

Galway Downs News
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Galway Downs International Horse Trials

CCI-4 contenders lead a strong field March 29-31 at ever-improving California competition venue.*

March 20, 2019: Temecula, California: A showdown at the Galway corral is shaping up as top eventers prepare for the Galway Downs International Horse Trials March 29-31 in Temecula, California.

Good friends Tamie Smith and Frankie Thieriot Stutes, both on US Equestrian's Pre-Elite Training list, finished one and two last year and will morph into fierce competitors as they face off in the International's top division. It's a strong field in the West's first CCI-4 S (Short) since the FEI elevated the starring system for international competition. Athletes include long-reigning Galway champ James Alliston and the hot-streaking mare Pandora and USEA Emerging Athletes U25 star Mallory Hogan on her longtime partner Clarrissa Purisima.

Set in the heart of Temecula Valley wine country, the action unfurls under the keen eye of USET Eventing High Performance Director Erik Duvander. He's out West scouting prospects for this year's Pan Am Games, next year's Olympics and future U.S. team consideration.

Lauren Billys brings a small herd of horses from Northern California, including her 2016 Olympic partner Castle Larchfield Purdy at the 3* level, plus two 2* entries. Olympic course designer Derek DiGrazia and his wife Bea have two up-and-comers from the famous Ringwood Irish Sporthorse line campaigning in Open Intermediate.

With competition from CCI-4 S to Beginner Novice, the Galway Downs International Horse Trials draws Olympians and newbies alike. New facility, stabling and footing upgrades await riders already accustomed to a first-class competition venue. "Galway Downs has quickly become a premiere equestrian facility that Olympic hopefuls, previous Olympic riders and top professionals can compete at to prepare their horses and themselves for the world stage," notes Tamie Smith. "Organizer Robert Kellerhouse and his team have worked tirelessly to make improvements to create a venue that is one of the best on the West Coast."

Galway Downs has been receiving high praise from exhibitors for some time now. Ken Smith's purchase of the 242-acre property in 2010 triggered significant investments in the special events and equestrian competition sites and riders are especially grateful. After this past fall's Galway Downs International, exhibitor and Eventing Riders Association of North American president Shannon Lilley was thrilled with the improvements made at that time. "The guys did a tremendous job on the cross-country footing and the new warm-up ring and stadium jumping rings and footing are great." Those and other upgrades "really make it a special atmosphere. It's very good for the West Coast."

In becoming a mecca for top equestrian sport in all disciplines, Galway Downs is harnessing the good work, good will and generous support of many key players in the sport. Nilforushan Equisport Events, along with Footing Solutions USA, have brought fantastic footing through their sponsorship of the Grand Prix Arena and warm-up ring, and a new jumper ring and cross-country warm-up area. Becoming host of the entire six-week Adequan West Coast Dressage Festival is an additional source of upgrades, as is the ongoing hosting of equestrian competitions almost every weekend of the year.

Many of the most recent improvements are things “that you won’t notice until you notice,” said Kellerhouse. In the process of adding infrastructure that will expand the venue’s capacity to host bigger events, major upgrades to the power and water systems, RV facilities and permanent and portable stabling have been underway all winter.

Schedule & Sponsors

Galway Downs International Horse Trials competition begins Friday March 29 with dressage for all divisions. On Saturday, it’s show jumping for the upper levels (to accommodate the new “S” format) and cross-country for the lower levels. On Sunday, upper levels finish on cross-country and the national levels finish with show jumping. (Ride times available March 25 at www.galwaydowns.net). The course designer is Canada’s Jay Hambly, with an assist from the USA’s Bert Wood, familiar to many as the builder of many obstacles on Galway’s track.

The all-important competitors party is set for Saturday at 6 p.m. in the Patrons Tent.

The Galway Downs International Horse Trials’ high quality of competition is made possible by generous sponsors. They are:

Presenting Sponsors: Equine Insurance, Devoucoux, CWD, *California Horse Trader* and the USEA

Gold: Sunsprite Warmbloods

Silver: Temecula Creek Inn, Smartpak

Bronze & Friend: AHTF-Horse Trials Foundation, Auburn Lab (APF), Geranium, Ride On Video, Voltaire, Symons Ambulance Service, San Dieguito Equine

The Preliminary Challenge Up Next

After the International Horse Trials wraps, Kellerhouse’s Del Mar Eventing crew will begin focusing on The Preliminary Challenge Preview, at Galway Downs May 10-12, followed by The Preliminary Challenge and the Woodside Spring Event, set for May 24-26 at the Woodside Horse Park in Northern California. (Entries open April 9).

The Preview at Galway Downs offers \$2,500 in prize money for both the Training and Preliminary divisions, with a Sunday finalé round and brunch honoring Mother’s Day. Two weekends later in Woodside, The Preliminary Challenge offers \$15,000 in prize money in both the horse and rider divisions and the final rounds are contested during a reverse-order stadium jumping round in front of a packed house of Saturday Evening Gala guests at the Woodside Horse Park. Both iterations of The Preliminary Challenge draw top pairs to this stepping stone to international level competition.

For more information on the Galway Downs International Horse Trials, visit www.galwaydowns.net. For more information on The Preliminary Challenge and the Woodside

Spring Event, visit www.woodsideeventing.com. For media credentials for both, contact press officer Kim F Miller at kimfmiller1@mac.com or 949 293 1555.