

## Press Release: June 8, 2008

### Todd Minikus and Pavarotti Outrun the Competition to win \$100,000 Budweiser Upperville Jumper Classic

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**Todd Minikus and Pavarotti**

Upperville, VA - June 8, 2008 – It was hot. There's no other way to put it. A beautiful, blue sky summer Sunday in the Virginia hunt country was the perfect setting in which to experience the \$100,000 Budweiser Upperville Jumper Classic. But it was hot. Temperatures hovered in the 90's all afternoon, with only the occasional breeze to provide momentary respite from the heat. A great crowd was on hand, the ladies resplendent in their sundresses and hats occupying the ringside box seats surrounding T. A. Randolph Field.

The first round of the class consisted of twelve obstacles with fifteen jumping efforts. Course Designer Ken Krome allotted 82 seconds time allowed in the first round, which was adequate. The course began over the Budweiser Six-Pack triple bar positioned directly in the center of the field. Riders then turned right uphill to a vertical at fence 2, then turned back left to another vertical at fence three which began a series of related distances between fences 3, 4 and 5 which ran along the side of the field back toward the ingate. After 3, riders cantered downhill to 4, which was a one-stride double combination, oxer to vertical. Continuing downhill, an oxer at fence 5 came up a few strides later. In general this line caused

few problems, with rails coming down only three times throughout the class. After 5, riders turned back left and headed back uphill to 6, the Dover Saddlery vertical, then bent right across the center of the field to an oxer at 7. The track then rolled back around to the left and headed downhill to the open water at 8, then uphill to a vertical at 9. Back around to the right to fence 10, the Tiffany oxer, jumping directly toward the box seats on the hill, then bearing left and slightly downhill to 11, a vertical – oxer – oxer combination jumping toward another set of box seats and the jury box. The course finished up over fence 12, the Seaworld vertical passing the jury box at the top of the field.

A strong field of twenty-two entries started off with Kristen Vanderveen aboard Bull Run's Charly Brown. The pair held up well until the end, having rails down at 11a, 11b, and 12 to finish with a twelve-fault score. The problems at fence 11 were just beginning, as the next two competitors would also have multiple rails in the

triple, and ultimately thirteen of the twenty-two entries would have faults at one or more elements of that combination set late in the course.

Fourth to go in the order was Debbie Stephens on Centennial Farm's All Star. Reprising their performance in the \$25,000 Welcome Stake held on Friday, Debbie and All Star were once again the first duo to tour the course without fault. Margie Engle of Wellington, Florida showed next on Hidden Creek's Quervo Gold. Good until the end, they rolled the top rail off of 11a for a four fault score. McLain Ward of Brewster, New York rode next on Sagamore Farm's Quo Vadis. The first of two rides of the afternoon for the Olympic veteran, Quo Vadis ran into trouble early on and Ward withdrew voluntarily.

After six had gone, there was one clear and one with four faults. Then, it seemed like the floodgates opened. Marilyn Little riding Raylyn Farm's and Patrick and Eileen Witte's Unika jumped around easily. Pablo Barrios on Sinatra joined the good list, and then Mary Lisa Leffler on Rolling Acres Farm's Gerona 92 went around fault-free. Two rounds later, Todd Minikus and Pavorotti, 2nd place finishers in Friday's Welcome Stake, became the fifth clear round. Four rounds later Alison Robitaille was clear on Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Firestone's Intrepide Du Valon.

Kent Farrington and Up Chiqui were next on course. Winners of Friday's \$25,000 Welcome Stake and last year's \$100,000 Classic and \$25,000 Welcome, the pair would prove unable to repeat as they became the latest casualties at the triple, having the 'B' element down for a four fault score.

As the first round wound down to the final three competitors, their names were familiar: Ward, Minikus, Engle. McLain, on his second ride of the day, was unable to qualify, having 11a down. Todd, on the Diamond Group's Romy, his second ride of the day, would qualify his second and now have two 'bullets' in the jumpoff. Margie, on her third and final ride of the afternoon, was still looking for her first clear round, and the third time would be the charm, as she became the eighth and final clear round to advance to the jumpoff aboard Hidden Creek's Coraya Z.

The jumpoff was big and open, with plenty of room to gallop. Starting at the top of the field over the Seaworld vertical, riders would gallop halfway down the field before turning back left to jump the Budweiser Six-Pack triple bar, now reversed. Then, galloping around right to jump a vertical on the rail not in the first round, riders would then roll back around right over the Tiffany oxer before heading to the triple combination, now a double with the 'C' element removed. Turning left, the course led all the way back down to the other end of the field, backward over the Dover Saddlery vertical, originally fence 6, and then rolling back right to finish over an oxer by the ingate which was originally fence 5.

Debbie Stephens led off with All Star. Choosing a slow, careful track, Debbie was clean in 47.72 seconds. Marilyn Little was next on Unika, and was a little faster, but still careful, in 46.94. Pablo Barrios and Sinatra kicked it up a notch, and blazed around in 44.35 seconds for the lead. Mary Lisa Leffler also chose a cautious route, and went around clear in 47.22.

The four left to show were notorious speedsters. Todd Minikus was in next on Pavorotti. Shifting into high gear heading to the first fence, he didn't let up until the end, adding a risky cut in front of a tree on the approach to the Tiffany oxer for good measure. Todd broke the beam at 42.62 to take over the lead. Alison Robitaille then took her shot on Intrepide Du Valon. She opted for the same cut to the Tiffany oxer and was successful there, but got caught up in the combination, bringing down the B element for a four fault score just fractions off the leading time with 43.34.

Margie Engle was slotted to go last but opting to move up and go ahead of current leader Minikus and his second ride. Engle and Hidden Creek's Coraya Z galloped around, but did not take the high risk cuts and finished with a clear round in 44.94.

Todd then came in for the final ride of the jumpoff on Romy. With the win sewn up on Pavarotti, Minikus's shot for a 1-2 finish looked promising until the pair had a rail at 14, the vertical by the ring fence. Adding another rail at 11a, they finished with 8 faults.

After leading the victory gallop on the handsome chestnut, Todd noted that this was the first time he'd won this event: "It feels good. It's a good win, a prestigious class. I've been second, third, fourth, last...it's nice to finally win one here." The next stop for Todd is Saugerties; Pavorotti will have a well-deserved rest until the Lake Placid shows in a couple of weeks.