



Previewing the Biggest YEH and FEH West Coast Championships

October 25, 2022

By Jonathan Horowitz

Paso Robles, CA — Twin Rivers Ranch is preparing to host the largest field for the Dutta Corp. USEA Young Event Horse (YEH) and Future Event Horse (FEH) West Coast Championships since they were first run as a standalone event in Paso Robles, Calif., in 2020. A total of 65 horses were entered as of the start of the week of the competition that will culminate the year of YEH events for 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds and FEH events for yearlings, 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds, and 4-year-olds.

The entrants include former YEH and FEH West Coast champions. Some will begin their weekend by competing in the Last Chance Qualifier on Thursday, Oct. 27, before the championships take place with dressage and conformation evaluations on Friday, Oct. 28, and jumping tests on Saturday, Oct. 29.

“We feel like we’re starting to develop a tradition,” said Connie Baxter, organizer for events at Twin Rivers. “We’re thrilled with how this event has grown and how excited riders on the West Coast are to showcase their young talent.”

The Baxter family’s commitment to growing the YEH and FEH series on the West Coast is also reflected in Andrea Baxter being a member of both the USEA’s YEH and FEH committees.

“I’ve worked very hard to keep the West Coast relative and growing,” Andrea Baxter said. “It’s my vision to make it look and feel like an FEI event for these young horses. They’re only young once, so it’s a unique opportunity for these special young horses to show themselves off.”

There were 41 horses that competed in each of the 2020 and 2021 Dutta Corp. USEA YEH and FEH West Coast Championships.

Among the 20 horses entered in the 5-year-old championships in 2022 are the top three 4-year-olds from 2021—Anita Nardine’s Oldenburg gelding Quinn HSR (Quarterback x Bonne Chance) ridden by Kaylawna Smith-Cook, Michlynn Sterling’s Dutch Warmblood gelding Musquito (Fly x Silona), and Sterling’s Irish Sport Horse gelding Gaelic Gamble (Island Commander x Marlton Dusk).

Sterling’s third 5-year-old entry is Irish Sport Horse gelding Carrigfadda (Luidam x The Big Lady), who is coming off posting the best YEH 5-year-old qualifying score in the country in 2022 with 87.3 and winning the Novice Amateur division on their dressage score of 23.9 at the Twin Rivers Fall International in September.

“He is the best jumper I’ve ever sat on,” Sterling said about Carrigfadda. “He loves to jump. He just eats it up. I’ve never felt something like that.”



Michlynn Sterling and Carrigfadda at the 2022 Twin Rivers Fall International. Ride On Photo.

Also in the 5-year-old field is the 2021 USEA FEH 4-Year-Old West Coast champion, Oldenburg mare Graceland's Ladera (Libero Star x Rittersporn) ridden by Charlotte Freeman. They won a YEH 5-year-old qualifying event at Shepherd Ranch in California in June.

For the 12 YEH 4-year-olds, with 10 currently entered in the championships and an additional two in the Last Chance Qualifier, Layla Self's Oldenburg gelding Indelible (Sandro's Star x Ava) had the third-highest 4-year-old qualifying score in the country in 2022 with 85.3 ridden by Maxance McManamy at Shepherd Ranch in August. McManamy was the 2009 USEF Junior Equestrian of the Year across all breeds and disciplines.

Four of the nine riders with horses entered for the 4-year-old championships will be traveling from outside of California—Ashley Horowitz from Colorado on Irish Sport Horse gelding Monbeg Salt Fever (Womanizer x Eden Breeze), Catie Cejka from Washington on Irish Sport Horse mare MRF Nonchalant (Metropole x Cavalier Carnival Rose), Erin Storey from Idaho on Canadian Warmblood gelding Grayscape (Farscape DSF x Lotta), and Michele Pestl from Washington on German Sport horse gelding Tristan (Titulus x Elaisa).

The field of 10 for the USEA FEH 4-Year-Old West Coast Championships includes Hanoverian gelding RSH Goliath (Gringo-Gallipoli x Sam's Girl), an FEH West Coast champion as a 2-year-old in 2020 and as a 3-year-old in 2021 when presented by Chloe Smyth.

Two FEH 4-year-olds, The Big Easy (Mr Lincoln B x PLS Hippo Q) and MBF Kingsriver Romeo (Womanizer x Soraja), both Irish Sport Horse geldings, are also entered in the YEH 4-year-old Last Chance Qualifier.

Among the eight FEH 3-year-olds, Belgian Warmblood mare Trilogy (Claire de Lune x Honor Jean) was the FEH West Coast champion as a yearling in 2020 when presented by owner Janine Jaro and as a 2-year-old in 2021 with Ghislaine Homan-Taylor. Megan Bittle's 3-year-old American Warmblood gelding Nevadas Ember BDF, fourth as a 2-year-old in 2021, enters the 2022 championships off of the

highest FEH qualifying score across all ages this year with 88.3 at the Twin Rivers Summer Horse Trials in June.

Martin Plewa from Germany and Marilyn Payne from New Jersey will be the YEH judges at Twin Rivers. Earlier this month, Plewa and Payne judged at the Dutta Corp. USEA YEH East Coast Championships at the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill. Plewa was the national coach of German eventing team from 1985 to 2001 and is well-regarded for his work with young horses. Payne, an eventing judge at the 2008 and 2016 Olympics and recently President of the Ground Jury at the 2022 American Eventing Championships, is the chair of the USEA Young Event Horse Committee.

Payne and Katie Rocco from Massachusetts will be the FEH judges at Twin Rivers. Rocco judged the USEA FEH East Coast Championships at Loch Moy Farm in Maryland last month.

Ride On Video will again produce a livestream of the Dutta Corp. USEA YEH and FEH West Coast Championships. Last year's livestream attracted approximately 1,000 viewers.

“You ride your upper-level horses, and you know them really well, and then the young horses, it's like, ‘I wonder what they're going to do,’” Rebecca Braitling, who rode three YEH championship horses in 2021, said about the camaraderie among riders after last year's event. “Coming out, you feel like you're ready to go to the Olympics.”

[Links](#) [Entries](#) | [Website](#)

Number of Horses (as of Oct. 24)

YEH-5: 20

YEH-4: 10 (with potentially 2 more in Last Chance Qualifier)

FEH-4: 10

FEH-3: 8

FEH-2: 7

FEH-YR: 10

TOTAL: 65 (includes 2 with entries in both YEH-4 and FEH-4)

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For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Christina Gray of Gray Area Events at Christina@grayareaevents.com.

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Connect with Twin Rivers

Location: 8715 N. River Road, Paso Robles, CA. 93446

Email: info@twinrivershorsepark.com

Website: www.twinrivershorsepark.com

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