



Twin Rivers Fall International Preview: Comebacks, Move-ups, and Prepping for Major Events

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By Jonathan Horowitz

Paso Robles, CA — The 2024 Twin Rivers Fall International will feature horses coming back to competition, moving up to a new level, and preparing for future top-class events to close out a big year for the sport of eventing. Taking place from September 19 to 22 at Twin Rivers Ranch in Paso Robles, California, the Fall International will comprise: FEI competition in the CCI4*-S, CCI3*-S, CCI2*-S, and CCI1*-S; national levels from Starter up to Advanced; and qualifiers for 4- and 5-year-olds in the USEA's Young Event Horse Program (YEH) leading up to the Dutta Corp. USEA YEH West Coast Championships that will take place at Twin Rivers on October 25-26, with a Last Chance Qualifier on October 24.

Mai Baum (Loredano x Ramira) and Tamie Smith, who made history in 2023 as the first American pair since Phillip Dutton and Connaught in 2008 to win the CCI5*-L at the Kentucky Three-Day Event, are returning to competition for the first time since winning the CCI4*-S at the Galway Downs International in Temecula, California, in March.

"There's nothing better than being able to do it with a horse where we think for each other," Smith said. "I've never had a horse that I've had that long of a partnership with where I've been able to start and then go all the way to the top and keep him there for so long, just to the point where we think for each other. So, it's really special."

Smith and "Lexus" are entered in the CCI4*-S at Twin Rivers as a prep for the CCI5*-L at the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill next month. They previously won the CCI4*-S at this event in 2019.



Tamie Smith and Mai Baum winning the CCI4-S at the 2019 Twin Rivers Fall International. MGO Photography.*

“He’s feeling great,” Smith said. “Obviously, we wanted to take him to Paris, but he wasn’t going to be fit enough. He had a blip right before Kentucky and had to have a few weeks off. And then, the timing was horrible to get him fit enough and ready. He’s been back and feeling fit and galloping and jumping and feeling really ready. So, I’m excited. I think he’s excited.”

Maryland would be the first five-star for the 18-year-old black German Sport Horse gelding since Kentucky in 2023.

“When you see him, you wouldn’t think he was 18 for sure,” Smith said. “With Lexus, I think every moment is enjoyable. I love every single moment with him.”

While the partnership between Smith and Lexus goes back to 2015, a new partnership that the California-based five-star eventer will showcase at the Fall International is with Lillet 3 (S.I.E.C. Livello x Princess L) in the CCI3*-S. Prior to joining Smith’s stable in July, the young 8-year-old dark bay Holsteiner mare won the CCI4*-S at Kristianstad in Sweden with German Olympian Andreas Dibowski in the spring.

In the United States, “Lillet” has won her first two events with Smith at Preliminary at Rebecca Farm in Montana and Intermediate at Woodside in California.

“Every day we learn more about each other,” she said. “She’s very much my type of ride, but she is a mare, and I have to figure out her quirks and her ins and outs of how she likes things done because unfortunately there’s not a manual that says this is how you ride a mare.” Smith laughed and added, “If you get a partnership with a mare, there’s nothing better.”



Molly Duda and Disco Traveler winning Advanced at the 2024 Twin Rivers Winter H.T. Ride On Photo.

While Lexus and Smith are veterans of the four-star level—Lexus since 2015 and Smith since 2007—the CCI4*-S will also feature horses and riders that are new to and excelling at the level in 2024 or making their four-star debut at the Fall International.

Both Molly Duda, the 2023 USEA Young Rider of the Year, and her 14-year-old bay Oldenburg gelding Disco Traveler (Donatelli x Cadence) made their four-star debut together in March, finishing second in

the CCI4*-S to Smith and Mai Baum at Galway. They've since competed at the level overseas as part of the U.S. Eventing European Development Tour, highlighted by a 23rd-place finish out of 59 at the FEI Eventing Nations Cup CCIO4*-NC-S at Millstreet in Ireland.

“The opportunity to travel to Europe as part of the 2024 European Development Tour was absolutely invaluable,” Duda said. “During those six weeks overseas, I grew more as a person and as a rider than I probably have in my entire riding career. I was able to take my riding to the next level and continue developing my partnership with ‘Disco’ while being surrounded by some of the best horses and riders in the world.”



Molly Duda and Disco Traveler at Millstreet in Ireland. Bit-Media photo courtesy of Molly Duda.

They'll be eyeing their first CCI4*-L at Galway starting on October 31.

“Being back in the United States and reflecting on my experience, the main emotion I feel is inspired,” Duda said. “Disco and I are now based full time with Tamie in Temecula, and he is feeling fit and ready to run his first CCI4*-L at the end of the year.”

Making their four-star debuts will be Cora ridden by James Alliston and Regalla ridden by Taren Hoffos.



James Alliston and Cora winning Intermediate at the 2024 Twin Rivers Winter H.T. Ride On Photo.

Cora, a 9-year-old bay Oldenburg mare (Commissario x La-Montana), has been reserve champion in her two CCI3*-L competitions in 2024 at the Twin Rivers Spring International and at The Event at Rebecca Farm. Both times she was double-clear on cross-country. She then added no jumping penalties in show jumping, going just one second over the time allowed at Twin Rivers.

“It’s her first four-star and excited to try it,” Alliston said. “She’s been really good at three-star, so hopefully it translates. She’s a nice all-around horse really, so I’m hopeful it’ll go well.”

Regalla, a 13-year-old bay Oldenburg mare (Sir Donnerhall x Rubiera), has won two CCI3*-S competitions at Galway in 2023 and 2024. Hoffos debuted at the four-star level this year at Galway with Master Class, whom she’ll also ride in the CCI4*-S at Twin Rivers. “Chester,” a 15-year-old bay Canadian Warmblood gelding (Cree x Night Destiny), had previously competed at the four-star level with Leah Breakey in 2019 before Hoffos started riding him in 2021. On the other hand, Hoffos has brought up “Luna” from the Beginner Novice level starting in 2018.

“The horses are so different,” Hoffos said. “Master Class is older, with more experience at the level with his previous rider Leah Breakey and also with me, while this will be Regalla’s first attempt at the level. Chester’s prep has been focused on dressage, his weakest phase. He’s a very emotional and sensitive horse, so I’ve been trying to tap into his mental game with the help of my dressage coach, Tiffany Silverman. Luna’s prep has been finessing the jumping, taming her wild nature. I’m super excited and grateful to have two horses at the level and am relishing the experience.”



Renee Kalkman and Flame Eternal winning Advanced at the 2024 Twin Rivers Summer H.T. Ride On Photo.

The field of seven for the CCI4*-S also includes two Thoroughbred geldings that have become successful eventers after previous careers as racehorses. Eye of the Storm (Olympio x Message of Honey), was bred in California and raced 11 times in The Golden State under the name of Steamy Oly. This will be the sixth CCI4*-S for the 15-year-old bay gelding and Jen Moody in 2024. Flame Eternal (Flammabull x Silmarillion), was bred in British Columbia, Canada, and raced a total of six times in his home province and Washington. This will mark the second time the 13-year-old chestnut gelding and Renee Kalkman have competed in Paso Robles after winning the Advanced level at the 2024 Twin Rivers Summer Horse Trials.

With 7 entries in the CCI4*-S, 16 in the CCI3*-S, 18 in the CCI2*-S, and 8 in the CCI1*-S, the 49 FEI competitors in 2024 represents six more than at the same event in 2023. Last year represented the most

FEI entries since international competition returned to Twin Rivers' fall event in 2019 after a decade-long hiatus.

Among other horses with previous championship or FEI success at Twin Rivers this weekend: Camelot PJ (Colman x Hauptstutbuch Evita) and Andrea Baxter in the CCI2*-S won the 2023 USEA YEH 5-Year-Old West Coast Championship; Get Wild (Plot Blue x Cantana) and Gabriella Ringer in the CCI2*-S won the CCI2*-L at the 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International; Igor B (Vittorio x Erica B) and Megan McIver in the CCI3*-S won the CCI2*-S in the spring; and MGH Capa Vilou (Ars Vivendi x Dilou M) and Julia Beauchamp Crandon in the CCI3*-S won the CCI2*-S at this event last year.

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