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Course Changes Bring Fresh Look To The Galway Downs International Horse Trials

Temecula, Calif., March 20, 2015— Competitors at the Galway Downs International Horse Trials always expect new challenges, but the top-level riders and horses from the United States, Canada and other countries will face some questions they haven't seen before on March 26-29 at the Galway Downs Equestrian Center.

Riders will be competing in three international divisions—the featured CIC3*, the CIC2* and the CIC1*.

Each of the more than 60 horses expected to start in the international divisions will perform in the dressage ring on Friday morning and then negotiate the demanding show jumping course in the late afternoon.

Then, on Saturday afternoon, they'll gallop over the more than 30 jumps on the cross-country course designed by Ian Stark of Great Britain, the Galway Downs course designer since 2007.

The awards will be presented during a catered dinner on Saturday evening. After the dinner and awards, the popular local band Mrs. Jones' Revenge will perform.

"[There won't be] too many changes [to the course] this time," said Stark. "But, what I like to do is keep the riders thinking, especially the ones that get used to a route, who start to plan their own course. So, careful walking will be a must! It would be, oh so easy to have a rush of blood to the brain and miss the last loop by being in a hurry to get home."

As course designer, Stark must always keep the interests of all the competitors in mind as he makes his plans—often a challenge, since some riders and horses will be making their first attempt at the level, while others are more seasoned and are using Galway Downs as their final prep for the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event in April.

"There's plenty to give the Kentucky-bound horses a good prep run, yet still be a good confidence boost for the younger or less experienced combinations--provided the riders are in attacking

mode,” said Stark. “Fence 4, the Hollow, has a new look early on the course, and the Control Tower at the end might surprise some.”

Almost half of the 16-horse field in the Galway Downs CIC3* boasts an international past-performance record that makes them contenders for the top prizes. The two horses to beat are Tivoli, winner of the 2012 Galway Downs CCI3* and second in the 2013 Galway Downs CIC3* with James Alliston, and Eveready, winner of the 2014 Galway Downs CCI3* with Barb Crabo.

They can expect pressure from Matt Brown in Happenstance (winner of the 2014 Galway Downs CIC2*) and Super Socks BCF (second in the 2013 Galway Downs CCI2*) and from Lauren Billys on Castle Larchfield Purdy (winner of the 2014 Woodside CIC2*). Two other top contenders should be Jolie Wentworth on GoodKnight (second at the Galway Downs CCI3* in 2011 and 2013) and John Michael Durr on Esprit De La Danse (second in the 2014 Galway Downs CIC3*).



Eveready II and Barb Crabo, winners of the 2014 Galway Downs CCI3*, are among the favorites for next week's Galway Downs CIC3*.



Tivoli and James Alliston, winners of the 2012 Galway Downs CCI3*, are also among the favorites for next week's Galway Downs CIC3*.

Christian Steiner of Austria and Alain James of France will judge the international divisions, which will be using the new 2015 FEI dressage tests. Andy Bowles of New Zealand will be the international technical delegate, assisted by Gabriel Sacchi of Brazil.

The CIC3* at the Galway Downs International Horse Trials is one of the 11 events across the country comprising the Adequan/USEA Gold Cup Series. Since Galway Downs is one of only two Gold Cup Events in California (and one of the four on the West Coast), it's a vital competition for advanced riders who are aiming to qualify for the \$40,000 Adequan/USEA Gold Cup Series

final in September. The Galway Downs CIC3* offers prize money of \$6,000 and an array of prizes provided by the generous sponsors of the Galway Downs International Horse Trials.

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Media representatives must contact the Press Officers (above) for passes prior to March 25.

General admission for the Galway Downs International Horse Trials is only \$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 also available for \$55 per day on Friday and Sunday, \$75 for Saturday, or \$150 for the weekend in advance. For advance reservations, go to www.galwaydowns.com.

For more information on the Galway Downs International Horse Trials, 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).