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## **Davidson Stays On Top In Galway Downs International Three-Day Event**

*Temecula, Calif., Nov. 2, 2013* – Just as he was after dressage, Buck Davidson is still the leader of the CCI3\* at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. But it's on a different horse.

Following yesterday's dressage phase, Davidson stood first on The Apprentice, second on Absolute Liberty, and seventh on Petite Flower. But on today's cross-country course, The Apprentice incurred 14 time faults to drop to sixth, Absolute Liberty pulled up lame, but then Petite Flower, as the last horse to start, jumped faultlessly and galloped through the finish flags 6 seconds fast to take over the lead with 55.2 penalties.

With rails on Sunday's show jumping worth 4 penalties each, Davidson has a one-rail lead, since Jolie Wentworth and GoodKnight stand second on 59.7 penalties. But four more horses have scores within a rail of GoodKnight – third-placed Nonsensical and Emilee Libby (61.2), fourth-laced HHS Cooley and Elizabeth Halliday-Sharp (61.6), fifth-placed Ballylaffin Bracken and Kristin Schmolze (62.7), and sixth-laced The Apprentice and Davidson (62.9).

The Presenting Sponsors of the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event are: Equine Insurance of California, Land Rover, Professional's Choice, the California Horse Trader and the PRO Tour.

"There were a lot of ups and downs today," said Davidson, 37. "I'm obviously very happy about Petite Flower and very disappointed about Absolute Liberty."

Davidson said he realized that he was ahead of time at the seven-minute mark of the 10-minute course, and he considered jumping some slower options. "But then the competitive side of me came through, and I just kept galloping and jumping the fast ways," he said.

The opposite happened to Wentworth, 32. She said that she was about 15 seconds fast at the same point, “and I just took my foot off the gas. In hindsight, I wish I hadn’t. But I’m happy with our round – if I’d just kept going, we would have made the time.”

Wentworth and GoodKnight finished second in the CCI3\* in 2011.

“This cross-country course was hard. It walked hard, and I think it rode hard,” said Wentworth, of Crockett, Calif. “Every year it gets a little harder, and the time was especially harder to make this year. Ian [Stark] is definitely putting his stamp on the course now, and it’s quite substantial.”

By finishing the course 19 seconds fast, Libby, 26, and Nonsensical climbed eight places, from 11<sup>th</sup>. Galway Downs was the first CCI3\* start for Nonsensical, a 10-year-old Thoroughbred. “He was spot-on, and I had a pretty great ride,” said Libby, from Temecula, Calif.

Galway Downs was the first CCI2\* for Doesn’t Play Fair, the leader of the CCI2\*, and he galloped willingly around the cross-country course for Maya Black, finishing 8 seconds fast to keep the score he gained in dressage (46.2). Second-placed Matt Brown finished 2 seconds slow on BCF Bellicoso and now has 47.3 penalties. Frankie Thieriot and Uphoria added nothing to their dressage score of 50.0 to keep third.

Brown is also fourth on Super Socks BCF (51.9) and fifth on Aida (53.1).

“He’s never had a cross-country jumping penalty, but he’s never done a course this long, and there were things out there that he’d never seen before,” said Black of Doesn’t Play Fair, 7. “I was really pleased with him: He went out there and did what I asked him and more.”

In addition to riding three horses in the CCI2\*, Brown rode two more horses in the CCI1\*, and he finished with no jumping faults on all five. He said that riding the CCI1\* course twice gave him a good feel for what he had to do to make the optimum time in the CCI2\*. Aida and Super Socks BCF finished with no time faults. “I don’t have anything to complain about today,” quipped Brown.

“The big thing was the beginning, was being on your minute markers early, because, as I thought, you couldn’t make the time up at the end,” said Brown.

Just as in the CCI3\*, show jumping will likely be decisive in the CCI2\*, as less than one rail separates the top three horses.

Black said that Doesn’t Play Fair is a careful show jumper, but he’s also spooky and can be distracted by banners and other ring decorations. “Show jumping is what we’ve been working on the most,” she said.

“Aida and Bellicoso are pretty good show jumpers, so their energy level tomorrow will definitely be a factor,” said Brown. “Super Socks can have rails due to control problems, so if he is a little bit tired tomorrow, it might make him better.”

Said Thieriot, “I know from experience that in a CCI you have different Horse on Sunday than you do in a horse trial. She was definitely tired in the first CCI2\* I did with her, so I’m hoping the big environment here will perk her up a bit and get the job done.”

Tammy Smith, leader of the CCI1\* (40.4), expects Fleur De Lis to be mentally and physically tired for Sunday’s show jumping. James Alliston is second on Talisker (43.0), and Ruth Bley is third on Rodrigue Du Granit (43.4).

“The course’s lay-out was completely changed, and it definitely took a toll on the horses more than ever before. It was a tough course—more so than it’s ever been,” she said.

Smith’s problems began at fence 2, when she said she circled Fleur De Lis to the right, because he wouldn’t turn left to the jump. The jump judge penalized her with a refusal, but the ground jury ruled that she hadn’t presented the horse to the jump and removed the 20 penalties.

“Usually if you’re in first place, you say you had the best ride of the day, but I think I had the worst ride of the day,” said Smith, 37. “He felt pretty green. At the last water jump, he landed, and I swear I thought his nose went under the water.”

Fleur De Lis is a 6-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding.

The Gold Medal Sponsors of the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event are: Devoucoux, Ian Stark Equestrian Center, MD Barn Master and Sunsprite Warmbloods.

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General admission for the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event is \$10 per day in advance, \$15 at the gate, with children under 12 free when accompanied by a paying adult.

Patron's passes – which include seating in the ringside tent, lunch and a full selection of beverages – are available for \$55 per day on Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

For all advance ticket reservations, go to [www.galwaydowns.com](http://www.galwaydowns.com).

For more information on the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event, visit [www.galwaydowns.com](http://www.galwaydowns.com) or call 951-303-0405. To learn more about eventing, visit the U.S. Eventing Association's website ([www.useventing.com](http://www.useventing.com)).