



North American League News

With the end of the qualifying season for the North American League (NAL) in sight, the summer competition results have been changing the rankings with riders rapidly gaining points that will take them to the top of the standings, along with a chance to compete at one or both of this year's NAL Finals this fall. This summer newsletter features the top rider in each division as of the end of July.

The NAL West Coast Finals take place at the Blenheim's International Jumping Festival at San Juan Capistrano, CA, September 22-26. The National Finals will be held for the second straight year at the Capital Challenge Horse Show, which runs October 1-10 at the Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, MD.

"Last year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we moved the National Finals to the Capital Challenge for the first time and the move was very well received by our participants," said Annette Longenecker of Ryegate Show Services which produces the NAL. "The Capital Challenge did a great job hosting the Finals and we feel that keeping the Finals there is in the best interest of those who compete in the NAL."

Both Finals will feature year-end championship competitions in each of the NAL's five divisions – Adult Jumper Presented by SmartPak, Children's Jumper Presented by EquiFit, Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Presented by HorseFlight, Children's Hunter, and Adult Hunter.

The NAL qualifying season runs from September 1 through August 31. NAL qualifying classes are open to all competitors, but only current members are awarded points. By joining the NAL, riders can accumulate the points necessary to make it to the Finals. Annual memberships are only \$40 per rider.

For more information regarding the North American League, please call (717) 867-5643, email to NAL@Ryegate.com or visit www.ryegate.com. Follow us on [Facebook](#)!



Summer 2021



NAL Children's Jumper Division Presented by EquiFit

Taylor Landstrom Leads National and West Coast Children's Jumper Divisions Presented by EquiFit

Taylor Landstrom of Excelsior, MN, currently leads the National and the West Coast Children's Jumper Division presented by EquiFit with *Colina SN* with 7,334 points.

Starting her riding career at age four-and-a-half, Landstrom, a high school student attending Minnetonka High School, started riding in the North American League in the hunters in 2019 where she received sixth place with her horse *Everglade VDL*. She turned her sights to the jumpers in 2020.

Training with Abby Blankenship out of Three Ships LLC in Indiana for the past four years, Landstrom travels from her home state in Minnesota during her show schedule and travels early to shows to meet with Blankenship for additional training prior to entering the ring.

Her biggest influences are Abby Blankenship, who exemplifies what it means to be a dedicated rider and horsewoman. Abby teaches her students how far honesty, being hardworking and driven can get you. Taylor's other big influence is her brother who has shown her what dedication is all about.

Landstrom's riding goals are to go as far as possible. With Olympic dreams, Landstrom focuses on being the best horsewoman she can be. Qualifying for the WEF Equitation Championship has been her biggest accomplishment to date. One of her favorite shows is Devon; "It's a very fun and different show grounds. It is also very cool that the fair goes on during the show!" she said.

Outside of the show ring, Landstrom enjoys trail riding with her horses, spending time with friends, wake surfing and enjoying a quiet moment to read.

Landstrom would like to thank her trainer who told her once, "Don't be a flattened squirrel. It's the advice I will be taking going into this year's final."





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NAL Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak

Britta Stoeckel Leads National Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak

Britta Stoeckel from Chicago, IL, leads the National Adult Jumper Division presented by SmartPak with 4,919 points on *Everest De Muze*.





Gwen McCaw Tops the West Coast Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak

Gwen McCaw of Seattle, WA and *Wellington Gandorie* hold the lead in the West Coast Adult Jumper Division Presented by SmartPak with 1,939 points.



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NAL Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Division Presented by Horseflight

Anna Keonig is the Leader in the National Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Division Presented by Horseflight

Anna Keonig of SW Ranches, FL, leads the National Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Division presented by Horseflight with *Korino Von Bueren* with 5,934 points

Riding six days a week, Keonig trains out of Ashland Farms in Lexington, KY, with Ken & Emily Smith. She also trains with Chrissie Kear, Daisy Farish, Nora Gray, Kaely Tomeu, and Cormac Hanley. Under their guidance, Keonig has been competitive in the jumper ring and has been showing in the NAL jumper divisions for the past few years. To Keonig, staying consistent in her riding has been her biggest accomplishment, maintaining a top three position in the Low Amateur division. Her goal is to compete at a top level and have her own, successful horse sale business.

Keonig's biggest influences are her trainers and her mom. "No matter the outcome of the day they continue to be by my side and continue to show me that not every day is perfect but if you did the best you could, that's what matters.

"I have so many favorite places to show but I think my top place would have to be Kentucky, it is like my second home. I love the environment and the horses are always so happy."

Keonig's favorite NAL experience is when she and her horse *Korino* came in second and secured the championship week 12 at WEF. "I competed in NAL Finals once before with Super Trooper, it was an incredible experience."

A graduate of Lynn University with a degree in International Business, Keonig is now working on her real estate license. When she is not hitting the books or in the competition ring, Keonig takes a pause to trail ride, work out, and spend time with friends.





Jordan Gibbs Is Tops in the West Coast Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Division Presented by Horseflight

Colorado Springs, CO, native Jordan Gibbs is leading the West Coast Low Junior/Amateur Jumper Division Presented by Horseflight. Grimes currently sits in first with 3,778 points aboard *Douwe*. *Douwe* won the NAL finals last year with Jordan's brother Dominic and was the USEF Low Junior Jumper of the year.

Gibbs's passion for horses began young with her mom being a rider and living on a small horse ranch. Like many, Gibbs took to barn life by always helping with barn chores. Her formal training and showing at local venues began around the age of six. She began competing in NAL classes in the middle of WEF 2021.

Gibbs's biggest influences are her parents, brother and coaches. "My parents are the hardest working, loving and supportive people. My brother, Dominic, is a national champion, and I love that he is chasing big dreams. Both my coaches are extraordinary women who are so accomplished, articulate and devoted to their students. They are different people, but both motivate me to do what I am doing today", said Gibbs.

Gibbs looks forward to spending as much time as she can in the saddle. Riding six days a week and happy to be a catch rider at the barn whenever she can. Gibbs splits her training between Katie and Henri Prudent at Plain Bay Farm for the jumpers, and Beacon Hill Show Stables with Stacia Klein Madden and team for the equitation and hunters. She has been with Plain Bay for almost one year following in her brother's footsteps who has been there for four. She has been with Beacon Hill for three years.

"I can't deny how much I love to jump, but I find flatwork to be just as fun because you have freedom to work off of feel, and what your horse needs. Other than that, I love a good trail ride!"

Her favorite NAL memory was winning her first low junior classic at WEF with *Douwe*. "It was one of the hardest courses I have ever done. We had to be on our A game, but we had so much fun!"

In her free time, she loves to run, ski, hike, swim, play with her dogs, and have fun with friends and family; but mostly she loves being home in Colorado. Her goals are to become a professional equestrian with her own business, as well as represent the U.S. at the highest levels. Her biggest accomplishment so far is being reserve champion at junior hunter finals and having numerous champions and year-end finals placings in the hunters, jumpers, and equitation.

"I would like to thank my parents, trainers Stacia, Katie and Henri, grooms and the kind friends who make these dreams possible for me. I would not have such great opportunities unless people believed in me and my potential," said Gibbs. "I especially want to thank my horses as they have taught me resilience, forgiveness, patience, and focus. They give me the greatest joy and adrenaline!"



Gibbs' motto for success comes from a clipping of Nelson Mandela hanging in her family's kitchen that says, "You either win, or learn." While her dad always says, "Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard."





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NAL Children's Hunter Division

Savannah Welch Leads the National Children's Hunter Division

Savannah Welch of Elon, NC, and Zeus lead the National Children's Hunter Division with 3,004 points.





Adler Manson Holds the Lead in the West Coast Children's Hunter Division

Adler Manson from Dallas, TX, currently leads the West Coast Children's Hunter division with 2,725 points on *Drommels*. Starting her riding career at age six, Manson began competing at age eight and joined the NAL when her partnership with *Drommels* (affectionally known as Nico) first in 2019. Manson is a student at St. Rita Catholic School in Dallas, TX and will be entering 7th grade.

Manson's biggest influence by far is her trainer, Courtney Lenkart. "Courtney and I have a special bond and such a great connection because she has trained me from the very beginning and really understands my personality and how to motivate me – when to push and when to give me a hug instead," said Manson. "She has helped me to define my approach to riding by always reminding me that it's supposed to be fun but we are here to work hard and stay humble. Her approach is focused on the health and safety of my horse first, attention to great riding round after round through hard work, and teaching me to focus and improve every time we step foot in the ring and not being consumed by the color of the ribbon."

Manson has been training with Courtney and Scott Lenkart out of Bartonville, TX for almost 7 years. She has also had the privilege of training with Cody Williams, a longtime friend of Courtney and Scott and a fellow trainer. "My first Capital Challenge last year was a huge bucket list moment for me. Qualifying for the NAL Challenge Class was such an honor and I couldn't believe I was going to compete with some of the best riders from around the country whom I admire so much."



Manson tries to ride as often as possible when at home, usually 4-5 days a week. Her favorite thing is to practice handy rounds and work on equitation. "I also love when Courtney lets me design my own course; that gives me a big boost because I feel like I'm being given more responsibility."

Aside from spending time with her horse, she loves to hang out with her family and friends at the lake and wake surf, wake board and tube. As for her goals, Manson's next step, she hopes, is Junior Hunters and then possibly trying jumpers someday. Being in seventh grade, Manson is also looking ahead at her academic career to go to a great college and travel around the world, hopefully with a horse! One of her favorite quotes is from her trainer Courtney Lenkart: "There are days when you win a class when you didn't deserve to, there are days you don't place when you should have won. We are here to be the best that we can be and the ribbons cannot be your driving force, riding at the highest level is your goal."



NAL Adult Hunter Division

Jennifer Morris Leads the National Adult Hunter Division

Jennifer Morris leads the pack in the National Adult Hunter Division with her own, *Quetzalcoatl* with 2,754 points. Morris began riding horses when she was 8 but only did a handful of shows throughout her early childhood years. It wasn't until 2018 that Morris began seriously competing with her first year showing in the Adult Amateur division and that same year, she first joined NAL.

Morris's biggest influence has been Peg Seals, her former trainer when she lived in Virginia. "She taught me virtually everything I know about the hunter/jumper world. I had no aspirations of showing on the A circuit – much less winning – when I came to her barn. She is the hardest working person I know; she ensures that every horse in her barn has the absolute best and tailored care, and goes above and beyond for each of her riders. Without question, I would not be the same person or rider I am today if I had not landed in Peg's barn during those years," said Morris

In her personal life, Morris notes that her mother has always been the biggest influence. "She is an elementary school teacher and is the most selfless, dedicated person I have ever met. At every turn, she is always there to support and encourage me. She is kind and cheerful to everyone and is well known around the shows for her 'Team Staros' and 'Team Quetzi' shirts."

After relocating from Virginia to South Carolina at the end of 2020, Morris started training with Hunter Kay of Crossfields Farm in Aiken. Morris, who studied Art History at Duke and received MA and PhD degrees in Art and Archaeology at Princeton prior to attending law school, is now an art and cultural heritage lawyer who works with collectors, auction houses, museums, and other nonprofit organizations on issues like stolen antiquities and art. With a busy schedule, Morris still finds time to ride every day when not traveling or otherwise unavailable because of work. She has two older horses that she shows, *Staros*, whom she competed in the NAL Adult Hunter finals at Harrisburg in 2018 and now shows in the Amateur Owner division, and *Quetzalcoatl*, as well as a 3-year-old named *Protokol*. Morris staggers their training schedules to give her at least one horse to ride per day.

Morris's favorite NAL memory comes from the Lexington Spring Encore show in Lexington, VA. "I had only been showing in the Adults for 5 or 6 months and we had a difficult classic round that started with a line. Somehow, I mustered up enough pace and the trip went smoothly, earning us an 89 (my highest ever score at that point) and a win in a competitive NAL/WIHS Adult Hunter Classic with more than 30 entries. I had to rush off to the airport for a work trip before I knew the results, and I was so elated when I got the news!

"I love working my horses outside the ring as much as possible. I am thankful to live in an equestrian community with miles of trails and a hunt course. The horses and I have a blast popping over the logs and



coops and trail riding with our neighbors,” said Morris. “As a rider, I strive to be soft, kind, and empathetic so I bring out my horses’ best qualities and help them enjoy their job.”

Morris is proud of the fact that she keeps her horses at home and manages every aspect of their care, both at home and at shows. Even though it is an incredible amount of work, she feels that she has a much better relationship with them as a result.

“I would like to thank Peg Seals and Laura Wright of Freedom Farm and Hunter Kay of Crossfields Farm for all that they have done for my horses and me.”





Cathy Morris-Schmitt Again Tops the Leaderboard in the West Coast Adult Hunter Division

Cathy Morris-Schmitt, based in Greenwood Village, Colorado, depends on the partnerships she has with her beloved *Andover*, the 13-year-old, Oldenberg gelding, and the team around them to be successful. Training with Morley Abey and Joie Gatlin based out of The Oaks in San Juan Capistrano, Morris-Schmitt is atop the leaderboard in the West Coast Adult Hunter Division with 2,487 points.

"The NAL Finals are very important to me," Cathy said, while praising her coaches for readying her horse so well for last year's Finals. "I came and had the most wonderful and prepared horse that you could imagine."

The lifelong rider now gets saddle time only when she meets up with *Andover* at shows. "When you are sitting on a horse like him, there's no cause to be nervous. All you have to do is stay out of his way!"

Andover, who is notably her favorite horse, is reminiscent of her first AO Hunter, Cactus Jack. She noted, "They both have given me confidence in the show ring when I returned to riding after a long hiatus."

Outside of the saddle, Cathy's number one supporter is her husband.

It's no secret that Cathy enjoys the thrill of competition with her current favorite show being the Capital Challenge since it really celebrates the Hunters. However, the National Horse Show when it was at Madison Square Garden will always be most memorable. "It was a thrill to compete in a venue that hosts the best athletes in the world," she said.

Cathy's goals as a rider and in life are straightforward – "to have fun and I aspire to mentor and coach extraordinary women leaders."

