

Conor Swail takes two events at Equestrian Park last week

By Bill Rea

Conor Swail enjoys his visits to Palgrave, with good reason.

He was victorious Sunday in the \$50,000 FEI Jumper Classic at the Caledon Equestrian Park in Palgrave, riding Dillinger. And that came after a successful afternoon Friday, when he won the \$35,000 FEI Open Welcome aboard Grafton. That performance narrowly beat the second-place combination of Swail and Cita.

It was a cold and windy day at the park Sunday, as Swail and Dillinger were among 27 combinations to enter the event. They were also among the nine competitors to turn in clear rounds to get into the jump-off, as were Swail and Cita.

Swail, who hails from the Belfast area in Northern Ireland and is currently riding out of Lothlorien for Sue Grange of Cheltenham, had lots of good things to say about his mount Sunday.

"He was up to the challenge today," he declared, praising the performance of his nine-year-old mount. He added he has a good relationship with the horse. "He let me do all the tight turns really well."

Swail and Cito were the first competitors in the jump-off, turning in a respectable time of 36.46 seconds. But that wasn't going to last, as Daniel Coyle, also riding for Grange completed the course in 35.53 seconds on Tennyson, and that time seemed unbeatable. But that was before Swail and Dillinger got their turn. They cleared all the jumps on the course in 34.88 seconds.

Swail also took third place Sunday, riding Cita.

Fourth place was taken by Ali Ramsay of Victoria, B.C., aboard Hermelien, followed by Amy Millar on Heros, Ian Millar on Teddy du Bosquetiau and Vanessa Mannix of Calgary on Carolien VH Scheefknsteel.

Friday's event was a busier one, as 36 entries took to the course, and 12 of them jumped clear to make it to the jump-off, including all three of Swail's mounts and two that Coyle was riding.

Beth Underhill of Schomberg was in the jump-off on Count Me In, and she knew she was going to need a very fast round to have a chance. That's just what she did, completing the course in 36.08 seconds, but she was a tiny fraction off the pace set by Swail on Cita, with a time of 36.03.

Underhill had to settle for third place, as Swail and Grafton shaved better than a full second off the time he and Cita posted. They finished it in 34.93 seconds.

Underhill was pleased with the outcome, pointing out it was his first time competing at that level.

"He felt so relaxed and on his game," she remarked. "He did everything I asked him to."

She admitted being "a little bit" frustrated on missing second place by one-20th of a second, commenting she put on the speed in the jump-off.

"That's about as fast as I wanted to go," she said. The pendulum could have swung either way."

Coyle and Tennyson were fourth, followed by Swail on Dillinger and Ian Millar on Teddy du Bosquetiau.

"It was a good day," Swail remarked after the competition.

Dillinger was the first mount he rode in the jump-off, and he said he had been confident that the 36.4 seconds would stand up.

"I felt it was a good enough round to win, and I was fifth," he said.



Conor Swail had a fast and clear round here in the jump-off Friday on Grafton to take top honours in the event, and he had similar success two days later aboard Dillinger.



Beth Underhill of Schomberg set a fast pace in Friday's jump-off aboard Count Me In. It was good enough for third place in the event.