

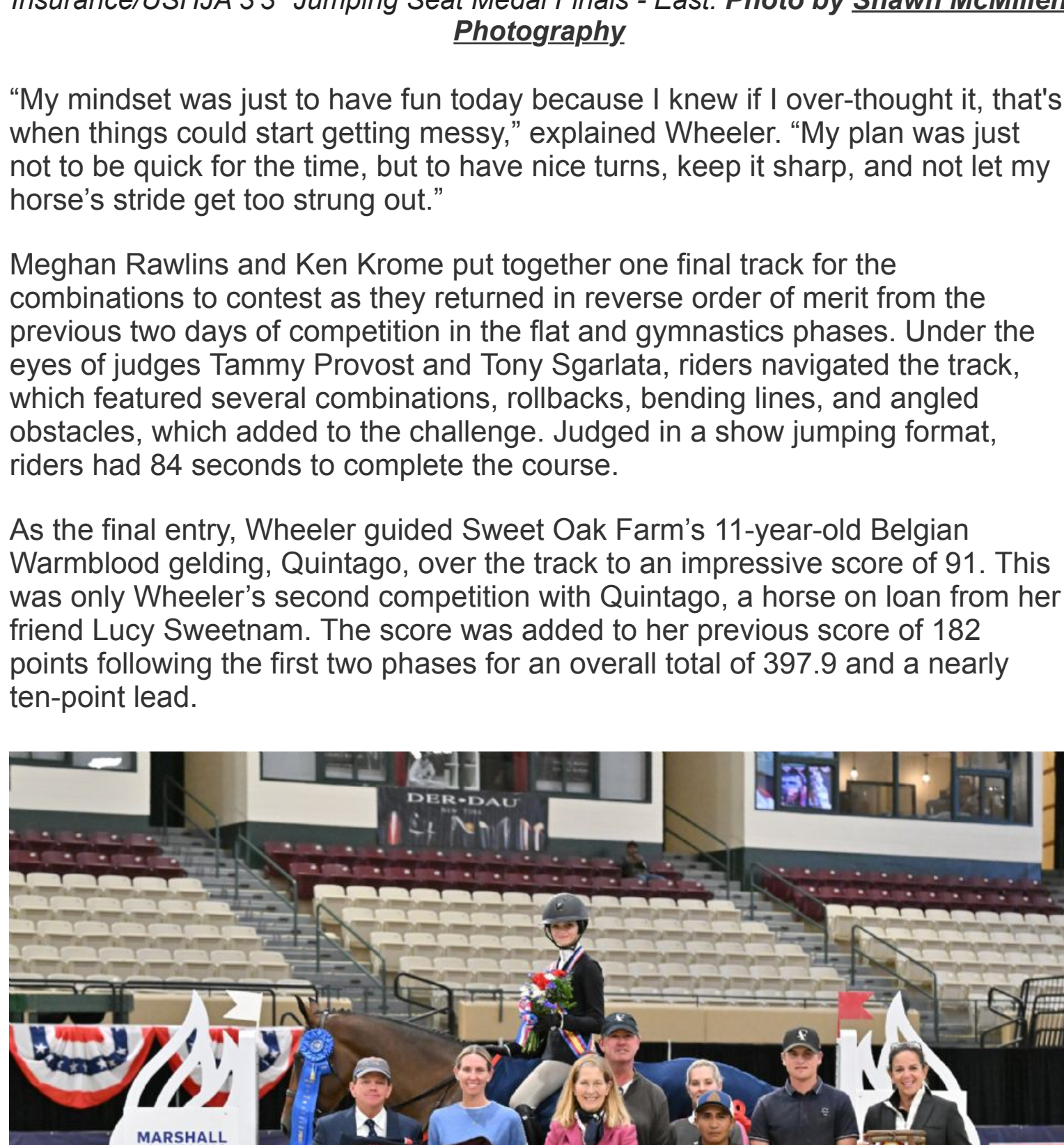


For Immediate Release | September 25, 2026
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Natalie Wheeler Displays Nerves of Steel to Win Marshall + Sterling/USHJA 3'3" Jumping Seat Medal Final - East

Upper Marlboro, MD – The final day of the **Marshall + Sterling Insurance/United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) 3'3" Jumping Seat Medal Final - East** took place in The Show Place Arena on Friday, September 25, 2026. As the featured event of the third day at the 2026 Capital Challenge Horse Show (CCHS) Equitation Showcase, presented by [BIGEQ.com](#), in Upper Marlboro, MD, the class highlighted young equitation riders from across the country.

Despite the additional pressure from a prestigious championship event and returning last to go of 168 entries, Natalie Wheeler of Wellington, FL, kept her cool and led the victory gallop as both the winner of phase 3 and the overall winner.



Natalie Wheeler and Quintago jumped in great form to win the Marshall + Sterling Insurance/USHJA 3'3" Jumping Seat Medal Finals - East. **Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography**

"My mindset was just to have fun today because I knew if I over-thought it, that's when things could start getting messy," explained Wheeler. "My plan was to just not be too quick for the time, but to have nice turns, keep it sharp, and not let my horse's stride get too strung out."

Meghan Rawlins and Ken Krome put together one final track for the combinations to contest as they returned in reverse order of merit from the previous two days of competition in the flat and gymnastics phases. Under the eyes of judges Tammy Provost and Tony Sgarlata, riders navigated the track, which featured several combinations, rollbacks, bending lines, and angled obstacles, which added to the challenge. Judged in a show jumping format, riders had 84 seconds to complete the course.

As the final entry, Wheeler guided Sweet Oak Farm's 11-year-old Belgian Warmblood gelding, Quintago, over the track to an impressive score of 91. This was only Wheeler's second competition with Quintago, a horse on loan from her friend Lucy Sweetnam. The score was added to her previous score of 182 points following the first two phases for an overall total of 397.9 and a nearly ten-point lead.

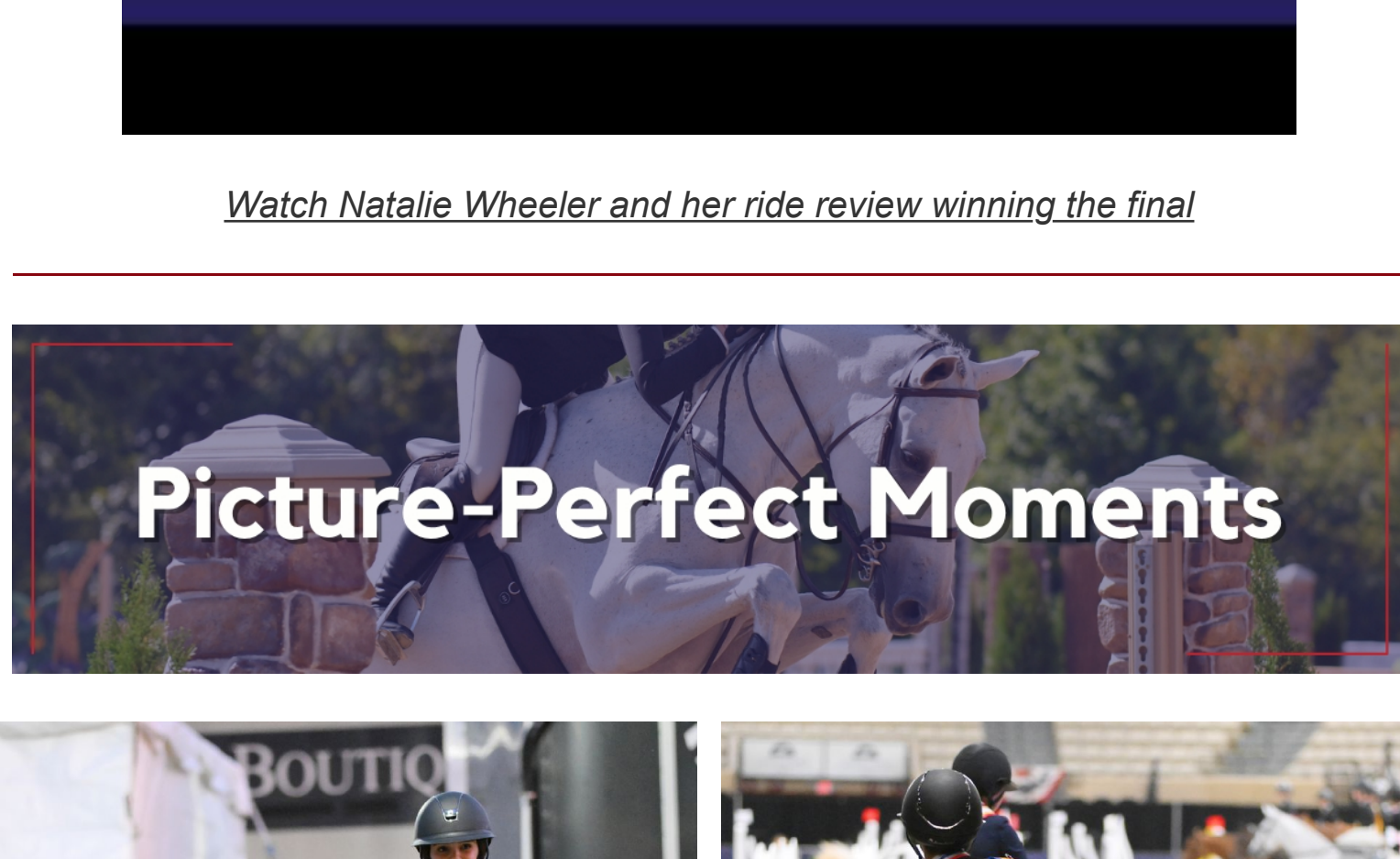


Natalie Wheeler and Quintago in their winning presentation with USHJA President Britt McCormick, trainers Ali Sweetnam and Ken Smith, Chrissie Kear and Hugh Turner of Ashland Farms, Sue Bopp of Marshall + Sterling Insurance, groom Tomas Mateo, and Jennifer Hinman of H&H Horse and Home. **Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography**

"He's so brave, and he listens to anything you tell him to do; he's the best," said Wheeler of her new mount. "We were always a little bit unsure about who I was going to be riding in this class, and we decided to use the horse I had been planning to compete in this class for the Taylor Harris Insurance Services (THIS) Medal Final tomorrow instead. I'm so grateful to Lucy for letting me borrow him."

The cheering section was loud as Wheeler led off the victory gallop, and included her trainers Ali Sweetnam and Ken and Emily Smith.

"All of my best friends pretty much are here with me tonight, and it's so nice to have that support at an event like this," added Wheeler.

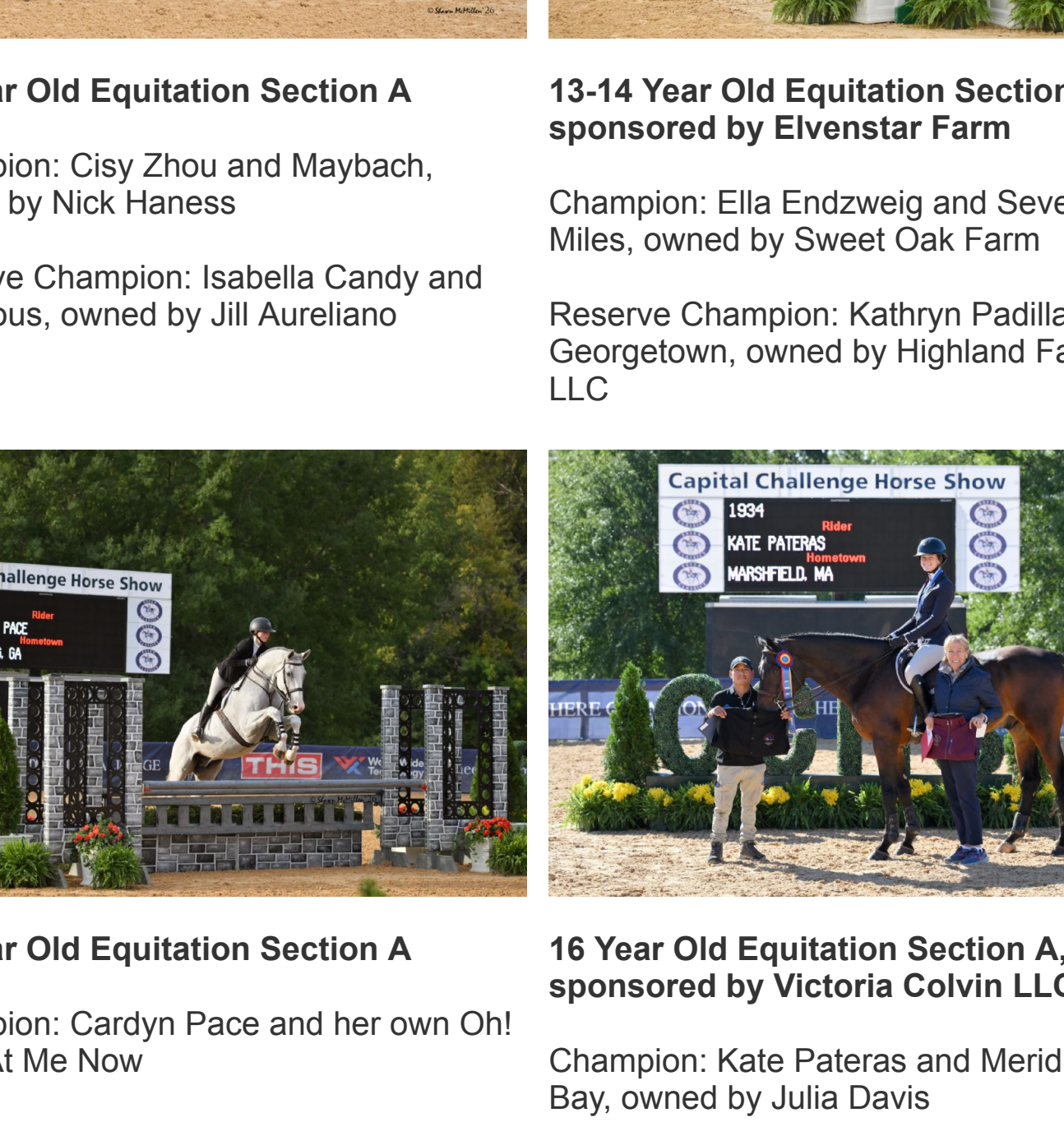


Natalie Wheeler leads the way in the victory gallop. **Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography**

Kathryn Padilla claimed the runner-up position with an overall score of 388.87 points with Highland Farm, LLC's Georgetown, while Olivia Johnson and Chessland Equestrian, LLC's Claus van de Helle rounded out the top three with a total of 387.97 points.

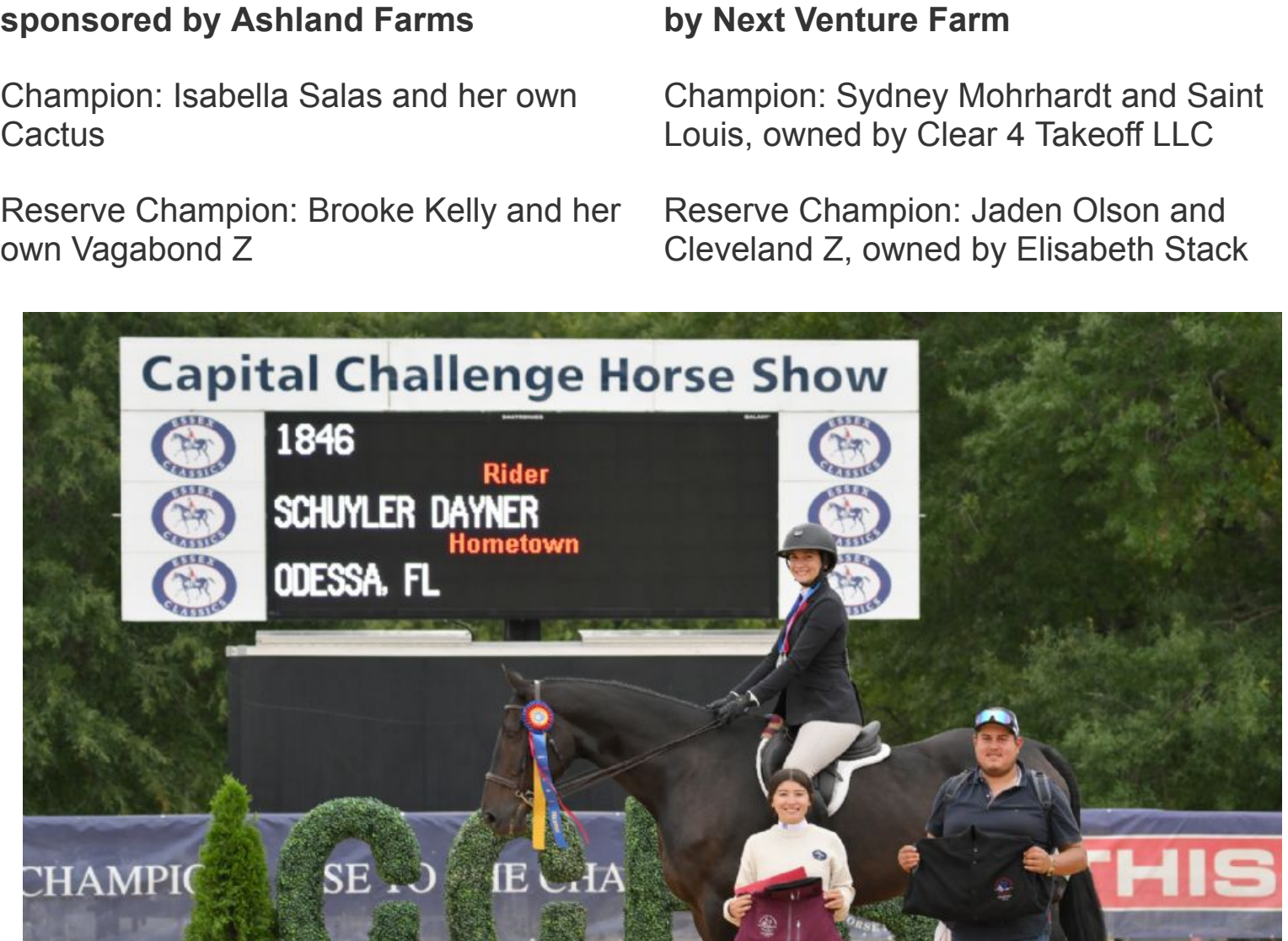
Competition at the 2026 Capital Challenge Horse Show Equitation Showcase resumes Saturday, September 26, and features the Taylor Harris Insurance Services (THIS) National Children's Medal Finals, the \$10,000 North American League (NAL) Children's Hunter Final, presented by Charles Ancona, the North American Junior Flat Equitation Championships, and section B age group equitation divisions.

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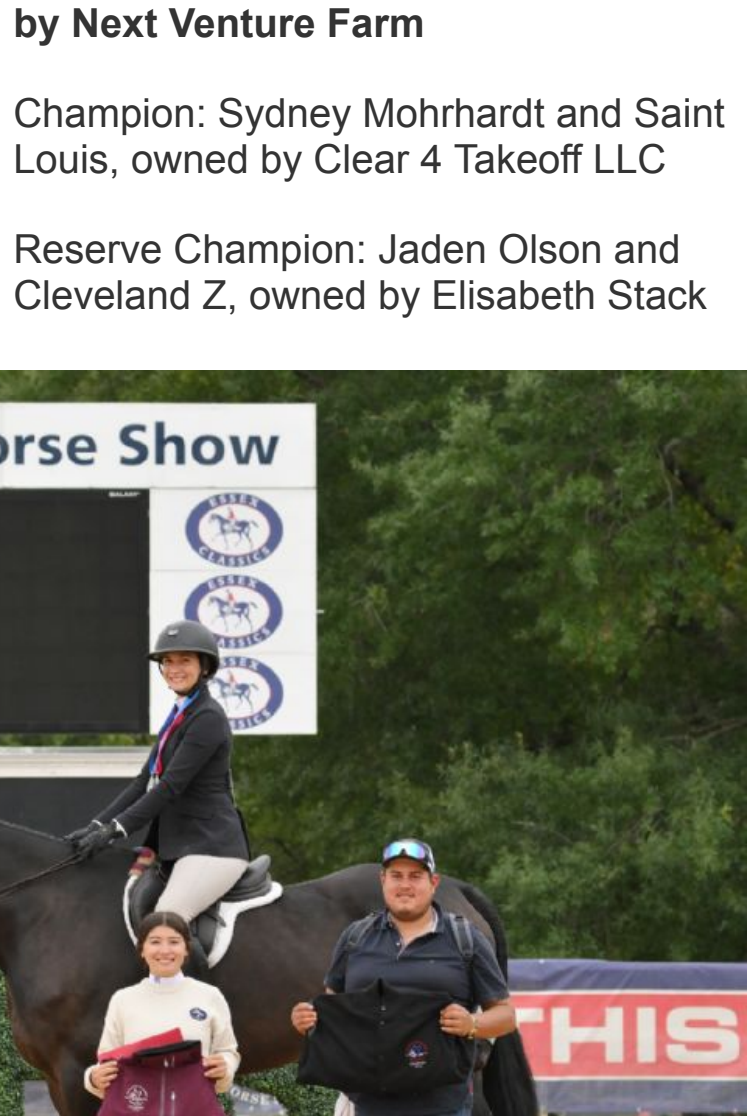


Watch Natalie Wheeler and her ride review winning the final

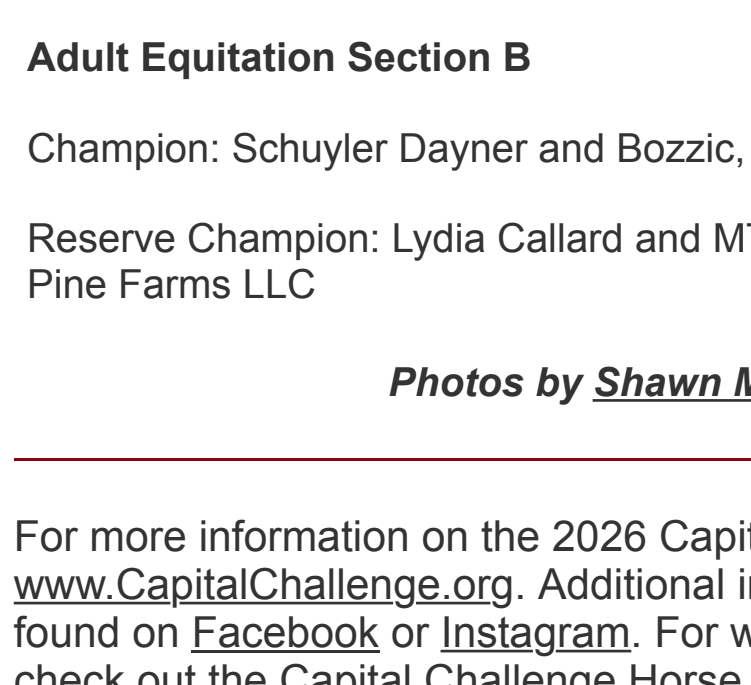
Picture-Perfect Moments



Natalie Wheeler and Quintago before the winning presentation.

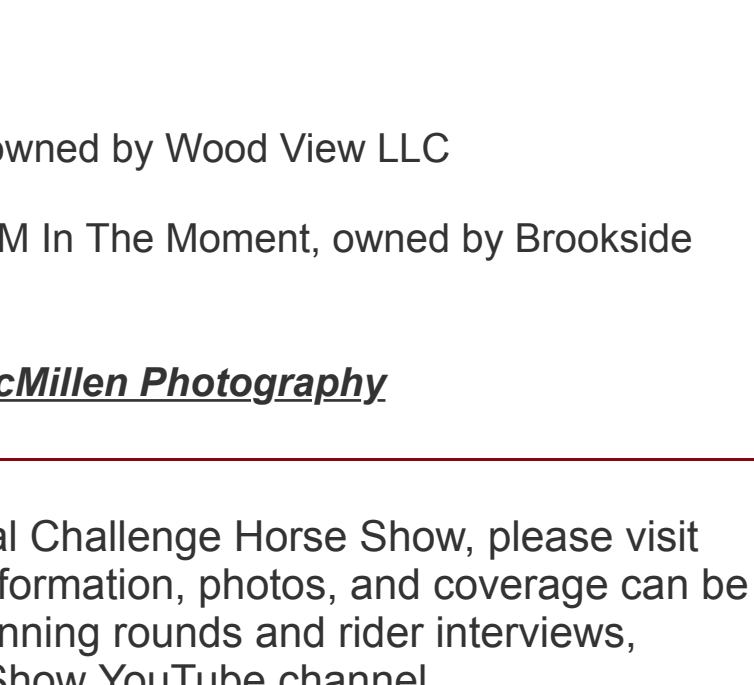


Natalie receiving congratulations after her win.



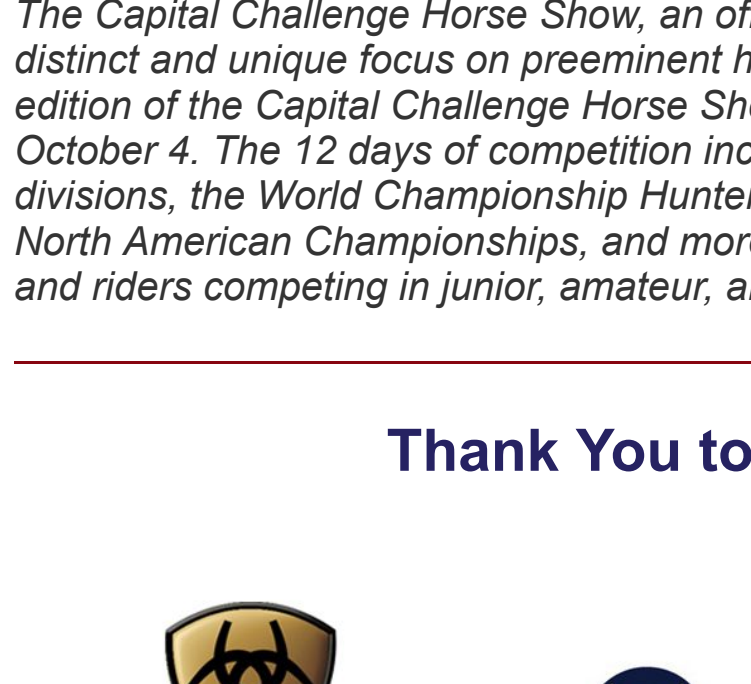
12 Year Old Equitation Section A
Champion: Cisy Zhou and Maybach, owned by Nick Hanes

Reserve Champion: Isabella Candy and Decorous, owned by Jill Aureliano



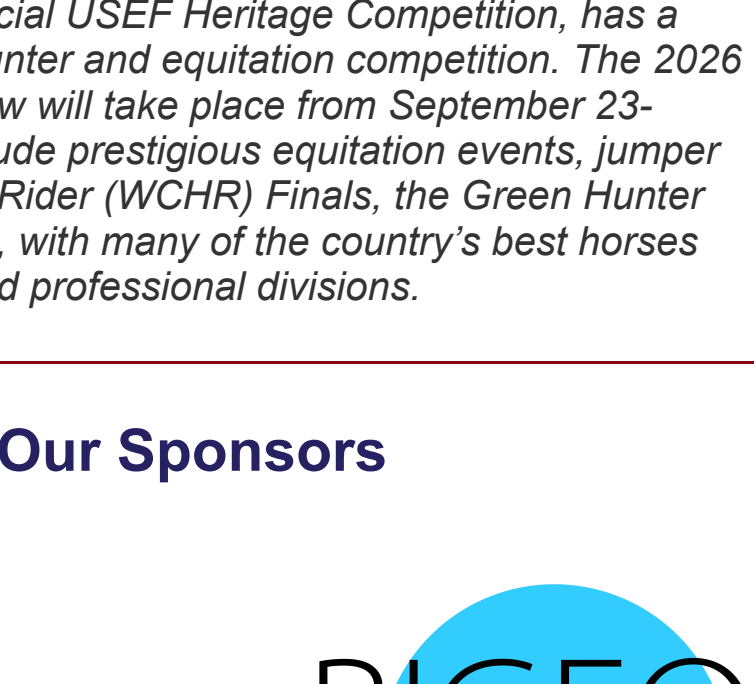
13-14 Year Old Equitation Section A, sponsored by Elvenstar Farm
Champion: Ella Endzweig and Seven Miles, owned by Sweet Oak Farm

Reserve Champion: Kathryn Padilla and Georgetown, owned by Highland Farm LLC



15 Year Old Equitation Section A
Champion: Cardyn Pace and her own Oh! Look At Me Now

Reserve Champion: Hadley Black and her own Newport



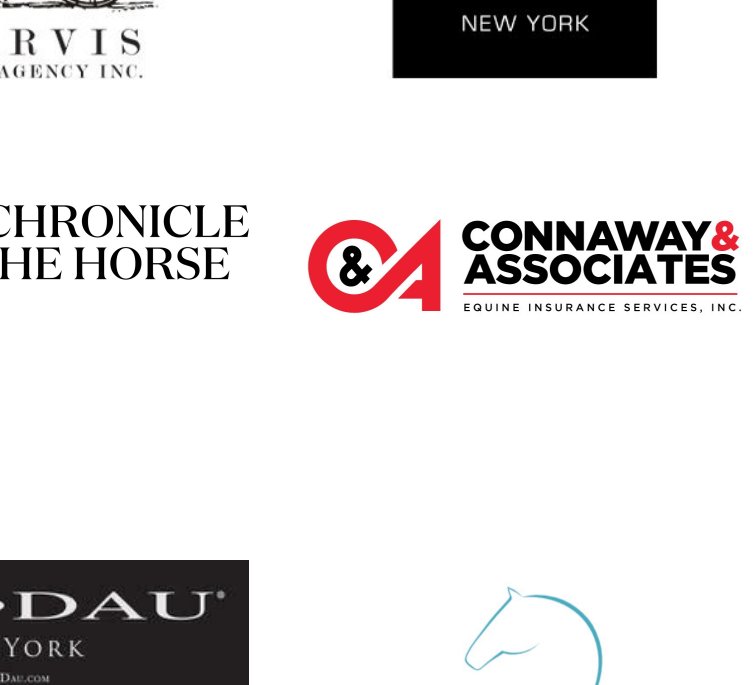
16 Year Old Equitation Section A, sponsored by Victoria Colvin LLC
Champion: Kate Pateras and Meridian Bay, owned by Julia Davis

Reserve Champion: Samantha Smith and Kingsman, owned by Laurretta Jakobsen



17 Year Old Equitation Section A, sponsored by Ashland Farms
Champion: Isabella Salas and her own Cactus

Reserve Champion: Brooke Kelly and her own Vagabond Z



Adult Equitation Section A, sponsored by Next Venture Farm
Champion: Sydney Mohrhardt and Saint Louis, owned by Clear 4 Takeoff LLC

Reserve Champion: Jaden Olson and Cleveland Z, owned by Elisabeth Stack



Adult Equitation Section B
Champion: Schuyler Dayner and Bozzic, owned by Wood View LLC

Reserve Champion: Lydia Callard and MTM In The Moment, owned by Brookside Pine Farms LLC

Photos by Shawn McMillen Photography

For more information on the 2026 Capital Challenge Horse Show, please visit [www.CapitalChallenge.org](#). Additional information, photos, and coverage can be found on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#). For winning rounds and rider interviews, check out the Capital Challenge Horse Show [YouTube](#) channel.

US EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION HERITAGE COMPETITION

About the Capital Challenge Horse Show

The Capital Challenge Horse Show, an official USEF Heritage Competition, has a distinct and unique focus on preeminent hunter and equitation competition. The 2026 edition of the Capital Challenge Horse Show will take place from September 23-October 4. The 12 days of competition include prestigious equitation events, jumper divisions, the World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) Finals, the Green Hunter North American Championships, and more, with many of the country's best horses and riders competing in junior, amateur, and professional divisions.

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