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WEEKLY WIRE

WEEK 10 • MARCH 11, 2026

DARRAGH

KENNY

SHINES UNDER SATURDAY

NIGHT LIGHTS

IN SPOTLIGHT:

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DARRAGH KENNY AND EDDY BLUE

Conquer \$500,000 Bainbridge Companies CSI5* in First WEF Grand Prix Victory

Irish Olympian Darragh Kenny and his European Championships mount Eddy Blue had never won a grand prix at WEF until last week. Under the shine of Saturday Night Lights at Wellington International during Week 9, the pair broke that maiden by storming to a win in the \$500,000 Bainbridge Companies CSI5* Grand Prix from a field that included six of the world's top 10.

Clear rounds were not easy to come by over tracks set by Alan Wade (IRL), who has been tapped as the course designer for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. However, nine horses advanced to the tie-breaking jump-off, with

riders representing five nations. The jump-off pathfinder, Marilyn Little (USA) set the time to beat at 41.92 seconds aboard her own La Contessa, an 11-year-old Mecklenburg mare (License x Cornet's Prinz). Six rounds later, Australian Thaisa Erwin and her Paris Olympic mount Hialita B matched Little's footfalls in perfect unison to cross the final timers in a rarely seen dead heat aboard the 14-year-old Dutch-bred mare (Emerald x Vaillant) owned together with Michael Smith. Little and Erwin shared second-place honors on the podium.

Kenny returned as the

penultimate challenger aboard Eddy Blue, a 14-year-old Oldenburg gelding (Eldorado vd Zeshoek TN X Chacco-Blue) owned by Carol A Sollak. He used the horse's massive stride and quickness across the ground to stop the timers at an uncatchable 41.77 seconds.

"He's been second and third here [at WEF] and placed in a lot of five-stars, but to finally win one here is really deserving for the horse—he's an incredible athlete," said Kenny, who won the FEI World Cup™ of London with Eddy Blue in 2024. "He tries so hard every time he goes in the ring, and I am really proud of him and how he competed tonight."



Of his jump-off round, where he left a stride out in the first line, Kenny noted, "Eddy Blue is a very careful horse, so I can take a bit of risk with him. The relief of winning tonight was quite big.

"He's a championship-type horse because he wants to leave the jumps up every day," he continued about his long-term goal to be named to the Irish team for the FEI World Championship in Aachen in August.

The Bainbridge Companies Grand Prix was the first five-star grand prix podium finish for Little and La Contessa, however, the pair has jumped clear in their last five five-star grands prix together.

"My goal for this season was to position Contessa as a

five-star grand prix podium at WEF. Erwin changed that on Saturday with her tied second-place finish. "When I saw the time, I thought it must have been an error, but grateful that we could be here on the podium," she said.

"I'm grateful to break the long streak of no Australians here, and I hope this is the first of many," continued Erwin, who admits that the road to Hialita B's success has not been simple. "She is a difficult horse to manage on the ground and to ride, and I've taken a lot of time. Luckily, she has taught me a ton of patience, because

you need that to be around her. But she gives me her heart every time."

Kenny, Little, and Erwin will now focus on aiming their three horses from Saturday's podium at the \$1m Rolex US Equestrian Open Grand Prix, a Rolex Series event, at the end of the season.

real competitor at the five-star level and show what she can do," said Little, who was most recently part of the winning U.S. Nations Cup squad in Wellington. "For her to come out and put in another performance like tonight against this group and a course designer with the technicality and the size that Alan Wade built is a big deal. "She doesn't have the biggest stride, but she's smarter than almost any horse I know. She's probably smarter than most people that I know.

"I would have loved to have not gone first," laughed Little. "When you're going first with a group of riders like this, all you can do is the best you can do."

Since 2010, an Australian rider has not finished on a





SPOTLIGHT ON: HORSEWARE IRELAND

Horseware Ireland has always been driven by a passion for innovation and a deep understanding of the needs of horses and riders. From the very beginning, their mission has been to create high-quality equestrian products that enhance comfort, performance, and the connection between horse and rider.

Innovation remains at the heart of everything they do. The Horseware Ireland team

is constantly exploring new materials, technologies and designs to develop products that support equine wellbeing and help riders perform at their best. From revolutionary blanket designs to thoughtfully engineered gear, every product reflects a commitment to combining advanced technology with practical functionality.

At Horseware Ireland, the belief is that great products come from listening to the equestrian community. The

insights of riders, trainers and horse owners around the world help guide the development process and inspire new ideas that push the industry forward.

Horseware Ireland's partnership with the Winter Equestrian Festival is a natural fit. WEF brings together some of the best equine athletes and riders in the world, and it provides the perfect environment to showcase the latest innovations in equestrian



equipment. Being part of this event allows Horseware to connect with the community, share the newest products, and celebrate the sport that inspires everything they create.

Horseware Ireland is always looking ahead, continuing to develop products that support horses, riders and the future of the sport.

During WEF Week 10, Horseware Ireland is hosting a special giveaway, offering attendees the chance to experience some of their newest products.



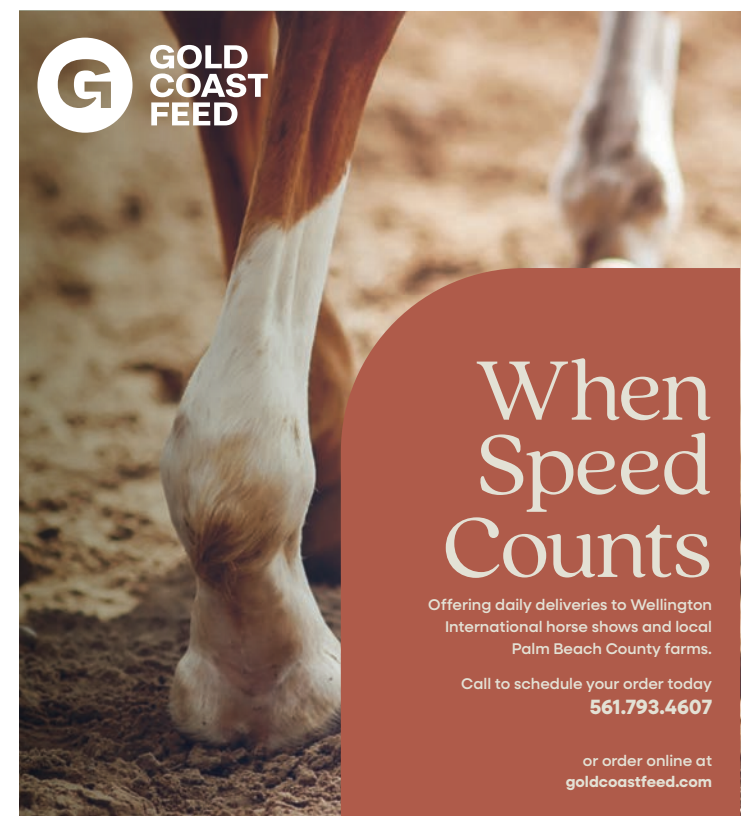
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AFTER A SEASON OF STRIDES: WHY FOOTING TEXTILE IS THE FOUNDATION OF GREAT ARENAS



As the Winter Equestrian Festival Nears Its Finale, GGT-Footing Textile Highlights the Critical Role of Arena Additives

CRITICAL ROLE OF ARENA ADDITIVES

After more than two months of world-class sport, the Winter Equestrian Festival is approaching its final weeks. Thousands of horses have galloped through the rings, jumped countless fences, and delivered unforgettable performances in front of international audiences.

While the spotlight shines on riders and horses, one essential element has quietly supported every stride all season long: the footing.

Arena footing is the foundation of equestrian performance. It protects horses, supports athletic movement, and provides riders with the confidence

to perform at the highest level. And after weeks of competition, its importance becomes even more evident.

As arenas endure thousands of rounds of jumping and training rides, maintaining a consistent, safe surface requires more than just sand and maintenance. It requires the right footing additives—materials specifically engineered to stabilize the surface, absorb impact, and maintain structure under heavy use.

That is where **GGT-Footing Textile** plays a critical role.

WHY FOOTING ADDITIVES MATTER

At elite competitions like the Winter Equestrian Festival,

arena surfaces experience tremendous daily stress. Horses accelerate, turn tightly, and land with significant force after each jump. Over time, sand alone cannot maintain the structure required to support this level of athletic performance.

Footing additives—such as specialized geotextile fibers—are designed to reinforce sand surfaces, helping arenas maintain the balance between stability and cushioning that horses need.

Without proper additives, footing can quickly lose its consistency. Surfaces may become too loose, too compact, or uneven, increasing the risk of slips, strain, or injury.

Quality footing additives

help prevent this by binding sand particles together and improving energy absorption. The result is a surface that allows horses to push off with confidence while reducing concussion on joints and soft tissue.

For riders, that consistency means knowing the ground will respond the same way from the first round of the morning to the final class under the lights.

A KEY INGREDIENT IN ELITE ARENAS

For more than two decades, GGT-Footing Textile has been a global leader in arena footing additives. Its specialized blends of geotextile fibers are engineered to mix with sand, creating a structured surface that remains stable even under heavy traffic



and changing weather conditions.

This technology has made GGT-Footing Textile a trusted ingredient in arenas across the world—from private training facilities to some of the sport's most prestigious competition venues.

The Winter Equestrian Festival is among those venues that rely on carefully engineered footing systems. With thousands of horses competing and training throughout the season, maintaining consistency is essential for both safety and performance.

GGT-Footing Textile helps arenas achieve that consistency by reinforcing the sand base and allowing the surface to maintain its integrity over time. Horses are able to move freely while still benefiting from the stability needed for takeoff and landing.

PERFORMANCE BEGINS AT HOME

While major competitions showcase the importance of professional arena footing,

the same principles apply to training arenas at home.

Horses develop strength, technique, and confidence in the arenas where they train every day. The footing beneath them plays a major role in protecting their bodies and supporting long-term soundness.

Without proper footing additives, training arenas can quickly become inconsistent—too deep after watering, too hard during dry conditions, or uneven after heavy use.

By integrating advanced footing textile fibers into sand arenas, riders and trainers can create a surface that holds together better, drains effectively, and remains consistent through daily use.

This stability allows horses to train safely while giving riders the confidence to focus on their program rather than worrying about the ground beneath them.

REFRESHING ARENAS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

As the Winter Equestrian Festival season winds down, many arena owners and facility managers begin evaluating the condition of their own footing surfaces.

Months of training and competition inevitably take a toll on arenas. Sand particles break down, surfaces lose structure, and the original balance between cushion and support begins to fade.

Refreshing an arena with high-quality footing additives can restore that balance and extend the lifespan of the surface.

GGT-Footing Textile works with arena owners and builders to revitalize existing arenas by incorporating new footing fibers into the sand base, helping restore consistency and performance.

For riders, that refresh means a safer and more reliable surface for every ride.

THE UNSUNG HERO BENEATH EVERY ROUND

In equestrian sport, success often comes down to the

smallest details—fitness programs, careful training, proper equipment, and meticulous preparation.

Footing is one of the most important of those details, even though it rarely receives the attention it deserves.

As the Winter Equestrian Festival season concludes and the sport looks ahead to the months of training and competition to come, the importance of well-engineered arena footing becomes clear.

Because while the spotlight will always be on the riders and horses, the foundation beneath them plays a vital role in every performance.

With decades of expertise and continued innovation in footing additives, GGT-Footing Textile remains committed to supporting the safety of horses, the confidence of riders, and the future of equestrian sport—one stride at a time.



RINGSIDE HEALTH CONCIERGE CARE:

Built for the Equestrian Lifestyle—Wherever the Road Takes You

In the equestrian world, life rarely stays in one place. Riders, trainers, grooms and horse owners spend months traveling between circuits, competitions and summer destinations. Healthcare shouldn't be something that starts and stops with the show season. That's the philosophy behind the Ringside Health Concierge Program; a year-round medical partnership designed specifically for the demands of the equestrian lifestyle.

Unlike seasonal medical services that appear during major circuits and disappear when the shows end, the Ringside Health Concierge Program is

built on continuous care. When members enroll in annual coverage, they gain consistent access to physicians who understand the unique physical and logistical demands of working around horses and competing at a high level.

This means your care travels with you.

Whether you're spending the winter competing in Florida, heading north for the summer circuit, or based in an equestrian hub anywhere in the country, the program ensures that you always have a trusted medical team available. Ringside Health physicians are licensed across all 50 states, allowing members to receive care



Ringside Health

RINGSIDE HEALTH MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

Exclusive Concierge Packages Designed for the Equestrian Lifestyle

PREMIUM CONCIERGE MEMBERSHIP

- 24/7 Provider Access
- Healthcare Navigation
- Expedited Referrals to Specialists
- Expedited ER Visits & Care Coordination
- Discounts on all Wellness Services
- Licensed Physician Coverage in all 50 States
- In-Barn, In-Home, or Hotel Visits
- Comprehensive Physical Exam and Health Review
- USEF Return-To-Sport Clearance
- TUE-Therapeutic Use Exemption Letter for FEI Riders
- Comprehensive functional lab evaluation and advanced epigenetic testing for deep biological insight.
- Personalized care focused on longevity and hormone optimization, performance optimization, and ageless medicine.
- Full genetic screening and risk evaluation for proactive personalized health management.
- Targeted peptide therapies and premium supplements to support enhanced health and recovery.
- Personalized weight management program led by Board certified obesity medicine physician.
- Complete Women's health care led by board certified OBGYN

MEDICAL CONCIERGE MEMBERSHIP

- 24/7 Provider Access
- Healthcare Navigation
- Expedited Referrals to Specialists
- Expedited ER Visits & Care Coordination
- Discounts on all Wellness Services
- Licensed Physician Coverage in all 50 States
- In-Barn, In-Home, or Hotel Visits
- Comprehensive Physical Exam and Health Review
- USEF Return-To-Sport Clearance
- TUE-Therapeutic Use Exemption Letter for FEI riders

Ringside Health. Driven by passion, backed by science. Medical care designed for the demands of the equestrian lifestyle.



- Located On-Site at Wellington International
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- (561) 247-2373
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and guidance no matter where the horse industry—or life—takes them.

MORE THAN ACCESS—TRUE MEDICAL PARTNERSHIP

At the core of the concierge program is direct physician access. Members benefit from 24/7 provider availability, healthcare navigation and expedited referrals when specialized care is needed. In the event of injury or illness, Ringside Health helps coordinate emergency care and follow-up treatment, removing the stress of navigating unfamiliar healthcare systems while traveling.

A dedicated telemedicine team allows members to connect with Ringside Health physicians quickly

from anywhere in the United States. The Concierge Program is not limited to specific locations. Through nationwide physician licensing, telemedicine access and coordinated care networks, Ringside Health supports members anywhere in the United States—whether they're competing on the show circuit, managing a training barn, or simply living the equestrian lifestyle in their home community.

For equestrians, convenience is also critical. Care can be delivered where members need it most—whether that's in the barn aisle between rides, at home, or even at a hotel during a competition week. The program also includes comprehensive

physical exams and health reviews, helping riders stay on top of their health and performance throughout the year.

For competitive athletes, the program also supports regulatory and sport-specific medical needs, including return-to-sport clearance and therapeutic use exemption documentation when required.

HEALTHCARE THAT MOVES WITH YOU

Equestrians live life on the move. Show schedules change, travel plans shift, and long days at the barn demand reliable, responsive healthcare. The Ringside Health Concierge Program was designed with that

reality in mind.

By offering year-round access, nationwide physician coverage, and a dedicated telemedicine team that can coordinate care anywhere in the country, the program ensures that members always have medical support—no matter where their horses, competitions, or summer plans take them.

Because in this sport, the season may change—but your healthcare shouldn't have to.

Ringside Health

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VICTORIA COLVIN AND GREG CROLICK



Go Head-To-Head in USHJA Hunter Derby

Identical combined scores of 190 called for a rare hunter jump-off between Victoria Colvin and Greg Crolick in the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunt & Go Derby, presented by Bainbridge Companies, to highlight Saturday of Week 9 on the grass derby field at Wellington International's Equestrian Village. Breaking the tie, Colvin came out on top riding Golden Road, a 10-year-old Selle Français gelding owned by John & Stephanie Ingram.

In the "hunt & go" format, where riders jumped a classic phase and a handy phase over one course, 24 combinations took to Andy Christiansen's track. Judges Ken Smith and Daniel Arendt—both of Wellington, FL—were in a dead heat between Golden Rule and

Crolick's mount Chappy.

To determine a winner, Crolick of Clarkston, MI, and Colvin of Loxahatchee, FL, went head-to-head. While neither rider's round went entirely to plan, it was Colvin, of Loxahatchee, FL, who ultimately claimed the win after Crolick suffered a rail at the first fence of the deciding round.

Colvin boasted a score of 90 in the classic phase and a 100 after bonus points in the handy, matching Crolick's 91 and a 99. Colvin's jump-off score of 87 landed her on a total of 277, and Crolick finished in the reserve spot with a final combined score of 241.

"The jump-off was quite cool, but I don't think either of our jump-offs went as planned,"

laughed Colvin. "I tried to turn really tight back to the log, and he didn't really see it. It got a little long, and then he [Crolick] unfortunately had the first jump down. It was fun to do, and I'd never done a jump-off specifically, so hopefully there's room for improvement there."

This newly minted pair is no stranger to high-stakes events after winning the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby during opening week of the 2026 Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) just a few months into their partnership.

"He's a fun horse, very game and doesn't spook at anything," said Colvin of the gelding sired by Cornet Obolensky. "You put him there, and he jerks his knees up high, so he's a



fun horse to show in these derbies, especially. He really fired over all the jumps—in the first round, he jumped incredibly over the first seven jumps. I couldn't have asked him to jump any better than that."

Colvin is having a banner season, after winning the \$150,000 WCHR Peter Wetherill Palm Beach Hunter Spectacular on Dicoblue PS, and is currently leading the Professional Hunter Rider Standings, sponsored by YETI, by nearly 1000 points.

"It's so fun to be able to ride these nice horses and try to make them go as well as possible and have them perform to the best of their ability," concluded Colvin.

Third-place honors were awarded to Eleanor Rudnicki of The Woodlands, TX, riding

Vex Freedom, a 13-year-old Holsteiner mare for owners Vex Sporthorses, with scores of 88 and 101, they finished on a final 189 total.

PONY POWER ON THE DERBY FIELD

It was Grace Stenbeck-Werner, of Los Angeles, CA, who took home the blue ribbon with her mount Clovermeade Heartthrob, a 10-year-old Welsh Pony Cross gelding, in the \$5,000 USHJA Pony Hunter Derby, presented by MARS Equestrian, during Week 9 of the 2026 Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) on the derby field at Equestrian Village.

63 ponies took to the classic round, set according to their respective large, medium, and small heights. 12 returned for the shorter handy round, where Werner

moved up two spots to take the win.

With it being only her third time on the derby field, Stenbeck, 12, made the callback for the Handy round after making use of her pony's ability to easily course through tricky lines. In the end, it was her identical classic and handy round scores of 84 that put her on top with a combined score of a 168-point total.

"In the first round, there were a lot of twists and turns and we're really good at turning. I think that really helps with our track and helps me find the jumps better, so it all worked out today," stated Stenbeck, training under David Belford at New Hope.

"This is my second year with her [Harper]. She's a princess; very opinionated, but in

the best way. She always wants to win, tries so hard, and really loves it," Stenbeck said of her partnership with the mare owned by Swede Ventures LLC.

Second place was awarded to Lexie Tucci, of New York, NY, and Why Not?, a 10-year-old Warmblood gelding owned by Oceans Edge Farm, with a total score of 167. Sienna Rossano, of Fishers, IN, took home third place with Pamela Wright's Higher Love, a 12-year-old Welsh Pony Cross gelding, with a score of 165.



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Serenella
French Boutique (WEF P-2)
Flor De Campo (WEF 3-4)
Irene Neuwirth (WEF 5-6)
Zoe (WEF 7-11)
SR Blackinton (WEF 12)

BRIDGE DECK AT TIKI TERRACE

DADA Sport
Coastal Steel Structures (WEF 5-7)
Weatherly Stroh Studios (WEF 8-11)
US Equestrian (WEF 12)
Cara VL (WEF P-1)
Horsehair Jewellery (WEF 3-4)
Hangai Mountain Textiles (WEF 5-7)
The Calvert Collection (WEF 8-12)

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HUNTER HILL

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Coastal Steel (WEF 11-12)

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RING 6

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Charles Ancona
La Enovese Designs
Devoucoux
70 Degrees
Erica Wilson (WEF P-4, WEF 7 & 8)
J Wilder Imports (WEF 5-6)
Ryde Equestrian (WEF 9-10)
Paulina Velez Designs
The Oasis Café

VENDOR VILLAGE SOUTHSIDE

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Equestrian Team Apparel
Optic Nirvana
Fab Finds by Sarah
JODS
Sofie's Boutique
Best Buds Florist
Odette (WEF P-8, WEF 11 & 12)
Flor De Campo (WEF 9-10)

VENDOR VILLAGE NORTHSIDE

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The In Gate
Ride EquiSafe
Miki Saddlery
Parlanti
Equ Lifestyle Boutique
EQUIS
Vogel
Kelly's Lemonade

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Turner & Co.
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CM Hadfield's
Equine Tack & Nutritionals
Equiline
Tack N' Rider
Toasties Gourmet

PONY ISLAND

Scarlet Technologies (WEF 1-2)
Fashion Farm Girl (WEF 3-4, 6, 10-12)
The In Gate
Palm Beach International
Academy
Sylvia Tacos
Best Pizza Heaven
Florida Snow
Farm Stand

THE BARNS

Paddock Paws
Dandy Products
FarmVet
Josey's Laundry
Anonymous Coffee

RING 9

Arion (WEF P-8)
The Dad Den (WEF 9-12)
Forestier

Graceful Oaks
Nathalie's Café

RING 10

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DELIVERIES ON SHOWGROUNDS & AROUND WELLINGTON



BUSINESS TO BUDS

How flowers allowed a family to flourish

Words and photos by Raelyn Baker

Best Buds Florists was created after Mark Mandich asked his wife, Suzanne, if she wanted to start a floral shop. After spending twelve years as a divorce lawyer, Suzanne was ready for a change, so naturally she said 'yes.' The decision to use her natural gift to create floral arrangements led to her earning an international

certification from the American Institute of Floral Design. With a leap of faith and a certificate in hand, Best Buds Florists came to life.

No stranger to the South Florida equestrian community, both Mark and Suzanne frequented WEF quite often growing up. Suzanne rode with Mark's mother, and it was her own mother, Kitty, who introduced the two. The now happily married couple of six years has been working from their home studio in Delray Beach, serving the Palm Beach, Broward and northern

Miami-Dade counties. With Mark's background as a commercial developer and Suzanne's knowledge of law firms, the couple is no stranger to the demands and technicalities of running a business.

"I couldn't have asked for a better partner; there is nobody I trust more. We both have the same work ethic; just keep working hard, doing the right thing, and the rest will come along," Mark said of his business partner and wife.

With a deep connection to the equestrian community,



it was Leah Patipa, owner of Paddock Paws and Paddock Equine, who suggested they sign up for a vendor booth space at WEF this season. "She's very business minded as well, and we thought it was a great idea. So, we signed up, and we've already renewed for next year!" stated Suzanne.

With their first physical retail location in the heart of Wellington International, the Mandich's are now able to service their community in a more intimate and involved manner. "I think it's helped me reconnect with a lot of people that I haven't seen in forever. Mark's meeting all these people for the first time and even reconnecting

with people that he's known through his mom," explained Suzanne when asked if their physical location has brought them closer to the people within the equestrian community.

While new to the Vendor Village, Best Buds Florists have been flourishing with the help of those around them. "We get a lot of pointers from people who have been here for a long time, and they're good people to learn from. So, we've got some nice historical data to work with," laughed Mark of his conversations with nearby vendors.

With positive feedback

from customers and even the staff of Wellington International, the Mandich's take each week in stride. With the opportunity to design the floral arrangements for the grands prix during Saturday Night Lights, the front office, and most recently the FEI Nations Cup, Best Buds Florists is growing slowly but learning quickly.

With a mission as simple as crafting stunning, thoughtful arrangements that capture emotion and elevate every occasion, this dynamic duo pours their hearts into every design, ensuring that their clients feel the care and creativity behind each bloom. Whether it's

a wedding, special event, or a beautiful everyday arrangement, Mark and Suzanne are honored to create something unforgettable.





KAPPY KAPLAN FARRIER APPRECIATION EVENT

Celebrates Industry Excellence at Wellington International

Without farriers, horse sport would not be possible. Wellington International played host to some of the best among them during the \$500,000 Bainbridge Companies CSI5* Grand Prix of WEF 9. The Kappy Kaplan Farrier Appreciation Event, presented by Absorbine®, Back on Track® and the Farrier Education Fund honored the legacy of Herman 'Kappy' Kaplan and the dedication that farriers have to their craft.

The event is a testament to the character, professionalism and heartfelt warmth and gratitude the equestrian community

has towards Kappy, who was a legendary horseman and farrier and made a profound impact on the industry. His years of riding and training horses gave him an uncanny ability to analyze gait faults and develop solutions to enhance a horse's way of going. He taught shoeing and basic forging skills and became known as "the professor" by all who sought his knowledge.

Kaplan was also a close friend of Gene Mische, founder of WEF. He became the official farrier of Mische's Stadium Jumping shows, including WEF, and one of the original stakeholders in the iconic Wellington show

series.

The evening was hosted by Bryan Quinsey, who has served as executive director for the American Farriers Association, the American Association of Professional Farriers, the International Association of Professional Farriers, and the Hoofcare Essentials Foundation. Quinsey co-founded the Farrier Education Fund in 2024 alongside farriers Roy Bloom, Tim Cable, Dave Farley, Steve Prescott and Adam Wynbrandt. Wellington International Director of Sponsorship Lenore Brown led sponsor recognition and event introductions.

"Farriers are the unsung heroes of the equine world, and at Absorbine, we are incredibly proud to support an event that shines a well-deserved spotlight on their expertise, dedication and passion," said W.F. Young/Absorbine Vice President of Marketing and Innovation Amy Cairry. "The Kappy Kaplan Farrier Appreciation Event embodies everything we believe in, honoring those who work tirelessly to keep horses healthy, sound, and performing at their best."

James Ruder, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Back on Track, a 20+ year Master Farrier veteran, could not agree more with Ms. Cairry. "Farriers are the foundation of our industry," he said. "The simplest of statements, 'No Hoof. No Horse,' is true at all levels of all equestrian sports and Back on Track is proud to play a small part in honoring the American farrier."

Highlighting the evening, the winners of the \$500,000 Bainbridge Companies CSI5* Grand Prix—Darragh Kenny and Eddy Blue— were presented with the Herman 'Kappy' Kaplan Perpetual Memorial Trophy.

2026 AWARD RECIPIENTS

National Friend of the Farrier Award: Linda Hill and Dan Burke, Farrier Product Distribution

Now in its third year, the National Friend of the Farrier Award recognizes individuals who have advocated for and served the farrier and

hoof care industry. Previous honorees include Jeremy McGovern of the American Farriers Journal (2024) and Bryan Quinsey (2025).

This year's recipients, Linda Hill and Dan Burke, founded Farrier Product Distribution in 1990, a pioneering wholesale-only company dedicated to serving farrier supply retailers.

National Farrier Apprentice of the Year: Nico Kozakiewicz

The inaugural National Farrier Apprentice of the Year Award was presented to Nico Kozakiewicz of South Florida. Since the age of 15, Kozakiewicz has immersed himself in the farrier trade, spending summers and weekends riding along with experienced farriers before transitioning to full-time work after high school.

National Farrier of the Year: Yancy Russell

The second inaugural award of the evening, the National Farrier of the Year, was presented to Yancy Russell (Baptistown, New Jersey, and South Florida). Russell's connection to horses began at just 2 years old, when he started showing horses alongside his father. Over the course of his distinguished career, he has worked with multi-million-dollar Olympic horses to donkeys, bringing the same level of care and dedication to every animal.



Tim Cable accepts the award for Linda Hill and Dan Burke from W.F. Young/Absorbine Vice President of Marketing and Innovation Amy Cairry, W.F. Young/Absorbine Marketing Coordinator Morgan Palmer, and Back on Track's Sandra Pikulski and Michelle Spano.



W.F. Young/Absorbine Vice President of Marketing Amy Cairry presents the National Farrier Apprentice of the Year award to Nico Kozakiewicz (with his family) with W.F. Young/Absorbine Marketing Coordinator Morgan Palmer, and Back on Track's Sandra Pikulski and Michelle Spano.



Farrier Education Fund Co-Founder Bryan Quinsey with Yancy Russell as he accepts the National Farrier of the Year award from W.F. Young/Absorbine Vice President of Marketing Amy Cairry, with W.F. Young/Absorbine Marketing Coordinator Morgan Palmer, and Back on Track's Sandra Pikulski and Michelle Spano.



AROUND THE GROUNDS

From the Wellington International Photography Collective



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From the Wellington International Photography Collective





CHAMPIONS GALLERY



Ava Stryk rode Gold Digger, owned by North Run Farm, to champion of the WEF 9 Medium Pony Jumper Division.



Samurai, owned and ridden by Alessia Lavender, was presented with the Champion Equine Insurance Jumper Style Award by Laura Fetterman after winning the \$10,000 NAL/WIHS 1.15m Amateur Jumper Classic sponsored by Wölffer Estate Vineyard during WEF 9



After winning the High Performance Hunter Handy round, Saint, owned by Davlyn Farms and ridden by Vivian Yowan earned the Champion Equine Insurance Hunter Style Award presented by Laura Fetterman during WEF 9.



Darragh Kenny's groom Shauna Murray was presented with the Double H Farm Grooms Award and a \$500 cash prize for her care and preparation of Eddy Blue.



SEASON STANDINGS

LEADING LADY RIDER AWARD STANDINGS

PRESENTED BY MARTHA W. JOLICOEUR, DOUGLAS ELLIMAN

1	ERYNN BALLARD CAN	475 PTS
2	NINA MALLEVAEY FRA	468 PTS
3	LILLIE KEENAN USA	451 PTS
4	NATALIE DEAN USA	436 PTS
5	MARILYN LITTLE USA	430 PTS



After a second-place finish in Saturday night's five-star grand prix, Thaisa Erwin was presented with the Martha Jolicoeur, Douglas Elliman Leading Lady Rider Award for WEF 9.

HERMÈS 1.50M CHAMPIONSHIP JUMPER SERIES

1	MARK BLUMAN COL	171 PTS
2	ERYNN BALLARD CAN	168 PTS
3	NAYEL NASSAR EGY	156 PTS
4	MCLAIN WARD USA	145 PTS
5	RICHARD VOGEL GER	134 PTS

\$25,000 LEADING INTERNATIONAL RIDER BONUS STANDINGS

PRESENTED BY MICHAEL SMITH

1	DARRAGH KENNY IRL	\$251,230
2	RICHARD VOGEL GER	\$228,616
3	SHANE SWEETNAM IRL	\$222,879
4	MCLAIN WARD USA	\$197,470
5	BEN MAHER GBR	\$197,446

DON LITTLE MASTERS STANDINGS

PRESENTED BY RUSHY MARSH FARM

1	CAMILLE PACHECO CESARSKI & FLINT T.S. ET	87
2	REZA SHABANI & DAKOTA Z	78
3	MOLLY ATHEY & KEBEA KS	71
	CHRISTIAN CURREY & UNESCO DU ROUET	71
5	BONNIE ORLOWSKI & LOCATO VAN HET KAPELHOF	62

BRAINJUICE UNDER 25 GRAND PRIX SERIES

1	CAMPBELL BROWN USA	208 PTS
2	EVA FISHERMAN USA	174 PTS
3	CASSIDY REIN CAN	167.5 PTS
4	ALEXANDER ALSTON USA	158 PTS
5	MARY ROSE CANTERBURY USA	155.5 PTS

OVERALL HUNTER JUNIOR/AMATEUR-OWNER RIDER

PRESENTED BY YETI

1	LILLY HERZOG	530 PTS
2	PARKER PEACOCK	476 PTS
3	IRENE NEUWIRTH	383 PTS
4	JOHN INGRAM	339 PTS
5	LEXI MAOUNIS	334 PTS

OVERALL HUNTER PROFESSIONAL RIDER

PRESENTED BY YETI

1	VICTORIA COLVIN	2406 PTS
2	SCOTT STEWART	1414 PTS
3	MICHAEL BRITT-LEON	1288 PTS
4	JENNIFER HANNAN	1229 PTS
5	CHRISTOPHER PAYNE	1066 PTS



MARIA ISRAELSSON

Reflects on 10-Year Role as Shane Sweetnam's Groom

Contributed by Sarah Eakin/Paper Horse Media in collaboration with HorseGrooms

Ten years is a long time for any relationship, and when it comes to grooming for a top show jumper, that decade is built on a foundation of trust. "We know each other very well now," said Maria Israelsson, who has groomed for Irish Olympian Shane Sweetnam since 2016. "He lets us [the team] do our job. He doesn't interfere too much—he trusts us, and it is a good relationship."

Israelsson is from Sweden but has hints of an Irish accent when speaking English. "I think I spend too

much time with too many Irish people," she joked. She works alongside Irishman Shane McKeever—her husband in fact—whom she met in Ireland some 15 years ago.

One of Israelsson's current charges is Coriaan van Klapscheut Z, known in the barn simply as 'Corey'. This WEF, Corey has been on form, clinching the \$215,000 MARS Equestrian CSI4* Grand Prix win during Week 4. The pair also finished third in the \$200,000 JTWG Inc CSIO4* Grand Prix to close out Week 8.

Corey, 11, required some patient handling from Israelsson. "When we got him a year and a half ago, he was eight. At the beginning, he was very difficult," recalled Israelsson. "There was a time we couldn't get him into a wash stall, but he has gotten a lot better. But he's very sharp—if he doesn't like something on the ground, he'll skip away from it."

Corey's main barn friend is Sweetnam's Olympic mount James Kann Cruz, who has been a mainstay of Sweetnam's string for some time.

Israelsson does not come from a 'horsey' background and learned horsemanship

from a once-a-week riding lesson while helping at a local riding school. Sweetnam is currently ranked number 11 worldwide in show jumping, but working for a top-level rider is something Israelsson remains grounded about. "Obviously, we want the horses to do well," she said. "But I don't feel pressure to perform in that way, or that I have to be up to a certain standard because the rider is in the top 20 or higher."

For the WEF 4 grand prix win, Israelsson earned the Double H Farm Grooms award and \$500 cash prize. "More shows are doing grooms prizes like in Wellington," she said. "Which obviously is very nice."

PHOTO © SPORTFOT



About HorseGrooms

HorseGrooms is a global platform dedicated to supporting, educating, and connecting grooms across all disciplines of equestrian sport. Through educational resources, interviews, in-person events, and an international online community, HorseGrooms works to improve horse welfare while giving grooms the recognition, tools, and support they deserve.

HorseGrooms collaborates with events, brands, and professionals worldwide to share practical knowledge and real stories from the people who care for horses every day, from local barns to top-level competition venues.

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