

Text by: **Emily Riden/Jump Media**
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THE ONES TO WATCH

Julia Tops

Tops is a familiar surname on the international jumping scene, thanks in large part to Dutch Olympic team gold medallist and founder of the Longines Global Champions Tour, Jan Tops. Now there is another rider putting the Tops name on scoreboards around the globe, 20-year-old Julia Tops. The daughter of Jan and Canadian jumping team veteran, Tani Zeidler, Julia is following in both of her parents' footsteps and achieving success in the competition arena, all while simultaneously carving out her own unique path.

Equestrian Pursuits

With two parents actively involved in the equestrian industry it is no surprise that Julia got an early start in the saddle. She was sitting on the back of a horse with her mom well before she could walk and then advanced quickly through the ranks on both ponies and horses. At the age of 14, Julia won the Canadian Equestrian Team (CET) Medal Western Regional Final based on her equitation aptitude. That same year, she competed in her first national-level grand prix. Although her parents separated when she was young, they have continued to be the greatest supporters of Julia's equestrian pursuits. Julia currently competes with Sire One, an 11-year-old Italian Sport Horse gelding (Silverstone x Ahorn) co-owned by Jan and her mother's Zeidler Farm Canada Ltd., and Delacroix AS, a seven-year-old Oldenburg gelding (Douglas x Landwind II) owned by Zeidler Farm Canada Ltd. and Tops Horse Trading BV. Julia also competes with India Blue ZF, a 12-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare (Mr. Blue x Calvados IV). India Blue ZF is a product of Zeidler Farm's highly successful jumping

breeding operation based just down the road from Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Canada. "It's been great to watch my mom's vision come to fruition," said Julia of her mom's decision to launch the Zeidler Farm breeding program in the early 2000s. "Both of my parents are great horse people, and my mom has been really inspiring to watch as she creates her own legacy through our homebreds."

Excellence Outside of the Ring

Seeing her parents tenaciously pursue their own visions and goals, including her father's development of the wildly successful Longines Global Champions Tour, has motivated Julia to similarly pursue her own dreams and ambitions, including those outside of the show ring. At the University of Toronto, Julia isn't known as an international jumping competitor with wins on the Global Champions Tour. Rather, she is identified as a hard-working student, a sister in the university's chapter of the Delta Delta Delta sorority, and as a Co-Chair for the G7 Research Group, dedicated to studying compliance to goals put in place at the annual G7 Summit. Currently in her fourth and final year of university studies, Julia is pursuing a double major in International Relations and Contemporary Asian Studies. While her parents have each continued careers directly within the equestrian industry, it's their business prowess – and their differing geographical locations – that led Julia to her areas of study. "With my mom being Canadian and my dad being Dutch, I travelled a lot between Europe and Canada growing up," said Julia. "My mom loves to travel. She loves adventure and we

have visited a bunch of different countries, and my dad took me along when he travelled for work. That really exposed me to what international relations has to offer." Julia hopes to ultimately put her academic pursuits to use with a career in international development or international law while also incorporating her passion for jumping. Balancing academics or a career with riding competitively is a difficult task, but it's one that Julia is adept at, thanks in part to the wholehearted support of her parents. "I believe that Julia is capable of competing at the top level of jumping in addition to excelling at her university studies thanks to her mindset," said Tani. "She is very good at time management and prioritizing. She is able to decide what is important, what to put time into, and what can wait. This allows her the ability to do everything, and Jan and I both try to give her an abundant support system. I've always told Julia not to listen to other people telling her what she can or can't do. Our minds are capable of doing much more than we give them credit for. I've always instilled in her the belief that she that can go far beyond what anyone says she can do." Following her university graduation, Julia is unsure what the future holds for her in the sport, but by taking her mother's advice to heart, she is likely to continue making both the Tops and Zeidler Farm names notable ones in the jumping world. "I don't think I could live my life without riding being a part of it," confirmed Julia. "I'm not sure whether it will play as big of a role as it does right now, but I credit a lot of where I am today to my parents and to riding. It will be a part of my life, in some form, forever, and I thank them for that." <