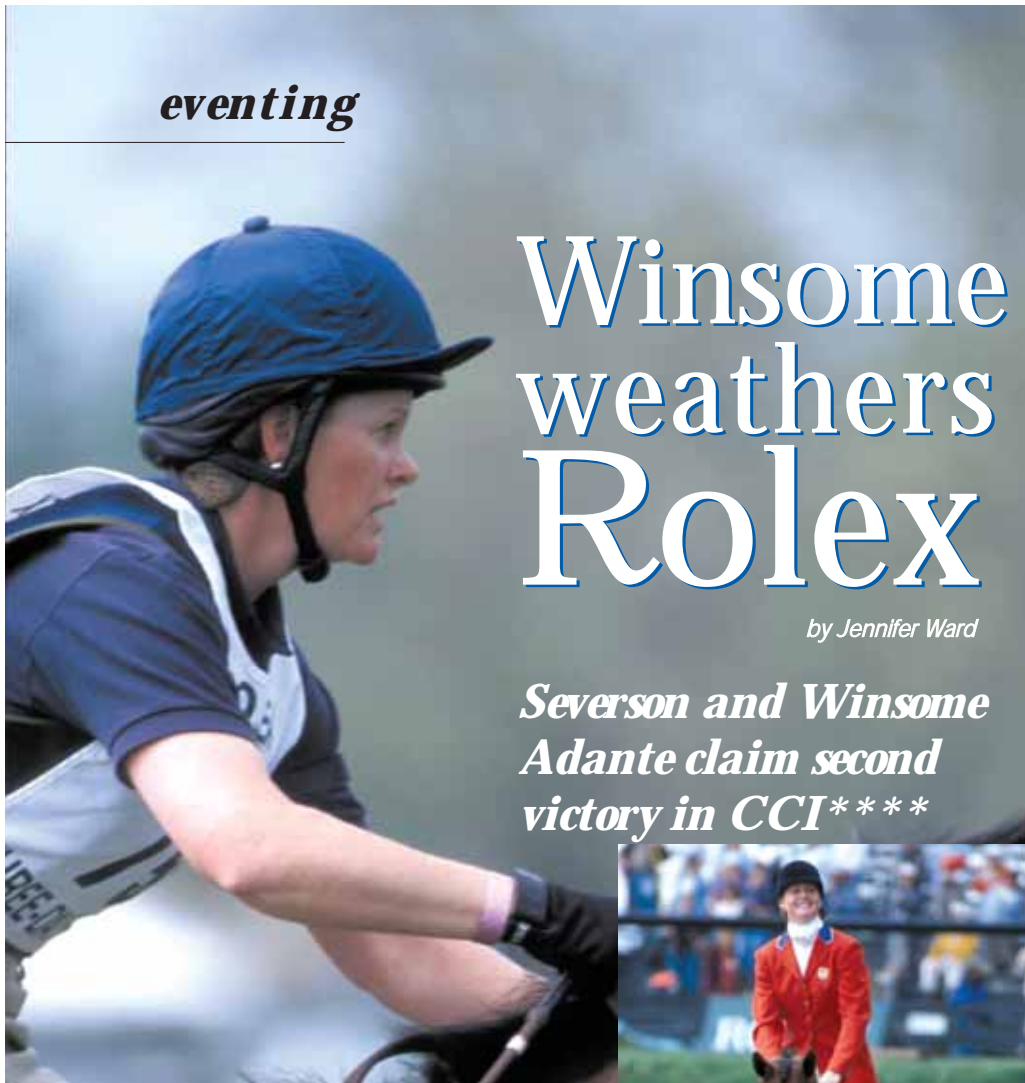


Winsome weathers Rolex

by Jennifer Ward

*Severson and Winsome Adante claim second victory in CCI*****



photos by Clix

For the second time in three years, victory in the CCI**** Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event belonged to Kim Severson and her talented 11-year-old English thoroughbred gelding, Winsome Adante, owned by Plain Dealing Farm.

Held April 22-25 at the picturesque Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY, the Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event represents the pinnacle of competitive eventing in North America. One of only four Olympic-level events held annually in the world, Rolex attracts the best of the best.

This year was no exception as most of the 44 horse-rider combinations eyed qualification for the upcoming 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

From the opening phase of dressage when Severson posted the leading dressage score of 37 penalty points, there was little doubt of the pair's strength. In muddy conditions, Severson of Keene, VA, put in a typically fluid dressage test before heading out on Saturday's cross-

country test set by 2000 Olympic course designer, Michael Etherington-Smith of Great Britain. Severson and 'Dan' answered all the questions, putting in a foot-perfect performance to come home double clean with no jumping or time penalties added to their dressage score.

"It was liking having my best friend back," said an elated Severson after her cross-country round.

On Sunday, the pressure elevated, especially as the riders before her,

Phillip Dutton and Abigail Lufkin, sitting in second and third positions respectively, had turned in clear show jumping performances over a technical track set by Richard Jeffery. The margin between Severson and Dutton allowed for one dropped rail, but not two. Severson proved she didn't need the breathing room, however, flawlessly jumping the course without appearing to ever touch a rail.

"I feel more connected with Winsome Adante than I have in the past, he feels stronger and more together," said Severson whose broken leg in the spring and Winsome Adante's colic surgery in September gave the pair some forced time off in 2003. "Last year was the first time since he was maybe a five year old that he did not do two three-day events and I think he benefited from the break."

Phillip Dutton of Australia and Nova Top finished as the runner-ups and were awarded the Carimati Cup as the highest-placed foreign combination. Dutton was one of seven riders to complete the cross-country test without penalty, a feat he repeated on Sunday in show jumping to finish on his dressage score of 43 penalty points.

"He's an interesting horse," reflected Dutton. "Someone asked me this morning if I ever thought I would get this far with him and I'm not sure that I did. His dressage is getting a lot better, he's turned out to be a cross-country machine and in show jumping he just tries so hard."

Black leads the Canadians

All three Canadian starters were among the 30 riders who successfully completed the event. Stuart Black was the top Canadian, finishing in the top half of the starting field to secure Olympic qualification with Fleeceworks Blackout, a horse he and long-time supporter Mr. Elkins Wetherill recently purchased from Black's 1996 Atlanta Olympic teammate, Kelli McMullen Temple. The nine-year-old black New Zealand thoroughbred gelding had only arrived at Black's training center in Bluemont, VA, five days before he began his first journey to the Rolex

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Kentucky Three Day Event. While the new partnership had a small glitch at the 23rd obstacle on cross-country, the enormous 'Head of the Lake' water complex, Black was thrilled with the horse's performance.

"He felt super, we were just a bit unlucky at the second element of the Head of the Lake when he didn't get up on the island well enough to jump it," explained Black, the 1992 and first Canadian Rolex winner. "He is a fantastic horse, I am very lucky to have him. I have two qualified for Athens now, and he and Midnight Magic are like twins, no one can tell them apart!"

With a score of 54.6 penalty points following the opening phase of dressage, Black added 20 jumping and 11.2 time penalties to his score over cross-country. Two rails down in the final show jumping phase gave him a three-day total of 93.8 penalty points and put him in 21st position, the same place he had been following dressage.

Amanda Vines got her first taste of competing at the four-star level riding Simon Says, her 14-year-old Canadian thoroughbred gelding. The pair had completed the CCI*** Fair Hill International last October, and moving up to the Olympic level was an eye-opening experience for the B.C. native, who finished in 28th position with a score of 205.8 penalty points.

"The course had some really good technical questions that showed the weaknesses in our training," said Vines. "My goal was to complete and feel good about it. I'm just not sure I got my horse fit enough."

Originally from Langley, Vines currently trains in Texas where her fiancée, also an eventing competitor, has a facility. The 29 year old also makes trips to California in order to take advantage of training sessions with Canada's International Technical Advisor, Jimmy Wofford, as well as dressage lessons with Dale Irwin and well-known U.S. dressage competitor, Kathleen Raine.

"The dressage felt pretty good," said Vines, who was sitting 25th with a score of 56 penalty points following the opening phase. "Usually my horse is tense when there is a crowd, and the hardest work is the collection and the flying changes."

Another west coast competitor, Sonya Crampton of Victoria, B.C., on Shindig II, a 13-year-old chestnut New Zealand thoroughbred gelding owned by North Slope Stables and Raymond Venoski also completed the event. In 41st position following dressage, Crampton clawed her way up to 29th.

Olympic hopefuls test new format

In addition to the regular CCI**** division, this year's Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event also hosted a Modified Four Star Three-Day Event that was, in part, patterned after the format to be used for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Open only to U.S. citizens and foreign riders residing in North America who have already met the FEI qualifying criteria for the Olympic Games, the Bayer Modified Four Star division marked the first time ever that horses and riders had the opportunity to 'test' the shortened format prescribed for Athens.

The difference between the CCI**** and the modified division was seen on Saturday when the modified competitors did not complete the usual roads, tracks and steeplechase phases prior to heading out on cross-country. Instead, riders did one 20-minute road and tracks warm-up before having an opportunity to jump as many fences as they felt necessary to prepare for a cross-country course that consisted of 32 obstacles compared to 33 for the regular CCI**** division, but with a time



photo by Michelle Dunn

Stuart Black and Midnight Magic at the jog.



Stuart Black on Fleeceworks Blackout.

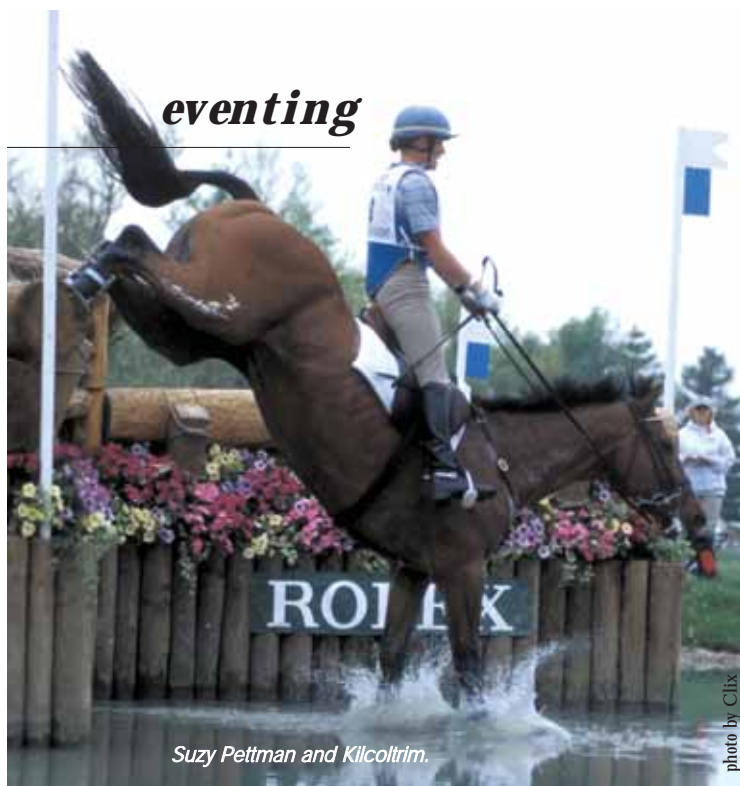
photo by Clix

allowed of 10 minutes compared to 11 minutes, 14 seconds, for the CCI**** competitors. This meant the horses in the modified division did not have the same 'breathers' between fences allotted four-star horses. On average, the modified horses faced one jumping effort for every 125 metres of course versus one jumping effort for every 142.2 metres for the four-star horses.

The riders agreed that they had not prepared their horses any differently for the modified division than they would have for the regular CCI**** division. The biggest adjustment came in the jumping warm-up before cross-country when the riders were left to their own devices - some said they were happy with their warm-up plan while others said they would make changes in the future.

In all, eight of the 38 starters failed to complete cross-country while another five either withdrew from or were not accepted at Sunday morning's horse inspection, including notable names such as Darren Chiacchia with Power Ty and Julie Richards with Hyde Park Corner. The 25 horses that remained to

eventing



Suzy Pettman and Kilcoltrim.

photo by Chix

contest Richard Jeffery's course treated the large crowds, who had once again braved 'severe' weather conditions, to a great day of horse sport.

In a dramatic conclusion, overnight leader Nathalie Bouckaert was the final competitor out on course riding West Farthing. Coming to the course's first fence, the 23-year-old Bouckaert began wrestling with the 11-year-old English thoroughbred gelding, causing him to put on the brakes resulting in four penalties for the refusal. Once underway, Bouckaert of Chatsworth, GA, picked up an additional eight jumping penalties as well as six time faults dropping to seventh position with a three-day total score of 56.6 penalty points.

"I thought he jumped really well, it was the best round he has had in a long time, and the two rails were totally my fault," commented Bouckaert who was in tears as she braved the media. "I think I need to go home and jump a lot of different horses so I am more comfortable and have more experience with seeing my distances."

Bouckaert's misfortune was Chiacchia's gain as the reigning Pan American Champion advanced securing victory riding Windfall II, an 11-year-old black Trakehner stallion, for owner Timothy Holekamp. Despite having the final fence on course down to incur four penalties, Chiacchia's

winning score of 45.2 cemented his position as one of the United States' top hopefuls for Athens.

Just as it had been in the CCI**** division, victory was once again just out of Dutton's reach. A penalty-free show jumping performance catapulted the two-time Olympic team gold medalist into second place with Hannigan, a 13-year-old Irish thoroughbred gelding also formerly ridden by Lufkin.

"It's good to move up the rankings when you can, but I was truly sorry for Nathalie," commented Dutton.

Although based in West Grove, PA, Dutton continues to ride for his native country and Australian Olympic Selectors were on hand to observe his performance. As for his hopes, Dutton commented, "They play their cards pretty close to their chest, but if luck is on our side, I hope to be in Athens."

Hawley Bennett was the top Canadian, finishing in 14th position (see 'The Canadian Kids' on page 36 for more details). A strong dressage performance earned her a score of 52.4 penalty points and placed her 16th in the standings. Currently based in Corona, California, Bennett has been working with well-known American dressage competitor, Kathleen Raine, and was pleased with the results.

"Kathleen is not the typical dressage coach, thinking that if the horse is not a warmblood, she can't teach them," said Bennett. "Last year, here at Rolex we got a 67, and this year we got a 52.4. I wanted to be within ten points of the leader after dressage, and we were only off by two points. The rain was a factor. My

reins and gloves were soaked, and that affected my canter work. My reins got long and I couldn't keep him together, and I had a few problems with my changes."

While Bennett had been looking to make the time over cross-country, the heavy rain plaguing the 2004 event made the going slower than normal and Bennett added 16 time penalties to her score. In show jumping, Livingstone once again proved his aptitude for the phase, posting one of just four faultless rounds for a final score of 68.4 penalty points.

Mike Winter, 29, originally from Toronto, ON, and now based in Newnan, GA, also finished in the top 20 with Emeline Loughlin's Balista, a 14-year-old American thoroughbred gelding. Sitting 35th after dressage, Winter had a typically strong cross-country performance, taking all the direct routes and adding 18.4 time penalties to his score.

"I didn't plan on making the time, we all know he's very fast, so let's save that for when we really need it," explained Winter whose strategy included looking ahead to the Olympics Games. "He was super and he had plenty left in the tank. He felt like a million bucks!"

And Balista, Canada's top finisher at the 2003 Pan American Championships, looked like a million bucks, jumping each of the imposing cross-country obstacles like an easy schooling exercise and returning home keen and fresh. In show jumping, the pair joined Bennett in turning in one of four faultless performances to move

Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event

April 22 - 25, 2004 Lexington, KY

CCI**** Three-Day Event

Pl.	Horse	Rider	Country	Dress.	X-Country	Jump.	TOTAL
1	Windsome Adante	Kim Severson	USA	37	0	0	37
2	Nova Top	Phillip Dutton	AUS	43	0	0	43
3	Kildonan Tug	Abigail Lufkin	USA	45.8	0	0	45.8
4	Ballincoola	William Fox-Pitt	GBR	48.2	8.4	0	56.6
Canadians:							
20	Fleeceworks Blackout	Stuart Black	CAN	54.6	30.2	8	93.8
28	Simon Says	Amanda Vines	CAN	56	186.8	19	205.8
29	Shindig II	Sonya Crampton	CAN	67.4	194.8	18	212.8

Modified**** Three-Day Event

Pl.	Rider	Horse	Country	Total
1	Darren Chiacchia	Windfall 2	USA	45.2
2	Phillip Dutton	Hannigan	AUS	49.6
3	John Williams	Carrick	USA	50.2
4	Amy Tryon	My Beau	USA	53.2
Canadians:				
14	Hawley Bennett	Livingstone	CAN	68.4
18	Michael Winter	Balista	CAN	86.0
23	Suzy Pettmann	Kilcoltrim	CAN	106.4
25	Stuart Black	Midnight Magic	CAN	140.8

eventing

from 25th after cross-country to 18th.

Another young talent, 25-year-old Suzy Pettman, impressed with her performance aboard Kilcoltrim, a 15-year-old Irish thoroughbred gelding formerly campaigned at the four-star level by her fiancé, American competitor Jonathan Elliott. Thirty-second after dressage, Pettman had one refusal on cross-country at fence number 27 where a pair of thatched cottages demanded precision and accuracy to add 18.8 time penalties to her score.

"He was great, but I didn't ride aggressively enough at those cottages, so that cost me some time," said a disappointed Pettman of her round. "I wanted to jump clear and fast. I'm mad at myself!"

In stadium jumping, the pair knocked just one rail to bring their final three-day total to 106.4 penalties, securing 23rd place in only their second three-day event together. Originally from Westbank, B.C., Pettman now trains with 2003 Pan Am Gold Medal Team member, Jan Thompson, at Surefire Farm in Virginia.

Black experienced déjà vu with his second ride of the day, Midnight Magic, when the 11-year-old black English thoroughbred gelding missed the turn to the corner at The Farmyard at fence 17, the same spot had given them trouble last year. Black continued home after another problem at number 30 where Karen O'Connor and Joker's Wild had also been caught.

Garry Roque also jumped clear over cross-country but added 26 time penalties to his score riding Waikura, a 13-year-old New Zealand-bred gelding owned by Gustav Quast.

"I scared myself with some long distances, but the parts I thought would be difficult he handled with no problems," said the affable Roque.

Unfortunately, Roque withdrew Waikura from Sunday morning's horse inspection. Having placed 22nd at last fall's Fair Hill International Three Day Event, Roque and Waikura are already qualified for the Olympic Games in Athens and had been hoping to make a good impression on the Canadian Olympic Selectors at Rolex. 🐾

The Canadian kids – Hawley Bennett and Livingstone

by Jennifer Ward

As the top placed competitors in the CCI**** division at Rolex, Hawley Bennett and Livingstone have something unique going for them. They grew up together in the eventing world, and reached the apex of the sport by coupling determination with hard work.

Bennett, now 27, had only competed at the training level with a 14-hand Arab when she purchased Livingstone 10 years ago as a four year old. Better known as 'Hank' around the barn, the Canadian thoroughbred gelding by Wander Kind has carried Bennett from start to finish on the road to Athens.

Rolex marked the eighth three-day event for the pair, and demonstrated how far they have progressed together. The pair won the CCI** division at Chase Creek in their home province, British Columbia, in 2000, and continued to complete the CCI*** Fox Hall Cup in 2002 and CCI**** Rolex the following year. They also mastered the Fair Hill International on two occasions, the last in 2003 when they were members of the silver medal team at the Pan American Championships.

"I think the coolest thing is that I have had him for 10 years and we have done it all together!" said Bennett, petite in stature but big in personality.

A Langley native Bennett is currently based in Corona, California. As is always the case on the road to the Olympics,



Bennett and Livingstone during trot up at Rolex this year.

photo by Michelle Duim

there are a lot of people to thank along the way. Bennett is extremely grateful to have worked with United States Equestrian Team member, Buck Davidson, and relies on his support and expertise at the big events. She is also especially quick to thank her groom, Stacey Thorson, and to acknowledge the never-ending support of her mother, Gerry, and her 'Canadian' coach, Pam Arthur, for the roles they have played in her success.

As for a trip to Athens for the 2004 Olympic Games, Bennett says, "My fingers are crossed, it will be a dream come true if that happens. I will believe it when I go through the finish flags on August 19!"



Bennett and Livingstone were the top Canadian pair in Rolex's Modified CCI****.

photo by Michelle Duim

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