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Downey Soars to Victory in Show Jumping Hall of Fame Jumper Classic Series Championship Final

Upper Marlboro, MD – October 31, 2023 – The Washington International Horse Show (WIHS) set a gorgeous backdrop for the **Show Jumping Hall of Fame Jumper Classic Series Championship Final** on Saturday, October 28, and Tessa Downey of Houston, TX, soared to victory with the only double-clear performance.

The Show Jumping Hall of Fame conducts the Show Jumping Hall of Fame Jumper Classic Series with classes at approximately 80 horse shows each year. The Series hosts separate divisions for junior and amateur riders in two Conferences – the East Conference presented by Rood & Riddle and the West Conference presented by LAURACEA – and follows Grand Prix rules and specifications. The Series is designed to give amateur and junior riders the opportunity to compete at higher levels and serves as a proving ground for many riders who aspire to represent the United States in international competition.

The Series culminates in a West Conference Championship Final at Blenheim EquiSports' International Jumping Festival in San Juan Capistrano, California and the overall Series Final at the Washington International Horse Show in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The riders who top the year-long Series standings receive an engraved Tiffany crystal trophy and the winners of the Series' two Finals receive one of LAURACEA's best-selling Convertible Backpack Totes.



Tessa Downey and Isabelle won the 2023 SJHOF Jumper Classic Series at WIHS © Shawn McMillen Photography

Downey proved the best in the \$15,000 SJHOF High Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic, which served as the overall Series Final for 2023. Her two-year partnership with *Isabelle*, Orchard Hill LLC's 14-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare, shone brilliantly in the ring; they were one of only two horse-and-rider combinations to make it to the jump-off and the only pair to finish double-clear.

"I have had issues developing a strategy and sticking to it in the past, so I knew going in it was very important for me to make a plan and follow that plan," Downey said. "We were planning one less stride in the first line, which didn't work out. My horse doesn't have a gigantic stride, but it definitely helped me turn back a little better from the second jump to the third. I think that was where I was really able to set up the next line, and in that line, I did leave a stride out.

"It's Washington; it's such a great feeling that can't be replaced," added Downey, who will now focus on her time with the University of Georgia and their equestrian team. "How they dress the ring up, the prizes, the ribbons, everything – it's just so special. The team has been so great about letting me come back and do finals, and I'm so grateful to be here."



Tessa Downey and Isabelle receive their awards including one of LAURACEA's best-selling Convertible Backpack Totes © Shawn McMillen Photography

As the second entry to return to the jump-off, Hallie Grimes of Houston, TX, hoped to chase Downey's time of 35.751 seconds aboard Can We Keep It? LLC's 12-year-old Zangersheide mare *La Belle Dame Z*, but an unfortunate rail knocked them into second place. Third went to Katherine Pugliese of Malvern, PA, who piloted her own 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding *Heineken* to the fastest four-fault ride in the first round.

The **Show Jumping Hall of Fame** was organized to promote the sport of show jumping and to immortalize the legends of the men, women and horses who have made great contributions to the sport. The Show Jumping Hall of Fame is located at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. Plaques honoring those who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame can be seen at the Horse Park's Rolex Stadium. Mementos and artifacts from the sport's history are on display as part of the Show Jumping Hall of Fame collection at the United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) Wheeler Museum at the Horse Park.

The Show Jumping Hall of Fame is sponsored by Blenheim EquiSports, Charles Ancona, CMJ Sporthorse, Hampton Classic Horse Show, Kentucky Horse Park, LAURACEA, Markel, Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital, United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA), Washington International Horse Show and Wellington International.

[Blenheim EquiSports](#) is an equestrian event management company based in San Juan Capistrano, CA, producing horse shows in San Juan Capistrano, CA and Las Vegas, NV. These competitions include USEF "Premier" rated hunter-jumper shows; Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ USA; a Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ North American League Qualifier; USHJA International, National, & Pony Hunter Derbies & Finals; the Whitethorne Equitation Challenge, Medal Finals, and so much more.

[Charles Ancona](#) jackets are made in the USA using the finest Italian stretch fabrics to provide both stylish looks and high-performance functionality. Machine washable, water repellent, and lightweight

to help keep you cool on the hottest days, each jacket features a fully customizable design and is made to order in New York City's garment district – no two jackets are alike! Charles Ancona is the Official U.S. Team Supplier through USEF. Charles Ancona Show Jackets were worn in the Tokyo Olympics and will be for all U.S. teams through the 2024 Paris Olympics. Charles Ancona takes pride in designing and manufacturing the highest quality products for their customers, including top riders such as Show Jumping Hall of Fame inductee Margie Engle, five-time Olympic veteran McLain Ward, Aaron Vale, Beat Mandli, Brian Moggre, Brianne Goutal-Martreau, Laura Chapot, Sydney Schulman, and John French.

[The Hampton Classic](#) is the prestigious culminating event of the Hamptons' famed summer season. Top jumper and hunter riders from around the world compete for some of the richest prize money in the nation. The Classic hosts more than 100 classes of competition in six rings for horses and riders of all ages and abilities. The Classic also features a Boutique Garden with more than 70 vendors, a wide selection of dining options and a Farmer's Market, all on its 60- acre show grounds.

The [Kentucky Horse Park](#) is the leading tourist attraction for all things "horse" and one of the world's best equine competition facilities and only park open to the public. The Kentucky Horse Park hosts a handful of events each year such as the Land Rover Kentucky Three-Day Event, Kentucky Summer Horse Show and BreyerFest.

[LAURACEA](#) is a collection of finely crafted leather goods inspired by the true equestrian lifestyle. Designed for equestrians with quality, function, and sophistication in mind, LAURACEA is the brainchild of founder Tamara Makris, designer, entrepreneur, and mother of two equestrians.

Backed by a team of equestrian and insurance experts, [Markel](#) is the insurance company with horse sense. At the shows and in the barns, Markel serves its clients with the highest standards. Markel has a team of insurance specialists across the country who know the product inside and out. Visit [Horse Specialist | Markel Specialist \(markelinsurance.com\)](#) and find the Markel Insurance Specialist that's right for your horse, farm and liability needs.

[Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital](#) began as an ambulatory practice in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1982 and established a full-service equine hospital in 1986. Today the practice is known and respected worldwide for innovative and highly skilled treatment of horses. Rood & Riddle continues their tradition of excellence into the twenty-first century serving as a referral center for horses requiring specialized medical and surgical care and providing ambulatory care for all breeds and disciplines. With the original hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, and locations in Saratoga Springs, New York, and Wellington, Florida, Rood & Riddle maintains an unwavering commitment to quality, both in the care of horses and in our relationships with clients and the community.

The [United States Hunter Jumper Association](#) (USHJA), as the official hunter/jumper affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation, is a competition-based sport organization that serves our members through educational programs, awards and recognition, communication and rules. They provide a wide array of programs for all hunter/jumper levels and are mindful of the well-being of our equine partners. Additional information is available at www.ushja.org.

Founded in 1958, the [Washington International Horse Show presented by MARS Equestrian™](#) is one of the most prestigious, competitive and exciting equestrian sporting events in North America. Held annually in October, WIHS brings together the finest and most talented horses and riders from across the country and around the world for seven days of top jumper, hunter and equitation competition, equestrian entertainment, and community and charity events.

[Wellington International](#) is the home of the internationally recognized Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) in addition to 28 weeks of the Annual Series horse shows. WEF came to Wellington in 1974 and boasts more than 155 acres, 18 competition arenas, over 400 permanent equine stalls, horse trails, pedestrian paths, and golf cart tracks. This award-winning venue operates the largest and longest-running hunter/jumper horse show in the world while annually welcoming thousands of riders from all 50 states and more than 42 countries. In addition to equestrian sporting events, Wellington International offers VIP, hospitality, event spaces, world-class shopping and much more! With the support of their parent company, the Global Equestrian Group (GEG), Wellington International is focused on the future of equestrian sport to better serve exhibitors, stakeholders, and community.

For more information about the **Show Jumping Hall of Fame**, including the Show Jumping Hall of Fame Jumper Classic Series, please visit the Show Jumping Hall of Fame website at www.ShowJumpingHallofFame.net.