

Interscholastic Equestrian Association

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and teams participated in multiple competitions during regular season shows, regional finals and zone finals to qualify for the National Finals competition.

Stepping back into the spotlight and rising to the top of this year's National Finals was 2019 Leading Hunt Seat Rider, Riley Babb from TerryAllen Farms (Zone 1) in Terryville, CT. Babb secured a national title in 2018 when he won the Varsity Intermediate Over Fences Individual class. The IEA Leading Rider is selected from the highly competitive Varsity Open Championship class, where riders compete in two phases, over fences and on the flat. Beginning with 12 riders, judges Randy Neumann and Phillip Long, both United States Equestrian Federation "R" judges, whittled down their top choices with additional difficult testing of the top several riders. Joining Babb in the spotlight was Reserve Champion Varsity Open Championship rider Olivia Brown from Little Clovelly/C-Line Stables (Zone 3) in Easton, MD. Babb received \$1,000 in scholar-




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2019 Leading Hunt Seat Rider, Riley Babb.**

ship money from IEA as well as a host of awards and prizes from generous sponsors as well as opportunities for further competition and training with the National Collegiate Equestrian Association. Babb, coached by Samantha Borkoski, is also the first

male rider to earn the Leading Hunt Seat rider title.

Taking top honors in the Upper School Team competition was HRA-Foxtail Farm (Zone 3) from Virginia Beach, VA, coached by Dana Kiser and Sugi Dewan. Yinger Equestrian Team (Zone 5) out of Pataskala, OH, coached by Lindsay Yinger and Courtney Newbym, took the Middle School Team Championship. Reserve Champion for Upper School Team was Clover Grove (Zone 3) from Staunton, VA, coached by Luanne Leonard and Britni Cash. Reserve Champion Middle School Team went to Hanover Heritage Equestrian Center (Zone 3) from Hanover, VA, coached by Kimmie Lawhorn.

The IEA holds the trait of good sportsmanship in the highest regard, both for riders and coaches. Lauren Kamber from Milton Eagles Equestrian, Red Team (Zone 4) in Alpharetta, GA, took home the fifth Annual Coach Sportsmanship Award. Tara Wall from Criedmont Saddle Club in Bellingham, WA, (Zone 9) was awarded the Victor Hugo-Vidal Sportsmanship Award.

For more information on IEA and the full results, visit rideiea.org. 

Stacia Klein Madden Pony Club Clinic

Focuses on Effective Riding at All Levels

BY MOLLY SORGE/JUMP MEDIA

ELEVEN GIRLS DILIGENTLY brushed their ponies and horses and combed out their tails as they were tied to trailers parked in a field at Fine Idea Farm in Mt. Airy, MD, on April 27. A few of them carefully worked their pony's tail in a braid. Members of the Iron Bridge Hounds Pony Club (IBHPC), were preparing for a clinic with top hunter, jumper, and equitation trainer Stacia Klein Madden. "The girls have been so excited," said Theresa Riley, the mother of Ella Riley, one of the riders. "Everybody made sure their ponies were nice and clean. They polished their boots and cleaned their tack. It's great to see the girls come together as a team and be excited about

participating in something like this together."

IBHPC's winning entry in the video contest at the 2018 Washington International Horse Show Barn Night earned them this "Fundamentals in Equitation with Stacia Klein Madden" Clinic, presented by BarnManager. "The opportunity for these girls to have this is amazing; they would have never had this opportunity if it wasn't for the Washington International Horse Show and BarnManager people putting it together for us," said Carrie Roesler, the mother of another rider.

Madden, who won the 1987 ASPCA Maclay Finals, has trained national champions and equitation finals winners out of her Beacon Hill Show

Stables in Colts Neck, NJ. She taught five groups of the IBHPC riders, who ranged in age from seven to 13 and in level of riding from walk-trot to jumping three-foot. "It's really refreshing to teach at this level because you can see the kids get it so fast," Madden said. "They're like sponges, and they take in the knowledge so fast. When you're at a grass-roots level, you can see the improvement so much faster. When you're trying to work on that one or two percent of improvement, you don't get to see the results so dramatically. It's very gratifying!"

For each group, Madden kept the exercises simple, but focused on effective riding and the horses' obedience to the aids. "Be the pilot" was the theme of the day. "Air Force One is the most technologically advanced airplanes in the world, but it can't fly itself!" Madden said. "It still needs a pilot. Think of your horse as the plane, and you as the pilot. No matter what kind of horse it is, you have to

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Stacia Klein Madden Pony Club Clinic

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fly the plane. If they want to go off the course you planned, you have to correct it.”

With each group, Madden asked riders to test the horses' responsiveness to the aids, calling out for repeated canter-halt transitions and prompt upward transitions. She also focused on having the riders stay straight and halt their mounts after a jump instead of rushing and cutting their turns. Each rider showed marked improvement in the quality of their turns and pace with this exercise.

“I really liked the way she had us stop after the jumps. I'd never done that before, and I think it really worked well,” said Charlotte Milner, who rode Rocky in the clinic. “It helped relax him a lot. Rocky was definitely calmer toward the end. He started to calm down going down the lines because I think he knew we were going to stop after the jump and not go around the corner. I liked that she had a lot of different exercises that we

could try, so we weren't always doing the same thing. Some instructors will have you go on a circle over and over again, but she mixed it up and found different ways to get at the same point. I liked that a lot.”

Helping the riders control the horse's bend and track was also a focus for Madden. In one group, she set markers in each corner of the ring and asked the riders to circle around them, pointing out the correct bend. It helped the horses' balance and rhythm. While Madden used some exercises with each group, including stopping after the jump and navigating rails on the ground, she also found unique variations for each group of riders.

“I liked how it wasn't repeating the same things over and over; she changed it up. That was really helpful,” said Grace Strosnider, who rode Brandy in the clinic. “At home, I tend to repeat the same exercises over and over, but now I think I'll have some new ideas. She said a lot of the same stuff we've been working on, but I think it was good to hear it in another way. It was cool to ride with someone who has helped people at very high levels.”

Madden's dedication to helping the riders improve continued through the last group of the day, the walk-trot riders. When Waverly Smith's pony, Victoria, was anxious and spooking at the wind outside the indoor ring, Madden took the time to longe the pony for a bit. As she longed Victoria, she worked on the pony's obedience, emphasizing the need to respond to the reins and aids to move forward. It was a display of Madden's belief that horses need boundaries.

“Horses don't know the difference between right and wrong, so we have to give them very clear corrections and rewards to teach them what's right,” Madden said. After the longeing session, Victoria was much more compliant, and Smith was able to re-mount and trot over poles confidently with the pony.

“We've definitely seen the girls progress even in the limited time Stacia had with them, from picking up the canter in three seconds to keeping their eyes up over the jumps,” said Riley. “A lot of it was reinforcing some of the things they've learned, but they also learned a lot of new tips and tricks to become stronger riders.”



Stacia Klein Madden with Grace Strosnider on Brandy and Charlotte Milner on Rocky during the Fundamentals in Equitation clinic.

PHOTO: JUMP MEDIA