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United States Para-Equestrian Association



For Immediate Release:

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First Day of 2012 Paralympic Equestrian Team Competition Reveals Leading Countries

London, England, United Kingdom-August 30, 2012 - In London, there is always one conversational topic that a stranger can depend on to relieve an awkward situation, the weather. On Thursday August 30th, at the 2012 Paralympic Equestrian venue in Greenwich Park, the weather transitioned from rain, to wind, on to more rain, and brisk temperatures. As the opening day of the Para-Dressage Team Test competition transpired the weather became accommodating to some riders and unpleasant to others.



Jonathan Wentz (USA) and NTEC Richter Scale

Grade II and Grade Ib performed their Team Test's over the course of the day setting the tone for the Team Medal competition. Although there are still Grade Ia, III, and IV riders to compete in Friday's Team Tests, Canada, The Netherlands, and The United States of America have already earned multiple high scores. Great Britain had two riders compete Thursday but only nine-time decorated Gold Medalist Lee Pearson was nominated as one of the four members of Team Great Britain. Pearson and horse Gentleman topped the Grade Ib competition even with a minor blunder through his test. Fellow British rider Natasha Baker also prevailed in her Grade II rivalries giving her a test she can depend on for the Individual and Freestyle competition. As a five-star Para-Equestrian competition the ground jury consists of a random combination of five of these judges, President Kjell Myhre (NOR), Lillian Iannone (ARG), Freddy Leyman (BEL), Anne Prain (FRA), Gudrun Hofinga (GER), Sarah Rodger (GBR), Carlos Lopes (POR), and Kathy Amos-Jacob (FRA) as the reserve member. Under these judges top riders include: Jonathan Wentz (USA) and NTEC Richter Scale (owned by Kai Handt); Rebecca Hart (USA) and Lord Ludger (owned by Jessica Ransehausen); Lauren Barwick (CAN) and Off to Paris; Ashley Gowanlock (CAN) and Maile; Pepo Puch (AUT) and Fine Feeling; Joann Formosa (AUS) and Worldwid PB; Katja Karjalainen (FIN) and Rosie; Britta Napel (GER) and Aquilina 3; and Barbara Minneci (BEL) and Barilla.



Rebecca Hart (USA) and Lord Ludger

The Team Test Results for Grade Ib:

1. Lee Pearson and Gentleman (GBR)----74.682%
2. Pepo Puch (Individual AUT)----73.636
3. Joann Formosa (AUS)----71.955
4. Katja Karjalainen and Rosie (individual FIN)----70.909%
5. Jonathan Wentz and NTEC Richter Scale (USA)----70.364%
6. Valerie Salles and Menzana D'Hulm (FRA)----69.500%

The Team Test Results for Grade II:

1. Natasha Baker and Cabral (individual of GBR)----76.095%
2. Britta Napel and Aquilina 3 (GER)----72.571%
3. Lauren Barwick and Off To Paris (CAN)----72.095%
4. Rebecca Hart and Lord Ludger (USA)----69.095%
5. Barbara Minneci and Barilla (BEL)----68.571%
6. Petra Van de Sande and Valencia Z----68.095%

The first United States Team member in the ring was Dale Dedrick and Bonifatius of Ann Arbor, Mich. With the amount of experience Dedrick has gained over the years showing internationally, in front of large crowds, she commented, "When you go overseas you don't think the ring is going to be the same, but it is. It is the same white fence, the same arena at your feet, and the same letters on the perimeter. This is just a horse show with a lot of people, flags, and an opening ceremony. I

like to remember that when Erik and I travel down to X." Dedrick is looking forward to another opportunity to ride for the U.S.A. in the Grade II Individual Test on Saturday.



Dale Dedrick (USA) and Bonifatius

Within an hour of Dedrick's ride Grade II Para-Equestrian Rebecca Hart (USA) of Unionville, Penn. and Lord Ludger trotted down center line. Within that hour the weather turned fickle bringing wind and rain in all types of patterns. "Let it rain," exclaimed the U.S.A. Team Captain Rebecca Hart before her Team Test. Hart enjoys the focus and muting that the rain brings for Lord Ludger and her during her execution of the test. "We prefer sunshine but he's just as happy to go in the rain. It actually kind of puts us into our own little bubble and we focus on each other more than what's going on. It gives you one more thing to block out but I look at it as an aid and it actually helped us."

Jonathan Wentz (USA) responded, "I'll take the wind Richter could care less of where he is. He could ride in a war zone or in a field and neither would affect him during a Dressage Test. You can ride him anywhere in the world, that's why he's such a great Para-Dressage horse and a great horse to have at a competition like this. You can always count on a certain level of score, it may fluctuate a little, but he always produces a ride that is similar to any ride he has given his whole career."



Jonathan Wentz and NTEC Richter Scale entering the ring with Kai Handt

Wentz earned pulled up the lead for the United States Team during his Grade 1b Team Test. "We're in a really good position," noted Wentz, " it will come down to tomorrow but the team is sitting quite nice. We earned good scores today and we'll just have to go through the tests tonight and read over the judge's comments for ways to improve. Of course there's lots of room for improvement, there always should be, that's what Dressage is all about."

Friday will bring forward the last of the four riders for the United States Para-Equestrian Team when Donna Ponessa of New Windsor, NY and Western Rose, owned by Wes Dunham, compete in Grade 1a Team Test competition.

Canadian Para-Equestrian Team Lauren Barwick and Off To Paris completed a guarded third place ride in the Team Test competition behind German rider Britta Napel, and Natasha Baker from Great Britain.

Barwick explained, "My horse has been really good with crowds and weather but the speakers were bothering her a little bit. I know how she can perform so I was proud of her when she decided to trust me and do her job. I had to be very conservative due to the new environment of the ring but I rode today for tomorrow. If I would have blown her up today and asked for too much she wouldn't have trusted me in our next test. So the good thing today was to put in a good performance, ride today for tomorrow, and tomorrow will be an even better day. I was super proud of my mare today because halts have been our biggest challenge and she nailed all three of them. I was also proud at the end, For her to let me walk out of the arena on a free walk with a long rein that moment said a lot about her and a lot about our partnership."



Lauren Barwick (CAN) and Off To Paris

Barwick continued, "I don't mind a challenge like we experienced today. We are all dealing with the same challenge and we are on the same playing field. This is where Great Britain will have an advantage because they got to do the test run in this arena."

As the day approached 4:00 PM the skies began to darken and the rain set in. The stadium began to fill up as famous British Paralympian Lee Pearson entered the ring. Pearson would complete a quality test with moments of brilliance and yet a moment of hesitation. As Pearson and horse Gentleman approached the 5 meter circle away from center line on the left rein he proceeded to track right and bauble for a moment before correcting and moving on to the next requirement. Pearson expressed, "It was not our best test in the world. I warned everyone about Gentleman's sense of humor. He warmed up perfect and he came in the arena and said, 'Eww thousands of people watching.' then he Blocked all of his energy and I had to nurse him around the arena. If the engine is working I can keep contact but when the engine dropped out I had to release the contact on Gentleman and move him forward. It is all in his head really, physically he can go fantastic, but he gets a bit cheeky sometimes when he goes in the arena, when so many people are watching. It wasn't our worst test but it wasn't our best test."



Lee Pearson (GBR) and Gentleman

Pearson continued, "I have been reading the test for days now and I got rider error. I knew we would do something stupid at the Paralympic games. When you are losing ingredients as an athlete, you are kind of over focused. Rider error I am not fool proof!"

Pearson was impressed with the amount of talented riders and horses that have come to the 2012 London Paralympics. He has also noted that he is looking forward to cheering on his competitors and teammates.

The 2012 London Paralympic Equestrian Competition continues at 9:00 a.m. Friday August 31st, with the Grade IV, III, and Ia Team Test. The final horse enters the ring at 6:15 p.m. Donna Ponessa will enter the ring at 4:33 p.m. behind Canadian Jody Schloss and Inspector Rebus.

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

Rebecca Hart, 27, of Unionville, Penn. and Jessica Ransehausen'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 Ransehausen (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 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

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.

SUMMARY:

26 nations - ARG, AUS, AUT, BEL, BER, BRA, CAN, DEN, FIN, FRA, GBR, GER, HKG, IRL, ISR, ISV, ITA, JPN, MEX, NED, NOR, NZL, RSA, SIN, SWE, USA

TEAMS

4 nations with 5 riders (team + 1 individual): CAN, DEN, GBR, GER

9 nations with 4 riders (team): AUS, BEL, BRA, FRA, IRL, ITA, NED, RSA, USA

3 nations with 3 riders (team): MEX, NOR, SIN

NATIONS REPRESENTED ONLY BY INDIVIDUALS

2 nations with 2 individuals: FIN, NZL

6 nations with 1 individual: AUT, ARG, BER, ISR, JPN, HKG

3 Bipartite Commission invitations: AUT, ISV, SWE



Rebecca Hart (USA), Lord Ludger and Missy Ranshousen



Pepo Puch (AUT) and Fine Feeling



Barbara Minneci (BEL) and Barilla



Natasha Baker (GBR) and Cabral



Natasha Baker (GBR) and Cabral



Ashley Gowanlock (CAN) and Maile



Katja Karjalainen (FIN) and Rosie



Britta Napel (GER) and Aquilina 3

PHOTO CREDIT: All photographs taken by Lindsay Yosay McCall for the USPEA 2012

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.

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