

United States Para-Equestrian Association

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Para-Dressage Receives Overwhelming Response at 2017 LONGINES FEI World Cup Jumping & FEI Dressage Finals

United States athletes Annie Peavy and Katie Jackson demonstrate Paralympic Dressage Sport for the masses.

Omaha, Nebraska - April 11, 2017 - Strategically placed following German Dressage Olympian and record medal winner, Isabell Werth, Para-Dressage received its moment in the limelight at the 2017 LONGINES FEI World Cup Jumping & FEI Dressage Finals. World Equestrian Games' and Paralympian Annie Peavy, along with Para-Dressage rider Katie Jackson, gave the Omaha crowd a look at the competitive international sport of Para-Dressage. Spectators erupted in a roar watching each athlete demonstrate the difficult movements from their FEI Para-Dressage Grade Tests. Although Para-Dressage has received more acceptance in the United States it is still a discipline that is unfamiliar to the masses. The 2017 LONGINES FEI World Cup Jumping & FEI Dressage Finals were held March 27-April 2, 2017, at the CenturyLink Center Omaha. The demonstration classes were an opportunity to showcase the beauty and agility of the equine athlete.

"It was brilliant," stated Paralympian and United States Para-Equestrian Association President, Hope Hand. "Para-Dressage was in the spotlight in front of the biggest crowd ever. I was so proud of our riders for representing the US at this prestigious event. The crowd roared and applauded like never before because they recognized real talent and were anxious to learn more about Para-Dressage. I am still getting emails from around the World, saying how wonderful the demo was. Stay tuned for big things to come in the future for Para-Dressage."



Katie Jackson and NTEC Royal Dancer at the 2017 LONGINES FEI World Cup Jumping & FEI Dressage Finals Para-Dressage Demonstration held March 27-April 2, 2017, at the CenturyLink Center Omaha. Photo by Susan J. Stickle. Ellie Brimmer announces above the banner during the demonstration.

Hand continued, "I want to thank Thomas Baur, Monica Fritzgerald, Becky Reno, and Ellie Brimmer for helping us organize this event. They took a big chance and we picked the right riders to represent us."

World Equestrian Games' and Grade IV Paralympian Annie Peavy rode her 2002 Hanoverian Gelding Lancelot Warrior in the demonstration. Peavy explained, "It was very exciting. Lance lit up as we went into the arena because it was so electric. The crowd was cheering during my test, which I'd never had before, but both Lance and I enjoyed their enthusiasm. The venue was wonderful and the show was done very well. I want to thank Thomas Baur and all the show managers, staff, and volunteers for including the Para-Equestrian discipline and for putting together such a great World Cup."

Katie Jackson rode NTEC Royal Dancer, a 12-year-old Westphalian gelding owned by Julia Handt and Rachel Zent Handt of Wylie, Texas in the FEI World Cup's Dressage Showcase. Jackson commented, "The entire event, including our showcase performance, was a truly incredible experience. The Century Link Center in Omaha was a wonderful venue and getting to ride in the main arena is an experience I will never forget. I am deeply grateful to Thomas Baur and the World Cup for inviting us to be a part of their event."

Jackson continued, "The atmosphere was quite electric with the big, bright jumbotron above us and the crowd very close to the arena. The crowd's response was really fantastic. They cheered throughout our ride, which is something that most Dressage horses (and riders) are not used to, but it was so much fun. Royal was such a good boy, he stayed listening to me the whole time and I think he even enjoyed the applause. A big thank you to Hope Hand of USPEA and to US Equestrian for making a live stream of our rides available to the world. It is wonderful to see the huge positive response that US Para-Dressage has received from it."

Jackson acknowledged, "Leading up to the World Cup, Royal Dancer and I stayed in Florida after the 2017 Adequan Global Dressage Festival CPEDI3* March 9-12, to prepare for our performance. Royal and I really got to know each other during this time and I am thankful and honored to have also learned a lot from my fellow para-equestrian riders Annie Peavy and Ellie Brimmer who I joined in the World Cup performance. Thank you so much to Heather Blitz and Becky Reno for making me feel so welcome during my stay and thank you to Kai Handt, Julia Handt, and Rachel Zent for trusting me with Royal Dancer."

For more information about Para-Dressage please visit www.USPEA.org.

About the 2017 LONGINES FEI World Cup Jumping & FEI Dressage Finals:

First held in 1986, the FEI World Cup™ Dressage Final features the world's best dressage horses and riders. A total of 31 Finals have been held through 2016, and the United States has won the championship twice - in 2003 (Debbie McDonald with Brentina) and 2009 (Steffen Peters with Ravel). The Final has been held in the U.S. in Los Angeles (1995) and Las Vegas (2005, 2007, 2009, 2015).

Started in 1979, the FEI World Cup™ Jumping Final is an annual international showdown among the world's best show jumping horses and riders. In the 38 Finals held through 2016, Germany (10) and the United States (9) have emerged with the most titles. Previous FEI World Cup™ Jumping Finals held in the United States include Baltimore (1980), Tampa (1989), Del Mar, CA (1992) and Las Vegas (2000, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2015).

The FEI World Cup™ Finals Omaha 2017 are produced by the Omaha Equestrian Foundation (OEF), a certified 501(c)3 not-for-profit foundation. The focus of this foundation is to foster and develop international caliber athletes within equestrian sport and to support and educate the local community in the process. Since 2013, The Omaha Equestrian Foundation has donated tickets to local charities and created field trips for over 6,000 elementary school students, veterans and local military families. The OEF also produces the International Omaha, a world-class equestrian jumping and dressage experience. Their highly successful 2016 event was the prelude to the FEI World Cup™ Finals Omaha 2017. For more information about OEF, visit www.OmahaEquestrian.com.

About the United States Para-Equestrian Association:

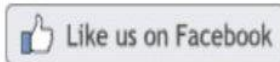
The United States Para-Equestrian Association (USPEA) includes every recognized equestrian discipline that is practiced by athletes with an eligible physical impairment with a focus on Paralympic Equestrian Sports. . The USPEA is a network of current and past athletes, owners, officials, event organizers, and equestrian enthusiasts. The Association assists athletes to get involved and expand their knowledge and experience in the Disciplines of Para-Equestrian.

USPEA was created to fill a need to assist Para Equestrian disciplines when they came under the governance of the FEI. While Para Equestrian disciplines were originally segregated, they now are integrated in international sport. As each individual Para Equestrian discipline develops, it is USPEA's mission to always serve as an advisory resource with the ultimate goal that the established able-bodied discipline affiliate will integrate within their organization.

In 2010, the USPEA earned its 501 (c)(3) status and became a recognized International affiliate association of the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) working together to grow the FEI recognized disciplines by helping to provide press, educational information, symposiums and competition opportunities for athletes with eligible physical impairments.

For more information about the USPEA please visit www.USPEA.org or contact USPEA President: Hope Hand by e-mail: hope@uspea.org or by phone: [610\)356-6481](tel:6103566481).

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