



IN STRIDE

Secrets to Show Horse Longevity

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**A WONDERFUL
WCHR**

Win

**Courtney Lenkart
and Glorieus**

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Courtney Lenkart Has a ‘Glorieus’ Time Winning the WCHR Pro Challenge

The Texas professional achieves a major milestone aboard a special horse.

By Tricia Booker

After competing in the \$25,000 WCHR Professional Challenge once before, Courtney Lenkart made it her goal to return to the Capital Challenge Horse Show and improve upon her performance.

Her hard work didn’t go unrewarded. Lenkart topped both rounds of the class, sponsored by the Gochman Family, aboard the 9-year-old gelding Glorieus, for a commanding victory

over Samantha Schaefer riding In The Know and Michael Britte-Leon aboard Private I.

The class was a featured event of the Capital Challenge Horse Show, held September 25-October 4 at the World Equestrian Center in Wilmington, Ohio.

“This is such a prestigious horse show, and my goal has always been to win this class,” she said. “It was an amazing experience. I was a little nervous going into the second round just because I was leading. My horse was so relaxed tonight and felt really good. I was confident in the schooling area coming in. The second round was very

smooth and comfortable. I wanted to win so badly after leading in the first round, so I tried to stay very relaxed and just have fun when I went in. Everything came up really smoothly. It’s like a dream come true.”

Lenkart and La Primera Hacienda LP’s Dutch Warmblood Glorieus (Lucky Boy—Toberlina S) first met a few years ago when the stallion was purchased as a jumper for

Courtney’s husband, Scott Lenkart. When they discovered the 1.40m horse loved the Hunters, Courtney “stole him,” and the rest is

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Courtney Lenkart

history. Since then, they’ve been successfully competing in the Hunters and USHJA International Hunter Derby events.

“I’m just so confident on him, because he can jump 3’6” and 4’ like it’s 3’. He has a huge stride and absolutely no spook, so it makes my job really easy,” said Lenkart. “He enjoys this so much. He loves going slow and jumping slow, and so it’s really been something to see him progress in the last couple of years.”

A score of 87.16 put Lenkart and Glorieus at the top of the leaderboard following the first round, and a second-round score of 89 only further cemented their victory, giving them a winning 176.16 total. As the WCHR Pro Challenge winner, Lenkart received the Little Brook Trophy donated by Gary Duffy and Little Brook Farm.

Lenkart, of Bartonville, Texas, thanked owners Angela Dominguez and Mike Barber, her husband, trainer Cody Williams, and their team of amazing people that make sure everything is perfect and set up.

Lenkart had to qualify for the WCHR Professional Challenge at the Capital Challenge, and she did so with ribbons in the High Performance Hunters with Glorieus earlier in the week.

Rosow Rides to Top of Developing Pro Challenge

Like Professional Challenge winner Lenkart, Julia Rose Rosow stepped into the ring for Round 2 with all the pressure. The 29-year-old from Calabasas, California, won the first round of the \$5,000 Developing Pro Challenge and returned last to try and keep that lead.

Aboard the elegant 12-year-old warmblood mare Chantilly, Rosow secured the



SHAWN McMILLEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Courtney Lenkart rode Glorious to fulfill her longtime goal of winning the WCHR Professional Challenge.

win in a field of 29 with a beautiful second round. That performance kept her at the top of the card held by three panels of six judges, including Shane George, Mark Jungherr, Keri Kampsen Tammy Provost, Bobbie Reber and Scott Williamson.

“Winning the WCHR Developing Pro Challenge has been a goal of mine for a while, and to have it happen this year riding Chantilly, a horse I know very well and really love and enjoy riding, means the world,” said Rossow of the chestnut owned by Malibu Valley Farms Inc. Fittingly, Rossow received the Bittersweet Perpetual Trophy, donated by Rachel Kennedy in remembrance of her own champion chestnut mare.

Rossow has been working as a professional and assistant for Chad Mahaffey for four years. “He hired me on right out of my amateur years—mainly to ride ponies, because I never grew out of them!” said the petite rider. “It’s just been a growing process for all of us. We took it from square one and kept going with it. And then Liz Reilly has been very generous in helping with all of these goals, as well. Chad has let me go chase my biggest aspirations, and Liz has been there to help guide as well. I’ve been really lucky to have some very supportive and generous people in my career.”

Rossow admitted she was nervous during the evening’s competition, especially because she was tied in points with Geoffrey Hesslink after the first round. Hesslink and Small Occasion, owned by Shadowfax Equestrian LLC, were the first of the two to return, earning a second-round score of 87.25—for a 175.41 total—and leaving little margin for error for Rossow and Chantilly. The pair rose to the challenge, however, earning a score of 88.66 and clinching the victory with an overall 176.82.

“That was definitely a lot of pressure, but good, competitive pressure,” she said. “I was really nervous going into the first round. Then it just all melted away going into the arena. I was in



TRICIA BOOKER



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“I was really nervous going into the first round. Then it just all melted away going into the arena,” said Julia Rose Rossow of her victory in the WCHR Developing Pro Challenge aboard Chantilly.

my own world. I just wanted to be able to mimic that in the second round. I knew I could trust her [Chantilly], and she was going to be there for me. She has a lot of heart. She always gives her all, but she really knows when it's a special class. As soon as I stepped into the ring, I knew that we were going to be there for each other."

Jacob Pope's mount Meridian and groom Mario Garcias were awarded the Shapley's Best Turned Out Award in the Pro Challenge, while Hillary Johnson's mount Suede and groom Jesus Guerra received the Award for the Developing Pro Challenge. The American Style of Riding Awards, sponsored by Bill Rube, were presented to Daisy Farish and Ashley Foster, respectively.

Britt-Leon Is Best in WCHR Pro Finals

Michael Britt-Leon came into the \$10,000 WCHR Pro Finals wearing the number 1 back number as the WCHR National Champion, and it turned out to be providence. He kept that momentum going aboard Kelly Sims' Private I and added the WCHR Pro Finals to his growing résumé, along with All The Way Perpetual Trophy, donated by Elizabeth Busch Burke and Lysa Burke Horkan.

"It's a dream come true to win the WCHR Professional Finals," he said with a wide grin. "I've watched this class for a while. Being here in 2020 when it's been so crazy, just being at a horse show of this caliber, is incredible. It's been a memorable and wonderful experience. This just put it over the top; I could not be more grateful and proud and excited. I have so many emotions right now I just can't almost even think. I'm so excited."

Britt-Leon, 37, of Alpharetta, Georgia, and Private I, an 8-year-old Oldenburg (Corrado—Verdi), have a successful and solid partnership. The pair earned the USEF National 3'6" Green Hunter Championship last year and are currently leading the country in the 3'9" Greens. Britt-Leon won the Classic Round and returned to the ring to clinch the victory with even better scores in the Handy Round from judges Shane George, Mark Jungherr, Keri Kampsen, Tammy Provost, Mike Rosser and Scott Williamson.

"Coming into the second round on top can be a little bit nerve-wracking for sure," he said. "When you're at the top, there's only one way to go and that's down! Yes, there were nerves for sure. I'm not used to having nerves in the show ring. It's been a little bit different, but I knew it was a special day."

In the class, which was open to the top six riders in the WCHR National Rider Standings, Britt-

Schaefer Sweeps Amateur-Owner Titles

Madeline Schaefer took the Capital Challenge slogan "Where Champions Rise to the Challenge" quite literally. The 19-year-old from Westminster, Maryland, rose above all other Amateur-Owner hunter riders and captured just about every title offered at this year's show, including both victories in the 3'3" and 3'6" WCHR Amateur-

Owner Challenges and the WCHR National Amateur-Owner Championship.

"I had a really great last two days," said Schaefer, who trains with her mother Stacey Weiss, sister Sam Schaefer and Kate Conover. "Being the first year competing as an amateur was definitely different, but it went well!"

Schaefer, a sophomore at the University of South Carolina, made the 10-hour drive to the World Equestrian Center well worth it. She rode the flashy chestnut Sutton Place to the 3'6" Amateur-Owner Hunter, 18-35, Championship, the 3'6" Grand Amateur-Owner title and won the 3'6" WCHR Challenge with a score of 84.50. She repeated the same three accomplishments in the 3'3" Amateur-Owner Hunter,

18-35, section with the elegant Checkmate for the clean sweep, taking the 3'3" Grand Amateur-Owner Championship and the WCHR 3'3" Amateur-Owner Challenge with an 86.33. She also earned the Leading Amateur-Owner Rider Award in both sections.

Even though she'd already collected armloads of ribbons, trophies and awards earlier in the day, Schaefer tacked up for the WCHR Challenges without feeling the added pressure to repeat.

"The WCHR Challenge class is a bonus," she noted with a smile. "If it didn't go well, then we'd go home. I already had a great day before I did the Challenges. It was awesome to win both this year, and the horses were excellent today."

"In the Challenge class, Sutton jumped incredible and was really there for me. I called on him twice, and he delivered. Checkmate really jumped incredible over just about all of them and made some really nice efforts that were definitely helpful for my win," added Schaefer.

Being from Maryland, the longtime home of the Capital Challenge, Schaefer has a long and successful history at the show and estimated she won her first blue ribbon there in 2007 at age 6. She also topped the WCHR Pony Challenge in 2013 aboard Rolling Stone and competed regularly in the WCHR Junior Challenge over the years.

"They always make this show feel important. There are a lot of horse shows, but the presentations here are always amazing," said Schaefer. "It's one of the best shows."



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Evan Coluccio received the Jeffrey Katz Memorial Trophy accompanied by High Society.



Julia Barnes and Simply Cool received the Urlala Perpetual Trophy.



David Vega, center, was honored with the David Peterson Perpetual Trophy.



Bobbie Reber, center, received a standing ovation when receiving the Daniel P. Lenehan Perpetual Trophy.

Leon was one of five rookies and one veteran to contest the class, winning it on his first try. Geoffrey Hesslink finished second riding Shadowfax Equestrian LLC's Bond, Evan Coluccio placed third aboard the Lignelli Family's High Society and Greg Crolick took fourth riding Jon Cotton's Handwritten. Courtney Lenkart guided La Primera Hacienda LP's Glorious to fifth and former WCHR Finals winner Kelley Farmer placed sixth with Sharon O'Neill and Kathy Chiaf's Nolan.

This year's WCHR Pro Challenge Finals featured a modified format. Instead of the riders catch-riding a group of unfamiliar horses and switching mounts, they contested a Classic Hunter Round and a Handy Hunter Round on a horse of their choosing. A different horse could be used for either phase of the Pro Finals, but no one chose to do so.

"The change in the WCHR Pro Finals format this year was due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said WCHR Task Force Chair Carl Weeden. "We're trying to minimize exposure between the different riders, switching horses, grooms holding horses, tack and equipment. Even having the riders stay mounted on their horses will help to minimize exposure. It takes a lot of interaction between people and cross-traffic to have this class held in its standard format."

With the riders aboard their own horses, course designer Ken Krome had more latitude to challenge the riders. The Classic Round featured option fences and materials not used yet in the ring, and a decorative carriage was wheeled into center ring to showcase the trophies and awards.

"I think there were a lot of tricks to the course, but it was a lot of fun," said Britt-Leon. "I loved the short turn to a bounce. That got to show a horse's brilliance, to come off that short turn and be bright, land, and leave right away. I chose to finish after the walk-through with a big gallop to the last jump. As soon as I came off the turn and picked up that canter and I asked him to gallop a little, I felt his ears perk

Words From the WCHR Challenge Winners

HELEN VOSS

Adult Amateur
Versailles, Kentucky,
riding Cantina

“To win the WCHR Challenge was so amazing,” said Helen Voss. “I didn’t even start riding until May of this year. I took a few years off, and we actually just bought this horse about three weeks ago, and he’s only 7. So, for him to come here and be at WEC for the first time and do indoors for the first time, he’s really stepped up and been amazing. It’s more than I ever could’ve asked for.”

EVA MACKENZIE

Pony
Darien, Connecticut,
riding Farmore State
Of The Art

“‘State’ was amazing,” said Eva Mackenzie happily. “We just loved the course and loved the whole entire thing. When he comes out of the ring, he knows he’s good; he knows he’s awesome. He’s just looking for his treats—he’s perfect.”

STERLING MALNIK

3’3” Junior
Ocean Ridge, Florida,
riding Coronation

“It feels like almost a dream come true,” said Sterling Malnik, who came off of a championship finish with Coronation in the 3’3” Junior Hunter, 14 and under, section to win the WCHR 3’3” Junior Challenge. “I felt very confident going in the ring with him. He just really was amazing. The moment that we saw him, we knew there was something special about him. The day we tried him, we actually got him, and we started our journey from there. He just got better and better.”

ISHA SWANI

3’6” Junior
Ponte Vedra Beach,
Florida, riding Bond

“I really loved the pace I had going to the first jump and the pace I had around the whole ring, and, honestly, I loved every part about my course. I don’t think I would want to change anything about it. He jumped 100 percent. It’s been one of my big goals to win the WCHR 3’6” Challenge and especially on Bond, because he’s a very special horse to me,” said Isha Swani.

ROSE CAMPBELL

Children’s
New Egypt, New Jersey,
riding Tallyman

“I haven’t owned him for a long time, but he and I have been really clicking, and it’s been amazing,” said Rose Campbell. “I love him. We call him ‘Sailor’ in the barn. He’s very friendly and playful; he likes treats a lot, but when he comes to the shows, he’s all business.”



Helen Voss and Cantina



Eva Mackenzie and Farmore State Of The Art



Sterling Malnik and Coronation

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forward. He looked to the jump, and it felt like the sun just hit it and we were in. It was an incredible handy.”

The Lignelli Family’s High Society received the Far West Farms Perpetual

Trophy for the highest average score of 95.33 in the Handy Round. In addition, his groom, Rodrigo Hernandez, received the Shapley’s Best Turned Out Horse Award. 🐾



Michael Britt-Leon earned the WCHR Professional Finals win aboard Private I, as well as the WCHR National Professional Rider title.

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WCHR National Champions

- Adult Amateur—Julia Barnes, Gates Mills, Ohio
- 3’3” Amateur-Owner—Jaime Auletto, Tabernacle, New Jersey
- 3’6” Amateur-Owner—Madeline Schaefer, Westminster, Maryland
- Children’s—Hollin Sutherland, Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan
- Developing Professional—Geoffrey Hesslink, Wellington, Florida
- Handy—Geoffrey Hesslink, Wellington, Florida
- 3’3” Junior—Raina Swani, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida
- 3’6” Junior—Augusta Iwasaki, Calabasas, California
- Pony—Alexa Elle Lignelli, New York, New York
- Professional—Michael Britt-Leon, Alpharetta, Georgia

WCHR Special Awards

- Alabama Clay Conformation Hunter Perpetual Trophy—Sterling Malnik and In Writing
- Charles Johnson Perpetual Trophy for Midwest High-Point Rider—Helen Voss
- David Peterson Perpetual Trophy—David Vega
- Daniel P. Lenehan Perpetual Trophy—Bobbie Reber
- Derbydown Perpetual Trophy—Kate Conover and Captivate
- Stewart Warner Awards—Pony—Olivia Sweetnam
- Children’s—Hollin Sutherland
- Junior—Ellie Ferrigno
- Jeffrey Katz Memorial Trophy—Guggenheim and Evan Coluccio
- Rox Dene Perpetual Trophy—Sabrina Hellman, owner of Luminosity
- Small Town Perpetual Trophy—Balmoral, owner of Miller’s Cove
- Urlala Perpetual Trophy—Julia Barnes and Simply Cool
- Winter’s Run Sportsmanship Award—Jennifer Hannan
- Old Springhouse Perpetual Trophy—Kost and Jenny Karazissis