

International Young Rider Activities in 2006

Here is report on the FEI Young Rider World Cup Dressage and a short summary of other Young Rider adventures this year. Prepared by Siobhan Laphorne, EFA National Office.

FEI Young Rider World Cup Dressage

The EFA received the FEI YR World Cup qualifying procedures well after the EFA's Calendar dates were submitted. It is difficult to arrange new FEI events, or add to the burden of existing FEI events at such late notice. The EFA instead nominated two qualifying events for this year – the first was the EFA National Young Rider Championships in Sydney in July. Riders who gained a qualifying score in the freestyle at this event were invited to contest the second qualifier at the National Dressage Championships. The outcome was that one rider gained the qualifying scores and the owners of her horse do not wish to send the horse overseas.

At present, the Young Riders here in Australia are not generally mounted on internationally-competitive FEI dressage horses – a situation that is likely to improve as the new YR World Cup gains more coverage and recognition here in Australia. The EFA is awaiting a response from the FEI and the Organiser of the Final as to whether our representative will be able to attend the show without her horse, as this alone will be tremendous experience for her.

The EFA has submitted three CDI-Y dates for the 2007 FEI Calendar – at Melbourne CDI-W (April), Sydney CDI 3-Star (May) and Toowoomba CDI-W (May). Australian Young Riders will therefore have three opportunities to achieve their two qualifying scores in 2007. Riders and their coaches aiming for this new international opportunity will need to prepare their horses and owners well in advance for the health, welfare and logistical issues they will face if they become Australia's World Cup Final representative.

Other Young EFA Members have achieved success and have been selected for international competition experiences this year. Many International Young Rider Events are conducted with borrowed horses or as a Derby. This makes international competition more affordable and gives young riders valuable experience of the procedures involved in international team competitions as they aim for senior competition.

FEI Children's Jumping – Spruce Meadows

The FEI Development Department runs an annual Children's competition in which countries from around the world participate. The FEI designs a jumping course and specifies exact dimensions and appearance of each jump. Each qualifying competition around the world is required to build the course to the exact direction of the FEI. Competitive equality is created by having all riders competing over a course that is identically built in each country. Each country's results are then submitted to the FEI and tallied with the results from the rest of the world. From the final worldwide results sixteen riders qualify for the FEI Children's Jumping final which is held on borrowed horses.

Olivia Hicks was the winner of the Australian qualifying competition and has qualified for the Final. Olivia received an FEI-funded trip to the final held at Spruce Meadows, Canada. The Host Country Canada was permitted to enter 16 riders, and a further 16 riders were entered from the rest of the participating nations. Olivia made it to the final round of 16 riders, and finished 14th. Well done Olivia.

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Dressage Young Rider Derby in New Zealand

The Australian Team consisting of Vanessa Midwinter (NSW) and Victoria Welch (Qld.) won by 1.2 points. The riders were supported by ICDF funding. New Zealand riders Sara Cunningham and Amanda Goldsbury provided some tough competition to make it an exciting event. The riders drew their horses in the first round then swapped horses with the other team; this helps to even out any advantage gained by drawing an easy horse. In the end the contest becomes who was able to get the best out of each horse on the day. The New Zealanders are keen for a rematch soon.

The team would like to thank Dressage New Zealand, the owners of the four lovely horses that were provided for the derby and Glennis Barrey for providing a terrific tune-up.

International Showman – South Africa

In a hard-fought competition, Australia's team went very well and placed third at the International Showman of the Year competition in South Africa

Katherine Climas (Vic), Amy Maskell (Qld), Adam Linardi (Tas), and Jessica Stalling (NSW) won the right to represent Australia at the inaugural EFA Australian Showman of the Year in September. The team traveled to South Africa in early November to compete against South Africa, England and New Zealand. Australia did very well in the in-hand presentation and dominated the field with all four of our riders placing in the top seven. In the dressage test the riders and horses put up a good show. The working hunter phase was a different experience as these classes are not common in Australia. All riders got their mounts around the course on unfamiliar horses. The last phase was the ridden show workout and Australia proved very strong in this area, with Jessica and Amy placing in the top four riders and Australia winning this phase.

Overall, Australia placed third with England taking out the title for the second year in a row. Individually all of our riders did extremely well with the unfamiliar horses. Katherine and Amy placed in the top ten in every phase and Jessica topped the in-hand and ridden workout phases.

International Young Rider Jumping in India

Tim Bowman, 19 (Qld); Brad Hearn, 17 (Vic); and Hayden Kneebone 19, (Vic) have been selected to represent Australia next month at the International Jumping Competition for Young Riders in Bangalore, India. The Embassy International Riding School in Bangalore will host the event. All competitors will compete on borrowed horses. We wish the riders the best of luck and hope they have an enjoyable and successful trip.