



TWIN RIVERS SUMMER HORSE TRIALS

Alliston's Busy Weekend, Braitling's Reuniting with Five-Star Mount, and Kalkman's Advanced Victory Highlight Twin Rivers Summer H.T.

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By Jonathan Horowitz

Paso Robles, CA — As he was finishing tacking up his horse in preparation to navigate the cross-country course at the 2024 Twin Rivers Summer Horse Trials, James Alliston expressed concern about navigating the 101 Freeway. That's because as soon as he crossed the finish line aboard Intermediate level winner Addyson (Ampere x Nickerbocker) at 10:38 a.m. on Saturday—his fifth cross-country round of the morning with three at Preliminary and two at Intermediate—the West Coast-based five-star rider had to drive 185 miles on the 101 Freeway from Twin Rivers Ranch in Paso Robles, California, to San Francisco International Airport to catch a 4:35 p.m. flight to Frankfurt, Germany.

“One thing at a time,” Alliston said.

In Germany, Alliston is scheduled to reunite with Karma (Escudo II x Travita), with whom he won the U.S. Olympic Team's mandatory outing at the Stable View Summer H.T. in South Carolina one week prior, to be part of the Defender U.S. Eventing Team at the CHIO Aachen CCIO4*-S to be held from July 1-7.

“It's exciting, and I'm really looking forward to it,” Alliston said. “I've not done that show, but everyone says it's an incredible show. Cross-country is very hard, I think, but the mandatory outing was a nice preparation.”

It's certainly a robust time for Alliston, and the team at Twin Rivers ensured that it could be a productive event for him to ride five of his up-and-comers during a quick return to his home state before going back on the road.

“We created this weekend's schedule to allow James to compete his five horses before flying to Germany,” Twin Rivers secretary Christina Gray of Gray Area Events said. “As a rider that is always so supportive of this venue, it was important for us to support him in keeping his horses and business going while chasing his team goals. We wish him the best of luck in Aachen.”

The Intermediate level won by Alliston and Addyson, a 13-year-old bay Oldenburg mare, with the quickest cross-country round at the level was a who's who of the best West Coast eventers. In second place were Twin Rivers-based Australian international rider Bec Braitling aboard Caravaggio II (Vangelis-S x Courtesan) in their first event since completing their first five-star together and Braitling's first five-star in more than two decades at the 2024 Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event.



James Alliston and Addyson. Ride On Photo.

“I thought that would be nice for him after Kentucky,” Braitling said about the first Intermediate that she and “Ernie” have done since 2022. “And at home, he’s always relaxed running here, so I thought that would be kind of fun. He felt just as fun as ever. After how nervous you get at the big ones, then this just felt so relaxed. I was like, ‘Don’t be too relaxed. You still got to ride around, you know.’ So, that was a good reminder. It was a great gallop. The ground was great. The course was really educational. So, it was actually a really good run.”

Braitling said that she and Arnell Sporthorses’ 13-year-old black British Sport Horse gelding will next compete in the CCI4*-S at The Event at Rebecca Farm in Montana and aim for the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill in October.

“So, this was a good ‘welcome back from Kentucky’ but also ‘get ready for Rebecca,’” Braitling said.



Bec Braitling and Caravaggio II. Ride On Photo.

Finishing third at Intermediate was 2023 Kentucky five-star winner Tamie Smith aboard Sumas Tina Turner (Quantino x Sumas Fanny Brice). Smith took over the mount on “Tina” this year after Julianne Guariglia’s 8-year-old chestnut Irish Sport Horse mare was previously campaigned at the two- and three-star levels in Europe by Australian riders Isabel English and Kevin McNab.

“It takes a good solid 12 months to get a really good partnership with them,” said Smith, who also rode Pierre’s Farceur du Bochard (Con Air x Ariane du Bochard) at Intermediate as part of their first year competing together. “The horses I feel like gain confidence when they have a partnership with the rider, and it just takes time. Tina had done quite a bit in her early stage, Pierre not so much, and so I’ve just decided to keep them both at the level. I feel like I’ll be at that level for a bit until I have the partnership with them where they’re not asking questions so much.”

The highest level offered at the Twin Rivers Summer H.T. was Advanced, and Renee Kalkman, who came to Paso Robles from British Columbia, Canada, won with her 13-year-old chestnut Thoroughbred gelding Flame Eternal (Flammabull x Silmarillion).

Kalkman started eventing with “Charlie” after he finished a six-race career with one win in British Columbia, Canada, in 2015.

“Honestly, I kind of bought him sight unseen,” she said. “I had purchased his half-brother, and when I went to pick up his half-brother, I noticed Charlie taking a nap in the stall next to him. I just took a liking to him. I liked his personality and said, ‘If you ever decide to sell this horse, I’ll come back and I’d like to buy him.’ Then, I got notified that he was for sale because, honestly, none of the jockeys could ride him. They told me he wanted to buck and play more on the track than run.”

They quickly progressed to compete in their first FEI event in 2018 and moved up to three-star in 2019. They stepped away from competition when Covid hit until returning in 2023.

“He’s been amazing,” Kalkman said. “He’s never had a cross-country jump fault his whole career. That’s totally his game. He participates. He looks for the flags. It’s his game all day long. He loves it. He’s easy to go quick on because he keeps his balance all the way around the course.”



Renee Kalkman and Flame Eternal. Ride On Photo.

Twin Rivers' first USEA Young Event Horse qualifier of the year took place with Brackenspa Valens (Renkum Valentino x Roxsette) and Braitling topping the 5-year-old division. The reigning 5-year-old West Coast champion, Camelot PJ (Colman x Hauptstutbuch Evita), and Andrea Baxter were fifth in the Open Preliminary division won by Get Wild (Plot-Blue x Cantana) and Gabriella Ringer, the winners of the CCI2*-L at this year's Twin Rivers Spring International.

“This was a pretty serious Prelim course, and they handled it like they've done it a million times,” said Baxter, who also rode youngsters The Big Easy (Mr Lincoln B x PLS Hippo Q) and Adventure (Avos Jordan Z x Rockmount Lillie) to top-10 finishes out of 19 in the Open Preliminary division.

Twin Rivers Ranch will next host the Twin Rivers Fall International from September 19-22. Then, the Dutta Corp. USEA Young Event Horse West Coast Championships will take place on October 25-26.

The full list of winners from the 2024 Twin Rivers Summer H.T.:

Advanced: Renee Kalkman and Flame Eternal (63.0)
Open Intermediate: James Alliston and Addyson (37.8)
Open Preliminary: Gabriella Ringer and Get Wild (28.8)
Preliminary Rider: Whitney Tucker Billeter and NC Sky High (30.9)
Open Modified A: Amber Birtcil and Milagro (23.8)
Open Modified B: Jillian Mader and Coolrock Wacko Jacko (25.7)
Open Training: Rhiannon Gorin and Monbeg Finnegan (32.1)
Training Rider: Julie Flettner and Excel Star Romeo (31.9)
Open Novice A: Nikki Lloyd and Lacey (25.4)
Open Novice B: Rebecca Braitling and Brackenspa Valens (31.9)
Novice Rider: Lauren Klein and Little Ghost (28.1)
Open Beginner Novice: Lauren Henry and Rimrock (26.3)
Beginner Novice Rider: Michaela Smith and Cashmaker (29.4)
Open Starter: Kendra Mitchell and Willy Von Wonder (27.0)
YEH-5: Rebecca Braitling and Brackenspa Valens (79.1)

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