



TWIN RIVERS SPRING INTERNATIONAL RECAP

First FEI Victories and Final Preps for Five-Star Hopefuls Highlight 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International

April 14, 2024

By Jonathan Horowitz

Paso Robles, CA — Veterans and young riders shined at the 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International in Paso Robles, California, during the event from April 11-14.

As they look ahead to five-star competition in the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event in two weeks, James Alliston won the CCI4*-S with Paper Jam and the Advanced level with Karma, and Bec Braitling and Caravaggio II had their prep as the only competitors in a special five-star combined test that was offered during the first of the two international events to be held at Twin Rivers Ranch in 2024.

Young riders Elsa Warble, Gabriella Ringer, and Mackenzie Davison won their first FEI events. Warble, 16, captured the CCI3*-S with FE Unlimited. Ringer, 20, won the CCI2*-L with Get Wild. Davison, 21, captured the CCI1*-L in her FEI debut with Lockdown JPL.

In addition, the CCI3*-L victory by Erin Grandia and Hyacinth marked the first victory in an FEI level for Grandia, who made her international debut in 2007. Megan McIver and Igor B won their second CCI2*-S in a row following victory at the Galway Downs International Horse Trials in Temecula, California.



James Alliston and Paper Jam. Ride On Photo.

THE VETERANS

The victory by Paper Jam in the CCI4*-S represented the first win for the 15-year-old chestnut Hanoverian gelding out of a Thoroughbred dam (Paparazzo x Reely Jamin) since the CCI4*-L at Galway in November 2022. After not competing in 2023 because of an injury, Alliston is now eyeing a return to the five-star in Lexington following the four-star victory at Twin Rivers on a final score 43.7 that saw them add just one rail in show jumping and time penalties to their dressage score. Alliston will also point the 10-year-old bay Oldenburg mare Karma (Escudo II x Travita) to her first CCI5*-L in Kentucky following a win at Advanced at Twin Rivers that saw them jump clear and add just one second of time in show jumping for a finishing score 35.0.

“They were both really good,” Alliston said. “It was a great course for a final Kentucky prep, and I was happy with how they felt.”

Because of heavy rain on Saturday, organizers moved the FEI cross-country rounds up to Friday, and all FEI show jumping rounds took place on Saturday.

“Conditions were tough today in the show jumping with all the rain, but they performed real well and I was very happy,” Alliston said. “Many thanks to the Baxter family and Twin Rivers for changing the schedule around to give the horses the best conditions possible and avoid doing [cross-country] in the worst weather.”

Paper Jam and Karma will be joined in Lexington by Caravaggio II and Bec Braitling, who did the five-star combined test at Twin Rivers with a dressage score of 45.4 and had one rail and three seconds of time penalties in show jumping. Braitling and Arnell Sporthorses’ 13-year-old black British Sport Horse gelding (Vangelis-S x Courtesan) also did the dressage test ride for the four-star competition. Braitling said she approached the weekend from a strategic standpoint.

“All systems go!” she said. “My score on the flat wasn’t amazing as I decided to school some canter walks in the test instead of the four changes. It was great to get in the ring and ride the test in a show setting. Also the XC was about to start, so he was for sure conflicted which phase he was REALLY supposed to be doing! He jumped SUPER in the very wet conditions. I’m excited!”



Bec Braitling and Caravaggio II. Ride On Photo.



Erin Grandia and Hyacinth. Ride On Photo.

In the CCI3*-L, Hyacinth and Grandia relished the move-up in level for their first win as a pair and her first victory in her 19th FEI event dating back to 2007. (Hyacinth’s previous victory in a USEA-recognized event came at the Preliminary level at Aspen in Washington in 2021 with Erin’s husband, Marc.)

“Winning at Twin Rivers was extra special because my husband, Marc, and I base our business here for two months every spring, so it really feels like a win on home turf,” Erin said.

Hyacinth was second after a dressage score of 31.3, jumped clear with eight seconds of time penalties to move into the lead after cross-country, and added one rail in show jumping to finish with a winning score of 38.5.

“Hyacinth is really a long format type horse,” she said. “She is a strong galloper, so having that extra time and space to let her go a bit more was a great feeling. She’s so brave on cross-country and she makes it feel like she’ll jump anything she’s pointed at. The show jumping has always been our hardest phase and we’ve worked really hard on strategies to keep the rails up, so I was really happy with how she jumped today, too.”

Grandia, who took over ownership of Hyacinth in 2024, said she will point the gray Dutch Warmblood mare (Contendro I x Vesper) to the CCI3*-S at Aspen in June.

“I want to give a special thank you to her breeder, Jessica Rosch, who was a great supporter and owner for me for several years before allowing me the opportunity to take over ownership of Hyacinth this year,” she said.

Two weeks after winning the CCI2*-S at Galway, McIver and Igor B won the same level at Twin, finishing on their dressage score of 30.6. The 11-year-old chestnut Dutch Warmblood gelding (Vittorio x Erica B) is now based in California after competing up to the four-star level with Kristina Hall-Jackson in Great Britain.



Megan McIver and Igor B. Ride On Photo.

“One of my amazing owners, Leo Wang, purchased him for me as a next step for my career goals,” McIver said. “It feels as if the sky is the limit with him, and he has made quite the impression so far Stateside with back-to-back two-star wins at Galway and now Twin.”

McIver said she will move up “Rupert” to Intermediate and then three-star at Rebecca Farm in Montana.

“He is quite an exciting horse for the future,” she said. “Our partnership is relatively new. I’ve only had him here in the U.S. for two months. But, we seem to just be cracking on as a team.”

THE YOUNG RIDERS



Elsa Warble and FE Unlimited. Ride On Photo.

In the CCI3*-S, Warble and FE Unlimited were second after a dressage score of 32.0 behind the 2022 USEA Young Event Horse 5-year-old West Coast champion That’s Me Z (Take A Chance On Me Z x Venetia).

“Coming out of the court after our dressage test was a really special moment because it was one of our best tests yet, and I know there is still a lot of room to grow,” Warble said.

Then, the 16-year-old rider and 10-year-old bay Holsteiner gelding (Uriko x Viona III) moved into the lead by jumping clear on cross-country with the second-fastest round, adding just two seconds of time penalties. They were double clear in show jumping to win with a score of 32.8. McIver and Elle (Con Caletto x Vamp’s Tude) were second after also finishing second in the CCI3*-S at Galway.

“It means the world to me to win on ‘Axel,’” Warble said. “He truly is my horse of a lifetime. It’s been a couple of years in the making and to have all the pieces come together at Twin with all the people who have been there supporting me along the way—Mickayla Howard, Bec Braitling, and Tamie Smith just to name a few—along with the whole West Coast eventing community was really special.”



Gabriella Ringer and Get Wild. Ride On Photo.

This same event in 2018—then known as the Twin Rivers CCI, CIC & H.T.—marked the first competition together for Ringer and Get Wild. They were 14 years old and 6 years old, respectively, at the time. The dark bay Dutch Warmblood gelding (Plot-Blue x Cantana) was coming off a third-place finish in the 2017 USEA Young Event Horse East Coast Championships with Matthew Flynn as part of a promising 5-year-old class that also included future five-star horses Chin Tonic HS (Chin Champ x Wildera), Ferrie’s Cello (Chello III VDL x Karelza), and Miks Master C (Mighty Magic x Qui Luma CBF).

Ringer and Get Wild won their first event together at the Novice level. Almost six years later to the day, the 20-year-old rider and 12-year-old horse celebrated their first FEI victory in the CCI2*-L. They led after each phase and finished with a score of 27.4, adding just one second of time penalties in show jumping to the only sub-30 dressage score at the level.

“I am beyond proud of Get Wild this weekend and feel grateful to be his partner,” Ringer said. “He is such a special horse, and this win makes me excited about what we’re going to accomplish together. I was particularly happy with how we performed on a challenging cross-country track. He had plenty of run and felt really good out there. We have been working so hard on our partnership, and I am thrilled to have it come together in all three phases this weekend.”



Mackenzie Davison and Lockdown JPL. Ride On Photo.

On the other hand, Davison's first event with Lockdown JPL at the final USEA-recognized horse trials held at Copper Meadows in Ramona, California, in September 2021 was not as auspicious. They had two jump penalties on cross-country at the Beginner Novice level. But, less than three years later, the 21-year-old rider and 8-year-old bay Irish Sport Horse gelding (KEC Maximum Joe x KEC Kingston) made their FEI debut a winning one, finishing on their dressage score of 26.2 in Twin Rivers' CCI1*-L.

They also won at the Modified level at the Galway two weeks earlier, and it's been a quick rise up the levels for the young rider and horse.

"I really came into this event just hoping to have a positive experience and ride my best," Davison said. "My horse is still green and can get a bit overwhelmed, so at every show my only goal is to give him confident rides. We've had struggles in all the phases at some point over our time together, but this weekend I could really feel all the work we've been doing come together."

LOOKING AHEAD

Following the Twin Rivers Spring International, Twin Rivers Ranch will next host the Twin Rivers Summer Horse Trials from June 27-30. The second FEI event in Paso Robles in 2024 will be the Twin Rivers Fall International from September 19-22. Then, USEA-recognized competition for the year will conclude with the Young Event Horse West Coast Championships on October 25-26.

The 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International marked the FEI debut for 2023 YEH 5-year-old West Coast champion Camelot PJ (Colman x Hauptstutbuch Evita), who finished third on his dressage score of 29.0 in the CCI1*-L with Andrea Baxter. Baxter was also 12th in the CCI2*-S with YEH alumnus The Big Easy (Mr Lincoln B x PLS Hippo Q) in the FEI debut for the horse she affectionately refers to as "Caesar" and "Yoda."

"It's been so fun to continue producing my two 5-year-olds," Baxter said. "Caesar/Yoda/The Big Easy won the Safe Harbor Award at the championships. He woke up this spring so trained and cottoned onto the job. He has effortlessly stepped up to Prelim and stepped around the two-star with his eyes closed. He is so cool. PJ is a totally different type, more of a Ferrari and has become a little more careful as the

jumps got bigger, so I opted to keep him at one-star for a little longer. I've never done a new style one-star, so that was a lot of fun and such a useful new level for developing future upper-level horses.”

The full list of winners from the 2024 Twin Rivers Spring International:

CCI4*-S: James Alliston and Paper Jam (43.7)
CCI3*-L: Erin Grandia and Hyacinth (38.5)
CCI3*-S: Elsa Warble and FE Unlimited (32.8)
CCI2*-L: Gabriella Ringer and Get Wild (27.4)
CCI2*-S: Megan McIver and Igor B (30.6)
CCI1*-L: Mackenzie Davison and Lockdown JPL (26.2)
5* CT: Bec Braitling and Caravaggio II (50.6)
Advanced: James Alliston and Karma (35.0)
Open Intermediate: Hanni Sreenan and Ebenholtz (42.6)
Open Preliminary: Rachel Brickman and Finally DG (24.9)
Preliminary Rider: Mickayla Howard and Miss Tique (32.1)
Open Modified: Tommy Greengard and I'm All In (26.5)
Modified Rider: Saulo Tristao and Kremer VD Falieberg (26.8)
Open Training: Amber Birtcil and Milagro (23.9)
Sr. Training Rider: Lauren Henry and Carel Cruiser (30.0)
Jr. Training Rider: Anya Ostrovsky and Coco Cassana (32.1)
Training Amateur: Reese Blinks and I'M Jaguar (22.9)
Open Novice: Tommy Greengard and Casa de Prestige (24.7)
Sr. Novice Rider: Christine Murphy and Made You Look (32.8)
Jr. Novice Rider: Josephine Clark and Cinzano (22.8)
Novice Amateur: Bari Boersma and Reverie GWF (26.4)
Novice Horse: Nicholas Cwick and O'Malley (29.7)
Open Beginner Novice A: Kaylawna Smith-Cook and Only-Else (29.4)
Open Beginner Novice B: Tommy Greengard and Optimistic Sol (22.9)
Sr. Beginner Novice Rider: Molly Johnson and Lexicon (27.1)
Jr. Beginner Novice Rider: Michaela Smith and Cashmaker (25.9)

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