtesy of FEI)

Host nation Great Britain, Germany, Denmark and Canada have qualified the maximum number of riders and will each be represented by a team of four and one individual.

Nine countries - USA, The Netherlands, Brazil, Ireland, Italy, Belgium, South Africa, Australia and France - have qualified four riders.

The National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) of Singapore and Mexico, which had originally qualified four riders, returned one qualification slot each and will be represented by three-rider teams. The unused slots were re-allocated to Norway and Israel on the basis of the Individual Para-Equestrian Rankings of athletes not already qualified with a team. As a result, Norway, which had already qualified two individual riders, will be fielding a composite team consisting of three members.

New Zealand and Finland will be represented by two individual riders apiece. Bermuda, Argentina, Japan, Hong Kong and Austria have each been allocated one individual slot.

Three Bipartite Commission invitations have been issued to Thomas Haller of Austria, Lee Frawley of the Virgin Islands and Anita Johnsson of Sweden.

A total of 78 Para-Equestrian riders will be battling it out for the 11 sets of medals available.

A few photographs from August 29, 2012:



Team USA courtesy of Hope Hand



Valencia Z ridden by Petra van de Sande of the Netherlands



Maile ridden by Ashley Gowanlock of Canada



Casablanca ridden by Erika Baitenman of Mexico



National Maritime Museum in front of the equestrian arena



Natasha Baker's horse Cabralo from Great Britain

PHOTO CREDIT: All photographs taken by Lindsay Yosay McCall for the USPEA 2012 unless otherwise noted.

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 or contact USPEA President: Hope Hand by e-mail: Wheeler966@aol.com or by phone: (610)356-6481.

To view an online version of this press release please visit: <http://uspea.org/category/recent-uspea-press-news/>



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