

Caymanian Junior Dressage Riders Excel in USA

Story by Jane Van der Bol (*Reprinted from Cayman Islands Dept. of Sports Blog*)

Two young C.I.E.F. riders represented the Cayman Islands at the 2011 Children of the Americas Dressage Invitational (CADI) in Concord Massachusetts on August 5th and 6th. Polly Serpell, 13 years old and Charlotte Hinds, 14 years old, participated in the weeklong event along with children from Peru, USA, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, England, Ecuador and Puerto Rico.

CADI provided young riders the opportunity to ride horses borrowed from owners who kindly lent their horses for the week event. The young riders trained with some of the best trainers in the world, like Nancy Later from the USA and Gerrit-Claes Bierenbroodspot from Holland, who were Polly and Charlotte's trainers respectively.

The first day was the horse draw where riders and horses names were randomly pulled and matched. Charlotte drew ATE a 16 hand black Friesian and Polly a 16 hand grey warm blood called Beau. The days leading up to the 2 day Weekend Event were geared towards lessons on the borrowed horses, general horse care and rider relations. CADI prides itself on bringing young riders from different countries together to serve one purpose – ride dressage.

On Friday, 5th August, Polly and Charlotte rode the CADI Preliminary Test. Polly scored 63.261%. Charlotte's rode in the HC category and scored 65.435% which was the highest score in her category. HC stands for the French "hors de concours," which means "out of competition."

On Saturday, 6th August, the riders perform a dressage routine to music called Freestyle. The scoring of this event is slightly different and allows marks to be given for musical interpretation and creativity as well as technical style. Charlotte scored 59.554% which was the second highest score in the HC category. Polly was the very last rider of the day and had an excellent energetic ride that scored 69.018% – the highest score in her category and the highest score of the day for all categories.

Overall in the event Polly Serpell's combined score of 66.139% and placed her in fourth position of the CADI event and Charlotte Hinds overall score was 62.495% which was the highest score in the HC category.

Serpell commented "I felt so sad when CADI finished, it is an experience that I will remember and treasure forever. Meeting children from other countries was wonderful and everyone got on so well and even though we were all competing against each other we were all very supportive and friendly. My horse Beau was magnificent and one the nicest horses I have ever had the opportunity of riding,. I cannot believe how generous his owner, Judy Wright, was to let me ride him and the instruction and guidance I received from my Coach Nancy and Gina was really helpful".

Hinds stated "The horses we got to ride, were highly trained, which was an opportunity we could not have had otherwise. I too am sad that it is over, but we made lasting friendships. As for my horse, ATE, he was a Friesian, the first one I had ever ridden as we do not have this breed in Cayman. I am truly grateful to Micaela Garzoni for lending him for the CADI event. I thought he was the best horse there!"

The Cayman Islands Equestrian Federation is very proud of it's young riders. The C.I.E.F. is now looking forward-ing to preparing its member riders for the World FEI Dressage Challenge scheduled to held in Grand Cayman in February 2011.