



TWIN RIVERS WINTER HORSE TRIALS

Wins by Smith at Advanced and Intermediate and First-Ever Modified Held at Twin Rivers Highlight Winter Horse Trials

March 5, 2023

By Jonathan Horowitz

Paso Robles, CA — The 2023 Twin Rivers Winter Horse Trials were an event to remember. A hard-working crew and community support stepped up after record rains in Paso Robles, California, flooded the cross-country course prior to the show. Tamie Smith's wins at the Advanced and Intermediate levels highlighted top-class performances. And, Twin Rivers hosted a Modified level for the first time in the event's history.

That the Twin Rivers Winter Horse Trials even took place was a feat in itself. The bottom field at Twin Rivers Ranch where the dressage rings and the lower part of the cross-country course are located was under approximately four feet of water six weeks prior to the event because of severe flooding to the area. The combination of grounds crews working round-the-clock, the strong response to a GoFundMe campaign, and a break in the weather during a particularly rainy California winter allowed for a "miracle," as organizer Connie Baxter described hosting the event.

"We've gotten quite a bit of weather here in California, more so than ever, and the river flooded out the lower part of the cross-country," Smith said. "So, it was a little nerve-wracking knowing whether they were going to be prepared, but they did a great job."



Tamie Smith and Elliot V. Ride On Photo.

Smith won Advanced with the 14-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding Elliot V (Zavall VDL x Vera-R) owned by the Elliot V Partnership. They led after dressage with a score of 30.0 and added 6.4 time penalties on cross-country for a finishing score of 36.4.

“2023 is going to be his breakout year, and he’s really come out fantastic,” Smith said.



Tamie Smith and Elliot V. Ride On Photo.

Following what Smith described as a challenging 2022 for Elliot V, she plans to step him up to the five-star level for the first time in 2023 at the Land Rover Kentucky Three-Day Event where he will join Mai Baum as Smith’s rides in the CCI5*L at the Kentucky Horse Park.

“He’s kind of been a little bit in the background, and I’ve been trudging along developing him,” Smith said about Elliot V. “Although he didn’t have the best year last year, it was more bad-luck-type stuff, and it always felt like he couldn’t catch a break.”



Tamie Smith and Kynan. Ride On Photo.

Smith also won Intermediate with Kynan owned by the Kynan Syndicate, adding 5.2 time penalties on cross-country to their dressage score of 28.6 to finish with a score of 33.8. It was Kynan's first Intermediate, and the 8-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding has made a quick ascent since his first USEA-recognized event with Smith at Training at the Twin Rivers Summer Horse Trials in June 2022.

"I took my time last year just trying to get to know him, and over the winter, I felt like I solidified a partnership," Smith said. "He's a real all-around super horse. He's really good in all three phases and has an intelligent mind and is game."

Kynan finished 2022 with a win in the CCI2*-S at the Morven Park Fall International in Leesburg, Virginia, and then a third-place in the CCI2*-L back in California at the Galway Downs International. He started 2023 winning at Preliminary at the Ram Tap Horse Trials before moving up to Intermediate at Twin Rivers.

"Everything went to plan, which is always nice, and the horses felt really prepared," Smith said. "The courses really felt up to par with a good track, and it was great."

Smith was also second in Open Preliminary with Julianne Guariglia's 7-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding Crafty Don (Tolan R x Diamond Breaker) to Helen Alliston and Alliston Equestrian's 8-year-old Zangersheide gelding Flinterro Z (Figaro). Elsa Warble won the Preliminary Rider division with Anna Meegan's 9-year-old Holsteiner gelding FE Unlimited (Uriko x Viona III).



Molly Duda and Carlingfords Hes a Clover. Ride On Photo.

In the first ever Modified held at Twin Rivers, Molly Duda and her 11-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding Carlingfords Hes a Clover (Polanski x Fourleaf Clover) finished on their dressage score of 25.3 to win. That tied for the lowest finishing score across all levels with Kelly Estes and Waltz With Me (Wild Dance x Point of Grace) in the Beginner Novice Rider Division.

"It was a tricky course. My trainers were joking that it looked like the Modified Olympics," Duda said with a laugh. "It felt really good. My horse, Tommy, was just incredible through it. He's just a cross-country machine. He loves it out there. The footing really held up with the rain, so it was great."

This was the second event together for Duda and “Tommy” following a fourth-place finish at Training at Ram Tap last month. Tommy was competing at the three-star level in Great Britain with Lizzie Baugh in 2022 before partnering with Duda.

“I’ve only had him for about two months. He’s very new to me,” Duda said. “He’s just such a gentleman. He’s a very well-trained horse, and he loves his job. We pretty much clicked right when he got to the States. He’s always been so level-headed about everything. He’s just got the sweetest personality.”

The Baxter family that hosts eventing at Twin Rivers Ranch was incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support received in response to the flooding that led up to the Twin Rivers Winter Horse Trials. There was a significant private donation and a strong community response to the GoFundMe campaign to have the facilities ready for the event.

“The support we received was so heartwarming,” organizer Baxter said. “It was a real team effort, and after all the hard work that went into hosting these horse trials, we’re looking forward to the internationals, as well as the Young Event Horse West Coast Championships, that make up our show schedule in 2023.”

The next event that will take place at Twin Rivers Ranch will be the Twin Rivers Spring International on April 13-16.

The full list of winners from the 2023 Twin Rivers Winter Horse Trials:

Advanced: Tamie Smith and Elliot V (36.4)
Open Intermediate: Tamie Smith and Kynan (33.8)
Open Preliminary: Helen Alliston and Flinterro Z (26.6)
Preliminary Rider: Elsa Warble and FE Unlimited (28.8)
Open Modified: Molly Duda and Carlingfords Hes a Clover (25.3)
Open Training: Tommy Greengard and Cooley Sligo (28.3)
Sr. Training Rider: Teresa Harcourt and Csongor (29.2)
Jr. Training Rider: Fiona Holland and Joshua Tree (25.6)
Training Amateur: Jessica Jones and Jameson (30.6)
Open Novice: Rebecca Braitling and Made by Leontine EB (26.1)
Sr. Novice Rider: Alexandra Naeve and Soaring Bird (30.0)
Jr. Novice Rider: Holly Fosmark and When Starz Align (29.2)
Novice Amateur: Taylor Miles and RLE Cappuccino (26.1)
Open Beginner Novice: Lauren Billys Shady and Mister Cooley (30.6)
Beginner Novice Rider: Kelly Estes and Waltz With Me (25.3)
Starter: Helen Alliston and Faraó (27.7)

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For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Christina Gray of Gray Area Events at Christina@grayareaevents.com.

Volunteers play a major part of events at Twin Rivers. Twin Rivers' generous volunteer incentive program includes vouchers for show stabling and credits for schooling between events at the beautiful 500-acre venue. That is in addition to the genuine appreciation of the Baxter family and the entire Twin Rivers team. To sign up, please visit www.twinrivershorsepark/volunteer.

Connect with Twin Rivers

Location: 8715 N. River Road, Paso Robles, CA. 93446

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