

# USHJA Congratulates Carly Anthony & Ricky Neal on winning the inaugural Emerging Athletes Program



## Congratulations to all of the finalists:

Alexa Anthony	Carly Anthony	Hayley Barnhil
Nelson Bierwirth	Arden Cone	Nick Gegen
Kathryn Haley	Elizabeth Kenny	Amelia McArdle
Richard Neal	Molly Osier	Matthew Wildung



## A special thanks to:

Dover Saddlery	Julie Winkel
Peter Wylde	Melanie Taylor
Dr. Midge Leitch	Mindy Bower
Eliza Shuford	Sally Ike
The USHJA Emerging Athletes Committee	



## EMERGING ATHLETES PROGRAM



The 12 EAP Nationals riders line up for their press conference after the final competition.

# A Great Start

The Emerging Athletes Program capped an “unbelievable inaugural year” with a challenging, enriching Nationals in Reno, Nevada.

By Whitney Allen



It's not just about riding: Alexa Anthony cleans tack during the EAP Nationals.

What does it take to make it to the Emerging Athletes Program Nationals? Practice, hard work and dedication. The 12 riders to make it to the inaugural EAP Nationals beat out over 500 applicants to make it to Level I, then they were among the top 60 to move on to Level II. Their skill, horsemanship and dedication lifted them to the top 12 spots.

The Emerging Athletes Program was created to develop complete horsemen by implementing a system of identifying and nurturing talented young riders and providing them with the support and assistance necessary to reach their full potential. USHJA offered 10 Level I Training Sessions in which 24 riders were accepted to each session. Over the course of two days the riders were trained and evaluated by Olympian Melanie Smith Taylor. With Melanie's keen eye for horsemanship and expert ability to immediately spot and improve problem areas, she narrowed the field of riders to 60 to move on to Level II. Here the riders were also evaluated over two days but they were critiqued harder and were monitored in the barns to truly evaluate their horsemanship. Then, the top 12 were on their way to Reno, Nevada, for the Nationals.

### Day 1

On January 8, the riders gathered at Maplewood Stables, owned by Julie Winkel. The morning started off with an introduction of the clinicians: EAP Committee members Melanie Taylor, Julie Winkel, Sally Ike, Eliza Shuford and Kathy Moore, joined by Peter Wylde, Mindy Bower and Dr. Midge Leitch. This panel of experts brought hard-earned, unparalleled knowledge and experience that they were as eager to share as the finalists were to learn.

Next the riders were each presented with their weekend uniforms—

PHOTOS BY WHITNEY ALLEN

polo shirts, saddle pads, vests—and fully stocked grooming boxes, sponsored by Dover Saddlery. Each rider was also presented with personalized, autographed books by George Morris and Paul Cronin. The riders were only about an hour into

a horsewoman and ranch owner in Colorado, taught the riders how to learn about their horses using effective groundwork.

Using voice and body commands, the riders were taught a new way to communicate with their horses. When asked

you think about McLain or Meredith Beerbaum—they know the sport and that's part of the concept of the EAP—to understand that it is more than just sitting on the back of a horse but to know all of the different things. I don't mind working in the stable or cleaning a stall because you need to know every day the little details of your horse. As a horse person, what's important is to manage all the little details, and that's why this is such a great program." Managing all the little details is exactly what the riders still had to finish. After enjoying food, company and Peter's talk, grand prix rider Eliza Shuford, designated barn manager for the Nationals, led the riders back to the barn for night check.



*Inaugural EAP Nationals winners Carly Anthony and Ricky Neal*

their EAP Nationals experience and they were already overwhelmed with a wealth of knowledge and opportunity.

Following the meet-and-greet the riders were broken into sections and sent to meet their horses, graciously donated by Maplewood Stables. The best way to learn about their new mounts was to have the riders analyze their horses. Dr. Midge Leitch, head of Radiology at the University of Pennsylvania, carefully watched and listened as riders analyzed their horses' conformation. Providing tips and advice, Midge (as everyone came to call her) soon had every rider excited about learning more on hoof structure and hip angles and getting to know how to spot problem areas.

While one group of riders learned about conformation issues the next group was getting to know their horses by grooming and cleaning their stalls. You could feel the gratitude, anticipation and excitement coming from each rider as they learned more about their horse and about being a horseman. While all this was happening in the barn, the third group of riders was learning a whole other way to get to know their horses. Mindy Bower,

what their favorite learning experience of the weekend was, just about every rider mentioned the natural horsemanship sessions with Mindy. The sessions allowed the riders the opportunity to truly bond with their mounts—horses they had never ridden or even seen before.

Then there was the anticipation of riding a new horse in front of your peers, an audience—and Olympic gold medalist Peter Wylde. All the riders rose to the occasion beautifully as they focused on flat work and gymnastics.

After a long day filled with a range of emotions the riders and their parents were treated to a private reception during which they had the rare opportunity to listen to advice and insight from Peter Wylde. "The best riding in the world is classic—no matter if it is dressage, hunters, equitation—it's just good classic riding," he said. "It's simple, it's not complicated, it's correct, it goes with the harmony of the horse; so no matter what you are doing, good riding is good riding."

Peter emphasized the importance of the EAP: "The best riders in the world could do any discipline. When you think about our best riders you think about Beezie,

## Day 2

Day 2 brought a similar schedule but with greater confidence as the riders were armed with more knowledge and better connections with their mounts. On the second day Peter raised the fence heights and began to prepare the riders for Day 3, which would bring a Nations Cup-format competition. In between riding sessions, grooming their horses, cleaning tack and general barn duties, riders were treated to veterinary seminars on lameness, bone structure and overall horse health by Dr. Leitch.

As Day 2 came to an end the riders hurried back to the hotel for a quick change before the evening's reception. The riders and their parents again walked into a room together not quite knowing what to expect. After MC Brian Lookabill presented the clinicians with thank-you gifts it was time to draw teams for the following day's competition. Each team was named after a famous show jumper: Team Fein Cera appropriately was led by Peter Wylde as chef d'equipe, Team Authentic's chef d'equipe was USEF Managing Director of Show Jumping Sally Ike, and Team Sapphire was led by chef d'equipe Eliza Shuford. While the riders were presented in their teams it was the parents' turn to get a piece of the weekend's action as Brian announced it was time for a *calcutta*. The teams were auctioned off to the highest bidder, and the high bidder for the winning team would

receive 50 percent of the proceeds with the other 50 percent going back to the Emerging Athletes Program. High bidders for Team Fein Cera raised \$730 with Heidi Hildebrand, Lisa Wildung, Kristin Hoff, Pat Vogel and Paul Rorbach; Team Authentic raised \$1,200 with Angela and David Kenny, David and Joyce McArdle, and Stacy and Scott Barnhill; and Team Sapphire raised \$1,400 with Lynn Mullins and Barbara Neal. A grand total of \$3,330 was raised and each bidder asked that the full amount of the proceeds go back to the program. With team spirit in full swing the riders retired for the evening to get a good night's rest for the third and final day.

### Day 3

True to EAP form, the third and final day got the riders on their toes with a 50-question written exam. Questions ran from "What is the periople?" to "Name the first U.S. Olympic Gold Medalist."

The riders finished their exam and rushed to the barn to groom their horses and prepare for the competition. After a few warm-up rounds it was time to begin. One by one the riders navigated their mounts over the course they helped build the night before. There were cheers and collective deep breaths as riders went clear or had refusals. In the end there was no need for a jump-off as Team Sapphire, consisting of Alexa Anthony, Arden Cone, Molly Osier and Ricky Neal, took the gold with zero faults over two rounds. Team Authentic, consisting of Amelia McArdle, Elizabeth Kenny, Nelson Bierwirth and Hayley Barnhill, took the silver with a two-round total of eight faults and Team Fein Cera, with Nick Gegen, Matt Wildung, Kathryn Hayley and Carly Anthony, took home the bronze with 15 faults.

Anticipation reigned as the overall top two riders still had to be selected as the winners for this inaugural event. At stake: \$1,500 gift certificates from Dover Sad-

dlery and 30 days of advanced training. The committee left the arena to deliberate. After close to 30 minutes, the riders were called back into the ring and presented with their ribbons and medals for their achievements in the riding competition. Finally the moment everyone was waiting for—the naming of the overall EAP Nationals winners. Melanie Taylor called not two but four riders to step forward: Alexa Anthony, Elizabeth Kenny, Ricky Neal and Carly Anthony. It was the excellence of these four riders that made the deliberations so very difficult, and the committee felt that all four should be recognized. But in the end there could only be two winners, and finally they were announced: Ricky Neal and Carly Anthony.

Following the announcement the riders were escorted back to the lounge to complete their experience with a press conference. When asked how they felt about winning, both Carly and Ricky expressed their excitement. "It is an honor and I feel very

# ReitSport HA-100™

*You Asked for it!*

100 mg Hyaluronic Acid  
10,000 mg Glucosamine  
2,000 mg Chondroitin Sulfate  
10,000 mg MSM (10 grams)  
4,500 mg Vitamin C  
Flaxseed Base with Omega-3 & 6

*Always Free Shipping in the Continental United States!*

**HorseTech® Inc.**

Read More or Purchase Online at [www.horsetech.com](http://www.horsetech.com)  
Telephone Orders Accepted at 1-800-831-3309

From the Makers of  
**Glänzen**

Member  
**nasc**  
National Animal  
Supplement Council



## Triple Crown® Custom Leg Wraps When Only The Best Will Do!

### Triple Crown® Custom Leg Wrap Features

- Durable poly-cotton
- Thick and washable
- Can be custom made (in width and color)
- All wraps are 42" long
- Also available with Velcro® closures

Available through Horseware® Ireland or TCC dealers. For the one near you visit [www.horseware.com](http://www.horseware.com) or call 800-887-6688.



privileged to be chosen as one of the two winners. I am extremely happy for Ricky; he deserved it and I am very proud of the rest of my peers for riding as hard as they can and being the best horsemen they can be as well," said Carly. Ricky shared Carly's excitement: "To be chosen from a group of riders of this quality is really an honor, so I feel pretty fantastic."

When asked what the program has meant to them, Carly's sister Alexa said: "It has made a difference and I feel extremely motivated to get home and ride and take my horse's temperature and check his legs and apply what I have learned. This has been an amazing experience." Added Amelia McArdle: "EAP has shown me that I am far from achieving my goals but that is not going to stop me. It has showed me my weaknesses where I struggle so I am hoping that in the future I will improve my knowledge as a horseman. Being a talented rider is only one tenth of what makes you a great rider and a great horseman, so this program has shown me what I need to work on and improve on and has only motivated me to try harder."

Melanie Taylor shared her passion for the program: "I wanted to do something that would really make a difference—not just for young riders but for horses as well. I feel like this program has made a difference for the 12 of you, which means it made a difference to 12 horses. Also, we all want to be able to give back in some way. I love the way all the riders are taking away from this program, and they can share their knowledge with other riders and other horses—that is how they can give back. This was an unbelievable inaugural year."

The first year of EAP has produced a program that will fill a void in our industry by providing an opportunity for change, improvement and a new generation of riders that look to tradition and horsemanship to take our sport to the next level.

Ricky Neal gives a final bit of advice to riders interested in EAP: "Do it. It is such a great opportunity and a great experience; there is no way you can come and leave without learning something."

## DIETRICH

Sponsor of USHJA Hunter Derby Series

### AND COMPANY Equine Insurance



*Offering the Sport Horse Community numerous comprehensive equine related insurance products through qualified companies at competitive premium prices*

MORTALITY • FARM  
LIABILITY • CARE/CUSTODY/CONTROL

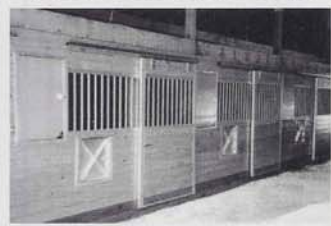
SHAWNA DIETRICH  
[www.dietrich-insurance.com](http://www.dietrich-insurance.com)  
800-942-4258



Stalls, Feeders, Arena Equipment, Manure Spreaders, ATV Equipment

Factory Direct  
Made in the U.S.A.

Visit our web site for current prices and secure on-line ordering



## CMI COUNTRY MANUFACTURING

[www.cmi-equine.com](http://www.cmi-equine.com)

Toll Free 1-800-335-1880

Horse Stall Systems

Tractor & ATV Accessories



For more information and a free catalog, contact:  
**Country Manufacturing, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 104 Fredericktown, OH 43019  
Phone: 740-694-9926 \* Fax: 740-694-5088  
Toll Free: 1-800-335-1880

E-Mail: [info@cmi-equine.com](mailto:info@cmi-equine.com) Website: [www.cmi-equine.com](http://www.cmi-equine.com)