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United States Para-Equestrian Association



For Immediate Release:

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United States Para-Equestrian Team Wins Gold at 2011 CPEDI3* in Mexico City

Mexico City, Mexico - November 15, 2011 - Sitting aboard a horse with unbelievable mountain views from all angles in a brand new facility was what eighteen para-equestrians experienced at the most recent CPEDI3* event. The red carpet was rolled out for United States Para-Equestrian Team at the 2011 CPEDI3* in Mexico City, Mexico at Rancho San Juan. Eighteen Para-Equestrians competed under five stringent judges for their respective country November 10-12, 2011. The five countries represented were Mexico, United States, Venezuela, Norway, and Argentina. The United States Team included Chef d'Equipe Kai Handt, Para-Equestrian Donna Ponessa (Grade Ia), Jonathan Wentz (Grade Ib), and Dale Dedrick (Grade III) who gave flawless interpretations of their tests to take home the Team Gold for the United States.

This competition was unique because they did not ride their own mounts, each of the para-equestrians rode a horse that was graciously donated by The Mexico Para-Equestrian Team.

The United States Para-Equestrian Team rode horses donated by The Baitenmann's (Erica Baitenmann is a Mexico Para-Equestrian rider). Besides earning the Team Gold the United States Para-Equestrians excelled individually as well. Donna Ponessa of New Windsor, NY captured gold medals in Grade Ia Freestyle, Individual, and Team competition while riding Gecko, USEF 2011 Para-Equestrian Dressage National Champion Jonathan Wentz from Tyler, TX also earned three gold medals in each Grade Ib test aboard Ariello, Grade II rider, Dale Dedrick from Ann Arbor, MI earned the Silver Medal on Bruno in Mexico City rounding out a spectacular weekend for the United States.

From the moment the United States Team crossed the boarder the Mexico Team gave everyone a first-class experience. President of the United States Para-Equestrian Association Hope Hand noted, "We could not thank the Mexico team, Erica, and Reni Baitenmann more for giving our team such a fabulous experience. We understand the time and dedication it takes to put together an event like this and they went above and beyond. The food was amazing, the lodging was five star, and the shuttles provided were unexpected. From the welcome reception where all the volunteers, coaches, horse owners, and riders were recognized to the award ceremony at the end of the weekend. On behalf of the United States we would like to thank the Mexico Team for giving us great horses, a top-notch facility, and an overall supreme experience. This was the beginning of a life long relationship that will eventually lead to the Pan American Games for para-equestrians.

The 2011 Mexico City CPEDI3* was another hurdle on the road to the 2012 London Paralympics. After the holidays the team will return home to Wellington, FL where they will host two CPEDI3* competitions at the Jim Brandon Equestrian Center January 19-22 and January 26-29, 2011.

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.



Jonathan Wentz on NTEC Richter Scale (2011 USEF Para-Equestrian Dressage National Champion)



Dale Dedrick aboard Bonafatius at Saugerties, NY CPEDI3*



Donna Ponessa aboard Otto at Saugerties, NY CPEDI3*

Photo Credit: All photos taken at the 2011 NEDA Fall Festival of Dressage CPEDI 3* and the 2011 USEF Para-Equestrian Dressage National Championship held in Saugerties, NY at the HITS On The Hudson show grounds. Photo©2011 Lindsay Y McCall for the United States Para-Equestrian Association (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).

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