



North American League News

December 2011

Champions Emerge in NAL National Finals at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show and NAL West Coast Finals at the Las Vegas National Horse Show

Equestrian sport's best hunters and jumpers converged at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show in Harrisburg, PA, and the Las Vegas National Horse Show, in Las Vegas, NV, to compete for top honors in the 2011 North American League (NAL) Finals. This was the first time ever that NAL West Coast Finals were held.

Following the Finals, eleven top riders emerged as Champions, six at Harrisburg and five at Las Vegas. The NAL runs season-long series in six divisions — Children's Hunter, Adult Hunter, Children's Jumper, Adult Jumper, Pony Jumper, and Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper.

The new NAL qualifying period began on September 1, 2011 and will end on August 31, 2012. Riders do not need to be members of the NAL to compete in any qualifying classes, but only current members earn points toward year-end finals. Join today to ensure yourself a spot in next year's Finals in Harrisburg and Las Vegas!



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~ Harrisburg ~

Kelly Champion and All In Celebrate Their Win in the \$10,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final

Kelly Champion rode her horse All In, to victory in the \$10,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final. This is Champion's second win in the Adult Hunter Finals!

Champion, of Washington, NJ, received a combined score of 173 points. With the highest score of 88 points out of 29 riders in the first round, she was one of 12 riders who came back for the second round. A challenging course designed by Blake Alder separated the top riders for the final round. Champion's trainer, Robert Beck, declared it as a classic hunter course. Champion earned an 85.00 in the second round giving her the winning score of 173.00.

Champion purchased All In, in September of 2010. All In, or "Hank," is a nine-year-old bay gelding, and is the first horse Champion has owned in a long time. Her previous horse, Copperfield, was her mount when she won the NAL Adult Hunter Finals in 2000.

The win was bittersweet for Champion, who was on tap to show at the Capital Challenge two weeks earlier, but was unable to compete because her husband, Tony, suddenly fell ill. He is recuperating nicely so he urged Champion to show at Harrisburg despite her protests.

"When I was at the Capital Challenge my husband told me to go back and show and I said, 'No way!' He made me come here because I wasn't going to show," said Champion. "This is definitely a special win."



Kelly Champion rode All In to victory in the \$10,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final

©Al Cook Photography



~ Harrisburg ~

Patricia Hennessy and Little Tom Finish Big in the \$10,000 NAL Adult Jumper Final

Patricia Hennessy captured the championship title in the \$10,000 NAL Adult Jumper Final with Little Tom.

“It was exciting because I had never done that well before and it was like, finally, I did it!” said Hennessy. “I knew I was able to do it; I just had to execute it.”

Hennessy, of Kintnersville, PA, competed against 29 other riders. The course designed by Steve Stephens proved to be a challenge for many of the 30 riders. Thirteen returned for the jump-off, with only five double clear rounds in all. Hennessy watched the first three riders in the jump off, so she knew the times she had to beat. She was the second to last rider to go, and made an impressive round with the winning time of 28.143 seconds.

“I saw Murray (*Murray Kessler and All That*) go right before me. I knew he was pretty fast and his horse was really careful so I knew that I had to be clean,” said Hennessy. “It was anybody’s game though. Anyone that was in the jump-off could have won. I just happened to get lucky.”

Hennessy and Little Tom, a 16-year-old bay, gelding had help from her trainer, Olympic Gold Medalist Chris Kappler, who came to Harrisburg just to help Hennessy for the class. Her husband Kevin was acting as her groom and many of her family members were on hand to provide support in the cheering section.

“They try to come and watch me as much as possible, especially my mother; she loves horses and she really enjoys it when we win.” said Hennessy. “It meant a lot to win here.”



Patricia Hennessy won the \$10,000 NAL Adult Jumper Final with Little Tom ©Al Cook Photography



~ Harrisburg ~

Elizabeth Adelson and Double Down Celebrate Their Win in \$10,000 NAL Children's Hunter Final

Elizabeth Adelson captured the championship title at the \$10,000 NAL Children's Hunter Final with a score of 172.500 points on Double Down. Only half a point separated Adelson and the second place competitor, Nicole White, on Wahlberg.

Adelson, 14, Tulsa, OK, received a score of 90 points in the first round of competition, the highest of the 29 qualifiers in the class. After the first round, 12 competitors came back for a second phase and the pressure was on for Adelson, as the second and third place competitors each received a score of 86. Adelson's score of 82.5 for the second round captured the win by a half a point.

"The first round was my highest score of all time," said Adelson. "I was really happy, almost crying. I was thankful for my horse because he was really good." Double Down is a 16-year-old, chestnut gelding owned by Four Fillies LLC. "I wasn't expecting to win," said Adelson. "He was perfect. I couldn't ask for him to be any better."



*Elizabeth Adelson won the \$10,000 NAL Children's Hunter Final on Double Down
©Al Cook Photography*



~ Harrisburg ~

Sarah Van Der Walde and Vigo Win the \$10,000 NAL Children's Jumper Final

Sarah Van Der Walde won the \$10,000 NAL Children's Jumper Final with a time of 31.114. A fraction of a second between Van Der Walde and the second place finisher was more than enough to claim the championship title.

"It was such a surreal moment," said Van Der Walde of her win. "I never even wanted to ride jumpers and then when I learned, I thought that it was so much fun."

Van Der Walde, 15, of Ann Arbor, MI rode Vigo, a 9-year-old, bay gelding owned by Thinkslikeahorse and Aaron Vale. Van Der Walde was grateful for the opportunity to ride him. "I started riding Vigo this spring and I have been having so much fun with him. He's not mine, but I really, really love him. He's so great. He knows when it's time to go fast and get the job done. When he hears the buzzer, he's ready to go."

With a field of 30 qualifiers, only nine came back for the jump-off, and three had double clear rounds. Van Der Walde had to wait for five riders to jump before being declared the winner and she said it was agonizing.



Sarah Van Der Walde and Vigo won the \$10,000 NAL Children's Jumper Final

©Al Cook Photography



~ Harrisburg ~

Kelsey Thatcher and Klotaire Du Moulin Win the \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final

Kelsey Thatcher of Bluffdale, UT won the \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final on Klotaire Du Moulin.

“It meant a lot to win here,” said Thatcher. “I am so grateful to my mother and Pony Lane Farm for making this all possible.”

Thatcher is sophomore at the University of Georgia (UGA) majoring in Early Childhood Education and rides on the UGA Equestrian Team. Thatcher was also the year-end leader in the NAL’s Low Junior/Amateur-Owner division.

The Steve Stephens designed course yielded six for the jump-off out of the 26 starters in the class. Last to go in the jump-off, Thatcher knew she would have to pour on the speed and go clear to win. When she cleared the second-to-last jump with 26 seconds on the clock, the crowd began to cheer her on as she crossed the timers with the winning time of 33.022.

Thatcher credits her victory to her mount Klotaire Du Moulin, or “Kolt,” a 13-year-old, chestnut stallion, owned by Pony Lane Farm.

“He’s so fast, he’s like a cat. As long as you look somewhere, he turns,” said Thatcher. “Before I rode him, I was never the fastest in the jump-off, but he’s taught me how to go fast. I was a little nervous about coming here for one class because he’s always the best his third or fourth day of showing, but he was very good today.”

“It’s been a great year,” said Thatcher. “I am so grateful to my Equestrian Team coaches because we had a double meet this weekend and they told me to come here and pursue my goals. It is so awesome that it all came together. It means a lot to me.”



*Kelsey Thatcher and Klotaire Du Moulin won the \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final
©Al Cook Photography*



~ Harrisburg ~

Noah Buehler and Porsche Win the \$5,000 NAL Pony Jumper Final

Noah Buehler and Porsche took top honors in the \$5,000 NAL Pony Jumper Final.

Buehler, of Wall, NJ, was the only rider out of the field of 16 that negotiated a clear round to win the class with a time of 70.145 seconds. He was thrilled with his victory, aboard his 12-year-old, Quarter Horse mare named Porsche.

“It’s really great to win this class,” said Buehler. “Especially since this is my first time at Harrisburg and my first time competing in the NAL Finals. It means a lot to win here.”

The Liverpool fence, an obstacle in Steve Stephens’s course, caused problems for many of the riders. For Buehler and his mount Porsche, this fence was not an issue.

“Luckily my pony is a good water jumper, so she was fine with it,” said Buehler.



*Noah Buehler and Porsche won the \$5,000 NAL Pony Jumper Final
©Al Cook Photography*

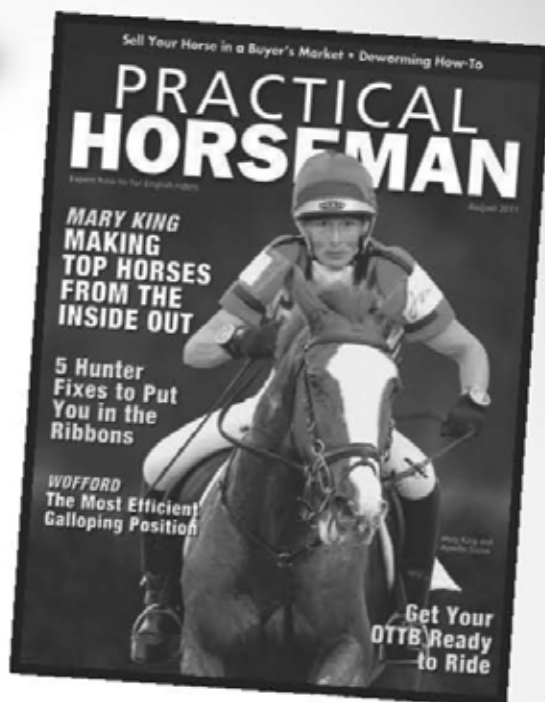
All class participants at Harrisburg received an NAL gift bag with an NAL embroidered saddlepad and product donations. In addition to a ribbon and prize money, all ribbon winners received an NAL Pendant. Class winners received a custom designed wooden tote box, NAL backpack, Coolerette, and an NAL Scrim gift certificate from the Clothes Horse. Second Place finishers received a backpack. High Point Year End Winners received a Jacket.



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North American League

The NAL offers year-long Series in six divisions – Children's Hunter, Adult Hunter presented by Practical Horseman, Children's Jumper, Adult Jumper, Pony Jumper, and Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper. The Series includes classes held at hundreds of horse shows across the United States and Canada.

National Finals for all divisions are held during the Pennsylvania National Horse Show in Harrisburg, PA.

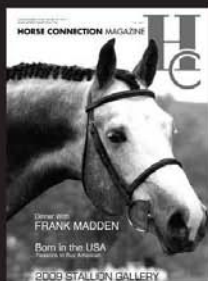
West Coast Finals feature competition in five divisions: Children's Hunter, Adult Hunter, Children's Jumper, Adult Jumper, and Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper, and take place during the Las Vegas National Horse Show at the South Point Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

All classes held at shows starting on or after September 1, 2011 through shows starting on or before August 31, 2012 are counted toward the 2012 finals.

Riders need not be members of the NAL to compete in any qualifying classes, but only current members accrue points towards year-end finals. Annual fee is \$35 per rider. Membership must be received at the League Office within 10 days of the completion of an event for points from that event to count.

Riders may join the NAL at a horse show in order for points from that show to count. Membership forms are available from the show secretary, however exhibitors are encouraged to mail the application themselves. For more information and a list of qualifying competitions, please visit the Ryegate website at www.ryegate.com.

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~ Las Vegas ~

Chelsea Samuels and Brooklyn Win the \$5,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final

Chelsea Samuels rode Brooklyn to the win in the \$5,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final. Not only did she win the class with Brooklyn, but she also received second place aboard Crocodile.

Samuels, 21, of La Canada, CA received a combined score of 166 points aboard Brooklyn, a 12-year-old, chestnut warmblood gelding. She received a score of 81 in the first round, and 85 in the second round to top the 12-horse field. With Crocodile, she received a score of 82 in the first round and 80 in the second round.

“The course was beautiful and I love this arena. The jumps were enough to look at but not spooky. As a junior rider I did the junior hunters but haven’t shown much in the hunters as an amateur,” she said. “It is difficult to balance school with riding and I haven’t jumped or shown since September. It is really nice to have big Finals for amateurs and not have to go east to compete. I qualified for the NAL Adult Hunter Final in the East but didn’t do that show. It was more reasonable to show here.”

Samuel rides with Archie Cox and Teddi Mellencamp at Brookway, and is majoring in Black Studies at U.C Santa Barbara.



*Chelsea Samuels and Brooklyn Won the \$5,000 NAL Adult Hunter Final
©CapturedMomentPhoto.com*



~ Las Vegas ~

Caroline Underwood and Reina Win the \$5,000 NAL Adult Jumper Final

Caroline Underwood captured the win in the \$5,000 NAL Adult Jumper Final on Reina. In a 10-horse jump-off, she was a second and a half faster than anyone, finishing in a time of 34.446 seconds.

Underwood, of Bonsall, CA and her 12-year-old Holsteiner mare, Reina, were on a winning streak. Coming into Las Vegas, prior to the NAL Adult Jumper Final, they won the \$25,000 PCHA Adult Amateur Jumper Championship at Del Mar, and the week before that they won a \$5,000 Classic in Del Mar.

Underwood is one of many riders who expressed happiness about the new West Coast NAL Finals. “Here on the West Coast we are jealous of all the big classes in the East and I don’t want to fly back to do those even though I used to show in the East and in Florida,” said Underwood. “I think having NAL Finals here in Las Vegas is great!”



*Caroline Underwood and Reina Won the \$5,000 NAL Adult Jumper Final
©CapturedMomentPhoto.com*



~ Las Vegas ~

Melanie Selleck and Foreign Escape Win the \$5,000 NAL Children's Hunter Final

Melanie Selleck won the championship in the NAL Children's Hunter Final on Foreign Escape. With 10 riders in the field, she received a score of 82 in each of the rounds to earn the victory.

"I love doing big classes indoors and thought it would be fun to enter the NAL Finals here at the Las Vegas National. It was also a good prep for the upcoming Onondarka Medal Final because it has the same height and presence--it is a special place," said the 13-year-old Selleck.

Selleck, of Los Angeles, CA was aboard Foreign Escape, a 9-year-old, Westphalian gelding. "I can ride him in both the hunters and equitation classes. The course today was very straight-forward. I always have to manage my pace because I get anxious. I just take a deep breath and tell myself to calm down," said Selleck.



Melanie Selleck and Foreign Escape Won the \$5,000 NAL Children's Hunter Final
©CapturedMomentPhoto.com



~ Las Vegas ~

Dinnia DiGennaro and Volturi Win the \$5,000 NAL Children's Jumper Final

Dinnia DiGennaro captured the win in the \$5,000 NAL Children's Jumper final aboard her horse Volturi. In a class of 23 horses, and with only four clear rounds, she was the first to go in the jump-off, which saw her turn in the eventual winning time of 36.294 seconds.

DiGennaro, 16, of Henderson, NV, a nearby suburb of Las Vegas, didn't know what the North American League was before coming to Las Vegas and entering the Children's Jumper Final. But after collecting a wealth of prizes, it is a victory that she will never forget. Her horse, an 11-year-old, Polish warmblood gelding, known as "Freedom" around the barn, has been used in the hunter, equitation and jumper classes, and this was his first year in the Children's Jumpers with her. Of her horse Volturi, DiGennaro says, "He's my three-ring horse."



*Dinnia DiGennaro and Volturi Won the \$5,000 NAL Children's Jumper Final
©CapturedMomentPhoto.com*



~ Las Vegas ~

Jaclyn Jarrell and Barthez Win the \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final

Jaclyn Jarrell, 19, of Calgary, Canada, topped a 20-horse field and a seven-horse jump-off in 30.428 seconds to capture the win in the \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final.

“We have done lots of shows in Calgary, but decided to come to Las Vegas to skip the snow—it is below zero there now and this is my first time here. I love this venue! I wanted to enter the NAL Final because we don’t have big classes at home other than mini prix that don’t give a lot of loot (for prizes) and hype, like this class,” said Jarrell.

Jarrell and her horse Barthez, a 9-year-old Belgium warmblood gelding started their career in the Children’s Hunter divisions but soon realized the hunter ring was not for him. Moving him up from the hunters to the jumpers lead to victory.

“Barthez is easy going and not spooky—this was a good height for him and the courses were all good and challenging. I was worried about the first line because he has focusing issues...we both have focusing issues and the first jump comes up quick. But in the jump-off that is his comfort zone when we can go flat out he’s on it. He is super neat and tidy and turns are not a problem; he has a big step,” Said Jarrell of her horse Barthez.



*Jaclyn Jarrell and Barthez Won the \$5,000 NAL Low Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Final
©CapturedMomentPhoto.com*



Every NAL member who competed in one of the five Finals on “NAL Day” at the Las Vegas National Horse Show received a gift bag and an NAL embroidered saddle pad.

In addition to a ribbon and prize money, winners of each NAL class took home a silver trophy, NAL coolerette, NAL pendant, and NAL backpack filled with other goodies

including a necklace designed exclusively for the NAL by Herschel Bonchek, a prize package for horse and human from Equine Matrix, and a certificate for an NAL scrim from the Clothes Horse. Second place finishers also received a package from Equine Matrix.

All ribbon winners received an NAL Pendant.



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