



TWIN RIVERS SPRING INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW

Record Field Size for FEI Levels at 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International

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By Jonathan Horowitz

Paso Robles, CA — The largest field for the international levels of eventing in the history of Twin Rivers Ranch in Paso Robles, California, is scheduled to compete in the 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International from April 11-14. The event will feature FEI competition in the CCI4*-S, CCI3*-L, CCI3*-S, CCI2*-L, CCI2*-S, and CCI1*-L. National levels will go from Beginner Novice up to Advanced, as well as a five-star combined test and intercollegiate, interscholastic, and adult team challenges.

The year after Tamie Smith and Mai Baum won the CCI5*-L at the Kentucky Three-Day Event to become the first American pair since Phillip Dutton and Connaught in 2008 and West-Coast-based tandem since Derek di Grazia and Sasquatch in 1985 to capture top honors in Lexington, three entries in the 2024 five-star field will be using the Twin Rivers Spring International as their final prep.

Bec Braitling, who is based at Twin Rivers and represents Australia internationally, will compete with longtime partner Caravaggio II in the five-star combined test, as well as do the dressage test ride for the four-star competition. They are eyeing their first five-star together at the Kentucky Horse Park, where they competed in the CCI4*-S in 2023. Braitling and “Ernie” were one of 12 out of 49 in the 2023 Kentucky four-star with zero jumping penalties and finished 23rd overall before embarking on a trip to Europe to represent Australia in international competition.



Bec Braitling and Caravaggio II winning at Advanced at the 2023 Twin Rivers Spring International. Ride On Photo.

“It’s such a long process with these horses, so any time you get the chance to go do these things, you like to jump on it, that’s for sure,” Braitling said. “He’s my buddy.”

The Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event would represent Braitling’s return to eventing’s highest level for the first time since she rode Just A Lady at Adelaide in Australia in 2003. She and Arnell Sporthorses’ 13-year-old black British Sport Horse gelding (Vangelis-S x Courtesan) are also long-listed for the Australian eventing team at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

“For me the big focus is doing a five-star,” Braitling said. “A lot of people that are going to end up doing [the Olympics] are going to be looking at a different preparation, but I feel like with him, you don’t get many chances to do a five-star. So, that’s my biggest focus for this year.”



James Alliston and Karma winning the CCI4-S at the 2023 Twin Rivers Fall International. Ride On Photo.*

James Alliston is using Twin Rivers as his final prep for the Kentucky five-star with Karma at the Advanced level and with Paper Jam in the CCI4*-S. Kentucky would be the first five-star for Karma, a 10-year-old bay Oldenburg mare (Escudo II x Travita). She was eighth in the CCI4*-S there in 2023. Then, she won the CCI4*-S at the Twin Rivers Fall International before representing the United States and finishing 14th, the highest for an American, at the FEI Eventing Nations Cup Netherlands CCIO4*-NC-L at Military Boekelo in Enschede, Netherlands.

“Everything she’s done, she’s done it well up to this point,” Alliston said. “So, hopefully the massive jumps and all of that doesn’t back her off too much, and she can go as she’s been going.”

Paper Jam is in the midst of a comeback after not competing in 2023. The 15-year-old chestnut Hanoverian gelding (Paparazzo x Reely Jamin) has finished second in events at Advanced-Intermediate and Advanced at Ram Tap in Fresno, California, in 2024.

“I wasn’t going to do the five-star to be honest; I was probably going to do the four-star [in Kentucky], and I still might,” Alliston said. “But, he’s going really well, and he has quite a lot of experience at four-star. He’s just had a year out with an injury, but he’s come back. They never forget anything, and they always have that experience. He doesn’t feel that rusty. Obviously five-star is a big ask, and they need to be at the top of their game. So, I’ll see how this show goes.”



*Andrea Baxter and Camelot PJ winning the 5-year-old championship at the 2023 USEA YEH West Coast Championships.
Tina Fitch Photography.*

There are a total of 70 entries across the FEI levels at the Twin Rivers Spring International in 2024. The most previously was the 68 that competed the first time Twin Rivers offered international competition during the spring in 2006. There were 56 competitors at the 2023 Twin Rivers Spring International after 17 ran in 2022.

After Twin Rivers featured its largest field for the 2023 Dutta Corp. USEA Young Event Horse (YEH) West Coast Championships since the West Coast Championships were first held as a standalone event at Twin Rivers in 2020, some of the YEH alumni will be making their FEI debuts.

Twin-Rivers-based Andrea Baxter and Camelot PJ (Colman x Hauptstutbuch Evita), the 5-year-old champions, are entered in the CCI1*-L. Baxter also rides The Big Easy (Mr Lincoln B x PLS Hippo Q), sixth in last year's 5-year-old championship, in the CCI2*-S. The CCI2*-S is the largest FEI level at the 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International with 24 entries.

"They've all just stepped up the levels, and it's kind of fun having them all showing up at the same time, Baxter said. "This time last year, they all did their first Novice in April, and a year later we're doing a two-star on The Big Easy and the one-star on the other two."

Baxter is also entered with Adventure (Avos Jordan Z x Rockmount Lillie) in the CCI1*-L. This will be Baxter's first FEI competition since the same event in 2022 when she and Laguna Seca (Linaro x Indy 500) won the CCI3*-S.

"I'm excited," said Baxter, who will also compete at the Beginner Novice level during the weekend. "I kept joking with everybody that I was retired after Indy [500] and Laguna Seca. I sold Laguna Seca to a young rider and restocked, and I've been doing that over the last couple years. It felt like I was out of it for a while, but here I am back again."



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

After winning the Advanced level at the 2024 Twin Rivers Winter Horse Trials, Molly Duda and Disco Traveler (Donatelli x Cadence) are part of the field of seven for the CCI4*-S. They're coming off a second-place finish to Mai Baum in their four-star debut at the Galway Downs International H.T. in Temecula, California. Smith is entered in the CCI4*-S with Julianne Guariglia's Pierre's Farceur du Bochard (Con Air x Ariane du Bochard), who competed at the three-star level with Ugo Provasi in France in 2023.

In the CCI3*-L, the highest long-format level offered, James Alliston will ride Cora, who won the Intermediate level at this year's Twin Rivers Winter Horse Trials. Wife Helen Alliston will be aboard Call Me Rudi (Clooney x Genia), who won at Intermediate at Ram Tap in November 2023. Both horses will be moving up to CCI3*-L for the first time.

"He's doing his first three-long, so that's quite exciting," Helen Alliston said. "He's feeling good; he's feeling ready. So, he'll do that, and then I'll probably just put him out in the field after that while I go cheer on James in Kentucky."

She added about Call Me Rudi, "He's one of my favorite horses I've ever ridden. I've got very high hopes for him. His jump is 10 out of 10. He has a lot of Thoroughbred in him, so he can gallop well."

Dressage for the CCI4*-S and CCI2*-S will take place on Thursday and for all other levels on Friday. The short-format FEI levels will also show jump on Friday. All FEI levels will do cross-country on Saturday, and the long-format FEI levels will conclude with show jumping on Sunday.

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