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Alliston Jumps To Top of Galway Downs International Three-Day Event

Temecula, Calif., Nov. 3, 2012 – James Alliston, who won the featured CCI3* at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event in 2011, has jumped into first and second places after cross-country day at this year's event. With a faultless round on Tivoli, Alliston has taken over the lead (49.4), and by guiding Jumbo's Jake, the horse he rode to victory last year, home just 2 seconds slow, he's also taken over second place (52.6).

Michael Pollard and Schoensgreen Hanni, the dressage leaders, dropped to third place (53.2) by picking up 6.8 time penalties for finishing 17 seconds slow. Buck Davidson and The Apprentice moved up from seventh to fourth (56.2) by adding 2.8 time penalties.

Alliston also stands in seventh place on Parker (64.8).

"I guess I didn't really think about being the defending champion before the event," said Alliston, a transplanted Englishman who lives in Castro Valley, Calif. Plus, Jumbo's Jake hasn't been jumping his customary clear rounds, even being eliminated in his most recent start.

"So I didn't really think there was much chance of him winning again, to tell you the truth," said Alliston, 27. "Tivoli will probably be my best horse down the line, but it's his first CCI3*, and Parker isn't really there in the dressage. They're all great jumpers, and I expected them to go well, but I didn't expect to be at the head of affairs necessarily."

With Jumbo's Jake, Alliston was the first starter on the three-star course. He rode Parker in the middle of the 12-horse field, and Tivoli was the last to go, as the sun was starting to set over Galway Downs.

"The first two were the physically most tiring, because you have to kick Jake a lot to make the time and Parker was really strong today. Tivoli was actually pretty easy after those two," he said with a smile.

Pollard, of Dalton, Ga., said he was winded when he finished the nine-minute course.

"For me it was a hard to make the time. She's a really good, scopey jumper, but she doesn't go across the fences really well. She's not an easy horse to get the time on," said Pollard. "I probably could have shaved a few seconds at the end, but, she'd gone really well and I really wanted her to finish her first three-star well, so I protected her a bit on the last two fences."

Seven of the 12 three-star starters jumped faultlessly, with only Parker and Hawley Bennett-Awad of Canada, on Gin 'N Juice, adding no time penalties. Phillip Dutton, who placed second in dressage on Atlas, had one refusal at fence 11, a narrow brush fence over a water-filled ditch, but then finished the course.

Bennett-Awad fell from her second mount, Five O'Clock Somewhere, after a refusal at fence 20; McKenna Shea and Landioso fell on landing at fence 20, the fourth element of the third water combination; and John Michael Durr fell from Warrick at fence 6.

With a fast round, Lauren Byllis of Visalia, Calif., grabbed the lead in the CCI2* on Ballingowan Ginger (50.8). Jennifer McFall and High Times are still holding second place (54.0), and dressage leaders Barbara Crabo and Over Easy have dropped to third place (55.5).

Byllis and Ballingowan Ginger finished 4 seconds slow (1.6 time penalties). “That was about as fast as she could have gone,” said Byllis. She said that she was “a little nervous” before starting, since in her last three-day start with the horse, at the 2011 Pan Am Games, they’d fallen three jumps from the end.

“So I wanted to redeem myself,” she said.

McFall and High Times finished 15 seconds slow (6.0 penalties). “I think I could have started off a little stronger, but this was the longest course he’s ever done, so I wanted to be sure about him, and he never questioned anything out there,” said McFall, of Wilton, Calif.

Erin Kellerhouse, of Temecula, Calif., maintained her dressage lead in the CCI1* aboard Roxabelle. The pair finished the course without jumping or time penalties.

“I thought the course was little bit easier than it has been in the past. It was very friendly for the horse and super galloping. But I thought that it was technically a little bit easier than it has been in the past. It was nice, though – I really enjoyed riding it,” she said.

Lindsey Weaver, of Morgan Hill, Calif., and Sintra also maintained their lead in the Training Level Three-Day Event.

Equine Insurance of California, Land Rover, Professional’s Choice and the Professional Riders Organization are the presenting sponsors of the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. A portion of all tickets sales will benefit Operation Homefront, PRO’s charitable partner.

The generous additional sponsors of the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event include: Advanced Protection Formula by Auburn Laboratories Inc., American Medical Response, the American Horse Trials Foundation, Big Horse Feed, Cavalor, CWD, *California Horse Trader*, *California Riding Magazine*, Charles

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General admission for the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event is only \$10 per day in advance, \$12 at the gate, on Thursday, Friday and Sunday, with children under 12 free when accompanied by a paying adult. General admission for Saturday's cross-country is \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door, but \$8 in advance using promo code DME on the ticket-purchase page. Children are 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 also available for \$55 per day. For advance reservations, go to www.galwaydowns.com.

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