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Stark Adds To Cross-Country's Challenge At the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event

Temecula, Calif., Oct. 28, 2014—British Olympic medalist Ian Stark has been then the course designer at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event since 2007, and riders have always given rave reviews to the challenges he creates.

In 2013 Stark made some major changes to the Galway Downs course's track, especially for the CCI3*, to better incorporate the limited terrain features available on the Temecula Valley property. Those changes added a dimension to the cross-country course that it hadn't had before.

"It walked hard, and I think it rode hard. The time was especially difficult to make," said Jolie Wentworth, who finished second in the 2013 Galway Downs CCI3* on GoodKnight, the horse she'll be riding in the CCI3* again this weekend. "Ian's definitely putting his stamp on the course now, and it's quite substantial."

Stark said that in the past he'd been limited to setting the course's track along the flood plains, making it rather flat and, thus, making the optimum time fairly easy to achieve. But sending horses over the berm surrounding the racetrack, among other route changes, gives riders and horses much more to do than just jump the jumps.

"The extra terrain can make riders think about how their horses will cope and when they will have to prepare for each fence: Prepare too early and waste time; prepare too late and things become risky and dangerous. So the terrain can put the onus onto the riders to make the proper decisions!" said Stark.

This year Stark has made further alterations to the route, including one that will take horses and riders through the water jump closest to the trade fair twice (fences 18 and 22).

"So we now have four water combinations on the course--I do hope the riders have brought a change of clothing!" said Stark with a smile.

"Plus we have a new look at the moat (fences 14 and 15AB)--ditches and corners come into play here. So bold riding and accuracy will be required even more," he added. "Also the jump under the

commentators' tower with a turning question (fence 3AB) comes very early on the course this time, so riders need to be awake from the word 'go' on this course."

Competition at Galway Downs will kick off on Wednesday with the dressage phase for the USEA West Coast Young Event Horse Championships for 4- and 5-year-olds. The YEH Championship horses will perform their jumping phase on Thursday, when the Training Level Three-Day Event will perform their dressage tests, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

On Friday, the Training Level Three-Day Event will tackle the challenges of the cross-country course, from 2:30 to 4:45.

The CCI1*, CCI2* and CCI3* will also perform their dressage tests on Friday. The CCI2* runs from 8:30 to 12:30; the CCI3* runs from 1:45 to 4:45, and the CCI1* begins at 8:15 and runs until 5:10.

Saturday is cross-country day for all three CCI divisions, with the CCI2* running from 9:20 to 10:45, the CCI3* running from 11:05 to 12:05, and the CCI1* running from 12:30 to 3:30. Saturday will conclude with show jumping for the Training Level Three-Day Event, starting at 4:10.

The CCI divisions wrap up the weekend on Sunday with the climactic show jumping phase, starting at 10:30.

The CCI3* is a member event of the 2014 PRO Tour and will be live-streamed on Pro TV on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 1-2. Go to <http://new.livestream.com/PROTV> to view it. Media players will be embedded on Galway Downs website. A Livestream App for TV, iPhone, iPad and Android can also be downloaded from the iTunes Store and Google Play. Follow the events on PRO TV to receive automatic updates on any schedule changes.

Leading the commentary team will be international event rider and BBC commentator Spencer Sturmeay, along with Samantha Clark, host of the Eventing Radio Show.

"We at Galway Downs are excited to be working with PRO TV in its new venture to cover and produce PRO Tour events," said Robert Kellerhouse, the Galway Downs organizer. "We're really looking forward to being a part of this new opportunity to raise awareness of eventing in North America."

CWD, Devoucoux, Equine Insurance of California and the PRO Tour are the Presenting Sponsors of the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event.

The Gold Medal Sponsors are: California HorseTrader, Equinox Equestrian Center, MD BarnMaster, Ian Stark Equestrian Centre, John Deere (the official tractor supplier for Galway Downs),

Professional's Choice and Sunsprite Warmbloods.

The Silver Medal Sponsors are: Charles Owen, Embassy Suites-Temecula, Holiday Inn Express, Majyk Equipe, SmartPak and Temecula Creek Inn.

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The Friends of Galway Downs are: Copper Meadows, Eventing Training Online and Success Equestrian Pads.

San Dieguito Equine Group is the Patron Sponsor.

General admission for the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event is only \$10 per day in advance, \$15 at the gate, with children under 12 free when accompanied by a paying adult. Haunted Horse After Party is \$35 per person, and Patron's Passes are available for all four days of competition.

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).