

The top four athletes in the 2025 WEC Premier Equitation Cup Championship powered by Gary Yeomans Ford taking their rightful places on the podium presented by Krissy Chalk, Regional Marketing Director at Gary Yeomans Ford and Mason Jordan on behalf of the Roberts Family.

Photo: Andrew Ryback Photography



WEC Premier Cup:

Setting the Foundation for Future Stars

by Jump Media

Equestrian riders have multiple goals throughout their show season, but one championship class has undoubtedly risen to the top of the bucket list for those aged 18 and under: The World Equestrian Center (WEC) Premier Equitation Cup Championship sets the standard with stunning courses, primetime scheduling and incredible prizes. All these factors and more

provide a stunning backdrop to a class that showcases the skills of the best junior equestrian riders as they begin their show season.

Each year, in addition to the competitive 3'6" opportunity at WEC – Ocala, the WEC Medal Final at WEC – Wilmington in November at the 3'-3'3" and 2'-2'6" heights makes it easy for riders to experience a finals-like atmosphere in a format

suitable to their riding level. Both championships continue to meet their intention of producing young riders who go on to further success in the sport.

“The focus is to build championship athletes.”



JJ Torano piloted Favorite Edition Z to the top in the 2025 WEC Premier Equitation Cup Championship powered Gary Yeomans Ford.
Photo: Andrew Ryback Photography



Originally held at World Equestrian Center in Wilmington, Ohio, the WEC Premier Cup moved to WEC – Ocala in 2021, where it takes place in February. It has seen some of the biggest names in the sport ascend to the top of the podium and go on to successful collegiate careers, professional riding jobs and even representing the U.S. in international show jumping championships.

The first WEC Premier Cup 3'6" Equitation winner in Wilmington, Olivia Darnell, catch-rode a horse in the class and ended up taking home her own new car, a tradition that has continued for every winner of the WEC Premier Cup ever since.

The class's original format in 2019, which included an opening

over fences round, a flat phase and a second jumping round for the top competitors, has continued throughout the years, but judges have the discretion to test their choice of riders, such as in 2024 when the leading four riders swapped horses.

Izzy Beisel of Goshen, Ohio, shows regularly at WEC – Wilmington with her family and her father's training business, David Beisel Stables. She competed in the 2019 WEC Premier Cup in Wilmington and finished fourth. She had the same placing in 2024 and returned in the top 12 in 2025 on her brother's grand prix horse, Triskel de Kerliven.

"She had a seasoned horse this year that had been all over the world, so that certainly helped," said

David Beisel. "I think that's a pretty impressive atmosphere for a young horse to go in there and jump around. It's an incredible development opportunity for the kids to get them ready for bigger and better things down the road. It quickly became a hot event, and each year, it seems to grow and be more prestigious."

WEC – Wilmington established its own equitation championship, the WEC Medal Final, in 2022, where winners take home a GOTRAX Scooter and the winning trainers receive \$500. The WEC Medal Final has no age limit, so adult equitation riders can participate, and the 2'-2'6" height can give pony equitation riders their first taste of a finals experience.

The 2024 WEC Medal Final winner, Elizabeth Rinehart of Westfield, Indiana, said, "Coming here and showing in the indoor really helped when we went to Medal Finals and Maclay Finals."

When WEC – Ocala opened with its first winter circuit in 2021, the WEC Premier Cup was a major draw with nearly 60 entries. Dominic Gibbs of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Cent 15, fresh off

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Emily Kowalichik and Fundamental rode to the top in the 2024 WEC Medal Final 3ft at WEC – Wilmington.

Photo: Winslow Photography





Top photo: The top three athletes in the 2023 WEC Medal Final 3ft. Photo: Winslow Photography

Bottom photo: Eleanor Rudnicki and Maddie Tosh sharing a memorable moment on the podium in 2024. Photo: Andrew Ryback Photography

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their ASPCA Maclay National Championship win the previous fall, became the first Ocala winner to drive away with a car. Gibbs went on to a successful professional career after graduating from the junior ranks.

In addition to the car for the winning rider, WEC awards \$100,000 in trainer bonuses to the top four riders' trainers. WEC also presents a prize to a WEC Premier Cup trainer outside of the top four in a random drawing.

Gibb's trainer, Stacia Madden, commented, "It was a unique experience. When I see things like this that are good for the sport, it is important to me to back it up as best I can by supporting it."

Seventeen-year-old Skylar Wireman flew in from Bonsall, California, to take the top spot in the 2022 edition of the WEC Premier Cup, while Kate Egan of Glen Gardner, New Jersey, claimed victory in 2023 when the class was held in the indoor arena due to inclement weather. Egan was named to the National Collegiate Equestrian Association All-Championship team in 2024, riding for Texas A&M University. Wireman successfully competed in the FEI Jumping World Cup Final in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the same year.

The WEC Premier Cup moved back outside to the WEC Grand Arena for 2024 and was a showcase of emerging talent. Eleanor Rudnicki

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of Conroe, Texas, rode Favorite Edition Z to the win and was trained by the team at North Run, including Missy Clark, John Brennan and Maggie Gampfer.

For the second year in a row, Favorite Edition Z helped his rider secure the blue ribbon in the 2025 WEC Premier Cup, as JJ Torano, also trained by North Run, won in 2025. The 14-year-old phenom, who captured the 2024 Dover Saddlery/USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final, won out of a class of 75 entries. In training Torano, North Run once again claimed the largest share of the \$100,000 in prize money for trainers of the top three finishers.

“It was amazing,” acknowledged Clark. “That doesn't happen very often. Nobody matches what WEC gives out in the prize department and it's hugely recognized and very much appreciated.”

Clark has trained winners of the country's biggest equitation finals for decades and she remarked that the WEC Premier Cup “feels like a true championship, which it is.”

“Because you have to qualify for it throughout the year, it is something our students aim for,” she continued. “The courses are always fabulous and challenging, and the



Skylar Wireman and Charisma sharing a moment after their 2022 win.

Photo: Andrew Ryback Photography

jumps are like nothing else. The venue is unparalleled and offers a different atmosphere than the norm, which is great.”

The WEC Premier Cup and WEC Medal Final course designer, Bobby Murphy, creates beautiful new jumps every year. “We aim to showcase what World Equestrian Center has to offer,” he stated. “Highlighting these talented athletes under the lights in a unique atmosphere is the goal, so they can carry forward this experience in the future when they represent their country at other major championships. The focus is to build championship athletes.”

As the WEC Premier Equitation Cup Championship in Ocala continues to grow in prestige and influence and the WEC Medal Final in Wilmington holds a special place

for riders of all ages and levels, both equitation championships have been firmly established as launchpads for the next generation of equestrian stars. With a blend of elite competition, world-class facilities and a focus on rider development, the classes offer far more than just ribbons and prize money — they provide young athletes with the tools, confidence and stage to pursue their highest aspirations in the sport. Whether it's stepping into collegiate programs, joining professional ranks or representing the U.S. on the world stage, the equitation championship alums from these events are proving they're not just a goal — they are a gateway to greatness. 🐾