

Written by CRM

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Medal Finals are successful & Geoff Teall set for annual clinic, held concurrent with TCP session, Nov. 30-Dec. 3.

Fall in Northern California is often a fleeting season, typically lasting only a few weeks before the heavy rains and brisk temperatures settle in the region. This past October, the terrible Wine County fires added to the normal unpredictability of the month weather-wise, but they were far enough away from the Sacramento area for the NorCal Hunter Jumper Association Medal Finals Show to be held under sunny skies Oct. 11-15, at Brookside Equestrian Park in Elk Grove.



The show held four medal finals in total: NorCal Junior, NorCal Senior, NorCal Pony and the NorCal Nancy Patton 3-foot. All riders competed in two over fences rounds, with a select number of riders returning for final work-off. Kaitlin Perry, champion of the NorCal Senior Medal, won the first round of the final, only to her own mother, Kassy Perry, in round two. Following a successful collegiate career with the Texas Christian University Equestrian Team, Kaitlin moved back to Sacramento, where she and her mother often find themselves competing against each other. Both Kaitlin and Kassy ride in train with Kelly Van Vleck at the nearby Murieta Equestrian Center.

Another Sacramento-area trainer who enjoyed great success at the show is Patty Ball, owner and operator of the Penryn-based, Hunterville. Patty's student Sophia Sanders earned Champion honors in the NorCal Junior Final, besting the field of 19 riders. Sanders, who held a consistent lead through all phases of the Junior Final, found herself in a work-off with fellow

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Hunterville rider Taylor Wohler, who ended up third in the Junior Final. Both Sanders and Wohler were two of four total Hunterville riders who earned top 10 Medal Finals placings at the show.



With 30 entries, the NorCal Nancy Patton 3-Foot Medal Final was the best-attended final of the week. Open to both junior and amateur riders, 2017 marked the first year where the final was re-named to honor the late Nancy Patton, a legendary Northern California trainer who passed away in 2016. Junior rider Ava Lakey finished 4th in the first round of the Final, going on to win the second round, and ultimately the entire final. Lakey rides and trains with Denize Borges, out of Livermore.



Often, the competitors at the NorCal Medal Finals have worked for many months, if not years, to qualify and ride in the Finals. Winning one of the Finals is a common goal for many Northern California equestrians, including 12 year old Emilie Bell. Bell, who has won a handful of Northern California pony medal finals, considered the NorCal Pony Medal Final to be her final goal as a pony jockey. With past NorCal Finals resulting in disappointment, Emilie had come to know the show as cursed with bad luck. This year Bell, who rides and trains with Jan and Emma Hainze, turned the page and rose above the curse, capturing Champion honors in the NorCal Pony Medal Final.

With the show season coming to a close, most riders are gearing up to rest in the coming months and prepare for the upcoming 2018 season. The NorCal Hunter Jumper Association will be hosting its annual clinic Nov. 30-Dec. 3 at Leone Equestrians in Sacramento. This year's clinician Goeff Teall is a USEF "R" judge with over 40 years of experience training champions in the sport. The clinic, which is free to audit, will also feature a USHJA Trainer Certification

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Program for professionals looking to renew or certify for the first time.

Thank you to NorCal's Lauren Wasserman for this report. For more information regarding the NorCal clinic, see the NorCal website: www.norcalhunterjumpers.com.