



ACROSS
THE
GLOBE

with the

U.S. Dressage Team

at the **2023** Pan American Games
in Santiago, Chile

by Jennifer Wood / Jump Media

Left: The team of Sarah Tubman, Codi Harrison, Anna Marek and Christian Simonson brought home the gold at the 2023 Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile.
Photo: Shannon Brinkman Photography

Hear from the gold-medal-winning U.S. Dressage team – Codi Harrison riding Katholt’s Bossco, Anna Marek with Fire Fly, Christian Simonson on Son of a Lady, and Sarah Tubman and First Apple – about their preparation, travel to and experiences at the 2023 Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile.

How did you prepare for the Pan American Games?

Anna: We had time at training camp at the beautiful Five Rings Farm in Wellington to settle in and organize packing. Nothing was stressful and I think that made a huge difference in our travel.

Sarah: Traveling to South America is quite a different experience than traveling to Europe because you have to have a really detailed packing list. For example, there are certain grains and supplements you can’t take, so there is a lot of preparation you have to do.

Christian: I had the incredible opportunity to spend a few days with the emerging athlete program at the United States Olympic Training Facility in Colorado Springs. Getting to meet with coaches from different sports was incredibly helpful when heading to the Games as I was educated on all the amazing resources one is given as a part of Team USA.

“By the time we boarded the plane, it felt like we weren’t just teammates, but real friends.”

What was it like traveling with the other riders?

Codi: Traveling with the other riders made the long trek so much more enjoyable! At training camp, we really got to know one another and bonded. By the time we boarded the plane, it felt like we weren’t just teammates, but real friends.

Christian: Some of my fondest memories of being in Chile with the team were traveling to and from the venue. It gave us the time to get to know each other, as well as develop camaraderie!

Is your horse a good traveler?

Codi on Katholt’s Bossco: I am lucky that my horse, “Bossco,” is a great traveler! He is a reliable, consistent horse; nothing fazes him. His first international flight was when I bought him; he flew over from Denmark. This, however, was our first international trip together.

Christian on Son of a Lady: “Sonny” is a great traveler and has many flight miles. We always bring a small horse stuffed animal that has been with me at every competition since FEI North American Youth Championships in 2018!

Anna on Fire Fly: “Fred” is so used to his routine now. As soon as he loads into the trailer and goes to a horse show, he’s like an old cow horse and he falls asleep.

Sarah on First Apple: “Apple” handles travel really well. He is an extremely picky eater, so he travels with a buffet of grain. Apple gets what Apple wants.





Far Left: Sarah Tubman and First Apple had previous Pan American Games experience, having won team and individual gold in 2019. Middle Left: At only 20 years old, Christian Simonson was the youngest on the team but added valuable scores with Son of a Lady. Middle Right: Hometown Ocala rider Anna Marek and Fire Fly also took home the individual bronze medal. Far Right: This was Codi Harrison's and Katholt Bossco's first senior championship experience.

Photos: Matt Turer/U.S. Equestrian

How did you acclimate yourself and your horse to the weather?

Codi: I think the biggest issue was how dry it was, so our team vet, Dr. Laura Faulkner, made sure our horses had proper care to get them accustomed.

Sarah: It was an eight-and-a-half-hour flight, so the flight recovery is kind of similar to when we go to Europe. I think the main thing is that it was actually quite cold. Our horses from Florida were happy, but they had blankets on and we were all in a lot of jackets.

What was it like having a team to travel and compete with?

Codi: Being able to travel and hang out with people who have the same goal in mind while also truly rooting for one another was incredible. We spent a lot of time talking about not just our competition horses but also some young or difficult ones we have at home, bouncing ideas off each other.

Anna: We watched horse videos together! Your teammates are in the same boat you're in. They have pressure on them, too. We could all relate to that and keep things light.

Sarah: It was a breath of fresh air. We all were genuinely cheering for each other. It's like a fresh look at dressage. It's really fun to see this up-and-coming group be that positive. This is a hard sport and we're all just here trying to make it. It's nice when other people feel the same way.

Were there any different aspects to the championship than a regular internationally rated show?

Anna: It's different than riding a regular Grand Prix because you're riding a test for your teammates. My coach Anne Gribbons hammered into my brain that you can't take many risks and need to try to have a clean ride. That's what I was focusing on.

Sarah: Because it's a team event we have a Chef d'Equipe, who is somebody that basically keeps us all organized. We have our own coaches that go with us, but we funnel any questions through our Chef. That's different than a normal FEI event.

Codi: We normally don't think of equestrian as a team sport, but when we are able to compete for our country, it creates more pressure but also a more fun dynamic! I think our whole team really thrived under the pressure.



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What was the championship atmosphere like?

Codi: The atmosphere was inspiring. It was so cool to see so many riders from different nations. Everyone was so kind and the competition organizers went above and beyond.

Anna: It was really cool and everybody was so nice and patriotic. Christian got lots of fun Fourth of July stuff to wear while we watched each other ride.

What was it like standing on the podium with your team?

Christian: Incredibly special. Standing hand in hand with teammates who truly supported each other and were all so motivated is an experience I will never forget.

Sarah: It's definitely a 'pinch me' moment. When I was a kid, I always dreamed of standing on a podium and hearing our national anthem play. It's truly something special to do that in a team situation. You really did something for your country.

What is your fondest memory of the experience?

Codi: Obviously, getting that medal around our neck was pretty epic, but all the funny and dumb moments in between are what I think about the most: Christian spilling his coffee on Anna, TWICE, and when we did the Fruit by the Foot challenge for the US Equestrian TikTok. These are my favorite kinds of memories.

Anna (who took home the individual bronze medal): Standing on the individual medal podium with my friend Julio Mendoza Looor, who won the gold. I was cheering for him and I figured he would win. It was very special. 🇺🇸



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