

WCHR West Coast Ones to Watch: Meet Three Developing Pros Currently Leading the WCHR Standings

BY EMILY RIDEN/JUMP MEDIA

Each year, the Capital Challenge Horse Show in Upper Marlboro, MD, attracts the country's top hunter horses and riders from all across the nation.

With the best of the best together in one place, the competition is stiff and can be daunting – especially for a young professional showing against the biggest names in the industry!

That was part of the motivation behind the creation of the World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) program's Developing Professional category and the annual WCHR Developing Pro Challenge, held each year at Capital Challenge.

"Capital Challenge is one of the biggest stages for the hunters," said professional Tara Metzner, who topped the WCHR Developing Pro Challenge in 2011 before going on to also win the WCHR Professional Challenge in 2014. "For a young, developing rider to go in the ring there following a Scott Stewart or a Liza [Boyd] can be super intimidating. To be able to have a class where you're still on a national stage, but that is specifically for developing pro riders where you're competing against your peers instead of those really seasoned riders, gives a nice opportunity for developing pros to really shine on that bigger stage."

Leading up to the WCHR Developing Pro Challenge, to be held this year on October 2 at Capital Challenge, riders qualify by earning points in the Green Hunters 3' and 3'3" and in the Performance Working Hunter 3'3" sections at WCHR member horse shows.

As the countdown to Capital Challenge begins, the WCHR Developing Pro standings are dominated by professionals hailing from the West Coast – six of the top eight riders, as of July, call California or Washington home.

Now, get to know three of these West Coast riders who may just be the ones to watch at this year's Capital Challenge – and in the show ring for years to come!

Gabriela Pattinson • Age: 21
Hometown: San Juan Capistrano, CA

Gabriela Pattinson started working for Devon Gibson at Seahorse Riding Club in Rolling Hills Estates, CA, four years ago, fresh off her junior career.

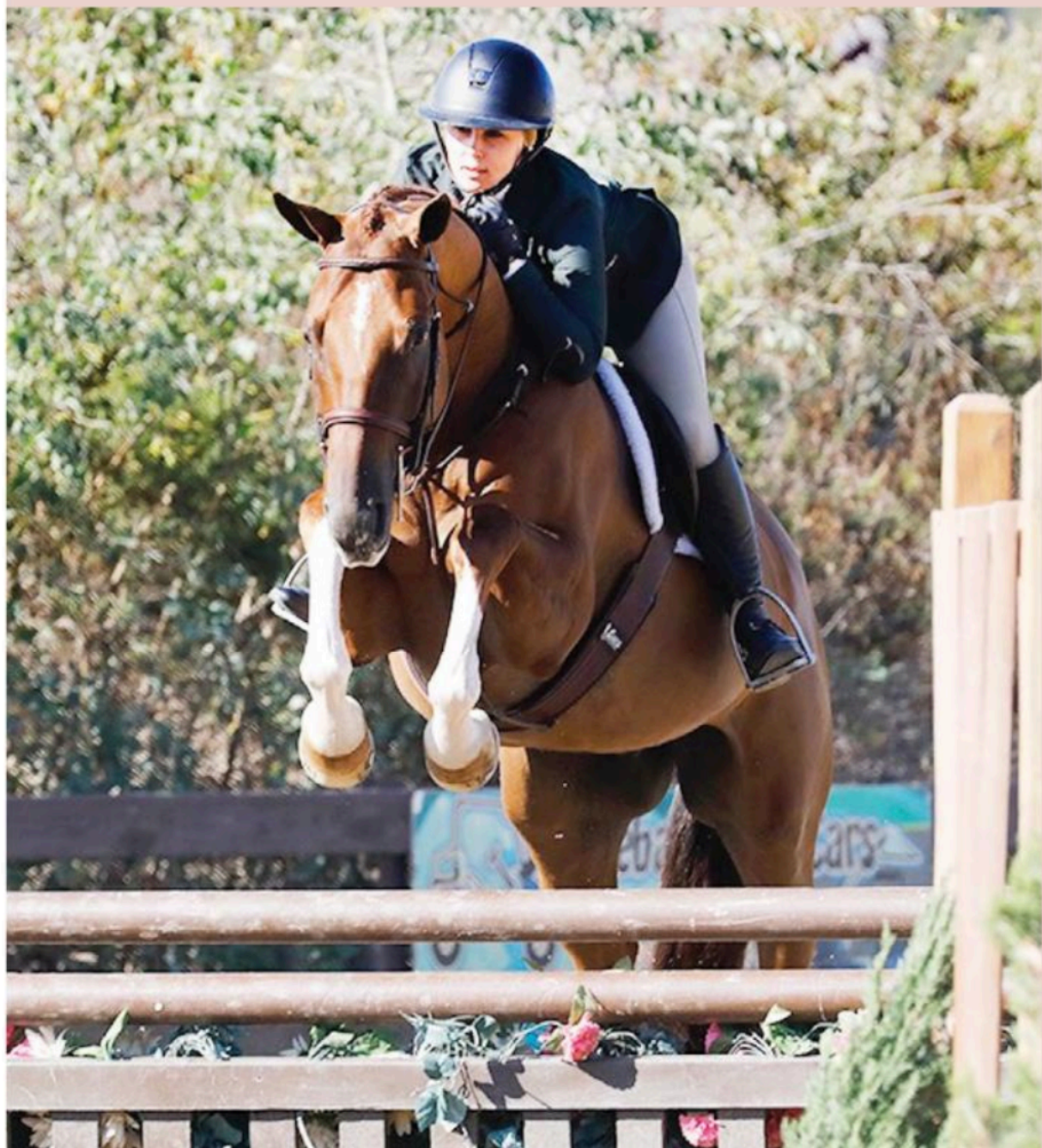
Today, Pattinson can be found in the jumper ring showing her grand prix mount, Quadrigus – a 13-year-old gelding that she most recently rode to the win in the \$10,000 Sunshine Grand Prix at the Huntington Beach Surf Classic in July in Huntington Beach, CA – and in the hunter ring

competing in the young hunter and 3'3" and 3'6" performance hunter divisions. At press time, Pattinson sat in second in the WCHR Developing Pro standings.

"The really great aspect of Devon's program is that she has a wide variety of hunters, jumpers, and equitation horses," said Pattinson. "It's really great to get experience in all those divisions. We have a lot of clients ranging from short stirrup ponies to the big jumpers."

In addition to riding and showing herself, Pattinson enjoys training and teaching clients – a new experience for her as a young professional.

"Before working for Devon, I had very little experience with teaching clients," said Pattinson. "Thankfully I had Devon, who is a brilliant teacher to help me along the way, and have I learned so much about teaching from Devon."



LEFT: GABRIELA PATTISON;
PHOTO © CAPTURED MOMENT PHOTOGRAPHY.

BELOW: PATTISON COMPETING SECRET ROMANCE;
PHOTO COURTESY OF GABRIELA PATTISON.

What are your current riding goals? “In the hunters, the Developing Professional Challenge at Capital Challenge is definitely my main goal this year. I’m also really excited to show the young hunters at the Young Hunter Finals and the [California Professional Horsemen’s Association (CPHA)] Pre-Green Incentive at the Oaks (in San Juan Capistrano and Del Mar, CA) in the fall.

For the jumpers, I hope to one day represent the U.S. at the international level.”

What is your favorite riding memory or accomplishment? “Last year, I competed in the CPHA Green Incentive Final with At Last TW. We ended up third, which was extra special because he had just turned six. It’s so fun to see a young horse like that develop into such a talent!”

What is your history at the Capital Challenge Horse Show? “This will be my second year competing at Capital Challenge. Last year, I went to compete in the Developing Pro class, and it was such an incredible experience. I can’t wait to go again!”



What do you think of WCHR having a designated Developing Pro category? “The Developing Pro category of WCHR is so beneficial to our sport. The hunter divisions can be very challenging to break in to when you are competing against the best, most experienced hunter riders in the country. The Developing Pro division allows young professionals an opportunity to have their own class to compete with others in a similar position across the country.”

What is your favorite thing to do in your free time? “My favorite thing to do in my free time is to go to the beach with a good book on my day off!”



RIDER SUPPLY CO.



THE RIDER'S CASE

The stylish way to keep your valuables close while riding, but also transitions seamlessly to life outside the barn!



Wear on your belt, or use the adjustable strap to convert to a cross-body or hip bag.



WWW.RIDERSUPPLYCO.COM
@RIDERSUPPLYCO



Lindsay Ransom • Age: 37
 Current hometown: San Diego, CA

Lindsay Ransom first began her professional career in Canada before moving from Toronto, ON, to San Diego, CA, to begin working with Lori DeRosa at Newmarket Farm. Now, seven years later, Ransom continues the job that she loves and is an integral part of Newmarket's program.

"I feel grateful every day to have Lori as a mentor," said Ransom. "She's humble and so understated. She doesn't ride herself now, but she's so insightful when it comes to teaching me and the customers. I feel really lucky to have her as a role model."

This year, Ransom considers herself extremely fortunate to have a strong group of hunters that have kept her toward the top of the WCHR Developing Pro standings, including a young hunter named Nivello, owned by Debra Chambers; Celebration, owned by Mountain View Farms and Elizabeth Oliver; and Hinkley, also owned by Chambers as her own future Adult Hunter mount.

"They've all helped me out this year," said Ransom. "Zone 10 is really a tough zone."

There are a lot of horses and a lot of great competitors, so to be in the mix is kind of exciting!"

What are your current riding goals?

"I have just as much fun developing the horses as I do watching the horses win with the customers. To me, I feel just as much part of that success – watching them go and be good with their people – as I do when I ribbon. I get just as much satisfaction out of that. So I'm really looking forward to both Deborah and Elizabeth on these really nice adult horses that we have right now. I'm looking forward to them getting to know them and then watching them be successful."

What is your history at the Capital Challenge Horse Show?

"You have to have the horses in the right divisions to be able to get the points to go [to the WCHR Developing Pro Challenge]. It's always been something that I thought I would love to do. It's an honor to go to that horse show. I've had students with Lori do the equitation there, and I've always watched the class and have watched online for many years."

It's one of my favorite horse shows every time that we get to go. There's just such an atmosphere, and the focus on the hunters and the equitation is so great. Just to sit and watch the top hunter horses and riders in the country is super inspiring."

What is your favorite riding memory or accomplishment?

This year at the Del Mar National Horse Show, I won every single class in the Pre-Green division on Nivello, and I was champion and reserve in the 3'3" Performance. That was a pretty great day and a pretty great horse show for me at a really special horse show."

What's your favorite thing to do when not riding?

"Taking my dog (a chihuahua) to the dog beach!"

.....
 ABOVE: LINDSAY RANSOM & BE OUR GUEST. RANSOM COMPETES A NUMBER OF YOUNG HUNTERS AS A PROFESSIONAL AT LORI DEROSA'S NEWMARKET FARM IN SAN DIEGO, CA. PHOTO © PHELPS SPORTS.

Sophie Simpson • Age: 21
Current hometown: San Juan Capistrano, CA



SOPHIE SIMPSON, 21, FIRST COMPETED AT THE CAPITAL CHALLENGE HORSE SHOW IN 2016 WHEN SHE TOPPED THE 17-YEAR-OLD EQUITATION DIVISION ABOARD YOU WISH. PHOTO © SHAWN MCMILLEN PHOTOGRAPHY.



A TOP CONTENDER IN THE HUNTER, JUMPER, AND EQUITATION RINGS AS A JUNIOR, SOPHIE SIMPSON (PICTURED HERE AT CAPITAL CHALLENGE ABOARD YOU WISH) HAS DEVOTED EVEN MORE TIME TO THE HUNTER DIVISIONS AS A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL. PHOTO © SHAWN MCMILLEN PHOTOGRAPHY.

After spending time living and showing on the East Coast throughout her junior career, Sophie Simpson and her now fiancé, Sean Leckie, moved to California and started their own Blue Ridge Farms in San Juan Capistrano, CA. Now nearly two years into running the business together, Simpson and Leckie – who is also a WCHR developing professional relatively high on the current standings – have roughly 40 horses in training with them.

"We have clients from seven years old to 60 years old!" said Simpson of she and Leckie's client base at Blue Ridge Farms. "It's quite a big range, so it's super fun. We've got ponies, sale horses, hunters, jumpers, and equitation; we kind of have a whole mix."

Among the mix are a number of promising young hunters, owned by the Looker family, with which Simpson has earned the majority of her WCHR Developing Pro points.

"It's super fun; I love it," said Simpson of both showing the hunters and being a young professional. Sean and I have really taken our time to build our business a bit. We've really been focusing on that for now. We're still maintaining our own riding careers, but we're definitely focusing on the business at the moment so that's been really fun.

"It's so nice to be able to work with your partner," continued Simpson. "You know, a lot of times, it's not highly recommended, right? But for us, we balance it really well. I'm so lucky to be able to work with him every day and be able to come home and basically be with him all the time. It's what any woman wants, right? I love it, and I think he loves it too!"

What are your current riding goals? "I'm actually really loving being in the hunter ring at the moment. Through my junior career, I was in all three rings, and that was always super fun. I would say the ring that I was probably in the least was the hunter ring. So, it's super fun for me to be able to do that now – and especially bringing along the young horses. I'd like to keep that up and then continue my grand prix riding career as well. I have a horse that will be stepping up and doing that really soon so that's very exciting. I'd like to maintain my grand prix riding level and go a little bit beyond that and ultimately be on some teams for the U.S."

What do you think is the biggest challenge of being a young professional? "I'd say being underestimated is hard. Because we are young, we're always being told, "Oh but you're so young." I am young, but I feel like growing up under my parents [top show jumpers Will Simpson and Nicki Shahinian-Simpson] and seeing the high level of the sport so young was worth a lot. I've gained a lot of knowledge from them, so I don't necessarily feel young in that sense."

What is your history at the Capital Challenge Horse Show? "I've shown there one time, and I don't think I got a score below a 90 so that was probably one of my greatest shows! It was on a horse, [You Wish], from Ashland Farms, Ken and Emily Smith, who are like family. It was a horse that just started its equitation career; it was kind of one of those weeks where it all felt great, and the scores were awesome. That was my one and only time at Capital Challenge so far, and I very much enjoyed it and hope to go back!"

What is your favorite food? "In-N-out Burger or mac and cheese – either of those and I'd be very happy!" ■



RHC EQUESTRIAN
Fine Riding Apparel

*Quality equestrian
apparel at
affordable prices*



*Show shirts and jackets
up to size 52
Breeches up to size 46*



*Visit
rhcequestrian.com*