

RESULTS

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Pony and Adult Amateur Hunters Shine During the Bainbridge AHJF/WCHR Hunter Week at the 2010 FTI Winter Equestrian Festival

For
Clara Lindner for Equestrian Sport Productions

Immediate

Release

Wellington, FL- February 21, 2010- The Bainbridge AHJF/WCHR Hunter Spectacular Week concluded today with Pony and Adult Amateur Hunter classics. The classics took place in the E.R. Mische Hunter Field and the Rost Arena.

The Peggy Cone Memorial Adult Amateur Hunter Classic took action in the E.R. Mische Hunter Field this afternoon. The top 30 scores from the first over fences round in the three different Adult Amateur Hunter age groups advanced to the second round of the classic.

Sandra Epstein rode Taylor Sutton's Little Blue Box to victory this afternoon in the Peggy Cone Memorial Adult Amateur Hunter Classic. The duo had a combined score of 174 for the win over Jeanne Fogel, who rode Avery Waite's Game Point to the second place, and Sarah Sturges aboard Melissa Ott's Nicole, who received the third place honors.

This was only Epstein's second weekend in the show ring aboard Little Blue Box, and the pair earned scores of 84 and a 90 to secure the win today. "I've only gotten a 90 one other time, so it was very exciting to get that 90," said an elated Epstein.

Epstein is undefeated with Little Blue Box so far, and took the Camping World Adult Amateur Hunter 51 & Over Championship last week, as well as being awarded the co-grand championship today.

"After the first round I felt I did well, but the first fence was a little quiet. My plan (in the second round) was to pick up a nice canter and hunt down to the first jump, keep it even, keep the pace, and let her do her job, which she does swell," Epstein noted of her performance today.

Epstein was thrilled with her mount, and was very thankful for the ride on the nine-year-old mare this weekend. "She is very straightforward. I just keep steering her straight and make sure she's straight for her lead changes, and then she's right there. She's an amazing mare to ride," Epstein explained.

The World Championship Hunter Rider week at the FTI WEF is one of the most prestigious hunter competitions in the country. "WCHR week is special because everybody tries to bring their best horses, and they all come. There are more horses, more riders, and the competition is fierce. The prizes are very good, and it's just special that way," Epstein acknowledged.



Sandra Epstein and Little Blue Box

The Peggy Cone Memorial Adult Amateur Hunter Classic is in memory of equestrian Carol Cone's, late sister, Peggy. Epstein said of her classic win, "It's very special because I'm friends with Carol Cone, and (this class) is dedicated to her sister. It's a very special class. There are a lot of people that ride in it, and a lot of people who would like to be on top, so I feel very fortunate to be there."

Little Blue Box is trained by Ken and Emily Smith at Ashland Farm, and when Epstein rides him she is assisted by her trainer, Lyman T. Whitehead. Epstein complimented Little Blue Box, and said "I'd like to thank that horse for being so good today. She's really an awesome ride, she's a lot of fun."

The Large Pony Hunter Classic started the day out in the Rost Arena, and Allison Toffolon rode Graciela Colston's Chakko to the blue ribbon honors. Only half a point separated the first and second place finishers in the Large Pony Hunter Classic. The winning pair had a two-round combined score of 171.5 for victory over Martha Ingram and Casey Hodges' Simply Henry, who had a two-round combined score of 171, and placed second.



Allison Toffolon and Chakko

Next up in the Rost Arena was the Medium Pony Hunter Classic where Meredith Darst scored the win aboard Northwinds Indian Summer, owned by Riverview Farm LLC. This weekend was Darst's first time showing the 10-year-old mare, and the pair clicked right away earning scores of 88 and 90 in the classic, for a combined score of 178. "I rode her once before a long time ago, but I never showed her before this," Darst explained.

"She has a pretty big stride, so you can get up the lines. She's really fun and she's easy," noted 12-year-old Darst after her win. Finishing second in the Medium Pony Hunter Classic was Alish Cunniffe with Frank Cunniffe's Major League, with a combined score of 172.

The Small Pony Hunter Classic finished the day in the Rost Arena, and Parker Wright took home the blue ribbon with Hillcrest Blue Halo, owned by Bill Schaub. Wright and Hillcrest Blue Halo earned impressive scores of 87 and 88, for a combined score of 175. The red ribbon went home with Kirklen Petersen and Jed Cogan's pony, Blue Crush. Third place honors were awarded to Daisy Farrish and Ballou, owned by Victoria Colvin.