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Palms Classic Horse Show Lights up Del Mar

March 26, 2007 – Del Mar, California – In its second year at the Del Mar Fairgrounds, the Palms Classic attracted a select group of top competitors and spectators. Special classes included the annual **\$5,000 WCAR Prix de Nations** class on Friday evening, and the **\$1,000 Dog Agility** class leading up to the **\$50,000 World Cup Qualifying Grand Prix** presented by **Antarès** on Saturday night.

“We’re not looking to be a big show, we strive to produce a quality event with special classes, awards, excellent footing and a host of other reasons that make trainers and owners want to bring their clients and horses,” explained Show Manager Dale Harvey.

With fourteen teams of four and a number of individual rides, the first round of the Prix de Nations had over eighty competitors jumping at the 1.10m, 1.20m, 1.30m, and 1.40m levels. Not only did the class offer riders a unique opportunity to compete on a team, it was also the first selection trial for the WCAR Spruce Meadows Prix de Nations teams heading to Canada this summer. Forming a star-studded line-up for the evening was **Chef D’Equipe Craig Starr**, with **Kelli Johnston, Barbara Ellison, Morgan Taylor and Maile Rehnberg**, who collectively had just 5 faults for the win.

Always a crowd pleaser, the Dog Agility class entertained the grand prix spectators and riders alike. With twenty-seven dogs competing in the preliminary round earlier in the evening, the top ten returned at 7p.m. to showcase their nimbleness. Congratulations go to the sprightly Australian Shepherd **Sage** and handler **Marla Friedler**.

On a beautiful course under the lights of the Del Mar Arena, the \$50,000 Antarès Grand Prix hosted twenty-one entries. Eight horses jumped the **Michel Vaillancourt** designed course clean in front of a cheering crowd of thousands. John Pearce and Archie Bunker were the first to ride the jump off, setting a seemingly unbeatable time. Numerous riders tried but victory appeared to be Pearce’s, until second-to-last in the ring **Chris Pratt** on C&S Partnership’s **Live Fire** shaved milliseconds off Pearce’s time for the lead.

Followed only by his stable mate, Conquest of Paradiso, also owned by C&S Partnership LLC and ridden by Richard Spooner, who blazed around the course with the winning time but with eight faults bumping him to 6th place. After the results were in, only three of eight managed double clear rounds, winner Pratt and Live Fire barely beating out Pearce and Archie Bunker, and coming in third with two clear rounds was Cassiato ridden by Harley Brown.

As the tack room curtains and trunks closed, a departing trainer noted, “This is such a nice show, everything from the office to the schedule. I really enjoy showing here.” Whether you’re an exhibitor or trainer, put the Palms Classic in your schedule for next spring and enjoy a horse show with class for everyone.

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