

Written by by Kim F. Miller
Thursday, 31 August 2017 22:38

Kaitlyn Lovingfoss & Vancouver, Nina Vogel & Durango take top honors in CPHA Junior & Amateur Medal Finals

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The California Professional Horsemen's Association Junior and Amateur Hunt Seat Medal Finals, Aug. 18-19, launched the medal final season that culminates a year of hard work toward goals often set in January. If the quality of competition seen in the Blenheim Farms indoor arena, provided by ACE Equestrian, is an indicator, we are in for top-notch showdowns in both age groups.



On the junior card, Kaitlyn Lovingfoss topped a field of 52 to win on Elvenstar's Vancouver with a total score over the three rounds of 782. Her meticulous rides over each track set her apart from the rest of the competition, finishing a solid seven points ahead of second place rider Brooke Morin.

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Lovingfoss expressed her gratitude for the ability to ride Vancouver, a horse who has posed in pictures for many medal finals in his past. "He has a lot of wins under his belt, so it was an honor to ride him in this class."

When speaking about her strategy over the three rounds, Lovingfoss said, "In the first round I was just looking for a solid go. I didn't do anything crazy I just took the tracks I had planned." Which earned her a 252, an average score of 84, sitting a respectable fourth going into round two.

"The second round, I took almost all of the inside turns and got a little more fancy." This effort was dutifully noted by the judges, as her average of 87.3 and overall score of 263 moved her into second place before entering the third round.

Lovingfoss continued, "And then the third round I went in like I wanted to win. I just went for it and took all of the turns and tried to make it happen." Her efforts paid off as she came out victorious with a round total of 267, scoring 89s from all three judges.

Thirteen-year-old Brooke Morin is relatively new to the "Big Eq" classes, but she entered the third round in the lead with a score of 519.50, aboard Boss. Morin's consistency procured her the second place finish and an overall total of 775.

Boss was purchased as a jumper, but a chance entry into a medal class earlier this year showed Morin and her trainer Nick Haness what a terrific equitation mount he could be. So naturally, Morin loved when the courses had tight, jumpery turns. The young rider appears to have a bright future in the equitation arena.

As the 2017 CPHA Junior Medal Final Champion, Lovingfoss received a medal and a beautiful bouquet of flowers, while Vancouver was dressed in a championship ribbon, sash and a wool cooler sponsored by Damoor's Feed & Tack. Lovingfoss also won an Antares helmet, a leather halter from Valencia Saddlery, as well as CPHA collectibles, including a silver and jeweled belt buckle, a jacket, and a stall plaque. Along with taking home a pewter tray, her name will go on the perpetual trophy sponsored by Far West Farms.

Vogel & Durango

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As a junior rider, Nina Vogel was no stranger to the CPHA Medal Finals awards area with several top finishes. And as the recipient of CPHA's 2016 Sportsmanship Award, Vogel made her first year as an amateur count. Competing in her second-to-last competition before heading off to college at Dartmouth, Vogel wrapped up a well-earned win.



Vogel and Durango began working as a team in early July and the two immediately formed a successful bond. She recognized the special role the horse's owner, Pam Stewart, played in their victory. "I am so grateful for the opportunity she has given me to ride him. She's so supportive and has so much confidence in us, it makes competing really fun."

Working with Durango Farm trainers David Bustillos, Katie Taylor, Allison LaJoie, and Lauren Dendiu, Vogel mastered the class with a three-round total of 760.5, 5.5 points higher than the second place finisher, Shannon Davidson.

"I thought (course designer) Scott Starnes did a great job all three rounds. There were some interesting jumps in the ring. A lot of bending lines, which required consistency in the first and second rounds. The third round introduced a few more tighter turns," Vogel reflected.



Second-place finisher Shannon Davidson picked up the 36 & over honors last year with her overall fifth place. She and Clifford returned prepared for the challenges of medal final competition. "This was our big goal this year," said Shannon, a fashion event producer by day

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and student of Cassie Frost in San Juan Capistrano.

“Cassie is all about track,” Shannon said, and she was able to stick to hers with Clifford over all three rounds. “We’ve done lots of slow, flat work to make him adjustable and elastic. These were really fun courses with him. There were chances to open up down the lines, then bring him back.” Hunter Derbies and Mini-Prix events throughout the year also went into his preparation. “This was a great chance to apply all that we’ve been working on. When I walked the course, I really felt that I’d be able to ride every step of what the track asked for.”

As the 36 & over high scoring amateur again this year, Davidson was also awarded a special cooler, ribbon, and a silver necklace.

Similarly to Lovingfoss, as the 2017 CPHA Junior Medal Final Champion, Vogel received the medal, a pewter tray, a stall plaque, and a beautiful bouquet of flowers, while Durango donned a championship ribbon, sash and a wool cooler sponsored by Damoor’s Tack & Feed. Along with taking home the goodies, her name will also go on the perpetual trophy, sponsored by DiAnn Langer.

Those prizes were part of a sparkling display of bounty organized by CPHA Awards Coordinator Paul Bennett. Per tradition, the top three riders in each division received silver and jeweled buckles, leather halters from Valencia Saddlery, CPHA embroidered jackets. Riders finishing from fourth to 10th place in each division also went home with prizes, including CPHA jackets, coolers, beautiful ribbons, and bouquets of flowers.

Great Turn-Out

Judged by Bill Ellis, Linda Allen, and Bob Crandall, round one on Friday and round two on Saturday afternoon combined to determine the top 10 scoring juniors and amateurs, who returned to compete for the top prize on Saturday evening. The turnout of 52 juniors was on pace with recent years, but the 17 amateur entries is a high mark, This is one of the few 3’6” amateur medals and CPHA’s Paul Bennett acknowledged that there has been some pressure to lower it to 3’3”. The organization has stood firm and this year’s good turnout validates that position.

September 2017 - The Gallop: CPHA Finals Kick Off Medal Season

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Assessing the field during the warm-up round on Thursday, course designer Scott Starnes saw plenty of talented horses and riders. The first round, on Friday evening, was judged on equitation over hunter-type fences and featured several bending lines over mostly solid jumps with ground lines. By Saturday afternoon's second round, the bending lines reappeared, but only two of those hunter jumps remained, replaced with airy obstacles, fewer ground lines and an in-and-out without wings. Starnes provided ample opportunities to pick unique tracks - tight inside turns or sweeping approaches around other obstacles - to show off the horses' adjustability. "I think the courses were difficult, but fair," he said. Saturday's third round was an advanced equitation-type track. It presented more chances to ride off the eye, and the importance of sticking to track that was evident in the first two rounds was critical in the third.

After galloping the first three single obstacles, the middle serpentine of three fences had a jump-off feel, allowing riders to show off sharp angles and efficient tracks. The last fence, an airy pedestal topped with lightweight blocks, was a test of precision.

The sold-out VIP area, benefiting the CPHA Foundation, gave fans the chance to enjoy top-notch competition and a catered dinner. Grateful acknowledgement was given to the Wasserman Foundation for their support of the CPHA fundraising efforts and to the CPHA Medal Finals sponsors: CWD, Four Oaks Farm, Archie Cox and Brookway Stables, Valencia Saddlery, Blenheim EquiSports, DaMoor's Tack & Feed, and Antares.

Edited from press release provided by Blenheim EquiSports.

The Gallop welcomes news, tips and photos. Contact Kim F. Miller at kimfmiller1@mac.com or 949-644-2165.

CPHA Junior Hunt Seat Medal Final

Place - Entry Number - Rider - Horse - Trainer - Total

1. 428 - Kaitlyn Lovingfoss - Vancouver - Elvenstar - 782
2. 129 - Brooke Morin - Boss - Nick Hanes - 775
3. 138 - Gabriella Cinquini - Trust De Circee - John Bragg - 768
4. 355 - Payton Potter - Pacord - Leslie Steele - 762
5. 324 - Lanie Walkenbach - Citadel - Gretchen Lof - 750.5
6. 405 - Emily Maclean - Let's Go - Elvenstar - 736
7. 134 - Kate Abajian - Lambada - John Bragg - 733
8. 126 - Libby King - Quentino - Lori DeRosa & Lindsay Ransom - 723.5
9. 366 - Breanna Bunevacz - Acortair - Robin Stiegler, 653.5
10. 112 - Tyler Francis - Portofino - David Bustillos - 606

CPHA Junior Hunt Seat Medal Final

Place - Entry Number - Rider - Horse - Trainer - Total

1. 108 - Nina Vogel - Durango - Durango Farms - 760.5
2. 550 - Shannon Davidson - Clifford - Cassie Frost - 751
3. 146 - Renee Rodda - Notable - Rainbow Canyon - 496
4. 272 - Jamie Krupnick - Conux - Brookway Stables - 739
5. 159 - Jessica Smith - Freedom - Nicole Husky - 736.5
6. 323 - Blake Lindsley - Diorado VDL - Far West Farms - 736
7. 455 - Lauren Morlock - Mighty Quen - Rainbow Canyon - 672
8. 158 - Emily Hartley - Peleus - Kristy Miller - 645
9. 172 - Holli Kolkey - Mr. Worldwide - Liz Hutchison - 629
10. 482 - Lindsey Schiefelbein - Con Paulo - Michael Croopnick - 527