

Written by by Kim F Miller  
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Mid-50s temperatures, wind, a little rain and new arenas for dressage gave an early season opportunity to test equine energy management and focus during Galway Downs International dressage and show jumping today.

At the CCI4\*-S, Erin Kellerhouse and Woodford Reserve had just the right balance of rarin'-to-go and relaxation. A quarter-point show jumping time penalty during the day's ending light rain put them on a 30.1 to lead the field of 12 pairs.

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"That was one of the best tests we've had," said Erin. "He is definitely getting stronger and happy with the work, and I am learning the little things I need to do to keep him that way. He wants to try so hard, sometimes he gets away from me. And there's still a lot to improve on, which is exciting."

The weather and new dressage court didn't faze "Woody." One of many things Erin has learned in her six years with the 10-year-old Irish Sport Horse is that "too much dressage is too much confinement on show day." Instead, she gave him an early morning gallop in her jumping saddle. "I let him be free." The knowledge is a luxury of their longtime partnership. Erin has always brought young horses along to the lower FEI levels, but Woody is the first horse she's had a chance to get to know and learn with through to their first CCI4\*-L, accomplished very successfully here last fall.



Marc Donovan's show jumping track offered another opportunity to advance their learning curve. With time faults often an issue, Erin "made myself take every inside turn." Though they had a niggling .4 fault, Woody's habitually clean jumping habits got even better. "I think it kept him on his toes. He was jumping out of his skin!"

It's hard to imagine tomorrow's cross-country -- though challenging -- will throw them anything

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they can't handle, but Erin isn't taking anything about Clayton Fredericks' design for granted.

Helen Alliston and Ebay are close behind. The elegant pair earned a 30.7 from dressage judges Peter Gray and Helen Brettel to stand second. They held that position after going fault free in the Grand Prix arena except for .8 time faults for a 31.5. In retrospect, Helen said she wished she'd taken some inside options, but the plan of going fast on the outside lanes still led to a clear jumping effort. "He felt great," she said of her 12-year-old Oldenburg. "I'm excited for tomorrow."

Emilee Libby was thrilled with the 12-year-old Belgian Warmblood Jakobi's day. Show jumping in a snaffle bit was especially exciting, and with the sense that "I could ride him more forward and still trust that he would come back." Their 33.7 dressage performance stayed as is thanks to double clear show jumping, moving them from 4th to 3rd going into cross-country.

Erin and Helen gave their thumbs-up to the new dressage courts, outfitted with all-weather footing and located where a grass jumping ring and grazing area was in the recent past. "It's less buzzy," noted Erin of the atmosphere compared to the Grand Prix Arena where international dressage had been held previously. Set amid trees and a short walk from the jumping rings, the arena setting was appreciated by both riders for its calming vibe and especially so on an otherwise animated morning, weather-wise.

Exhibitors on breaks loved the Grand Prix Arena, which has a literally brand new permanent VIP pavilion with a lovely seating and viewing area.

### **Young Riders Rule 3\* Roost**

Between a horse injury and a human injury, 18-year-old Haley Turner and her 11-year-old Irish Sport Horse, Shadow Inspector, had half their first four years together stymied. COVID waylaid show results for much of their third, but a strong second half to 2020 is rolling into a stellar 2021. Double clear jumping kept them ahead of the 13-pair pack on a 27.1 dressage score for this pleasing-to-watch pair.

Downtime for the East Bay Area team was well spent. They are students of Bea and Derek DiGrazia's Stillwater Farm, and work additionally with dressage coach Volker Brommann and jumping coach Alexis Hellfrich. "It's all a big help and keeps us in consistent work even when we can't get over to Bea and Derek in Carmel," Haley explained.

The normally laid-back "Chief" showed extra energy this morning in dressage, perhaps due to the frisky weather. More likely, "I think he knows when he's doing well!" The extra amperage continued in the Grand Prix ring and Haley harnessed it for a double clear effort to maintain their lead. Haley is 18 and in the midst of a gap year after graduating high school early.

Fellow young rider Alina Patterson moved into second after a flawless stadium round held her 29.3 dressage test in front of Peter Gray and Michelle Henry.

Professional Sabrina Glaser is thrilled with the effort so far of Cooley Mr. Murphy, who's new at

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the level. They had one rail and no time issues to stand on a 33.2.

### Can Be Sweet in the 2\*

Lauren Billys and her 9-year-old German Sporthorse Can Be Sweet got their groove back today. Their 25.8 dressage test in front of Helen Bretell and Carolyn Lindhom ranks high in their history. "It was one of his best," said Lauren, who also has her 2016 and 2021 Olympic partner Castle Larchfield Purdy in the 4\* division. "He (Can Be Sweet) was very uphill and showed what his movements can be. It felt like a very harmonious test."

Time-faults-only show jumping was a reassuring round after a disappointing outing in the 2\*-L last fall. "I was a little nervous to come in and rewrite history, but he is back on his form." She expects cross-country to be challenging with an appropriate mix of galloping stretches and spots where a carefully measured approach will be critical.

Miranda Olagaray and the 8-year-old Trakehner Tangueray's double clear jumping bounced them from the #7 spot to #2, on their 34.7 dressage score. They are followed by fellow clear jumpers Madison Temkin and MVP Madbum.

### Schedule & Sponsors

The international divisions conclude Friday, March 26. The CCI4\*-S begins at 1 p.m.; the 3\* at 2:10 pm, Open Intermediate at 3:10, then 2\* at 4:10 pm, all Pacific Standard Time. All will be live-streamed on [www.RideOnVideo.com](http://www.RideOnVideo.com). Competition through Beginner Novice starts Friday and continues through Sunday.

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