



Scott Stewart and Catch Me
Scott Stewart rode Catch Me to the win in the \$25,000 WCHR Professional Challenge, as well as the Second Year Green Hunter championship. Photo by Jump Media



Top Hunter and Equitation Riders

'Rise to the Challenge'

2016

By Emily Riden/Jump Media

As the host of the World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) Finals and four equitation finals, no horse show showcases the highest level of hunter and equitation competition quite like Capital Challenge.

This year's show, held October 1-9 at the Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, MD, featured a record number of entries from across the country and the same high-caliber competition that exhibitors and spectators have come to expect.

"It's really nice to show in such competitive divisions with so many people," said Stephanie Danhagl of Pacific Palisades, CA. "This show attracts riders from all over the country. It really feels special to be here and have a division of 35 people. They really make a big deal of the hunters here, so it's also fun to watch and fun to see the hunters in the spotlight."

Danhagl was one of the week's big winners riding away with both the Grand Champion Amateur-Owner 3'3" Hunter and Grand Champion Amateur-Owner 3'6" Hunter titles. On her way to claiming the championship and Best Rider

titles, Danhagl also earned the Amateur-Owner 18-35 3'3" Hunter championship on Quest and reserve championship on Enough Said and the Amateur-Owner 18-35 3'6" Hunter championship on Golden Rule and the reserve on First Light.

While Danhagl dominated the Amateur-Owner competition, her trainer Scott Stewart of Wellington, FL, was among the top riders continually seeing success in the professional hunter divisions. Stewart opened the week by earning the Second Year Green Hunter championship aboard Catch Me, owned by David Gochman. The pair then followed up their championship with the win in the \$25,000 WCHR Professional Challenge – a repeat performance as the duo was also victorious in 2015. Stewart also rode to the win in the \$25,000 Future Hunter North American Championships aboard Private Life.

Taking the Grand Hunter Championship title and the Leading Hunter Rider honor was John French of Woodside, CA, who rode to the win aboard Boss, owned by Laura Wasserman.



Stephanie Danhagl and Quest

Stephanie Danhagl returned home to California with numerous winning accolades, including the Grand Amateur-Owner 3'3" Hunter championship with Quest. Photo by Jump Media



John French and Small Gesture

John French, pictured aboard Small Gesture, accepts the award for the win in the \$5,000 WCHR Professional Finals. Photo by Shawn McMullen Photography



Chicago, Hunt Tosh and daughter Maddie Tosh

Hunt Tosh and Chicago exit the ring with the Future Hunter championship awards, escorted by Tosh's daughter, Maddie. Photo by Jump Media



Kelley Farmer and Publicized

Kelley Farmer rode Publicized to the Grand First Year Green Hunter and Grand Green Hunter championships for owner Amanda Hone. Photo by Shawn McMullen Photography

"This is the toughest, I think, of all the horse shows because everybody's here," French said. "There are a lot more horses here than any of the indoors. To be grand champion at this show is pretty special. The top horses come here. It's the biggest divisions, and they've got the special young horse classes. It's not only a great show for the horses, but for the riders. The riders get a lot of recognition here too with the [WCHR Professional Challenge] and the [WCHR Professional Finals]. It showcases the riders as well as the horses."

French capped off his time at the Capital Challenge Horse Show with a win in the very class he spoke of, the \$5,000 WCHR Professional Finals, this time aboard Small Gesture, owned by Chris Iwasaki and Elizabeth Reilly.

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Hunt Tosh and Chicago

Hunt Tosh rode Chicago, owned by Douglas Wheeler, to the Future Hunter Grand Championship win. Photo by Jump Media

Additional Grand Hunter Championship title winners throughout the week included:

Grand Green Hunter – Publicized, ridden by Kelley Farmer and owned by Amanda Hone

Grand Junior 3'3" Hunter – Luisant, ridden by Stella Buckingham and owned by Q&E Farms, LLC

Grand Future Hunter – Chicago, owned by Douglas Wheeler and ridden by Hunt Tosh

Grand Junior 3'6" Hunter – Evermore, owned by David Gochman and ridden by Emma Kurtz

Grand Adult Amateur Hunter – Spotlight, owned and ridden by Dawn Fogel;

Grand Children's Hunter – Iceman, ridden by Caroline Passarelli and owned by Kaile Rudy

Grand Pony Hunter - Bit of Love, ridden by Sophie Gochman for Dr. Betsee Parker.



Emma Kurtz and Evermore
Evermore was named the Grand Junior 3'6" Hunter Champion with rider Emma Kurtz for owner David Gochman. Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography



Caroline Passarelli and Iceman
Caroline Passarelli and Iceman, the 2016 Children's Hunter Grand Champions. Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography



Allison Fithian and Lucky D'Etencin
Allison Fithian reunited with her junior equitation mount Lucky D'Etencin to take the wins in both the Ariat National Adult Medal Final and the North American Adult Amateur Equitation Championships. Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography



Katherine Strauss and San Remo VDL
After finishing second in last year's Private Tutoring Services North American Junior Equitation Championships, Katherine Strauss came back to take victory this year aboard San Remo VDL. Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography



Alexa Aureliano and Qualitat
Alexa Aureliano, winner of the THIS National Children's Medal, aboard Qualitat. Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography



Sandra Zimmerli and Zaza
Sandra Zimmerli rode Zaza to the win in the \$10,000 North American Junior/Amateur Jumper Challenge Cup and the Junior/Amateur Jumper championship for owner River Farm Sporthorses. Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography



Christopher Payne and Show Me
Christopher Payne and Show Me, winners of the Future Hunter 5 & Under championship. Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography

Major equestrian victories were awarded to Katherine Strauss in the Private Tutoring Services North American Junior Equestrian Championships, to Allison Fithian in both the Ariat National Adult Medal Final and the North American Adult Amateur Equestrian Championships, and to Alexa Aureliano in the Taylor Harris Insurance Services (THIS) National Children's Medal Final.

To learn more about the Capital Challenge Horse Show, visit www.capitalchallenge.org.



Jane Gaston and Because
Jane Gaston and Because share a moment in the ring after being named the Amateur-Owner 36 & Over 3'6" Hunter champions. Photo by Jump Media



Lindsey Tomeu and Bonapart
Lindsey Tomeu of Wellington, FL, won the \$10,000 Children's/Adult Jumper Challenge and the Best Adult Amateur Jumper Rider Award riding Bonapart. Photo by Jump Media

