

Winning Nations' Cup team brings excitement to Tournament

The Canadian show jumping riders who twice this year captured North America's most prestigious team event – the Nations' Cup – will kick the excitement up a notch in the grand prix ring at the Tournament of Champions, Sept. 20-24, at the Caledon Equestrian Park.

The four-member team, fresh off winning the Nations' Cup Spruce Meadows, Alberta earlier this month – Ian Millar of Perth, Ont., Mario Deslauriers of Bromont, Quebec, Erynn Ballard of Hillsburg, and John Pearce of Stouffville, – will vie for supremacy in the \$175,000 John Deere Canada Cup Championship, a three-phase competition featuring top North American and international riders.

The Nations' Cup win marked the first time that Canada has claimed the title at Spruce Meadows. Canada also claimed victory at the only other Nations' Cup in North America this year in Wellington, Florida, with team members Millar, Deslauriers, Chris Pratt of Belfountain and Eric Lamaze of King, who will also compete at the Tournament of Champions.

At Spruce Meadows, a record crowd of more than 60,000 was treated to one of the most exciting finishes ever as Nations' Cup supremacy came down to a jump-off between "Captain Canada" Ian Millar and one of the world's riding legends, Michael Whitaker of Great Britain.

Both teams had finished the two rounds of competition with a total of 10 faults each, so Millar and Whitaker were chosen to represent their nations in the jump-off, with Canada going first. Millar took down one rail, while Whitaker accumulated with eight faults, giving Canada it's

first-ever Nations' Cup win at Spruce Meadows.

"What a great win for Canada, for the first time in 29 years," said team chef d'equipe Terence Millar.

Lamaze named Athlete of the Month

Eric Lamaze of King was named the ProChaps "Athlete of the Month" for August following his amazing performances at the 2006 FEI World Equestrian Games (WEG) held August 20 to Sept. 3 in Aachen, Germany.

Riding *Hickstead*, a 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood stallion owned by Torrey Pines and Ashland Stables, Lamaze began the first day of show jumping competition with a bang, setting a blistering fast pace and leaving the jumps in their place, not to mention the exhilarated fans on the edges of their seats. Stopping the clock at 78.40 seconds, Lamaze shot into the lead. Only American favourite Beezie Madden of Cazenovia, NY, and her mount *Authentic* were able to squeeze ahead of Lamaze, leaving him in second place against 116 of the top show jumping athletes in the world.

"It was my plan all along to attack this course, I wanted to be competitive from the beginning," said Lamaze following his round. "*Hickstead's* very quick and he's careful, he has been here in Aachen before and has had tremendous results this summer."

Lamaze maintained his runner-up position following the second day of show jumping competition, featuring the first round of the Nations' Cup team competition. As the third rider on course for the four-member Canadian Show Jumping Team, Lamaze and *Hickstead* put in another faultless performance, clearing each of the difficult obstacles, including a water jump, and a very technical triple combination.

In recognition of his achievement, Lamaze will receive a pair of state-of-the-art riding chaps, compliments of ProChaps. A Canadian manufacturer of high-performance riding chaps, ProChaps is the proud sponsor of the Jump Canada "Athlete of the Month" program.

"There was a huge crowd, the weather was beautiful, it was on live TV... it was a big moment. Both Nations' Cup victories were big wins and they gave everybody a

big boost."

The Wellington Nations' Cup victory in March was almost a mirror image of the Spruce Meadows event with Eric Lamaze, riding *Hickstead*, winning the jump-off event against U.S. rider Beezie Madden riding her World Championship mount, *Authentic*. Will that boost give these Nations' Cup team members an edge at the Tournament of Champions? Spectators can determine that for themselves, as riders compete Thursday in the \$25,000 John Deere Speed Classic, the first phase of the Championship, and return Friday for the \$50,000 John Deere Grand Prix. The top horses and riders from the first two phases will advance to Sunday's \$100,000 John Deere World Cup Qualifier, a test of strength, speed and consistency to determine the John Deere Canada Cup Champion.

Last year, Ian Millar and In Style, his equine partner for both Nations' Cup wins this year, took the John Deere Canada Cup Championship and aim to repeat that performance this year.


"The Tournament of Champions is one of the premier national shows," says Terence Millar. "It's an extremely high quality show and the riders always look forward to it. Having the three day format and the Championship sets it apart. There's a special atmosphere there."

The Caledon Equestrian Park, is located at the Caledon Equestrian Park off of Pine Ave. in Palgrave. Admission on Thursday and Friday is free; Saturday and Sunday is \$5 per person or


\$10 per car including parking. The show gates open daily at 10 a.m. and close at 5 p.m.

The 2006 Tournament of Champions is proud to support the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada, C.A.R.D. (Community Association for Riding for the Disabled) and the Rotary Club of Palgrave.

For more, visit the Website www.tournamentofchampions.ca, e-mail info@tournamentofchampions.ca or call 905-939-8666.



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For more information about the Caledon Centre, call 905-857-3313 or 1-800-621-1287.