



# NORTH AMERICAN LEAGUE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Marty Bauman, (508) 698-6810 or [classic.pr@verizon.net](mailto:classic.pr@verizon.net)

### **North American League Finals Cap Off Exciting 2003 Season**

Annville, PA—November 4, 2003—The 2003 North American League (NAL) Finals capped off an exciting NAL season when they were held at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show in Harrisburg.

The Finals had an exciting start with Jennifer Waxman winning the **NAL Pony Jumper Final** on opening day at the riding her bay mare, Just Have Fun. The pair put in a faultless performance to edge out the competition in a time of 29.448 seconds. Julianna Fischer and Indigo came in second with a double clear in a time of 30.729. Caroline Woods on Longacre Lavender just missed the Reserve spot to finish in third with a time of 30.869.

The field of 21 yielded eight for the jump-off with the first seven going clear and very little time separating the top two. The pressure was on for Waxman who, as the top qualifier, was the last to go in the first round, which put her in the final slot for the jump-off.

"I was so nervous," said Waxman. "I knew that everyone had gone clear before me, and they went fast, but I knew my mare could do it because she's really fast and great on the turns. She's so cool."

The 12-year-old from Chagrin Falls, OH, and her pony faced the challenge of leaving all the rails intact and beating the clock by nearly a second for the victory and the \$1,750 top prize.

"I had a hard rub both rounds at the eighth fence," said Waxman." It was the highest one on the course, but I was lucky. It was so exciting to win, I am really happy." said Waxman.

Waxman won the NAL Pony Finals in her first appearance in the series and hopes to be back again. The young rider plans on competing with ponies for at least three more years.

Ashley Hotz 15, of Shamong, NJ, won the **\$10,000 NAL Children's Hunter Final** riding her Dutch Warmblood, Insignia. The Reserve Champion was Gangbuster, owned and ridden by Ashley Scott of Reistertown, MD.

Consistency was the key for Hotz and "Micki", the barn name for the 13-year-old gelding. The pair came into the second round in third place, but moved into the top spot when they put in an impressive second round and received the highest overall score.

**c/o Classic Communications, 38 Mechanic St., Suite 101, Foxboro, MA 02035**  
**508-698-6810 508-698-6811 fax classic.pr@verizon.net**

"I was really excited to win," said Hotz. "I was a little nervous at first, but Micki's been here before and he was great."

Ashley's mom Karen still could not believe her daughter's good fortune. "I never would have dreamed that Ashley would have won," said Karen. "The whole experience has been so good for her. It's a wonderful program and a great confidence builder."

Lauren Pedicini, 16, of Farmingdale, NJ, jumped to the head of the class to win the **\$10,000 NAL Children's Jumper Final** with a clean round in a blistering 30.585 seconds on Moonlight Sonata.

Katie Brown of Wellington, FL, finished second also going clean in a time of 31.181 and Lisa Goldman riding Judgement Farms Count, owned by Tina Judge, came in third with no faults and a time of 31.687.

It was a question of time rather than faults with 15 of the 31 going clean in the first round and making for a very exciting jump-off. Pedicini and her Mecklenberg mare were eighth in the line-up and just about all before her went clean, prompting Pedicini to ask her mom for help.

"Just before I went into the ring, I asked my mom for the fastest clear," said Pedicini. "I never thought there would be so many in the jump-off and then when they were going clear, I got a little nervous. I knew I had the best horse in the class. This is her forte, but I knew I was really going to have to try hard in order to win."

The competition was fierce as less than two seconds separated the top three. "When I won, I was like 'YES!' and then I thought my trainer was going to yell at me for going so fast." Pedicini's trainer, Hugo Huesca, of Olympia Farm, was not mad, he was proud.

"When I saw the way she took the course, I knew it would be difficult to beat her," said Huesca. "She lost a little time in one of the turns, but the rest of the course was great."

Coatails, owned by Stephanie Ingram and ridden by Pamela Vance of Amenia, NY, impressively captured the **\$10,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final**. The pair received the top score in both rounds to easily win the class with an overall score of 171. Silver Rhythm, owned and ridden by Michelle Woodall of Gum Spring, VA, finished second with a score of 162 and Rumors Fly, owned by Tammy Smith and ridden by Melissa Feller, finished third scoring 160.

"He is such a special, kind and gentle horse," said Vance about the 10-year-old Swedish Warmblood. "He is as good as it gets, I adore him and he's not even my horse."

Vance picked up the mount in May when Ingram's sister, Frances Biggs, decided to take the summer off. Vance was grateful for her season with Coatails and thrilled to have qualified with him in the NAL Finals.

"I always wanted to ride at Harrisburg," said Vance. "To do it with such a wonderful horse that belongs to such a good friend makes it really special."

With any luck, Coatails may be back at the NAL Finals in 2004, but in a different division. Ingram's 14-year-old daughter, Alexa, is going to start campaigning Coatails in the Childrens Division next season.

McLain Ward of Brewster, NY, received a terrific present for his 28th birthday when he won the **\$25,000 NAL Open Jumper Speed Final**.

Ward became the first rider to capture the title three consecutive times with a blistering clear round in a time of 56.337 riding Labelle, owned by Sarah Willeman and Turnabout Farm. Second place went to Laura Chapot of Neshanic Station, NJ, riding her 8-year-old mare Sprite, to a clear round in a time of 59.555. Kimberly Frey took third, also going clear on River, owned by Overlook Farm, Inc., in a time of 63.831.

Out of field of 19, only four riders were able to negotiate a clear round due to some tricky parts on the course. "The course was a little harder then it walked," said Ward. "There were a couple of bogies that caused some problems. It helped to be able to go at the end; you watched the others go and then you understood what you had to do. I knew I had a fast horse and a chance to win if the time wasn't too crazy."

The first horse to go clear was not one that Ward rode, but one that he owned. Kartousche, ridden by Mary Lisa Leffler set the tone and the time to beat. Five rides later, Frey shaved nearly two seconds off Leffler's round and jumped to the top of the leader board. It began to look like Frey had it won, until Chapot. At the conclusion of her ride, the large crowd cheered wildly for what they thought was the winning round.

"That was really nice," said Chapot of the appreciative crowd. "I had seen Kim go and knew what I had to do to beat her, but I knew McLain and Margie had fast horses, so I just wanted to put in a smooth clear and make the last two riders try to beat me."

Unfortunately for Chapot, Ward did, leaving only Margie Engle and Hidden Creek's Charlie Brown to dethrone the defending champion. Engle had a rail and Ward had his third consecutive title.

Less than two seconds determined the top three places in the last NAL event of the 2003 season, the **\$10,000 NAL Adult Jumper Final**.

The top three riders negotiated the only double clears among the starting field of 29, and Natasha Sirjusingh of Brookville, MD, and Kentucky IV went the fastest, in a time of 28.041 seconds. Second place went to Louisiana, owned and ridden by Lauren Tisbo of Barrington, IL, who was just a tick slower in a time of 28.072. The third spot went to Rochee 7 and Aime Rosenthal of Chagrin Falls, OH, in 29.446 seconds.

Although Kentucky IV needed some encouragement to get around the first time, Sirjusingh could not find fault with him. "He's perfect," Sirjusingh beamed. "I owe everything to him."

The pair has only been campaigning together since April, but Sirjusingh has complete faith in Kentucky IV's abilities. "I know what he is capable of," said Sirjusingh of her 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood. "I just trust him to take care of me. There's always an element of luck and today was my lucky day".

Sirjusingh, 24, is a working student at Rolling Acres Farm with Mary Lisa Leffler, as well as an accounting major at the University of Maryland. Her goal is to become a grand prix rider full time, but it might take a while. Sirjusingh can only work in the US six months each year and then must return to her home country of Bermuda, where her parents were anxiously awaiting to hear the results of the NAL Championship Final.

"I am going to call my parents right away," she said.

The North American League (NAL) runs season long series in six hunter-jumper divisions – Children's Hunter, Children's Jumper, Adult Hunter, Adult Jumper, Pony Jumper and Open Jumper Speed. Each series culminates with a championship final at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show in Harrisburg, PA in October. The 2004 NAL qualifying period runs from September 1, 2003 through August 31, 2004. Riders need not be members of the NAL to compete in any qualifying classes, but only current members earn points toward year-end finals.

For more information and a list of qualifying competitions for 2004, please see the Ryegate Show Services website at [www.Ryegate.com](http://www.Ryegate.com).