

## **Carl Hester Masterclass Summary**

### **“Use Your Body More, Not Your Hands” and Other Training Tips**

**By Caryn Vesperman**

Four hours listening to Carl Hester was not enough. His valuable insights and British humor made the time go way too fast. Carl really needs no introduction, having made himself an equestrian household name as a three-time Olympic medalist and three-time World champion, as well as trainer of Charlotte Dujardin.

The symposium, held early December at the incredible World Equestrian Center in Ocala, started with two young horses, which gave Carl the opportunity to discuss selecting and training four- and five-year-olds and continuing through Grand Prix.

There were so many gems of advice that, like the symposium, this article could be much longer. However, I've opted to try to capture Carl's advice with simple bullet points under categories. I think about several of these gems when I'm in the saddle. I hope a few of them help you too.

#### **Selecting a Horse**

“Rideability is key,” says Carl. “Next is your personal assessment of why you are buying a horse. Is it to win young horse classes or develop a Grand Prix horse? Not that you can't have both, but some horses are late bloomers, so they won't necessarily shine at the lower levels and vice versa. Also, be sure to match the horse to the rider. You don't want crazy, and you don't want a non-reactive horse.”

After rideability, the canter is Carl's next

requirements for several reasons such as there are many movements and co-efficients in tests for the canter.

Carl assesses the horse's canter in both directions. “Stiffness and suppleness usually are different for each side. Also, look for the canter's air time and expression, and an energetic hind leg.”

Next, critique the walk. Does it have swing and the correct rhythm? Don't select a horse with a 3 or 4 walk, Carl explains, and while it's great if the horse has a 9 or 10 walk, don't feel as if you have to have that, as they can be tricky to keep a clear rhythm.

Lastly, check the trot. Does it have natural balance and swing? With young horses, assess the trot by rising, as the rhythm will usually be better since their backs aren't that strong yet. The trot can be developed.

When evaluating a horse, Carl says, “I like to see the horse tired to see its gaits. When they're all charged up, you may be seeing more than what is normally there, and then later you realize the horse only has ordinary gaits.”

**Continued on next page**



**Carl Hester talking to the audience and working with a rider on a young horse in one of the facility's many indoor arenas.**



## Carl Hester continued

### Riding/Training Tips

#### Hands:

- Ride with closed fingers on the reins with hands together.
- Don't ride with handlebar hands for turning.
- Don't carry your hands like you're holding a purse.
- Keep your hands in front of the saddle.
- Ride with a still hand.
- Think feathers in your hands.
- Slow your horse with your upper body, not your hands.
- Give and retake the reins. Get use to letting go. Don't always touch with your leg and hold the reins. Practice giving the reins.
- If you ask for forward, open the door.

#### Body Position:

- Don't let your upper body get too far behind the vertical. That is, don't ride with your legs in front and upper body back.
- When you ride a half halt, your upper body should come forward.

#### Balance:

- Transitions are the key.
- Downward transitions should be ridden forward.
- Always strive for perfection in all of your transitions.
- If a horse is not in balance, don't ride forward.

#### Training and Showing:

Start and end every training ride with a 15- to 20-minute walk on a long rein. This can be done outside, on the track or a trail ride. "Like fox hunting, you should walk the last mile home," he advises.

Carl likes stretching the horse because it shows where the horse is relaxed, where tension is, and where the horse wants to carry its head.

Stick to the dressage training scale. "Rhythm is number one—it's the first thing to achieve," he says. "Relaxation is the second."

- The inside rein does not straighten the horse.

- The curb bit brings the head down; the snaffle raises the neck."
- Hot horses need the leg on for comfort. Cooler horses need the legs more off.
- You can't ride a hot horse forward until it accepts your leg.
- Good riders have a good pelvis; riders have to be able to follow the movement—you can't just sit still.
- On the bit comes from self-carriage. It's not on the bit from the hand.
- When you see a dip in the neck, the horse is often over-paced. You need to slow down. With correct riding, the dip will fill in over time.
- To half halt, brace your middle for one stride. You should not hold a half-halt for more than one stride.
- Riders need to think about doing forward half-halts.
- Go forward two to three strides and then come back. The horse gets more energetic as a result. It also keeps the horse from getting bored if you stay in the same tempo forever.
- Be careful not to go too fast in your medium and extended trot.
- Think shoulder-in so you don't go too fast, which can cause the horse to become wide behind.
- Collection needs to come from a lighter leg and hand, not more leg.
- Good collection makes for good medium and extended trot and canter."
- Walk pirouettes need to come from shoulder-in.
- For the extended walk, think about pushing your hands out like you're rowing instead of just putting your legs on.
- If your horse's hindquarters fall in before a corner, think about doing renvers through the corner, i.e., if the haunches fall in left, think of doing renvers right.
- The rider needs to stay quiet during the flying change; let the horse do the flying change. "Flying changes are from the rider's seat and leg," says Carl, "not from flinging the upper body around."
- In every movement, rhythm always comes first—even in piaffe and passage.
- Go through every corner upright with bend. No leaning on the inside shoulder.
- If you have a horse with big paces, you have to make them small. If you have a horse with small paces, you have to make them big.
- Leg yielding in the canter loosens the horse and creates more loft/volume.
- Be disciplined at all times. "If you stop to talk, make sure the horse stands square," advises Carl. "If you stop to get off, make sure the horse halts square."
- Correct a mistake—don't punish. Punishment creates tension.
- The shoulder-in is a three-track movement. If you ride four-tracks, it affects the rhythm. In addition, you must finish the shoulder-in by going straight before the corner.
- Look through the horse's ears to the letter you're aiming for. For example, look at the letter A or C when doing shoulder-in down the long side. Basically, look to where you are going, not at the horse.
- In the Prix St. George zig-zag, be accurate. In the first half pass, look at H. The second half-pass is from X to M — do not arrive early.
- Try to get the walk that you get when you're leaving the arena after your test. The best walk is usually when you finish the test and are walking out.
- To get a good collected walk, you need the collection before you even pick up the reins.
- Know how many trot and canter strides your horse covers in 20 meters. That helps you know in the canter serpentine where the centerline is without looking, which helps you ride forward over the centerline.
- A good exercise to help keep the horse from getting heavy: On a small circle, do traverse at the walk. Ask for working canter pirouette. Then transition back to walk—keeping the traverse. Repeat.

**Continued on next page**

### Carl Hester continued

- Also, regarding the pirouettes, don't let the horse's poll get too low and curled. Think of a glass of water sitting between his ears without spilling down the front of his face.
- If horses get quick when learning flying changes, circle. A good exercise is to do a small circle on the long side of the arena, as you come back toward the wall, ask

for a change and go in the other direction, so you're actually doing a figure eight. You can keep going on this for as long as necessary.

### Final Thoughts From Carl

- There is no perfect horse. There is no perfect rider.
- "Always have the goal of Grand Prix with every horse. You have to believe," says Carl who speaks from experience,

admitting he had some horses he thought would not make it to Grand Prix and they did.

- Riding a Grand Prix schoolmaster teaches you to steer. Making a Grand Prix horse makes you a rider.
- A top Grand Prix horse has to have the ability to both push and sit. This is what makes good piaffe, passage, medium and extended gaits.

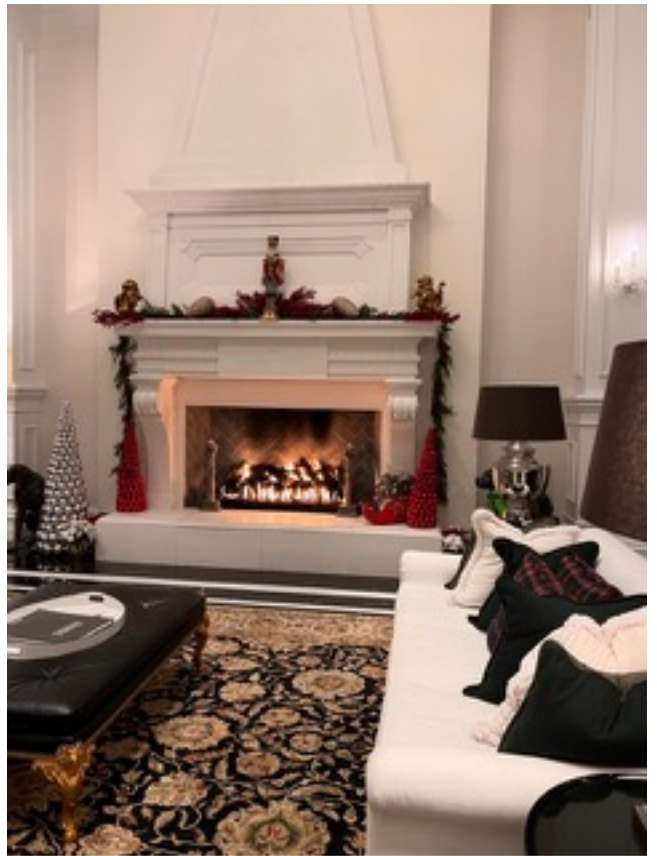
## World Equestrian Center in Ocala, FL

The new World Equestrian Center in Ocala (<https://worldequestriancenter.com/ocala-fl/>) is one of the most beautiful facilities I've ever visited. The attention to detail—always with the equestrian theme in mind—is mind boggling. I took a few photos of the facility and hotel. I hope all of you have a chance to visit it one day. It's spectacular!

Continued on next page



Splurged with my friend, Amy, to stay at the World Equestrian Center hotel, since the Carl Hester Masterclass was being held at the facility. (Clockwise from above) The hallway entrance to our room; the lovely bathroom (WAY better than mine!); the beds with the saddle pillows which I so wanted to "accidentally" pack in my suitcase (I didn't); and even the do-not-disturb door hanger was equestrian related: "Rider at Rest."



(Above clockwise) Christmas tree in the hotel lobby; fireplace in hotel lobby; the equestrian-theme hallway carpet throughout the hotel; and the hotel's primary restaurant, Stirrups.





The facility's walkways among the hotel, vendor stores, barns and indoor/outdoor arenas were filled with hundreds of holiday decorations, as was the hotel itself, which included a real gingerbread house that was a replica of the hotel with an added rocking horse.





## Caryn Vesperman Editor

All advertisements, articles and photographs (with photo release) should be submitted by the 15th of the preceding month of publication, unless you make prior arrangements for additional time.

Calendar of events will appear in both the eQuester and on the WDCTA website.

Payment for advertisements should be submitted via PayPal through the WDCTA website ([wdcta.org](http://wdcta.org)) or mailed with a check made out to WDCTA and mailed to the editor.

### CONTACT INFO

(608) 695-9914  
W1619 King Road  
Brooklyn, WI 53521  
[newsletter@wdcta.org](mailto:newsletter@wdcta.org)



# Winter Goal Setting

The winter has really blasted into Wisconsin. While there may be days when it's too cold to ride or the roads are too dangerous to navigate to the barn, winter can still be productive for evaluating where you are with your health, fitness, riding/training—and where you want to be in the future.

For my own goals now and into 2023, I decided to focus on two specific areas:

- Being in better physical shape (nutrition, weight loss, fitness), and
- Riding a better Prix St. George test in 2023 with the Grand Prix in mind for the near future.

Some background.... For the last year, I have felt my clothes were tighter, I didn't like the feeling in the saddle (too many extra areas were bouncing, especially in the sitting trot!), and I didn't feel as strong or aerobically fit as I've been in the past. Much as I hate to admit it, getting older doesn't help in any of those areas!

So, in October, I started on a nutrition program, which involved cutting out virtually all carbohydrates, fruit and other sweets, incorporating more vegetables and protein, and eating every two to three hours, so I wouldn't go for hours without food and then feel so hungry that I'd stuff my face with empty calories. (Imagine ice cream- and chocolate-loving me, with MY sweet tooth, now reaching for a dill pickle, carrot or celery when I need a snack!) I'm also going to the gym about four times a week, working with a personal trainer for two of those visits. I'm getting stronger at the gym, but I must admit, having to start with lighter weights than I was using two years ago was a bit disheartening.

As far as my riding and training goals, I've talked to my trainer, Shelly Reichart, about short-term expectations (Prix St. George for one more year to improve the fluidity of my flying changes and keeping Zeza soft while maintaining and controlling her power) and my long-term goal (Grand Prix). In addition, this winter I'm fortunate to have access to some excellent trainers in a warmer climate, as opposed to most of my past riding years, trying to learn and train in an unheated indoor arena with limited access to trainers, due to my full-time job and weather conditions not always being conducive to trailering.

I have a ways to go, but the thing is, one has to start somewhere. As the saying goes, make a plan and then work the plan.

I hope you find ways to set goals and work on meeting them over the winter. Fortunately there are a lot of online and local resources—WDCTA being one of them with our upcoming educational Zoom sessions and the Laura Graves clinic this coming May. You also have friends, family and your trainers—all willing to help you meet your goals. I hope even the article about Carl Hester provides some inspiration and riding help.

Until next month, stay warm and stay on!

*Caryn*

# Rider Makeover Clinic with Physical Therapist, Emily Rose

**By Diane Brault**

Emily Rose is a well-known, licensed physical therapist and certified equine rehabilitation practitioner. She gave several well-attended sessions at the 2022 Midwest Horse Fair. She believes physical therapy in horses and humans has many important benefits, including injury prevention and pain management.

Last spring, WDCTA's Southwest Chapter sponsored a two-day clinic with Emily at Megan McIsaac's Lindinhof Equine Sports Zentrum. An article appeared in the June 2022 issue of the *eQuester* about this clinic. This article contains even more details about Emily's philosophy and therapy.

Emily believes many horse/rider problems can be traced to ineffective or incorrect use of the rider's core. A strong core is the

rider's primary mechanism for stability in the saddle and transfer of energy from rider to horse. It provides postural stability and even protects the rider's spinal column. Core strength has many benefits to the rider. Just a few include providing balance, fostering subtle communication with the horse, maintaining tempo, and improving leg position.

Core strength increases the rider's ability to further refine her aids and communicate with the horse more through her weight and seat and less through hands and heels. A strong core can invite the horse to raise its back, strengthening its back and core muscles in the process. It also increases the rider's ability to stay on top of the horse if it bucks or shies! A few signs of a weak core include poor rider posture, back pain, overall weakness, and tiring easily when riding.

The horse can directly benefit from the rider's strong core by reducing tension in the horse, improving movement, preventing injuries, and supporting soundness and rehabilitation programs.

Emily's focus for this clinic was to help participants increase their awareness of the many functions of their cores and work on improving motor control of specific core muscles.

Emily differentiates between two types of muscles:

1. Gymnastic muscles, which are visible, on or near the surface. These are large muscles often responsible for most large movements.
2. Postural muscles, which are usually small and often hidden deep inside the body. They allow for fine motor control and stability of joints, including the spine. Since they are "out of sight and out of mind," they are often not given much attention, in spite of their importance.

A few postural muscles you may have heard of are the iliopsoas, piriformis, transverse abdominus, and gluteus medius. The iliopsoas is a major player in the ability to use the core correctly. The gluteus medius is most often weak and is involved with rotation of the hip in the lengthened leg position. This contributes to the "toes out" issue in dressage riders. The transverse abdominus muscles are very deep and very important to the development of core strength. You can feel them when your abdomen becomes sore after battling the flu!



**After Emily Rose's assessment and suggestions, Denise Sobering feels the difference after working with Emily Rose on her core and posture.**

**Continued on next page**

## Emily Rose continued

The gluteus medius muscles are attached to the top of the pelvis. They can be strengthened by standing up and doing slow, sideways leg lifts with toes pointed forward, or by getting into a squat position and stepping slowly sideways. When the piriformis is tight, it can apply enough pressure to the sciatic nerve to cause pain all the way down the back of your leg! It can be stretched out by doing a "figure 4" stretch either sitting in a chair or by laying down.



(Above photo) After Haley Madden's assessment and bodywork, Emily suggested she ride with a small rubber ball under the back part of her upper thigh to help her awareness and position.

Emily's focus for this clinic was to help participants increase their awareness of the many functions of their cores and improve motor control of specific core muscles. Following a detailed discussion of concepts involved, Emily worked with the riders individually to improve their riding through exercises customized for each rider's and horse's needs.



First in her process was observing the participant as she rode her horse in the arena. After listening to the rider's concerns, Emily asked the rider to dismount so she could assess her in a standing position, looking for imbalances, asymmetries and weaknesses. Treatment followed. This could entail such things as bodywork on Emily's table in the arena, riding with a rubber ball between her and the saddle or between her rib cage and upper

arm, plus exercises for follow-up at home. The final phase of the rider's session was mounted observation, in which Emily and the rider looked for improvements in both the rider's and horse's performance.

Each rider seemed quite pleased with the results! Riders and auditors alike went home with a greater appreciation of how core strength can impact their riding and their horses' performances.

WISCONSIN DRESSAGE & COMBINED TRAINING ASSOCIATION  
2023 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP TERM: December 1 – November 30



\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_ NEW - Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

FARM OR BUSINESS NAME \_\_\_\_\_

New members: Please tell us how you learned about WDCTA:

- \_\_\_ Clinic or Event
- \_\_\_ Midwest Horse Fair
- \_\_\_ USDF \_\_\_ USEF
- \_\_\_ USEA
- \_\_\_ Pony Club
- \_\_\_ Facebook
- \_\_\_ Current WDCTA member (name) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Web Search
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* Would you like to receive other horse-related mailings that are not affiliated with WDCTA? YES NO

DISCIPLINES:

- \_\_\_ Dressage
- \_\_\_ Eventing
- \_\_\_ Breeder
- \_\_\_ OTHER

RIDER STATUS:

- \_\_\_ Professional
- \_\_\_ Adult Amateur
- \_\_\_ Young Rider (\*age 18-21)
- \_\_\_ Junior Rider (\*age 17 or less)

\* Age as of January 1

CHAPTER AFFILIATION:

- \_\_\_ Southwest (SW Wisconsin, Madison and surrounding area)
- \_\_\_ Upper Peninsula (Upper Michigan and northern WI)
- \_\_\_ Central (Portage, Green Bay, Stevens Point, and central area)
- \_\_\_ Kettle Moraine (Milwaukee, Sheboygan, FDL and southeast WI)
- \_\_\_ General Member (No chapter designation)

MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION AND FEES

\$164 BUSINESS Membership – Includes one USDF Group membership; emailed newsletter; one voting privilege; recognition & business card ad in eQuester, listing & logo on WDCTA website. Also, INCLUDES Stable, Instructor, Breeder & Business listings (choose one or all four) in both eQuester & website.

\$64 FAMILY Membership - Includes one USDF group membership; emailed newsletter; two voting privileges. USDF requires that an additional USDF membership be purchased for each additional family member. Add \$10 for each additional family member.

\$10 Add'l family member name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date if age 21 or less \_\_\_\_\_

\$10 Add'l family member name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date if age 21 or less \_\_\_\_\_

\$52 INDIVIDUAL Membership (Age 18 & over) . Includes one USDF group membership; emailed newsletter; one voting privilege.

\$39 JUNIOR Membership -- Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ (must be age 17 or less as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. Do not use in conjunction with a Family Membership. Includes one USDF group membership; emailed newsletter; one voting privilege.

\$42 NEW MEMBERS ONLY (not a member in the previous year), JUNE MEMBERSHIP -- joining after June 1<sup>st</sup>. Includes USDF group membership.

As a member of WDCTA, I may choose to volunteer for Association responsibilities or activities. I expressly agree that my services are being provided as a volunteer and that I am not an employee of the Wisconsin Dressage & Combined Training Association. I am neither entitled to nor expect any present or future salary, wages, or other benefits for these volunteer services. I agree to abide by the WDCTA Standard of Conduct: to act honestly, fairly, ethically and with integrity and treat all WDCTA members with respect and courtesy.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

WDCTA STABLE, INSTRUCTOR, BREEDER, BUSINESS LISTINGS -- Listings on website & eQuester. **Must fill out listing form available on WDCTA website and include payment.** (These listings are free when purchasing a Business Membership.)

- \$10 Stable listing
- \$10 Instructor listing
- \$10 Breeder listing
- \$10 Business listing
- \$35 for all four listings

Make check payable to **WDCTA** & mail to Diane Brault, 5184 County Road HH, Barneveld, WI 53507  
[membership@wdcta.org](mailto:membership@wdcta.org) or 608-924-1808

## AUDITOR INFO & REGISTRATION

# OLYMPIAN LAURA GRAVES DRESSAGE SYMPOSIUM

May 20-21, 2023 - Madison, WI

## FORMAT AND SHOPPING

Over two days, 11 riders, working with young horses and on skills from Training Level to Grand Prix, will train with Laura for 45 minutes to an hour in each session. Laura also will ensure auditors learn from the work she does with each horse and rider.

The vendor area promises to be a great shopping adventure with a variety of tack, clothing and barn necessities. The vendors will be located next to the riding arena and will be open during the entire event.

All of the activities will be under one roof—climate-controlled for your comfort!



*Sponsored by the Southwest Chapter of*



## DAILY SCHEDULE

- 7:30 a.m. Registration and Trade Fair Opens
- 9 a.m. Welcome/Introduction
- 9:15 a.m. Training
- 10 a.m. First Level
- 10:45 a.m. Second Level
- 11:30 p.m. Third Level
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch/Shopping
- 1:15 p.m. Fourth Level
- 2:00 p.m. Prix St. Georges
- 2:45 Intermediare I
- 3:30 p.m. Intermediare. II, Grand Prix
- 4:15 p.m. Wrap-up
- 6:00 p.m. Trade Fair Closes

*Schedule subject to minor changes*

## LAURA GRAVES

### 2019

- Finished second at the FEI World Cup Dressage Final.

### 2018

- Defended her World Cup Finals individual silver medal at the competition in Paris.
- Earned team silver medal and individual silver medal, Grand Prix Special, at the World Equestrian Games.
- Ranked #1 in the world in a record-breaking freestyle performance.

### 2017

- Earned the silver individual medal at World Cup Finals in Omaha.

### 2016

- Competed at her first Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, winning a bronze team medal and placing fourth individually.

### 2015

- Placed fourth at the FEI World Cup Finals, Las Vegas.
- Won a team gold medal and individual silver medal at the Pan American Games in Toronto.

Currently Laura is competing Sensation HM. She had a very successful outing at the 2022 Festival of Champions including earning the Intermediare I Championship title.

## SYMPOSIUM LOCATION

The Alliant Energy Center ([alliantenergycenter.com](http://alliantenergycenter.com)) is the home of the Midwest Horse Fair, one of the top three horse fairs in the United States. It's conveniently located off the Madison beltline. The New Holland Pavilion is an excellent venue for equestrian events because the climate-controlled space contains an indoor arena, stabling, vendor booth areas and concessions, all under one roof. Some camping slots are available for a fee—contact Alliant Energy Center directly.

Alliant Energy Center  
New Holland Pavilion I  
1919 Alliant Center Way  
Madison, WI 53713  
(608) 267-3976  
[alliantenergycenter.com](http://alliantenergycenter.com)

## FEES

See registration section for costs.

- Limited seating. First come/first serve.
- Due to limited seating, priority admission goes to those auditing both days.

## KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST NEWS

Check the WDCTA website ([wdcta.org](http://wdcta.org)) and WDCTA's two Facebook pages to keep up with the latest news about vendors and the symposium.



## Laura Graves Dressage Symposium Auditor Registration Form

### Fees:

#### WDCTA Members

- ~ Through Feb. 28\* — \$55/day or \$95/both days
- ~ Mar. 1 - May 12\* — \$75/day or \$135/both days
- ~ At The Door — \$75/day or \$135/both days

#### Non-WDCTA Members

- ~ Through Feb. 28\* — \$65/day or \$115/both days
- ~ Mar. 1 - May 12\* — \$85/day or \$155/both days
- ~ At The Door — \$85/day or \$155/both days

#### Youth (Under 16 years)

- ~ \$35/day or \$65/both days

*\*Postmarked or online payments no later than May 12. After that date, please pay at the door to ensure we don't miss your payment.*

*If not sold out, tickets will be available at the door. See WDCTA website for updates.*

*Lunch is not included in price. Food available on site.*

*Free parking at the Alliant Energy Center. Some camping spots available for rent; contact the Alliant Energy Center for more information on camping and reservations.*

### One Auditor Registration Per Form. Sorry, No Refunds.

Auditor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Attending:

\_\_\_\_\_ Both Days

\_\_\_\_\_ One Day — Which Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday

**Total Auditor Fees Enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to volunteer to help.

### Contact and Registration Information

**Online registration** can be done via eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/laura-graves-dressage-symposium-tickets-89509929609>.

**Questions about online registration?** Contact Mary Barr at [onlinereg@wdcta.org](mailto:onlinereg@wdcta.org).

**Or mail this registration form, waiver and check made out to WDCTA Southwest Chapter to:**

Donna Thomas, 5996 Co. Rd. A, Brooklyn, WI 53521

**Questions about mail-in/paper registration?** Contact Donna at [paperreg@wdcta.org](mailto:paperreg@wdcta.org).

*Photos of Laura Graves from World Equestrian Games, Tryon, NC. Photo with Verdades - Rebecca Lewison. Head shot - Caryn Vesperman*

**Register via  
mail  
OR  
online at:**

[https://  
www.eventbrite.com/e/  
laura-graves-dressage-  
symposium-  
tickets-89509929609](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/laura-graves-dressage-symposium-tickets-89509929609)

**WISCONSIN DRESSAGE & COMBINED TRAINING ASSOCIATION  
WAIVER, RELEASE, AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT**

In consideration for my participation in the WDCTA Laura Graves Symposium, May 20-21, 2023, (hereafter, "the Activity"), I (the "Participant") hereby acknowledge and voluntarily agree to the following (hereafter, "Agreement"). "Participation" includes, but is not limited to, riding, handling, instructing, or spectating.

**1. Acknowledgment of Inherent Risks of Equine Activities.** I acknowledge and understand that there are numerous inherent risks of participating in equine activities, including, *but not limited to*: (a) the propensity of an equine or other animal, irrespective of its training, to behave in ways that may result in injury, harm, or death to persons on or around them (for example, jump, run, kick, buck, bolt, spin, rear, strike, or bite); (b) the unpredictability of an equine's reaction to such things as sounds, sudden movements and unfamiliar objects, persons or other animals; (c) certain hazards such as conditions at or below the surface or ground, whether seen or unseen; (d) collisions with other animals or objects; (e) the potential for another person participating in an equine activity to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to injury to me, or to others, such as failing to maintain control over the equine or not acting within his or her ability; (f) the breakage or failure of tack or other equipment; (g) the potential that an equine or other animal may cause injury or harm to the rider or to other persons or animals in the vicinity; and (h) sickness and disease (including communicable diseases). *I understand these risks and further acknowledge that I am not relying on the Wisconsin Dressage and Combined Training Association (hereafter, "WDCTA") to list in this document all possible inherent risks of participating in equine activities or the Activity.*

**2. Acknowledgement that Participation in the Activity is Voluntary and Requires Personal Judgment.** I acknowledge and understand that riding instruction by its nature requires that the instructor issue directions in the form of "commands." I understand that while I should consider such commands, I must and will use my own judgment during my participation in the Activity. I understand that while participating in the Activity that: the commands and all activities engaged in as part of the instruction are entirely voluntary; that the instructor is not entitled to nor requests absolute obedience; that I may elect not to comply with any command or suggested act; and that I am expected to at all times be alert and thinking while participating in the Activity. I represent that both my equine and I have the requisite level of physical fitness and mental alertness to enable us to participate in the Activity, and are in good health and free from injury, illness or other defects which may impair our ability to engage in the Activity.

**3. Waiver and Release of Liability.** I understand and voluntarily accept the inherent risks of engaging in equine activities, including risks from my voluntary compliance or noncompliance with instructor commands associated with the Activity. I voluntarily agree to hold harmless, release, waive, and covenant not to sue Laura Graves, WDCTA, its officers, members, non-members that pay an auditing fee, Alliant Energy Center, as well as all other participants in the Activity ("Released Parties") from any and all injuries, sickness and disease, death, liability, or damage to person or property arising from my participation in the Activity, unless caused by Released Parties' reckless, intentional or willful misconduct. Thus, I understand that this waiver and release is effective even if the injury, sickness and disease, death, liability, or damage to person or property is caused or contributed to by the *negligent* action or inaction of Released Parties.

**4. Equine Activity Liability Law.** I acknowledge that I have read the State of Wisconsin's notice regarding equine activities:

**Notice: A person who is engaged for compensation in the rental of equines or equine equipment or tack or in the instruction of a person in the riding or driving of an equine or in being a passenger upon an equine is not liable for the injury or death of a person involved in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities, as defined in section 895.481 (1) (e) of the Wisconsin Statutes.**

**5. Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Wisconsin. Any controversy, dispute, or claim arising out of or related to this Agreement, shall be resolved exclusively through proceedings filed in the federal or state court in Madison, WI. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision or sentence of this Agreement shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision or sentence of this Agreement, which shall remain in full force and effect.

***I have read this waiver, release, and hold harmless agreement, fully understand its terms, understand that I am assuming risks inherent to my participation, and agree to be fully bound by its terms. I understand that I am free to consult with any counsel about the terms of this agreement.***

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(or parent or legal guardian of behalf of Participant, if Participant is under 18 years of age)

Name of Participant (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## RIDER APPLICATION

# OLYMPIAN LAURA GRAVES DRESSAGE SYMPOSIUM

May 20-21, 2023 - Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI

*All located under one roof in the climate-controlled New Holland Pavilion I*

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Over two days, 11 riders, from the lower levels to Grand Prix, will work with Laura in a symposium setting.

- 7:30 a.m. Registration and Trade Fair
- 9 a.m. Welcome and Introduction
- 9:15 a.m. Training
- 10:00 a.m. First Level
- 10:45 a.m. Second Level
- 11:30 a.m. Third Level
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch and Shopping
- 1:15 p.m. Fourth Level
- 2:00 p.m. Prix St. Georges
- 2:45 Intermediare I
- 3:30 p.m. Intermediare II/Grand Prix
- 4:15 p.m. Wrap-up
- 6:00 p.m. Saturday - Trade Fair Closes

*Schedule subject to minor changes.*

*Sponsored by the  
Southwest Chapter of the*



## Opening Date for Rider Application

**Jan. 1, 2023**

## Deadline for Rider Application

**Mar. 1, 2023**

This is your chance to ride with Laura Graves, one of this country's top international riders, who started out, just like most riders, with a pony and a dream. Add to that, is Laura's persistence and determination through some tough times with her partner, Verdades, because he was not easy as a young horse. Together, they became Olympians and international stars. In early 2020, Laura announced the retirement of Verdades. Currently she is competing SenSation HW at Prix St. Georges and has some up-and-coming young horses. She had a very successful outing at the 2022 Festival of Champions with many wins including Intermediare I Champion.

Laura's experience and the opportunities she has had with top trainers over her career, will help give you tools for training your horse and, if an instructor, give you ideas for helping your students.

**For updates about the symposium, visit:**  
[www.wdcta.org](http://www.wdcta.org) or our two Facebook pages.



## RIDER SELECTION PROCESS

The following horse/rider combinations are needed:

- 2 Training Level
- 2 First Level (amateur riders preferred)
- 2 Second Level
- 1 Third Level (green to this level is fine)
- 1 Fourth Level
- 1 Prix St. George (green to this level is fine)
- 1 Intermediare I
- 1 Intermediare II/Grand Prix

The four reserve horse/rider combinations to back up the above selections are: Training/First Level, Second, Third/Fourth Level, and FEI. These combinations will be selected from the pool of riders not selected for the actual symposium riding slots. **Laura Graves will be selecting the riders.**

Riders need to submit a complete application to include all of the following:

- USDF/FEI Performance Record from the past two years or a letter of recommendation from trainer if the rider/horse combination do not have scores. (A letter of recommendation can be submitted even if one has the scores.)
- A summary explaining why the rider would like to be chosen
- A five-minute YouTube video showing the movements at the level applying for
- Current Coggins Test and record of current year vaccinations
- Rider release form
- Payment (which will not be processed until a rider has been selected and notified)

### NOTE:

- Riders must ride the horse listed on the application.
- Riders may apply with more than one horse.
- ASTM/SEI helmets are mandatory.

Applications and videos are not reviewed until after the deadline submission of **March 1, 2023**. We will notify all applicants upon receipt of their entry AND as soon as the selection process is complete, *no later than April 15*. We will not publish or release the names of applicants who are not selected.

If you are **not** selected to ride, we hope you'll join us by auditing. You may want to sign up to audit now to make sure you have a spot in case you are not selected as a rider. If you are selected as a rider, we will refund your auditor application fee. In addition, if you are selected as a reserve horse/rider and you accept, we will refund the difference between the two costs.

## FEES AND CANCELLATIONS

- ~ The 2-day clinic fee for Training through Second Level is:  
**\$400 for WDCTA members and \$450 for non-WDCTA members.**
- ~ The 2-day clinic fee for Third Level through Grand Prix is:  
**\$600 for WDCTA members and \$650 for non-WDCTA members.**
- ~ The fee for the four reserve riders is **\$100** for both WDCTA and non-WDCTA members. This includes admission for rider, a stall for the horse and a tack stall. (*No groom registration fee included. Lunch is also not included.*) If selected as a reserve rider, WDCTA will subtract \$100 from the submitted rider fee and refund the difference.

**The accepted rider fee (NOT reserve rider) includes a ride on both days, a horse stall, a tack stall and one auditor/groom pass for someone other than the rider, but does not include lunches. Stall mats are available for \$65/stall from Showtime. (Stall mat information will be sent to the selected riders.)**

Payment will be processed within 7 days of selection. Should checks/payment not be good, we will assume the rider has cancelled and the first alternate will be selected to take his/her place. (There is a \$50 charge to cover any insufficient fund fees.) Riders who need to cancel after their participation has been confirmed, should notify Caryn Vesperman, the rider coordinator, immediately. Riders canceling will receive a refund, minus a \$25 processing fee, if a replacement rider can be found. If no replacement is available from the applications, the rider will not receive a refund unless a medical or veterinary emergency can be verified.

## RIDER COORDINATOR

**Caryn Vesperman:** riders@wdcta.org - (608) 695-9914

**Only online applications will be accepted. For the application, go to [https://www.wdcta.org/index.php?option=com\\_rsform&view=rsform&formId=10](https://www.wdcta.org/index.php?option=com_rsform&view=rsform&formId=10).**

## Sponsorship and Vendor Opportunities



This symposium and trade fair will be all under one roof at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, WI. The event is expected to attract more than 300 enthusiastic attendees and generate national publicity.

### Registration/Trade Fair:

- Opens at 7:30 a.m.
- Closes at 6 p.m.
- Located in the New Holland Pavilion I— same building as riding clinic

### About WDCTA

The Wisconsin Dressage and Combined Training Association (WDCTA) is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization run by volunteers. We are a charter member of our national organization, the United States Dressage Federation. Events like this help fund scholarships and future educational opportunities. Visit our website at [wdcta.org](http://wdcta.org) or look for us on Facebook.

**For information about the sponsorship or vendor opportunities, contact:**

**Mary Hanneman**  
[vendors@wdcta.org](mailto:vendors@wdcta.org)  
Phone: (608) 712-0975

**Donations under \$100 will be gratefully acknowledged in the event program.**

## Sponsorship & Vendor Options

### Platinum \$2,500

- Double Vendor booth space (10 x 20' space)
- No registration charge for up to 2 vendor staffers
- 2 large banners (exceeds 3' in height/width) hung in riding arena
- Full-page advertisement in event program (inside front or back cover) — first come, first choice
- Full-page advertisement in 12 issues of the *eQuester*, WDCTA's monthly newsletter
- Banner ad on WDCTA website for 1 year
- Sponsorship recognition in program listing
- Pre- and post-event publicity in WDCTA newsletter, website and Facebook pages

### Gold \$1,500

- Single Vendor booth space (10 x 10' space)
- No registration charge for up to 2 vendor staffers
- 1 large banner (exceeds 3' in height/width) hung in riding arena
- Half-page advertisement in event program
- Half-page advertisement in 12 issues of the *eQuester*, WDCTA's monthly newsletter
- Banner ad on WDCTA website for 1 year
- Sponsorship recognition in program listing
- Pre- and post-event publicity in WDCTA newsletter, website and Facebook pages

### Silver \$1,000

- Single Vendor booth space (10 x 10' space)
- No registration charge for up to 2 vendor staffers
- 1 large banner (exceeds 3' in height/width) hung in riding arena
- Quarter-page advertisement in event program (inside front or back cover)— first come, first choice
- Quarter-page advertisement in 12 issues of the *eQuester*, WDCTA's monthly newsletter
- Banner ad on WDCTA website for 1 year
- Sponsorship recognition in program listing
- Pre- and post-event publicity in WDCTA newsletter, website and Facebook pages

### Bronze \$500

- 1 small banner (less than 3' in height/width) hung in riding arena
- No registration charge for one attendee, both days
- Business card advertisement in 12 issues of the *eQuester*, WDCTA's monthly newsletter
- Sponsorship recognition in program listing
- Pre- and post-event publicity in WDCTA newsletter, website and Facebook pages

### Vendor Booth Only

- Single booth space (10 x 10'): \$250
- Double booth space (10 x 20'): \$500
- No registration charge for up to 2 vendor staffers

### Business Card Only \$100

- Business card ad in event program

# LAURA GRAVES SPONSORSHIP/VENDOR FORM

## ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER - NEW HOLLAND PAVILION I

### Yes! We want to participate:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Platinum — \$2,500      \_\_\_\_\_ *Yes, I would like the booth included with my sponsorship.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gold — \$1,500      \_\_\_\_\_ *Yes, I would like the booth included with my sponsorship.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Silver — \$1,000      \_\_\_\_\_ *Yes, I would like the booth included with my sponsorship.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bronze — \$500
- \_\_\_\_\_ Single Vendor Booth — \$250
- \_\_\_\_\_ Double Vendor Booth — \$500
- \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Booth Space: \$500 initial booth space, plus \$100 for every 10 feet of additional space. Total number of 10' spaces (*including* \$500 initial space): \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Business Card — \$100
- \_\_\_\_\_ Donation (Amount): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Free 3 MG Wi-Fi  
is available at the  
Alliant Energy Center**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Enclosed**

### Additional Info:

Please check all that apply:

- I need an electric hook-up for my booth.
- I need table(s) with my booth. (Two 8' tables come with double booth; one table with single.)
- I need chairs with my booth. (Four chairs come with double booth; two chairs with single.)
- Please provide me with updates on the symposium. My email is listed below.

### Please complete the following:

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Deadline for sponsorship or booth reservations: April 1, 2023

*Note: The sooner we receive your commitment, the sooner we can begin advertising you as a sponsor.*

Please send the following to [newsletter@wdcta.org](mailto:newsletter@wdcta.org) by April 1:

- **Platinum, Gold and Silver sponsorships:** Your full-, half- or quarter-page ads and logo (PDF or JPEG)
- **Bronze sponsorships:** Your logo
- **Business card sponsorship:** Your business card

Banners should be mailed to [Mary Hanneman](#) by **May 1** at the address below.

For questions, contact [Mary Hanneman](#) at [vendors@wdcta.org](mailto:vendors@wdcta.org), or to reserve a sponsorship or booth, return this form with a check made out to **WDCTA-Southwest Chapter**:

**Mary Hanneman, N8160 Smith Road, Brooklyn, WI 53521**

**Phone: (608) 712-0975**

*Thank You for Your Support*

# Member Listings

## INSTRUCTORS

**Megan McIsaac**  
Lindinhof Equine Sports Zentrum  
4246 Schneider Drive  
Oregon, WI 53575  
[lindinhofllc@gmail.com](mailto:lindinhofllc@gmail.com)  
(608) 445-8531

[www.lindinhof.com](http://www.lindinhof.com)  
FEI trainer, USDF-certified instructor through 4th Level, 2014 national champion with Kingsley, USDF Gold, Silver, Bronze medalist, all USDF bars. Competed four horses at GP. Competed successfully at Dressage at Devon and West Coast Festival. Year-end USDF/USEF and WDCTA awards. 16+ years teaching experience. Students competed through GP, earned riding awards and medals. Travel for lessons and clinics.

**Kate Van Sicklen**  
110 Merrill Crest Drive  
Madison, WI 53705  
[katherinevansicklen@gmail.com](mailto:katherinevansicklen@gmail.com)  
(608) 669-0148

40+ years of teaching experience. British Horse Society instructor certification. USF "L" graduate with distinction. USDF Associate Certified Instructor. USF Silver Medal. Shown through Prix St. George. Will teach through 4th Level. Specialize in teaching horses and riders correct basics. Will travel.

## STABLES

**Lindinhof Equine Sports Zentrum**  
Megan McIsaac  
4246 Schneider Drive  
Oregon, WI 53575  
[lindinhofllc@gmail.com](mailto:lindinhofllc@gmail.com)  
(608) 445-8531

80x200' heated indoor w/ mirrors. New stalls and client tack room w/ individual lockers. Individual and group turnout. Wash stall. Solarium. Theraplate. Numerous trails. Individual training programs. Lessons and leasing options on FEI school horses, month training for horses and riders. FEI trainer on site.

## BUSINESS

**Lindinhof Equine Sports Zentrum**  
4246 Schneider Drive  
Oregon, WI 53575  
[lindinhofllc@gmail.com](mailto:lindinhofllc@gmail.com)  
(608) 445-8531  
[www.lindinhof.com](http://www.lindinhof.com)

Importing top quality dressage horses from Europe. Contact us to find your next dressage star.

**Caryn Vesperman - USEF/USDF "r" Judge**  
W1619 King Road  
Brooklyn, WI 53521  
[touchstonefarm@gmail.com](mailto:touchstonefarm@gmail.com)  
(608) 455-2208

USDF Gold, Silver and Bronze medalist. Shown through Grand Prix. Available for USEF/USDF-recognized dressage and eventing shows and schooling shows.

## BREEDERS

*Your listing here!*

\*

Submit  
Your  
Listing Today!  
Support Your  
Business and WDCTA.