

Dozens of Winners Crowned at Alumni Tournament of Champions

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Hunt Seat Alumni Cup Champion Devora McCoy, U of Maryland Photo courtesy of Alumni Tournament of Champions

Alumni Equestrian Events

For Immediate Release

Gladstone, NJ –The addition of the IHSA Alumni Nationals classes and the 10th year of the western discipline at the Alumni Tournament of Champions show were more reasons to celebrate at the iconic USET Headquarters in Gladstone, NJ on May 20-21. The show started years ago as a scrimmage against friends in the catch-riding format and is now the premier show for alumni competition.

Again this year the Hunt Seat was Saturday, new this year was starting the day with nationals classes. Erica Green brought home the blue in the Alumni Nationals Over Fences class. Erica rode for Washington and Jefferson College as an undergraduate. Juliana Giancinto of SUNY Binghamton was reserve. In the Alumni Nationals Flat class Alisha Mays of the University of Central Florida made the difficult testing look easy for the National Championship win. Gabby Danz of SUNY Cobleskill was the Reserve National Champion.

At the conclusion of the Nationals classes, the Tournament of Champions classes began over fences. Hundreds of trips were laid down in front of the watchful eyes of judge Suzanne Hehn. The rain began to fall during the 2'3" division but the spirits and the rails did not. Many riders joked about how fun their pictures from Skylands Photography would turn out. The rain did not last long and the outdoor ring was

cleared for the flat classes. The footing was perfect and the competition remained strong.

The Mane Jane Alumni Cup is a two phase jumping and flat class with scores added to determine the winner. Devora McCoy laid down a picture perfect trip and a flawless flat to ride away with the title. Joe Fellingingly held steady in the Reserve Champion Position. The IHSA sponsored Future Alumni Cup was open to graduating seniors, looking to dip their toes into Alumni Equestrian competition. Shannon Washburn held on to win the cup over Elizabeth Margiotes who came in reserve.

Ultimately 8 new Hunt Seat champions went home with huge smiles and amazing prizes from our generous sponsors. It was heard several times throughout the day, "what amazing sponsors" we have at the tournament. Thanks to the diligence of co-founder Lena Andrews Licata every ribbon winner went home with at least one prize in addition to the ribbon.

Sunday was a bluebird day for the western riders and the debut of new Ranch Riding classes were the source of much excitement. Western riders compete for 8 trophies: Steve Maxwell Alumni Horsemanship, Avon Advanced Horsemanship, Butewicz Lifestyle Real Estate Alumni Reining, Amanda Belcher Memorial Alumni Cup, and IHSA Future Alumni Cup, Alumni Ranch Riding sponsored by Dr. Alison Erkmann, Advanced Ranch Riding, and the \$500 added ATOC Founders Battle.

The Amanda Belcher Memorial Alumni Cup was hotly contested with big changes between the ranch riding and horsemanship phases. Judge David Philips used some extra testing and required a few riders to switch mounts in order to find his winner, Kaylee Hayes. Kaylee was overcome with emotion at the awards presentation as she competed with Amanda Belcher as an undergraduate, it was a very fitting win. Heather Burkholder, recent graduate of Penn State, ended with a narrow lead over Chloe Sullivan of Bloomsburg University to win the Future Alumni Cup. In celebration of the 10th year of western classes being held at ATOC, the Founders Battle was held and won by Catherine Schlegal who came from Ohio with newborn in tow, it was certainly worth her trip.

This year we were honored to have Alliant Private Client Insurance as a title sponsor, as well as a guest appearance from none other than IHSA founder Bob Cacchione. We are always so fortunate to have amazing support from incredibly generous sponsors. We had several amazing class, prize, and rider bag sponsors including Mane Jane, IHSA Alumni Association, Campus Equestrian, The Boujee Equestrian, Veltri Sport, Sandra Sayre, Lynn Artistry, Ridgetop North, Interactive Brokers, Corro, Lost Acres Vineyard, Avon, Rent the Show Ring, Adult Ammy Strong, Certified Horseman's Association, Jessie's Specialty Saddle Pads, MHC Western IHSA Team, Pro Elite, Horse Scents, Success Equestrian, Essex Classics, The Athletic Equestrian, Polysset, Great Scott Farm, Two Bay Horse Designs, Stateline Tack, Dreamers & Schemers, Brooke's belts, Avenue Animal Hospital, Molly's Custom Silver, Maryland Saddlery, White Horse Coffee Roasters, Dubois Cheval, NYCE Crafts, Green is the New Blue, Perri's Leather, Smartpak, FarmVet, Purina, Equi-Jet, EFA Equestrian Fitness Academy, NSBA, USHJA and Devocoux.

The Alumni Tournament of Champions is an IHSA style horse show for IHSA alumni from around the country. Riders draw horses before competing and are not able to practice on the horse before walking into the show ring. The purpose of the show is to expand opportunities for IHSA Alumni to ride in a finals type atmosphere, as many only show a few times a year with busy careers and limited funds.

More information can be found on our website www.alumnitoc.com, Full results can be found on www.horseshowing.com, and photos can be found on www.SkylandsPhotography.com.

Keep an eye out for the 2024 Alumni Tournament of Champions, the date and location should be set by early fall. As always, we look forward to what the next tournament will bring – we do know it will bring many memories, laughs, and new friends!



Western Alumni Cup Champion
Kaylee Hayes, MTSU
Image courtesy Alumni Tournament of Champions