



Laura Kraut flew Fleurette from her base in England specifically for the \$136,300 Longines FEI Washington World Cup qualifier at the Washington International Horse Show, and the mare made the effort worthwhile with the win. *LINDSAY BERRETH PHOTO*

Kraut Finally Takes The Crown At Washington

After chasing the feature grand prix class for nearly 30 years she finally wins the World Cup qualifier with new ride Fleurette.

By **Lindsay Berreth, Kieran Paulsen** And **Kimberly Loushin**

Laura Kraut has been competing at the top level of the sport for three decades, with three FEI World Equestrian Games appearances, two Olympic Games and multiple FEI World Cup Final entries on her record.

She's been competing at the Washington International Horse Show for just as long, from ponies to juniors and all the way up through the international jumper division, but a win in the feature Saturday night grand prix has always eluded her.

But this year she had the right horse, and it was her time. Kraut put St. Bride's Farm's Fleurette on a plane specifically for the class, and she came out on top of the \$136,300 Longines FEI Washington World Cup qualifier in a two-horse jump-off, held at the Capital One Arena in front of a packed crowd on Oct. 26 in Washington, District of Columbia.

From her first time at the show on a medium pony to sitting in the audience for Anthony d'Ambrosio's record-breaking puissance ride on Sweet'N Low in 1983, the show has held a special place in Kraut's heart.

"That was really just so memorable," she said of watching d'Ambrosio. "I was young, but just seeing the stadium packed, and the crowd went crazy. It was one of those moments to remember in show jumping. To get to go to that competition and just the feeling of how important it was—it was our national finals, and to qualify to be there and try to win something, it's something that I think our country really needs. It's a goal for our young riders and amateurs.

"I've had quite a few seconds and thirds and fourths, and [the grand prix] always seemed to elude me," added Kraut, who winters in Florida, but is based in Europe most of the year. "I said at the beginning of the week, 'This is going to be my week.' I had a good feeling about it. She jumped really well on Thursday. It was very special. It was also special because her owners were here to watch."

Fleurette, a 10-year-old Selle Français mare (Verdi TN—Kiss Me Not De Breve, Concorde), had been campaigned previously by Dutch rider Stefanie van den Brink and French riders Penelope Lerepovost and Christophe Escande before arriving in Kraut's barn earlier this summer.

"She just came across my radar because I was looking at her for a client, and that didn't work out. I just thought to myself, 'Actually I like her,'" said Kraut. "My first impression is she has the best canter. It's so balanced and so just right there with you, so she makes it easy to ride. You don't have to do anything to put her canter together."

Kraut describes Fleurette as a "diva" who knows she's good at her job. "She's never really nasty, but when she doesn't feel like having guests, then she sort of tells you to go!" Kraut said.

At home in Warwickshire, England, Kraut's partner, 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic gold medalist Nick Skelton, will sometimes ride Fleurette, and she appreciates a varied schedule with lots of hacks and gallops on a nearby race track.

\$136,300 LONGINES FEI WASHINGTON WORLD CUP QUALIFIER Washington, D.C.—Oct. 26			
HORSE/RIDER/NATION	FAULTS	TIME	PURSE
1. Fleurette/Laura Kraut/USA	0-4	40.99	\$34,075
2. Primo Troy/Andrew Welles/USA	0-12	45.69	27,260

▶Also competed: 3. Viva Colombia/B. Goutal-Martreau/USA, 1; 4. Catoki's Son Z/E. Ballard/CAN, 4; 5. Creedance/K. Farrington/USA, 4; 6T. Armik/B. Courneane/IRL, 4; 6T. Chaqui Z/S. Sweetnam/IRL, 4; 8. Bacara D'Archonfosse/C. Rivetti/BRA, 4; 9. Caspar's Lasino/D. Ryan/USA, 4; 10. Enjoy Louis/C. Tyree/USA, 4; 11. Toulago/A. Sternlicht/USA, 4; 12. Bull Run's Risen/K. Vanderveen/USA, 4; 13. Joli Jumper/H. Towell/USA, 5; 14. Squirt Gun/A. Kocher/USA, 5; 15. Diablo VII/R. Willis/AUS, 8; 16. Classic Dream/D. Kenny/IRL, 8; 17. Cornwall BH/A. Derbyshire/GBR, 8; 18. Quitana 11/S. Jenkins/USA, 8; 19. Major/A. Vale/USA, 8; 20. Carlchen W/A. Granato/USA, 8; 21. Brego R'N B/K. Dinan/USA, 9; 22. MTM Vivre Le Reve/B. Moggre/USA, 12; 23. Galan S/B. Mändli/SUI, 12; 24. Dicas/M. Goldstein-Engle/USA, 12; 25. Baloppi/L. Gilbertson/USA, 14; 26. Quillimbo/S. Riley/USA, 16; Don's Diamant/N. Dean/USA, E; Varoune/J. Verlooy/BEL, E; Quibelle/G. Bloomberg/USA, VW; Eristov/J. Coyle/IRL, VW.



Scott Stewart swept the professional hunter divisions at the Washington International and took home the leading hunter rider award thanks to winning performances from horses like Cameo (pictured). KIMBERLY LOUSHIN PHOTO

“We weren’t really sure [about competing indoors], but one thing I do know is she’s such an intelligent horse,” said Kraut, 54. “She takes everything in stride. Nothing ever really bothers her except for big screens. It’s funny, tonight she was looking straight up at the screen. But she handled it great. She’s handled jumping in a big ring like Aachen [Germany] beautifully. She’s handled pretty much anything I’ve asked her so far, and that’s just her personality. She’s just a workhorse.”

Only Kraut and Andrew Welles, who was aboard Primo Troy, advanced to the jump-off, and when Primo Troy stopped at a fence, the win was Kraut’s for the taking.

Kraut hopes Fleurette will be a candidate for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. “[Fleurette] has so many strengths,” Kraut added. “She’s just

one of those horses that I think she’s got all of the jump, all of the scope. She’s careful, she’s brave, she’s sensible, she lets you ride her. The only thing she’s missing at this point is the mileage at this level.”

Her other top horse, Old Willow Farms LLC’s Zeremonie, whom Kraut rode on the gold-medal team at the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games (North Carolina), has been out with a minor injury for most of the season, but she’s back in work and jumping.

“There’s really not a rush to get her going because the ultimate goal is next year,” Kraut said.

A DOMINATING PERFORMANCE

The night before opening day of the Washington International, Scott Stewart couldn’t sleep. The Flemington, New Jersey-based professional has won just about every important hunter championship, but he still feels butterflies before a show.

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—Laura Kraut



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“Monday night I was up most of the night worrying about it, thinking about it, but we have great people working for us, so everything stays pretty organized, so that helps a lot,” he said. “I went to bed too early this year. I went to bed at 8:30, which was a mistake. I try to stay up until 10:30-11, but I was up tossing and turning all night, but it’s good nerves. The nerves are good for competitive spirit.”

His concerns proved unfounded, as he picked up 14 blue ribbons on his way to sweeping the professional division championships, taking home both the grand and grand green hunter titles and the leading hunter rider award that bears his name.

“I love the city here [at this] horse show, and if you have the right horses to come it’s a really nice venue,” he said. “It’s one of the last ones that you get to come to the city.”

Betsee Parker’s Cameo, a 12-year-old warmblood by Coriano, took home the high performance and grand hunter titles and earned his third lifetime Protocol Trophy, while Krista and Alexa Weisman’s 7-year-old Baden-Wurttemberg gelding (Carrico—Aruba) Sports Page won the grand green and 3’9” green championships. Private Life, Critics’ Choice and Love Note won the high performance conformation, green conformation and 3’6” green hunters, respectively.

While the horses are in different stages in their careers, they all have one thing in common that helped them win at Washington. “They can’t take too much work to get ready,” said Stewart. “The quieter horses obviously do better because there’s limited space to get them ready. You don’t want to bring too difficult of a horse here.”



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Penny Denegre regained her confidence to win the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Hunter Championship with String Of Pearls. *KIMBERLY LOUSHIN PHOTO*

GETTING BACK IN THE GAME

For Penny Denegre, 2017 didn't exactly go to plan. A foxhunting fall landed her in the hospital for two weeks with several broken bones. When it came to returning to the saddle, she knew she couldn't force things.

"I just kind of let my body and my mindset dictate what I was going to do," she said. "The first time I got back on a horse, it felt so good. I felt I'm home, but that might not be [the case] for everybody. I didn't have a set goal. I still don't have a set goal. I'm going to let the circumstances and my body tell me what to do."

Denegre's confidence returned largely in part due to a special mare named String Of Pearls. Denegre purchased the 9-year-old Hanoverian (Clinton I—Celia) five years ago after her son-in-law and trainer Gavin Moylan imported her. Denegre was drawn to "Pearl's" movement and jump.

"She's one of those horses that wants to please," Denegre said. "She's perfect for a lady; she's a lady's hunter. She has the temperament. She has the stride. She has that rhythmical canter. And she's a good jumper, so all of those things, but I think probably the most important thing is that she's suited for a lady, really. She's quiet and kind and super."

On a mild day during the winter season in Wellington, Florida, Denegre gained the courage to jump Pearl over a couple fences. They started small, with just cavaletti at first.

"I remember exactly the first few fences I took," she said. "I felt confident about jumping her; I thought she'd take care of me. And the manicured footing, that helps too, but her temperament and kindness play into my confidence."

Denegre, 65, returned to the show ring shortly after, and 58 years after her debut at the Washington International on a pony, she rode Pearl to victory in the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Hunter Championship.

"I'm so blessed to be able to come back and do this," she said. "I know that, and to have this horse and to [win], it's pretty great."

Denegre, Middleburg, Virginia, is a joint-master at the Middleburg Hunt, and she's been leading the field since 1994, though since her accident she's stuck to leading the hilltoppers. She got involved in hunting at age 9, and it's been an integral part of her life since then.

"I think the show ring riding helps my hunting, and I think hunting helps my show ring riding," said Denegre.

HORSE SHOWS

“There are event riders that hunt and race riders that hunt. In my opinion doing multiple disciplines is good for your riding; it gives you a different perspective. Horse show friends of mine, when it’s pouring rain, say, ‘Of course that’s not going to bother you. You hunt in bad weather.’ On the other hand, being able to jump a course of fences in the show ring—you only have to jump one fence at a time [in the hunting field]—hones your skills to ride a good fence out hunting. It’s just good for your riding.”

A MEMORABLE DEBUT

Charlotte Powers set a goal at the beginning of 2019: qualify for the adult amateur jumpers at the Washington International Horse Show. She did that and more by winning the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Jumper Championship aboard former event horse Escot 6, despite it being her first year competing in the jumper ring.

“It’s been 10 or 15 years since I seriously competed,” said Powers, 32, Ashburn, Virginia. She rode in the hunters and equitation through college before taking time off to focus on her job in leadership development and assessment at Johnson & Johnson.

“We were sixth at [the Pennsylvania National Horse Show] last week being conservative; then this week he told me he didn’t want to be conservative!” Powers said. “I’ve always been told I ride too slow, so the speed was a change of pace. I’ve been to [Washington] a very long time ago to watch, so I was very excited and very nervous to come here, but it was so fun.”

Powers matched up with Escot 6 (Escudo I—Leca, Le Primeur) thanks to her sister, Justine Powers Jarvis, of Highgarden Farm in Frederick, Maryland. Jarvis sourced “Monkey” from eventer Colleen Rutledge, who rode the 13-year-old Hanoverian gelding at the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event in 2016. He placed third in the advanced division at Pine Top Horse Trials (Georgia) in February 2017, but that was his last outing as an event horse. Powers returned to the United States in early 2018 after 1 ½ years working in Windsor, England.

“He wanted a change of career, and I really wanted to show again, so Justine helped me find a horse to lease,” said Powers. “One month in I was like, ‘I can’t give him back.’ So Colleen was very kind to let me buy him during the year. I could never ever part with him; he’s just the sweetest.” 🐾



Charlotte Powers and Escot 6 claimed the \$10,000 WIHS Adult Amateur Jumper Championship at the Washington International Horse Show. *KIERAN PAULSEN PHOTO*

WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL Washington, DC—Oct. 22-27

GREEN CONFORMATION HUNTER CH: Critics' Choice, Bikoff Equestrian LLC.

RES: Everwonder, Bikoff Equestrian LLC.

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

RES: Boss, Laura Wasserman.

3'6" GREEN HUNTER CH: Love Note, Richard Prant.

RES: Cabrio, Bikoff Equestrian LLC.

3'9" GREEN HUNTER CH: Sports Page, Alexa Weisman.

RES: High Society, Lindsay Maxwell.

HIGH PERFORMANCE HUNTER CH: Cameo, Betsee Parker.

RES: Get Rowdy, Teton Farms LLC.

AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 18-35 CH: Chablis, Libertas Farm LLC.

RES: Fitz, IMH Equine LLC.

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

RES: Verdict, Jean Sheptoff.

3'3" AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 18-35 CH: Enough Said, Stephanie Danhaki.

RES: Iladin Du Rouet, North Star.

3'3" AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 36 & OVER CH: Classic, Dorli Burke.

RES: Incognito, Kirsten Pollin.

\$10,000 WIHS ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER CH: String Of Pearls, Priscilla Denegre.

RES: Zippo, Degenmoor Farm Inc.

\$10,000 WIHS ADULT AMATEUR JUMPER CH: Escot 6, Charlotte Powers.

RES: Speedy Chicolina, Round Hill Holdings LLC.

INTERNATIONAL OPEN JUMPER CH: Fleurette, St. Bride's Farm.

RES: Villamoura, Jill Shulman.

GRAND GREEN HUNTER CH: Sports Page, Alexa Weisman.

GRAND HUNTER CH: Cameo, Betsee Parker.

LEADING HUNTER RIDER: Scott Stewart.

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

LEADING AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER RIDER: Becky Gochman.

GRAND 3'3" AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER CH: Classic, Dorli Burke.

LEADING 3'3" AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER RIDER: Dorli Burke.

LEADING HUNTER OWNER: Betsee Parker.

LEADING INTERNATIONAL JUMPER OWNER: St. Bride's Farm.

LEADING INTERNATIONAL JUMPER RIDER: Laura Kraut.

LEADING FOREIGN RIDER: Sydney Shulman.

LEADING UNDER 25 RIDER: Sydney Shulman.

LEADING LADY RIDER: Laura Kraut.

PROTOCOL TROPHY: Cameo, Betsee Parker.

TECHNICOLOR AWARD: Chablis, Kelly Tropin.