



## Heavy Rains Couldn't Wash Away The Spirit Of Horsemanship At The Dansko Fair Hill International Festival In The Country

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Fair Hill, MD-October 26, 2009-For many riders, the thought of competing in the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) CCI three-star championship would be a dream come true. Take that dream and add in heavy rains, blistering winds and a sea of mud, and you have conditions at this year's Dansko Fair Hill International, which took place at the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area, October 15 - 18.

Somehow, through the dedication of untold numbers of staff members and volunteers, the folks at Fair Hill managed to turn what could have been a recipe for disaster into yet another successful year for one of America's favorite three-day events.

This year's Dansko Fair Hill International was home to the (USEF) CCI\*\*\*, USEF CCI\*\* and the Spalding Labs USEA Young Event Horse Championships. Some of the world's best horses and riders came prepared to battle for top honors in all three of these championships. The foul weather only further proved to test the stamina, bravery, and athleticism needed to compete - and win - at Fair Hill.

Boyd Martin prevailed in the USEF CCI\*\*\* Fall Championship aboard Neville Bardos. The victory served as Martin's first CCI\*\*\* win as well as his first major win while riding for the U.S., as he previously represented Australia. The Dansko Fair Hill CCI\*\*\* is one of the most prestigious three-day events in the United States. In fact, it is one of only two eventing competitions of such high caliber in the country. Martin also finished sixth overall riding Ron and Densy Juvonen's Dutch Warmblood gelding, Remington XXV. The win earned Martin the Fair Hill Bronze, the USEF Guy V. Henry Memorial Trophy, and the Gladstone Trophy for the highest placed U.S. horse, presented by the USET Foundation.

"For me personally I have come second a number of times in CCI three-star events, and finally I have won one," said Martin. "I've won a one-star, two-star and four-star before and it was eating away at me a little bit. I've come close and just couldn't quite do it so I put a little pressure on myself because it was a mark in my life."

Four-time Olympic veteran and two-time Fair Hill Champion, Karen O'Connor of The Plains, VA, rode Joan Goswell's 9-year-old thoroughbred gelding Mandiba to a second place finish in the CCI\*\*\*. O'Connor also earned the Beale Wright Morris Memorial Trophy for the Leading Lady Rider award. Kelly Sult of Erie, PA, finished behind O'Connor with Hollywood. Sult also won the USEF National Under 25 Championship and the USEF National Owner/Rider Championship, as well as the Edward Johnson Memorial Trophy for the highest placed Adult Amateur at Fair Hill. In fourth place was two-time Olympic team Gold Medalist and four-time Fair Hill Champion, Phillip Dutton on Kheops Du Quesnay.

Thirteen was a lucky number for Olivia Loiacono of Bonsall, CA, who won The Markham Trophy for the highest-placed Young Rider. Loiacono finished in thirteenth place overall with her 13-year-old thoroughbred gelding Subway. The top placing foreign rider in the CCI\*\*\* was

Canadian Rebecca Howard, who finished in ninth place with Riddle Master

Hannah Sue Burnett, of Ocala, FL, and Dick Thompson's 8-year-old Thoroughbred gelding St. Barths won the CCI\*\*. Thompson, whose wife Vita passed away last year, created the Sea Horse Farm Perpetual Trophy to go to the owner of the winning horse of the CCI\*\*, so Mr. Thompson stepped forward to award himself the trophy in his wife's memory.

Finishing second in the CCI\*\* was American Doug Payne and Running Order, and in third was Canadian Rebecca Howard and The Fork Stables' Dutch Warmblood/Thoroughbred cross, Roquefort.

The Spalding Labs/USEA Young Event Horse East Coast Championships showcased an exceptional group of four- and five-year old upcoming event horses. In the Four-year old Division, the Swedish warmblood/Thoroughbred Stallion Accolade had the top combined score for the three sections: Conformation and Type, Dressage, and Jumping Suitability and Potential. Owner Hope Thomas and co-owner and rider Dr. Kim Keeton, DVM, were "just tickled" about the stallion's performance. Placing second in the Four-year old division was Sharon Will and Buck Davidson's Oldenburg gelding, No More Rocks. Third place honors went to Tim and Cheryl Holekamp's Trakehner mare, Kalamata, who received the highest score in the conformation section of the competition.

In the Five-year old division, Matt Flynn rode the Dutch warmblood, BreakThrough, owned by his parents, Patrick and Kathleen Flynn, to first place honors. Second place went to Star Dazzler, owned by Courtney Cooper and Neal Camens, and ridden by Cooper. Kurt Martin rode Charlotte Hogg's Irish Sport Horse, Master Frisky to third place.

In addition to the world-class equestrian action at the Dansko Fair Hill International, there were also plenty of fun activities for all to enjoy - though some were cut short due to the weather.

Master Falconer Mike Dupuy didn't let the rain slow him, or his birds, down. He performed his show, The Art and Sport of Falconry With Live Birds of Prey, and brought the audience up close and personal with his magnificent birds while providing an unforgettable and educational experience.

Despite the adverse weather conditions, the famed Kids' Corner featured arts & crafts and activities for the younger set, while adults enjoyed shopping the many wonderful vendors at the Country Shops.

Members of the United States Pony Club participated in the President's Cup Invitational Games. During the Games, riders competed in teams of five in a variety of challenging and relay races. Awards were presented to the winning teams on Sunday. Pony Club members also served as volunteers during the event, helping in every area from running warm-up rings to directing traffic.

The popular Dog Agility Trials also returned. The Agility Trials are a favorite tradition at Fair Hill, attracting nearly 400 canine competitors each year!

The Dansko Fair Hill International Festival in the Country benefits Union Hospital in Elkton, MD. The hospital, whose mission is to enhance the health and well-being of the residents of Cecil County and its neighboring communities, has been caring for area families and neighbors for nearly 100 years.

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For more information on the Dansko Fair Hill International, please call (410) 398-2111 or visit [www.fairhillinternational.com](http://www.fairhillinternational.com).

Photos Available On Request

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Presented by:

