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Twin Rivers Winter Horse Trials: Friday Update
Tamra Smith, Jordan Crabo & Lauren Burnell lead Winter Horse Trials after dressage.



(Tamra Smith & Mai Baum. PC: Sherry Stewart)

Feb. 28, 2020. Paso Robles, California. Dressage day at the Winter Horse Trials saw Tamra Smith take familiar positions on familiar horses in the Advanced Division. She and Pan Am Games team gold medal partner, Mai Baum, owned by Alexandra Ahearn, earned an 18.4 from Ground Jury member Sue Smithson to lead the 13-horse field. And she's third aboard Danito and sixth on En Vogue, with a 20.2 and a 28.4 respectively. Both are owned by Area VI's Owner of the Year Ruth Bley.

Smith credits Mai Baum's terrific test to a winter focused on connection, throughness and strength. "He has this flamboyant movement, but he didn't have the core strength and fitness. We've changed up the fitness routine, and it's had great results."

Slotting into third is another familiar pair, Frankie Thieriot-Stutes and Chatwin, with a 20.2. Helen Bouscaren and Ebay are fourth and Auburn Excell Brady are fifth.

En Vogue and Danito were originally entered in the Intermediate division, but when Smith saw the Advanced cross-country course, she moved them up to get the experience of the new Advanced dressage test and for the show jumping mileage. "The course is big, but it's not overly technical," she said. "It's beautiful and a nice first Advanced for the season. I knew they wouldn't be in over their heads."



(Jordan Crabo & Over Easy. PC: Sherry Stewart)

The Open Intermediate division is tightly bunched after dressage, also in front of judge Smithson. Young rider Jordan Crabo and the veteran mare Over Easy lead on a 25.9 score. "She was awesome," said the young Crabo of her mom Barb Crabo's Swedish Warmblood. "I think it was our best test yet. She was very up and tried her heart out."

Of Saturday's course, Crabo said, "It looks really beefy! I'm going to be feeling some butterflies in the morning. Otherwise, it looks like a very fun course with areas that we haven't ridden before."

Eneya Jenkins is second thanks to the 26 score she earned with her own Lawtown Boy, one of three horses she's riding in this division with 20 pairs. Lauren Billys and Can Be Sweet are third on a 26.4. Billys is also in the fifth spot with her 2016 and already-confirmed 2020 Olympic partner, Castle Larchfield Purdy.

Open Preliminary has a distinct home field advantage after dressage in front of Ground Jury member Vicky Stashuk-Matisi. Amateur rider Lauren Burnell and Freedom Hill lead with a 24.1, followed by professional Bec Braitling and Pamela Duffy-Trotter's Kirschblute 3, with a 25.2. Burnell is a principal owner of Arnell Sporthorses, whose head trainer is Braitling, and the sales and development program is based at Twin Rivers Ranch. James Allison and Calaro are third with a 26.7 among 35 contenders in this division.

Since hosting its first event in 2004, the Baxter family has steadily built Twin Rivers Ranch into the premiere eventing venue they envisioned when they purchased 500 acres in Coastal Central California in 2001. The inaugural Spring International CCI4*-L April 9-12 will mark a major milestone in the realization of those early visions, and this weekend's Winter Horse Trials gives exhibitors a good glimpse of some of venue's latest, exciting upgrades. An element tentatively titled the "Burghley Flyover" is not being used this weekend, but illustrates the unique elements that have been dreamed up for the CCI4*-L. An expanded quarry section, now called "The Chasm," will be in action Saturday, with new multiple entry and exit points for most levels. A favorite Twin Rivers feature, "Jeff's Hot Tub" water complex, has ample new options, too.

Eventing Riders Association of North American president Shannon Lilley applauds the Baxter family's endeavors. "I have to hand it to them for all that they have done for the betterment of our sport. Especially when this is their home, their own property." Lilley describes the Baxters as among those "who can see things from 20,000 feet above the ground in the sense that what they are doing has a rising tide lifts all boats effect."

Competition continues Saturday with cross-country for Training through Advanced; while Training through Introductory show jumping,

The Twin Rivers Ranch season is presented by Professional's Choice and Auburn Labs. The Riding Warehouse and Best Western PLUS Black Oak are supporting sponsors.

For complete results, schedule and other information: www.twinrivershorsepark.com.

(The "Burghley Flyover")

