

Yeager Rises Up To Claim Washington Equitation Final

A longtime partnership with her own Copperfield 39 helps her capture her biggest victory to date.

BY KIERAN PAULSEN AND TORI REPOLE

A strong bond with Copperfield 39 helped Elli Yeager win the Lindsay Maxwell Charitable Fund WIHS Equitation Final at the Washington International. EMILY STAKEM PHOTO



The lights dimmed in the Capital One Arena as the top three riders in the Lindsay Maxwell Charitable Fund WIHS Equitation Final walked in under a spotlight. Only the judges knew who would take the coveted blue. Brian Moggre, Coco Fath and Elli Yeager lined up and waited. Moggre was called first, in third place, and then Fath and Yeager—who both train with Stacia Madden of Beacon Hill Show Stables in Colts Neck, New Jersey—held their breath.

More than 2,500 miles away, at Oaks Christian School in Yeager's hometown of Westlake Village, California, Yeager's friends gathered around a small screen at their lunch table and crossed their fingers. The arena erupted in cheers when Yeager was left standing alone, and in the darkened stands her father, Lou Yeager, rejoiced.

Elli topped the class aboard her longtime partner, Copperfield 39. It was her first overall win in a major equitation final, and at 16 years old it came sooner than she'd anticipated.

"I didn't think this was ever going to happen," said Elli. "I'm so grateful that it happened here, at my favorite horse show, with my favorite horse. It's better than I could have asked for. He's been super all week. Even when we got here he felt spot on, and that's given me a lot of confidence through the week. He was perfect. I couldn't have asked for more."

Elli led after the hunter phase, dropped to fourth after the jumper phase, and swapped mounts with Fath for the work-off. They'd switched once before, in a lesson in Florida, and Madden was ready with advice for how to ride each horse.

"I was so thrilled she was able to ride Class Action," Madden said. "He's a top horse and a very similar ride to 'Copper.'"

Elli impressed judges Brian Lenehan, Anne Kursinski, Mike Rosser and Steve Wall with a smooth, tidy round for a final score of 279.25, a single point above Fath.

Elli started training with Madden three years ago. She first expressed interest in horses when she was 2 and

went on a pony ride at a local fair. When her father tried to take her out of the saddle at the end of the ride, Elli screamed in protest.

"He knew he had to let me ride, even at that young age," Elli said.

She started taking lessons at a western barn near her home but switched to English once she had the basics down. Her debut in the show ring came in leadline classes, and she's been chasing blues ever since, first under the instruction of Karen Healey and then under Madden. Elli spent the last 1 1/2 years living with her father in New York City, where they moved to be closer to Madden and the show circuit on the East Coast.

But New York wasn't the right fit for Elli. She was attending online school to accommodate her training schedule and missed seeing her friends and classmates, so she moved back to California a few weeks before the Washington International Horse Show got underway on Oct. 23-28 in downtown Washington, District of Columbia.

"I wanted a separation between horses and real life," Elli said. She's considering a career in science, and she's particularly interested in human anatomy.

But she's also a serious equestrian, and when she set the goal of riding and winning at the Winter Equestrian Festival (Florida) Healey insisted Madden was the best person to get her there.

"I was always really into showing; I got my first pony at 4 or 5," Elli said. "My dad would take me [to the barn] every day, and it was just fun for me. It still is. I was intimidated by Stacia at first, but now we're really close. She's like a mom figure."

Copper, a 12-year-old Holsteiner (Crawford—Pedeka), has also become part of the family, as Elli was only 10 when she started riding the chestnut gelding.

"Over the years I've grown about 10 inches," joked Elli, who is now 5'10". "I would grow like two inches, get used to that, then grow another two inches, and it was just hard to keep relearning my balance and everything. But [Copper's] always been the same.

**LINDSAY MAXWELL
CHARITABLE FUND
WIHS EQUITATION
FINAL**

Washington, D.C.—Oct. 27

RIDER	HOMETOWN
1. Elli Yeager	Westlake Village, Calif.
2. Coco Fath	Fairfield, Conn.
3. Brian Moggre	Flower Mound, Texas
4. Emma Kurtz	Hudson, Ohio
5. Alexandra Worthington	Las Vegas, Nev.
6. Madison Goetzmann	Skaneateles, N.Y.
7. McKayla Langmeier	East Granby, Conn.
8. Grady Lyman	San Diego, Calif.
9. Ava Stearns	Chilmark, Mass.
10. Sam Walker	Nobleton, Ont., CAN
40 riders competed.	

He always has his game face on. He's never let me down, and he's been the best horse I could ask for."

Elli and Copper won a section of the ASPCA Maclay at the Devon Horse Show (Pennsylvania) and claimed the R.W. "Ronnie" Mutch Equitation Championship there, as well as contesting all the big equitation finals this fall.

"[Elli] always had a tremendous amount of feel and an excellent relationship with her horse," Madden said. "We've just been working on really trying to tidy up the focus. She's so tall and has gone through a lot of growth spurts, so we've worked a lot on her strength and style. She was really on her game as soon as we got to the horse show. She had momentum from the first round and just kept it going into the ride-off. She makes a real effort to keep up with riding and school, so I was glad to see her riding hasn't suffered from incorporating school in again."

Elli was quick to attribute her accomplishments to Copper, who has even done double-duty teaching Lou to ride. (Elli says her dad's not half bad on a horse.)

"He's just awesome. I couldn't have done any of this without him," Elli said. "Before I get on before a class I always kiss a bracelet I wear for my friend Shelby Drazen, who passed away four years ago, and I kiss Copper. That seems to work!"

YOUNG ENTRY

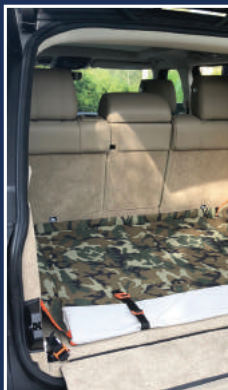


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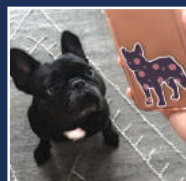
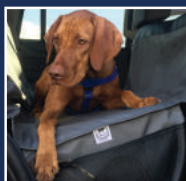


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Downey Takes On The City

Tessa Downey went back and forth from in-gate to ring, struggling to hold the growing pile of awards as her name lit up the big screen.

Not only did she win the medium pony championship aboard Anisette, but she also claimed the grand pony hunter tricolor, the medium pony hunter stake victory, and the Best Child Rider on a Pony award.

“We came here just hoping to jog in every class, and that was [also] our goal at [the Pennsylvania National Horse Show]; we just wanted to be consistent,” said Downey, 13, Houston.

Of the seven classes Downey and the 12-year-old Welsh Pony cross mare (Cusop Jovial—Northwind Katrina) contested in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, they won all but two. “Then we go [to Washington], and this happens,” she continued. “We’re over the moon.”

Anisette saw victory as an opportunity to munch away on the nearby floral arrangements during each presentation, and she gladly modeled

Tessa Downey and Anisette collected a slew of tricolors at the Washington International Horse Show, including the medium pony hunter championship, grand pony hunter championship and the Best Child Rider on a Pony award. KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO

as Downey's family took a gallery of photos with the various coolers, boxes of cupcakes and awards.

"She's spunky, and she doesn't have the best manners," said Downey. "She wants to be the best. You don't have to tell her. We got her in November of last year. We were friends with the owners while Caroline Signorino was leasing her, and the owners [told us] how great she was and how she'd be such a great fit for us. We decided to try her right after Capital Challenge [Maryland]. Caroline showed her here and was fantastic, so we said, 'That's the pony for us.'"

Downey has trained with Peter Pletcher for 2 ½ years, and at home they do an array of rollback exercises to prepare for the tests of the handy.

"Going into the handy I knew exactly what track I was going to take, exactly how I was going to take it, what kind of canter I needed going in, and how I needed to come out," said Downey.

Downey has competed at the Washington International for the past three years, and she loves the novelty of showing in downtown D.C.

"We're in the middle of the city; that's probably my favorite part," she said. "You forget something, and your hotel is 20 feet away."

Triple Threat

For most of her life Ashley Vogel stuck to the comforts of the hunter ring. That was, until 2016, when she added jumpers to her résumé, and in the spring of this year she decided to give equitation a go after receiving repeated nudges from trainer Jeff Wirthman.

"My trainer has always been very big in the equitation world, and he has always been big in encouraging me to do it," said Vogel, 17, Mequon, Wisconsin. "I quickly

► Learning From The Best

Eliza Kimball has loved animals since she was small. She grew up with the constant companionship of dogs, cats and fish. When she was 10 her mother suggested she try riding, so she started taking lessons at First Blue LLC in Bridgehampton, New York. Four years later she made her debut on the A circuit, and two years after that she rode Available Ohio to victory in the \$10,000 WIHS Children's Jumper Championship at the Washington International Horse Show.

Kimball, 16, hails from New York City. She started focusing on jumpers two years ago, shortly before she began training with Ken and Emily Smith of Ashland Farms in Lexington, Kentucky, and Wellington, Florida. This year was her first time competing at Washington, so she brought an experienced partner to build her confidence.

Available Ohio knows his way around the Capital One Arena. The 16-year-old Selle Français gelding (Flipper D'Elle—Urenice De Baugy) won the \$10,000 WIHS Children's Jumper Championship last year under Carly Hoft, who now leases him out, and Kimball's had the ride since May.

"He's pretty lazy at home and can definitely be grumpy, but he knows when it's important and when to rise to the occasion, which is exactly what he did today," Kimball said. "We won a class the first week I was trying him, and I just knew he was a winner. He's always determined to go the fastest and be competitive. He has a great personality, and he's willing to take care of me no matter what."

Kimball attends the Grace Church School in downtown Manhattan.

"I go after school every single day to ride, and every spare moment I'm either riding or thinking about riding," she said. "[Going to] traditional high school makes [showing] a little harder than [if I was] going to online school, but it also pushes me to work really hard to catch up to everyone else."

But Kimball was the one to catch at Washington. She topped a field of 18 other competitors in the jump-off with "Ohio."

"Having one more show under my belt definitely helps," Kimball said. "You get a better understanding of how to keep calm, deal with the difficult hours and balance homework with showing. Ohio helped teach me to stay calm. I'll be sad to see him go in a few weeks when my lease is up."



Available Ohio defended his \$10,000 WIHS Children's Jumper championship title, this time with Eliza Kimball aboard at the Washington International. KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO

▶ YOUNG ENTRY



Ashley Vogel rode Legacy to win the small junior hunter, 16-17, division, Best Child Rider on a Horse award, and the grand champion junior hunter at the Washington International. SHAWN MCMILLEN PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO

qualified for [the Dover Saddlery/USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final and the ASPCA Maclay National Championship], and we weren't really expecting it. We just wanted me to get in the ring, so it helped my hunters and jumpers. Everything worked out so fast, and we just kept going with it. I've been really excited with how it's been happening so far."

And those extra equitation rounds also paid off in the hunter ring at Washington, where she earned the small junior hunter, 16-17, division championship, the Best Child Rider on a Horse award, and the grand junior hunter tricolor riding Legacy, a 10-year-old warmblood gelding of unrecorded breeding.

"Everyone kept coming up to me like, 'You have a really good shot at [winning grand],' " said Vogel. "I was trying really hard not to crack under pressure, and my trainer said, 'Just go have fun with it,' and that's exactly what I did. Everything worked out in our favor."

Vogel started riding "Leo" in March of 2017, and the seasoned junior hunter helped her get comfortable in the 3'6" division. "He's the best; he's such a character," said Vogel. "I'm really excited where we're going right now because we've really started to click this year.

"He's very quirky," she added. "He loves food and attention at the barn. He's really cute, and when he lays down in his stall he likes you to be in there and spend time with him and give him scratches and stuff. He's very sweet." 🐾



Kennedy McCauley's ride on Zersina won her the \$7,500 Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Classic and the Shalanno Style of Riding award at the Washington International. KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO

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► **Tidbits**

► **SAMANTHA TAKACS**, 13, Oldwick, New Jersey, contested the WIHS Pony Equitation Final for the first time in 2017. She drew first in the order and went off course. After that disappointment, she didn't think she'd have a chance at redemption in 2018 because she lacked a mount. But her friend Caroline Signorino changed that. Signorino is leasing **STORYTELLER**, a 15-year-old German Sport Pony of unrecorded breeding who is well known in the winner's circle, and when she heard Takacs needed a ride for the equitation final she offered "Story."

"I've never jumped him before today," said Takacs, who trains with Dave Belford and Chris Payne of New Hope Farm in Batavia, Ohio. She rode Story for the first time that morning, and she immediately felt like it was a good match, but that confidence wavered in the warm-up.

"I wasn't sure how it was going to go," Takacs said. "But my trainer told me to have fun and try my best. Once I got in the ring I knew we could do it."

► **LILY POLLIN** had some mental baggage to contend with as she entered the ring for the \$10,000 WIHS Children's Hunter Championship. In 2017 during her first ride at the Washington International, Pollin fell off in the championship. As she returned to the Capital One Arena this year, she was feeling the pressure to prove herself.

"I was very nervous showing here," she said. "I pretended I wasn't showing, walked around, didn't learn the course until late, and that helped."

Pollin's strategy paid off with the winning scores on **PURA VIDA**, the 9-year-old Swedish Warmblood she began leasing two years ago from owner Katie Austensen.

"The first course I went in and was really nervous, but he took care of me," said Pollin, 15. "The second course I went in just wanting to have fun because I was so happy.

"He's perfect. He's the best horse ever," she continued. "I love showing here. I've been coming here and watching my mom since I was little. I think it's really fun to be able to ride in the city and the Capital One Arena."

Pollin's mother, Kirsten Pollin, also competed this year at WIHS, riding in the amateur-owner hunter, 36 and over, division.

Lily rides with Patty Foster and Mary Lisa Leffler of Rolling Acres Farm in Brookeville, Maryland.

**WASHINGTON
INTERNATIONAL
PONY EQUITATION
CLASSIC FINAL
Washington, D.C.—Oct. 28**

RIDER	HOMETOWN
1. Samantha Takacs	Oldwick, N.J.
2. Kat Fuqua	Atlanta, Ga.
3. Tessa Downey	Houston, Texas
4. Mae Mannis	Woodbury, Conn.
5. Claire Campbell	Colchester, Pa.
6. Katie Triantos	McLean, Va.
7. Sterling Malnik	Ocean Ridge, Fla.
8. Emily Cleo	Bethel, Conn.
9. Calder Trotz	Memphis, Tenn.
10. Josephine Rose	Springfield, Ohio

25 riders competed.



▶ Washington International Junior

Washington, DC—Oct. 23-28.

SMALL PONY HUNTER CH: Bit Of Love, Betsee Parker.

RES: Benlea Mizzou, Aquitaine Equine.

MEDIUM PONY HUNTER CH: Anisette, Tessa Downey.

RES: Fox Creeks Curious George, The Lignelli Family.

LARGE PONY HUNTER CH: Brighton, Kat Fuqua.

RES: Caleche, Lola Head.

SMALL JR. HUNTER, 15 & UNDER CH: Boss, Laura Wasserman.

RES: Evermore, Gochman Sport Horse LLC.

SMALL JR. HUNTER, 16-17 CH: Legacy, Ashley

Consistent rounds earned **Augusta Iwasaki** and **Small Occasion** the large junior hunter, 15 and under, championship at the Washington International. *EMILY STAKEM PHOTO*

Kat Fuqua went home from the Washington International Horse Show with the large pony hunter championship aboard **Brighton** as well as a blue ribbon in the \$3,500 Large Pony Hunter Stake. *TORI REPOLE PHOTO*



Stella Wasserman and Boss continued their successful partnership by winning the small junior hunter, 15 and under, championship at the Washington International. *EMILY STAKEM PHOTO*



Vogel.

RES: A Million Reasons, Betsee Parker.

LARGE JR. HUNTER, 15 & UNDER CH: Small Occasion, Iwasaki & Reilly.

RES: Skyhawk, Laura Wasserman.

LARGE JR. HUNTER, 16-17 CH: Cartello Z, Caroline Lloyd.

RES: Tztargazer, Steve Schaefer.

LOW JR./AMATEUR-OWNER JUMPER CH: Zersina, Annabella Sanchez.

RES: Chopin Z, Grindstone Farm LLC.

WIHS REGIONAL HUNTER FINALS CH: Romulus, Jessica Smith.

RES: Rococo, Brittani Director.

WIHS REGIONAL HUNTER FINALS, PONY CH: Autumn Frost, McKenna Gregorio.

RES: Shenandoah Jasmine, Molly McLaughlin.

GRAND PONY HUNTER CH: Anisette, Tessa Downey.

HIGH-SCORE JR. OWNER/RIDER PONY: Anisette, Tessa Downey.

GRAND JR. HUNTER CH: Legacy, Ashley Vogel.

HIGH-SCORE JR. OWNER/RIDER HUNTER: Boss, Laura Wasserman.

SHALANNO STYLE OF RIDING AWARD: Kennedy McCaulley.

GOCHMAN STYLE OF RIDING AWARD: Kat Fuqua.

BEST CHILD RIDER, PONY: Tessa Downey.

BEST CHILD RIDER, HORSE: Ashley Vogel.



Ava Stearns and Cartello Z claimed the large junior hunter, 16-17, championship at the Washington International. TORI

REPOLE PHOTO

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Madden Looks Forward With Longines FEI Washington World Cup Victory

After missing out on a WEG team spot, she focuses on what comes next.

BY TORI REPOLE, KIERAN PAULSEN AND EMILY STAKEM

Hours before the \$135,000 Longines FEI Washington World Cup qualifier, six of the most influential people in modern day U.S. show jumping filed into a ground-level elevator at the Capital One Arena. The hum of the crowd penetrated

the elevator's doors as they opened to the concourse above, signaling the stationed employee to radio its arrival. U.S. Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland wore his sports coat, while the five riders who joined him donned seasoned white breeches and pinque coats. The team of McLain Ward,

In his first indoor competition since winning the 2018 Longines FEI World Cup Final, Breitling LS proved he's lost none of his edge with a victory in the \$135,000 Longines FEI Washington World Cup qualifier for Beezie Madden at the Washington International. TORI REPOLE PHOTO

Laura Kraut, Devin Ryan, Adrienne Sternlicht and Beezie Madden was en route to an autograph signing, all part of the post-FEI World Equestrian Games celebrations hosted at the Washington International Horse Show, held Oct. 23-28 in downtown Washington, District of Columbia.

Six weeks before Washington the U.S. team had clinched gold at the WEG in Mill Spring, North Carolina. And five weeks before that selectors announced the team, surprising show jumping fans across the country when Madden was named to the reserve position aboard 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood Darry Lou (Tangelo Van De Zuuthoeve—

**\$135,000
LONGINES FEI
WASHINGTON WORLD
CUP QUALIFIER
Washington, D.C.—Oct. 27**

HORSE/RIDER/ NATION	FAULTS	TIME	PURSE
1. Breitling LS/Beezie Madden/USA	0-0	30.74	\$33,750
2. Dougie Douglas/ Katherine Dinan/USA	0-0	32.93	27,000
3. Caracho 14/ Lucy Davis/ USA	0-0	33.44	20,250
4. Don't Touch Du Bois/Shane Sweetnam/ IRL	0-4	30.90	13,500

Also competed: 5. Confu/L. Kraut/USA, 4; 6. Catoki's Son Z/E. Ballard/CAN, 4; 7. HH Gigli's Girl/M. Ward/USA, 4; 8. Eddie Blue/D. Ryan/USA, 4; 9. Chamonix H/K. Cruciotti/USA, 4; 10. Alma Z/C. Hanley/IRL, 4; 11. Bokai/C. Tyree/USA, 4; 12. Quinta 106/M. Tromp/USA, 4; 13. Donna Speciale/L. Burr-Howard/USA, 4; 14. Dibatsja/B. Mändli/SUI, 4; 15. Quibelle/G. Bloomberg/USA, 5; 16. Cassinja S/C. Jacobs/USA, 7; 17. Brindis Bogibo/A. Welles/USA, 8; 18. Finou 4/A. Vale/USA, 8; 19. Glasgow De Muze/J. Torano/USA, 9; 20. Cornwall BH/A. Derbyshire/GBR, 12; 21. Victorio 5/A. McArdle/USA, 16; 22. Quarto Mail/A. Kocher/USA, 17; 23. Butterfly Tibri Z/L. Douglass/USA, 27; Cassandra/M. Cawley/USA, VW.



Venus, Nabab De Reve).

Rumors swirled that Breitling LS, Madden's Longines FEI World Cup Final winner from just a few months before in Paris, was out with an injury. People even whispered that Madden had taken herself out of contention, but those rumors were unfounded.

"I was very disappointed," said Madden, 54, Cazenovia, New York. "Obviously, we had a lot of depth on the team, and that was really Robert's decision to have me as the fifth. It was disappointing; it was a big goal for me for this year."

In April, the 12-year-old La Silla stallion Breitling looked like a top contender for the Games after winning the World Cup, which doubled as his introductory championship. But then he had a sub-par performance in the Longines FEI Nations Cup in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, taking rails in both rounds, and that was followed by Madden retiring him on course in a

grand prix class at the CHIO Aachen (Germany).

But Breitling (Quintero—Armonia, Acord II) was back on form for Spruce Meadows (Alberta), which took place two weeks before the WEG. He jumped two clean rounds in the Nations Cup there and carried that momentum forward to Washington, his first indoor competition since his World Cup victory. There Breitling topped a 24-horse field, beating four in the jump-off over Olaf Petersen's course in the \$135,000 Longines FEI Washington World Cup qualifier.

"He's had an outstanding year," said Madden. "We aimed him for Washington because he did well there last year, and it fit in his schedule. It's the last show of the year for him, so he gets a nice break before Wellington [Florida]."

And with the disappointment of being left off the WEG team firmly in the

Hunt Tosh's outstanding performance with Flamingo-K at the Washington International earned him the high performance hunter championship and the Protocol Trophy for his combined results from Devon, the Pennsylvania National and Washington.

KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO

rearview mirror, Madden is focused on adding another World Cup Final victory to her growing count in 2019. New ride Chic Hin D'Hyrencourt helped her score another World Cup qualifier win a week after Washington at the National Horse Show in Kentucky (see p. ??), and Darry Lou did a qualifying class at the Hampton Classic (New York).

"Last year I didn't know which horse I was taking until probably the middle of Wellington when [Breitling] showed he was on great form," said Madden. "I'll probably plan on the same thing. I'm trying to make them all eligible. I'll just have Coach left, and we'll see which ones are on the best form."

► HORSE SHOWS

And this year at Washington, Madden proved she's a true horsewoman out of the tack as well. She and her husband John Madden left their grooms at home and took care of Breitling's needs with the help of student Madison Goetzmann, who was also competing at the show.

"We had one horse there for the week, and it just seemed a little overload [to bring a groom]," said Beezie. "We had a lot of horses at home for the few people we had, and it was kind of fun to have something else to do."

Eight Years Later

In 2010 Hunt Tosh stood beside Lone Star and accepted the Protocol Trophy, which goes to the high performance hunter that earned the most points from Devon (Pennsylvania), the Pennsylvania National and Washington. Lone Star was also the Chronicle's 2010 Overall and Show Hunter Horse of the Year. He helped lift Tosh from the ranks of talented riders with limited recognition to keeping company with the sport's greats like John French and Scott Stewart.

"So many people have come up to him in the last year and said, 'I can't believe how well you're riding,'" said Hunt's wife, Mandy, in 2010. "But he's always ridden that well. Over the last 10 years, he's ridden the same, but the quality of horses has gotten much, much better. We'd never had horses in the barn for just him to show until Douglas [Wheeler] came along."

In 2018 Hunt accepted the Protocol Trophy again, this time while holding the reins of Flamingo-K, a mount owned by Douglas' sister-in-law Ceil Wheeler.

► Zero To Hero

Many of the champions crowned at the Washington International Horse Show started riding in hunter/jumper barns, honing their skills in paddock boots and garters. But Allison Cederberg, who won the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Hunter Championship, had a different introduction.

"I grew up riding on the Arabian circuit," said Cederberg, 22. Her mother, Dru Cederberg, competed on the Arabian show circuit for more than 20 years, and Allison was attending shows before she could speak.

"I caught the horse show bug early," Allison said. "I started riding with the Desiderios in Arabian hunt seat equitation when I was 14 or 15 to do the Arabian hunt seat on the flat. Then they started getting into the warmbloods, and I decided to do hunters with them too."

Allison continued to keep a foot in both show rings while earning her journalism degree from Colorado State University, but now she's focusing on the hunters before entering a masters program for human resource management.

"It got difficult [to do both] after I graduated, so I chose the hunters," Allison said. "I love the atmosphere at the horse shows, especially somewhere like the Winter Equestrian Festival [in Wellington, Florida]. I love how in the hunter world you get four big finals and three indoors. In the Arabians you just get one big



Allison Cederberg and Zero Tolerance claimed the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Hunter Championship at the Washington International. KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO

national final."

Allison grew up in Montana and now lives in Fort Collins, Colorado. She makes the trip across the country to ride her 14-year-old Dutch Warmblood Zero Tolerance (Roven—Kim), and he lives with the Desiderios at their Tranquility Farm in Chester, New Jersey.

Allison imported "Zero" from the Netherlands six years ago after watching him go on a video, and things got off to a rocky start when they met in person.

"We both had to learn to be tolerant

of each other," Allison said. "[Zero's] name definitely relates to his personality, and we both struggled with confidence issues in the beginning of our partnership. I couldn't give him the confidence he needed, and he couldn't give it to me. He was very sensitive when we got him, and I wasn't good at riding that kind of horse, so I had to learn his quirks, and he had to get a little bit of a thicker skin. Over the years we've just both grown together, and now we trust each other to know it's always going to be all right."

“Red,” a 13-year-old Belgian Warmblood (Diamant De Semilly—Cilia Van Den Bisschop), earned the high performance championship at Washington and took reserve in the division the week before at the Pennsylvania National.

Ceil also owns Hunt’s other Washington standout, Bastogne. The 6-year-old warmblood gelding of unrecorded breeding won the grand hunter champion title as well as the grand green hunter championship and the 3’6” green hunter championship.

Hunt attributed his continued success to the enduring partnerships with his owners, such as the Wheeler family and Betsee Parker.

“I think I’m just very lucky,” said Hunt, 40, of Alpharetta, Georgia. “They’ve been great owners; we’ve been lucky to have phenomenal horses. Of course everyone out there is looking for good horses, and I think you have to be lucky to come across them. I’ve been lucky enough to have great ones in my career, and whenever you have a great one and think, ‘Wow, I’ll never have a horse like that again in my career,’ something else comes along to surprise you.”

But despite his rise to the top of the hunter rankings, Hunt’s life hasn’t changed all that much in the past eight years. He keeps about the same number of horses and clients as he always has. He’s careful not to overload his schedule so he can give each horse and rider his full attention. He still takes it easy at home, rarely jumping, and makes sure the horses enjoy lots of hacks and trail rides.

“Once you get them to a point where they know their job, you just have to keep them mentally and physically happy,” Hunt said. “The horses all teach you something; they all have different personalities and rides and give you different experiences. I would like to say it gets easier, not the training part necessarily, but having a good horse and knowing what it can do. The hardest part then is making sure they can perform at the best of their ability, and they have the chances to be successful. The most stressful part of it is staying out of their way!”

The biggest change in Hunt’s career has come as his daughter, Maddie Tosh, has started to win major titles. Now 12, Maddie was champion in the small

pony division at Washington aboard Bit Of Love. She earned the same accolade with the 12-year-old Welsh Pony cross (English Lad—Miss Pretty) at the USEF Pony Finals (Kentucky) earlier this year.

“[Maddie showing] adds more goals to our plate and a few more ponies to the barn,” Hunt said. “Indoors is different now. We used to just do the pros and maybe a few amateurs, then

head home, but now we stick around for those pony divisions. I could not be more proud of her. Of course I want my horses to do well, but it’s always more stressful for me watching her go in the ring. She works so hard and truly wants to be successful. The amount of knowledge she has now compared to what I knew at that age is astonishing. To watch her be so young and be so



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After leaving a demanding professional career outside the horse world, Stephanie King has jumped back into horse sport, and she won the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Jumper Championship aboard her own Co-Starr at the Washington International.

KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO

involved with not just her ponies but my professional horses is amazing. She can watch a class and judge it just as well as anyone else."

Hunt has been Maddie's primary trainer, along with his wife, Mandy. He said the father-daughter, coach-student dynamic isn't always easy, but it's worth the trouble.

"[Teaching Maddie is] truly the most special thing there is," Hunt said. "We laugh; we have good and bad days. Not every day is rosy and cheerful, but it's been fun. We have a great relationship, and I love helping her. I think she appreciates what I say as much as a 12-year-old girl can appreciate what her dad says, but we have a blast doing it. Mandy is also involved, so it's a true family business, and I couldn't ask for anything else."

While Hunt is thrilled to see her thriving in the horse industry, he would also support Maddie if she chose a different career path.

"I was hoping she'd be a neurosurgeon and support me," he joked. "What I can see so far is that she loves the horses, and she loves the work, so that might change, but as involved as she is now and as good as she's becoming I can't imagine her doing anything else."

Co-Starr Enjoys A Leading Role

Stephanie King grew up riding under the watchful eyes of her trainer mother, Pam Allen. They frequented the hunter/jumper circuits on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, and on the weekends they weren't showing their hunters, they rode Quarter Horses in local team penning competitions.

Addison Gierkink was all smiles after winning the \$15,000 High Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Classic and the division championship with Erco Van T Roosakker at the Washington International.

TORI REPOLE PHOTO

Now 33, King hasn't done much western riding lately, but she did win the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Jumper Championship aboard her own Co-Starr.

"My mom [trained] up until a few years ago," King said. "Now she sells farm real estate in Ocala [Florida]. It was a fun experience learning how to ride from my mom and going to all the horse shows together as mother and daughter. We had a really good time. She's always been a huge inspiration to me as far as my riding has gone. Now my mom rides reining horses."

King has stayed rooted in the hunters and jumpers, though she took an extended hiatus to pursue college and spend some time as a non-horse professional.

"My mom was pretty insistent on me going to school," King said. "When I was younger I wanted to follow in her footsteps and go be a trainer, but she was firm about me having a true college experience. I'm glad I did that, and I did ride in college, just not competitively. I loved English, and I hated math, so I actually have a double major in English literature and journalism."

King graduated into a bleak job market, so she sent out dozens of résumés hoping to find anything that would pay her bills and help her gain experience. She started as a receptionist at an accounting firm, and she rose in the company's ranks to become the director of marketing. After years of long, demanding hours (many lovingly spent, but not all) King felt the lure of horses once again. She met her husband, Jeff King, while working on the board of a children's museum, and after they married three years ago Jeff encouraged Stephanie to "follow the horses and enjoy what you're doing."

"I just really wanted to step back, take some time for myself and get back to riding," said Stephanie, who now lives in St. Augustine, Florida. "I'm very fortunate to be with someone who allows me to focus 100 percent on my riding right now."

Chuck and Dana Waters of Waterworks Farm in Sparr, Florida, handpicked Co-Starr (Promise—Ragazza Drum Van Ravott)

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► A Bittersweet Win

During the 2017 Washington International Horse Show, Lindsay Maxwell piloted Technicolor to the grand amateur-owner hunter championship and the amateur-owner hunter, 18-35, championship. She also earned the leading amateur-owner hunter rider award that year.

“[Washington was] one of my favorite memories that I’d had with [Technicolor] as far as competitions go. It was definitely one of our most successful shows,” said Maxwell.

In May of 2018, 8-year-old Technicolor died of a cardiac event after being diagnosed with cardiomyopathy and related chronic renal failure.

Maxwell knew returning to the Capital One Arena this year without her beloved gelding would be difficult, but she channeled her emotions to win the low amateur-owner hunter, 18-35, championship and the grand low amateur-owner hunter championship on Belgravia.

“It’s such an honor to win any class [at Washington], and to be able to go in there with Belgravia and win all four and get grand was really special,” said Maxwell.

She knew her nerves might affect her in the amateur-owners, so she rode High Society in the 3’6” green hunters to get her feet wet. Young professional Geoffrey Hesslink usually pilots High Society in the open divisions.

“It was intended as sort of a warm-up for me, and then we ended up winning the handy, which was really fun and exciting because the top horses in the country are in that division,” said Maxwell, Aiken, South Carolina.

“All the way leading up to [Washington] and then at the show was very emotional,” she continued. “I have great memories here with Technicolor, and losing him was very tough. I got a bracelet made of his tail, so he was kind of with me there. I wore it every day.”

In honor of Technicolor, the Lindsay Maxwell Charitable Fund debuted the Technicolor Award, given this year to Becky Gochman and Catch Me. The award goes to an amateur-owner hunter that best exemplifies the style and presence of a classic hunter.

“[Catch Me is] a fantastic hunter, so it worked out perfectly,” said Maxwell. “I’m thrilled that he got the inaugural award.”

In addition to the Technicolor Award, the Lindsay Maxwell Charitable Fund was also a title sponsor for the WIHS Equitation Final. Maxwell created the fund three years ago to give back to the equestrian community.

“It was really special to sponsor the Washington International Equitation Finals. That’s such a prestigious class and such an important part in every junior’s career if they want to move forward in the sport,” said Maxwell. “So being able to support young riders and having the grant to help kids who might not otherwise be able to financially afford those finals, to help them go is something I’m really proud of.”



Lindsay Maxwell overcame her emotions to win the low amateur-owner hunter grand championship with Belgravia at the Washington International.

EMILY STAKEM PHOTO

for Stephanie four years ago, then suggested she approach Brooke and Chad Watridge of Ridgewater Show Stables in St. Augustine for training.

“He has a bit of a different training program, and they understand that really well,” said Stephanie. “They also know my goals; we sit down and write them out and so far have accomplished them.”

By “different training program” Stephanie means that “Ringo,” an 11-year-old Belgian Warmblood, never jumps at home, and some days he doesn’t even canter, opting instead for long trot sets.

“Our focus at home is fitness, just leaving him alone and making sure he’s strong without making him fit into a certain mold,” Stephanie said. “When he gets to shows he’s relaxed and happy. He knows his job. It’s harder for me because sometimes I’m like, ‘I haven’t jumped anything in a while!’”

Stephanie’s goals for next year include trying to defend her Washington title, but she also wants to visit venues like the Rolex Central Park Horse Show in New York City because the bigger the atmosphere, the brighter Co-Starr shines, which is fitting given his name.

“He came with a very long Belgian name,” Stephanie said. “Chuckie sold him to me saying, ‘I’ll sell you this horse as long as you change his name!’ It took a while to come up with it. His grandfather is Darco, so I wanted something with Co. His mom is Ragazza Drum, so I thought, ‘OK, he came over from England ... drummer ... Ringo Starr ... Co-Starr!’”

No Blurred Lines

“Keep it moving,” was the memo Addison Gierkink got from trainer John Brennan as she walked through the warm-up ring atop Erco Van T Roosakker (Darco—Babbe Van’t Roosakker, Kannan). The pair had won the \$15,000 High Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Classic only moments before, which earned them the division championship, but since “Erco” is a breeding stallion, now wasn’t the time to stop to chat. “He’s very well-behaved, but we don’t want to put him in a situ-

ation where he could be bad,” said Gierkink, 22, Boston. “We’re careful about making sure I stay out the way of other horses and give him the space he needs, especially in a small schooling area like it is at Washington. It’s important to keep show time separate from breeding, so we never give him the indication that there’s any blurring of lines.”

The 14-year-old Belgian Warmblood has more than 130 offspring, and Gierkink bred her retired mares Tiffany and Lady Macbeth DH to him this year.

“The horses are getting so expensive nowadays that we have some really great ones for breeding, and it’s a nice thing to do with the mares if they can’t quite show anymore,” said Gierkink. “It’s fun to see two horses that you’ve competed have a cute little foal and see how they look similar or have similar personalities or characteristics.”

For the Gierkink family, breeding is a shared interest that stems from patriarch Robert Gierkink’s childhood on a Thoroughbred breeding farm. He passed his love of horses down to Addison and her sister Kendra, and their mother Tia Gierkink began riding a few years ago. Born in Boston, Addison and her family moved to the Netherlands when she was 2. They relocated to London four years later before moving back to Boston when she was 10.

“Every time we moved to a new place my dad was like, ‘OK, maybe this is just a phase, [and] we’re going to wait to find a barn,’ ” said Addison. “My sister and I would just beg my dad for months to find a new barn whenever we moved, so then he was like, ‘OK, maybe we’re a little more stuck in this than I thought.’ ”

Now a senior at Brown University (Rhode Island), Addison is studying with a concentration in business, entrepreneurship and organization.

In 2017, Addison was in the market for a horse to jump the larger tracks, and trainer Missy Clark got wind of Erco through her contacts at Stephex Stables in Belgium.

“He has the most scope of any horse I’ve ever ridden,” said Addison. “He’s the perfect amateur horse because he’s totally calm and cool, but he tries so hard. He’s a real competitor. He’ll always go out and jump his best for me.”

During the winter Addison will split

her time between Wellington with Clark and Brennan’s North Run team and Rhode Island. After graduating from college, she hopes to contest a few grand prix classes before going on to study industrial design and heading into a non-riding career.

“I always want to [compete] at some

sort of a level,” said Addison. “With school I think I’ve been able to balance it pretty well, so that’s something that I’m just looking to maintain at this point. The great thing about riding is it’s a lifetime sport, so even if it ebbs and flows for a little because of my career, that’s OK. I’m not going anywhere.” 🐾



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▶ HORSE SHOWS



Daniel Geitner took home the 3'9" green hunter championship at the Washington International aboard Walk The Moon. KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO



Jef Lauwers and Sutherland won the amateur-owner hunter, 18-35, championship at the Washington International. EMILY STAKEM PHOTO

▶ Tidbits

▶ **SCOTT STEWART** said the highlight of his week at the Washington International Horse Show was scoring a 94 aboard **CATCH ME** in the high performance hunter stake, but it was difficult to choose from his assortment of achievements. Stewart won the high performance conformation hunter championship aboard **PRIVATE LIFE**, took the green conformation championship with **HARVARD HALL**, was reserve champion in the high performance hunters with Catch Me and also grabbed reserve in the 3'6" green hunter division on **CORDOLENSKY** and in the 39" green division on **LUSTER**. Not to mention winning the Leading Hunter Rider award for the third consecutive year.

"I was happy with all my horses," Stewart said. "Especially Harvard Hall; he was great at [the Pennsylvania National] last week, and this week he just went a little bit

better even though this is his first time at Washington. He can be a little sensitive. He gets cranky about people around him, so you have to keep him happy."

▶ In 1959, **JOE FARGIS** made his debut at the Washington International Horse Show selling show programs. Fifty-nine years and two Olympic gold medals later, Fargis was inducted into the horse show's Hall of Fame.

Washington was a part of Fargis' competitive career through the decades, first in the pony and junior divisions and then in the professional classes. He rode in many a Nations Cup at Washington beginning in the 1970s, and he won the President's Cup Grand Prix aboard Touch Of Class in 1984, the same year the pair earned individual and team gold at the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Fargis also has spent time judging and volunteering as a member of the WIHS board over the last five decades.

▶ The Washington International Horse Show is a significant hike from Los Angeles, where **VIRGINIA FOUT** is based, but she clears her calendar every year when indoor season comes around. Her family hails from Middleburg, Virginia, and has attended Washington for as long as she can remember. Coming back to this historic show as an adult feels extra special for Fout, and for the third consecutive year she was champion in the low amateur-owner hunters, 36 and over, with **CARMA**.

Fout bought Carma in 2016 from Montana Coady following an injury that almost ended his showing career.

"It was sort of a 50-50 shot if he was going to get back into it, and we gave it a shot," said Fout. "And here we are. It's been a great partnership."



Becky Gochman and Catch Me claimed the amateur-owner hunter, 35 and over, championship, the grand amateur-owner championship and also received the inaugural Technicolor Award.

EMILY STAKEM PHOTO

► **Washington International**

Washington, DC—Oct. 23-28.

GREEN CONFORMATION HUNTER CH: Harvard Hall, Betsee Parker.

RES: Gavroche, Summerhouse Farm LLC.

HIGH PERFORMANCE CONFORMATION HUNTER CH: Private Life, Betsee Parker.

RES: Boss, Laura Wasserman.

3'6" GREEN HUNTER CH: Bastogne, Ceil Wheeler.

RES: Cordolensky, Betsee Parker.

3'9" GREEN HUNTER CH: Walk The Moon, Lynn Seithel.

RES: Luster, Betsee Parker.

HIGH PERFORMANCE HUNTER CH: Flamingo-K, Ceil Wheeler.

RES: Catch Me, Gochman Sport Horse LLC.

AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 18-35 CH: Sutherland, Peter Pletcher.

RES: Everything Is Gucci, Christina Fisher.

AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 36 & OVER CH: Catch Me, Gochman Sport Horse LLC.

RES: Walk The Moon, Lynn Seithel.

LOW AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 18-35 CH: Belgravia, Lindsay Maxwell.

RES: My December, Legado Farms LLC.

LOW AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 36 & OVER CH: Carma, Virginia Fout.

RES: Argentus, Isalou Inc.

HIGH JR./AMATEUR-OWNER JUMPER CH: Erco Van T Roosakker, Kadley Holdings LLC.

RES Tie: Caroquados T, Isabella Baxter, Elusive, Thinkslikeahorse & Carola BH, Gochman Sport Horse LLC.

INTERNATIONAL OPEN JUMPER CH: Breittling LS, Abigail Wexner.

RES: Dougie Douglas, Grant Road Partners LLC.

GRAND GREEN HUNTER CH: Bastogne, Ceil Wheeler.

GRAND HUNTER CH: Bastogne, Ceil Wheeler.

LEADING HUNTER RIDER: Scott Stewart.

GRAND AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER CH: Catch Me, Gochman Sport Horse LLC.

LEADING AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER RIDER: Becky Gochman.

GRAND LOW AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER CH: Belgravia, Lindsay Maxwell.

LEADING LOW AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER RIDER: Lindsay Maxwell.

LEADING HUNTER OWNER: Betsee Parker.

LEADING INTERNATIONAL JUMPER OWNER: Abigail Wexner.

LEADING INTERNATIONAL JUMPER RIDER: Beezie Madden.

LEADING FOREIGN RIDER: Erynn Ballard.

LEADING UNDER 25 RIDER: Catherine Tyree.

GEORGE H. MORRIS STYLE OF RIDING AWARD: Beezie Madden.

LEADING LADY RIDER: Beezie Madden.

PROTOCOL TROPHY: Flamingo-K, Ceil Wheeler.



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