

Smith's First Freestyle Wins At Dressage At High Prairie

Kathryn King Johnson

Adult amateur Lauren Smith rode her very first freestyle at Dressage at High Prairie. And she made it count, as she and Lamiro rocked the house and won the FEI Freestyle with a 68.00 percent.

They danced to an Intermediaire I medley of Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, and Queen tunes. Dressage at High Prairie I, II and II took place June 2-4 at the Colorado Horse Park in Parker, Colo.

"It was the best ride of my life," said Smith of Littleton, Colo. "I almost cried in the first canter half pass. It was a very special ride. Right in the middle of it, I thought to myself that this is what it is all about."

Smith has owned the 13-year-old, bay Dutch gelding Lamiro for six years. Smith rode in Pony Club as a child and started dressage with Sue Halasz. Then life intervened and she quit riding for 15 years. When she was ready to start up again, Halasz was still teaching. They reconnected and found Lamiro in Holland—he's Smith's first dressage horse.

"He is so sensitive. He used to be very suspicious and would go to the corner of his stall and quiver if a stranger came up. He's much friendlier now but still is suspicious of men in hats for some reason," Smith said.

"Lamiro has the best work ethic. He will go and go and try and try. He never says no. Although he is a bit of a worrier, he accepts my mistakes and is very patient. I love that about him."

Smith had some initial doubts about her music, as her ragtime version of the rock classics is not as emotionally powerful as some of the other freestyles. "But," she said, "Lamiro is a smaller horse and we didn't want the music overpowering the horse. I listened to my coach, Sue Halasz, who told me to ride, to go with the music, and not to get hung up on whether or not I love the music."

Halasz's strategy paid off. Smith and Lamiro not only won the class, but Smith also said, "I had so much fun. Riding my first freestyle opened up a new world for me. The music fits him. Now I love it!"

Both Smith and trainer Halasz were FEI champions on Sunday. Smith won the FEI Junior/Amateur high score with a 69.75 percent at Intermediaire I on Lamiro. Halasz was FEI Open High Score champion with a 71.00 percent at Prix St. Georges on the Dutch gelding Paradiso B, owned by Chardell Steves.

Doing Double Duty

Andria Allen of Longmont, Colo., another adult amateur, was lower level high score amateur champion on Friday and reserve champion amateur high score on Saturday. She scored a 71.48 percent riding her 6-year-old Oldenburg gelding Confabulate winning first level, test 1 on Friday. On Saturday, Allen won a very competitive first level, test 4 with a score of 66.66 percent.

Allen has owned this talented young horse for two years. "Last year he qualified for both [Rocky Mountain Dressage Association] and the [U.S. Dressage Federation] dressage championships, in our first year showing dressage. We couldn't go. Instead, we went to the American Eventing Championships in North Carolina." At the AEC, they finished second in open novice division.

In horse trials, Allen usually wins on her dressage scores. "I score just about as well at traditional dressage shows as at events. I will

say that if you want to be competitive at the bigger events, you better be competitive at dressage shows," she said.

Allen's balanced approach helps both her and her horse keep a good attitude. "Yesterday I thought I gave my canter lengthening a good go. The judge gave it a 6 and wrote 'modest.' So, today I gave it everything. The judge gave it a 6 and wrote 'hurried.' There must be a middle ground," she laughed.

Allen has trained with dressage instructors Glenda Needles and Dolly Hannon. She credits them with her success. Her favorite sport used to be cross-country, but with good coaching, she said, "It is now dressage. I'm having a blast."

She also attributes her success to the terrific disposition of her red gelding. "Milo's a lover. If I hadn't nicknamed him Milo, I would call him Clifford because he's just a big, red dog. He tries so hard. He's a perfectionist." This year her goal is not only to qualify for the RMDS/USDF dressage championships, but to attend and to try to win.

She Can Do It All

Another rider who firmly believes in cross training is Jane Sikes Clark. On Saturday, Clark won open third level, test 2 with a 64.04 percent. She rode the 12-year-old bay Bavarian mare, Regina, co-owned with her partner Thomas Atkins. They were also



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(Equine Events Photos)

reserve champion upper level high score. Clark is a Grand Prix rider and trainer at Freedom Farm in Elizabeth, Colo. She has studied under Uwe Steiner and Gretchen Verbonic, among others. "I want to see how far this horse can go," Clark said. She began riding the mare 2½ years ago, starting at training level, then skipped a year, schooling second level at home, but not showing again until they came out at third level this year.

Regina was an ex-jumper before Clark started working with her. They are planning to compete at their first horse trials this spring since Regina has discovered a flair for cross-country. Regina's relaxed Rocher-like ears "help her listen very well," according to Clark.

Junior rider Shannon Fox of Arvada, Colo., had a show of highs and lows with her flashy chestnut Hanoverian gelding VA Grand Rouge Escobar.

On Saturday morning, Fox won second level, test 1 with a 68.94 percent. Then, Escobar colicked. It turned out to be a mild colic, probably heat related. "Fortunately," Fox said, "he was coming out of it before the vet arrived." Escobar recovered easily before his afternoon class, second level, test 4, which he won with a 65.49 percent.

Fox has owned the gelding three years, and he only had six months of training when she bought him. "Escobar has a sweet personality. He wants to win when he goes in the show ring," Fox said. They train with Sheri Mattei-Mead.

Two other juniors battling it out at second level were Mary Sage Hanner with Spencer and Nicholas Sigler with Royal Diamant. Hanner and her 15-year-old bay schoolmaster train with Sarah and Clayton Martin in Lafayette, Colo.

She showed Spencer at training level last year, but skipped first level to come out at second level this season. Hanner won the second level, test 1 junior/young rider test on Friday with a 58.95% and second level, test 2 on Saturday with a 62.97%.

Nicholas Sigler from Evergreen, Colo., was pleased with his rides on his grey gelding Royal Diamant, an Oldenburg, in his second show at second level. He won the junior/young rider second level, test 1 on Sunday. Royal



Riding her very first freestyle, Lauren Smith topped the FEI Freestyle TOC with her Lamiro at Dressage at High Prairie.

Diamant was imported three years ago from Germany, and Sigler started showing him then at training level. "I like everything about this horse," Sigler said.

PARKER, CO—JUNE 2-4.

JUDGES: Nancy Benton, Janet Curtis, Barbara Ebner.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE FEL, FRI, CH: Billy Bell, Kristi Wysocki.

RES: Titan, Trisha Ford.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR/JR./YOUNG RIDER FEL, FRI, CH: Que Cir Que, Vanessa Simon.

RES: Phoenix, Tyler Haney.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE UPPER LEVEL, FRI, CH: Superman, Grant Schneidman.

RES: Fabrizio, Virginia Carr.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR UPPER LEVEL, FRI, CH: Romeo, Alexandra Curnette.

RES: Amigo H2, Vance Diggins.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE LOWER LEVEL, FRI, CH: Gallahan, Patty Thurman.

RES: B Titans Image, Trisha Ford.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR LOWER LEVEL, FRI, CH: Confabulate, Andria Allen.

RES: Sonoma Liberty, Michelle Long.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE JR./YOUNG RIDER LOWER LEVEL, FRI, CH: Wild Magic LHF, Brooke DeVore.

RES: Orwood Maddison Bay, Victoria Femalid.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE FEL, SAT, CH: Paradiso B, Sue Halasz.

RES: Titan, Trisha Ford.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR/JR./YOUNG RIDER FEL, SAT, CH: Que Cir Que, Vanessa Simon.

RES: Phoenix, Tyler Haney.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE UPPER LEVEL, SAT, CH: Superman, Grant Schneidman.

RES: Regina, Jane Sikes Clark.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR UPPER LEVEL, SAT, CH: Amigo H2, Vance Diggins.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE JR./YOUNG RIDER UPPER LEVEL, SAT, CH: Vitet, Anastasia Ross McKimmon.

RES: Romeo, Alexandra Curnette.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE LOWER LEVEL, SAT, CH: Serious Hit, Glenda Needles.

RES: B Titans Image, Trisha Ford.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR LOWER LEVEL, SAT, CH: Maude RF, Julie Hesse.

RES: Confabulate, Andria Allen.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE JR./YOUNG RIDER LOWER LEVEL, SAT, CH: Wild Magic LHF, Brooke DeVore.

RES: Va Grand Rouge Esco, Shannon Fox.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE FEL, SUN, CH: Paradiso B, Susan Halasz.

RES: Felke, Patty Thurman.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR/JR./YOUNG RIDER FEL, SUN, CH: Lamiro, Lauren Smith.

RES: Rubin's Posse Partou, Jamie Clark.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE UPPER LEVEL, SUN, CH: Polaris, Jennifer Diamon.

RES: Sam, Margo Gogan.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR UPPER LEVEL, SUN, CH: Romeo, Alexandra Curnette.

RES: Munesicht's Compassion, Camille Griffin.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE LOWER LEVEL, SUN, CH: Gallahan, Patty Thurman.

RES: Golden Escapade, Elaine Marion.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE ADULT AMATEUR LOWER LEVEL, SUN, CH: Taittinger, Bonnie Garin.

RES: Sublina, Kathryn Hobbs.

HIGH-PERCENTAGE JR./YOUNG RIDER LOWER LEVEL, SUN, CH: Mejicano XXXV, Greta Barringer-Richers.

RES: Wild Magic, Brooke DeVore.

▲ **FEI Y.R. Team Test - 1:** Que Cir Que, 67.03%; 2. Phoenix, 64.29; 3. AM Tawny Gypsy Mont, A. Morris, 62.44. ▲ **FEI Y.R. PSG Freestyle - 1:** Phoenix, 62.00; 2. AM Tawny Gypsy Mont, 60.12; 3. Cristofori, L. Grindle, 58.25. ▲ **FEI Y.R. PSG - 1:** Verden, M. Gregg, 62.25; 2. St. James, A. Sletta, 59.75; 3. AM Tawny Gypsy Mont, 59.50. ▲ **FEI Jr. Team Test - 1:** Rusticus, D. White.

Andria Allen and Confabulate are also successful at eventing, but at Dressage at High Prairie they earned the lower level amateur high-score award.