

Daniel Coyle dominates \$86,600 CSI2* Jumper Classic in Caledon

Daniel Coyle of Ireland dominated the \$86,000 CSI2* Jumper Classic, presented by Case IH, recently during the CSI2* Classic at Palgrave Phase II at the Caledon Equestrian Park.

Coyle, 22, qualified three horses for the jump-off, winning the event riding Tienna and taking second place with the 10-year-old grey Belgian Warmblood gelding, Dillinger. With his third entry, Grafton, Coyle finished in fifth position after having the final fence down for a total of four faults in a time of 37.60. All three of Coyle's horses are owned by Susan Grange and her daughter Ariel of Lothlorien Farm, in Cheltenham.

The 22-year-old's winning streak began earlier in the day when Coyle rode to victory in the \$20,000 Under 25 class, presented by BDF Equestrian, aboard Somerset and placed third with Fortis Fortuna, also owned by the Grange. Muhammad Itani of Essex broke up the Irish party by finishing second riding Tax Free.

Course designer Manuel Esparza of Mexico set a testing track for the 34 entries in the \$86,000 CSI2* Jumper Classic, including a tight time allowed of 78 seconds that prevented three riders - Ian Millar, Hyde Moffatt and Nicole Walker - from advancing to the jump-off after leaving all the rails in place.

With eight horse-rider combinations returning for the tie-breaker, Coyle was poised for the win when all three of his entries qualified. However, as the first to return for the jump-off with Tienna, Coyle got the job done by coming home clear in a time of 36.85 seconds, a performance no one could improve on, not even himself.

American challenger Andy Kocher was the only rider to catch Coyle's time, stopping the clock in 36.45 riding Navalo de Poheton, but a rail at the 'A' element of the double combination left the pair in fourth place.

Coyle's final entry, Dillinger, left all the rails in place in a time of 40.23 for second place while Jonathon Millar of Perth was the only other rider to jump double-clear, taking third with Daveau in a time of 40.81 seconds.

'Any one of my horses could have won today, but Tienna is the fastest, and she won in the end,' said Coyle of the nine-year-old Canadian Sport Horse mare that was bred by owner Susan Grange. 'It's really hard to expect that when you're first back for the jump-off. If she was last to go, it might have made it a little easier; it's always hard to go first.

'I haven't had that much jump-off experience with Grafton, and it took me a while to get the feel for Dillinger,' continued Coyle of his three jump-off mounts. 'He's a great horse, but he is not the easiest to ride. I was most impressed with him today.'

Coyle is particularly fond of Tienna, noting, 'When I first started riding her, I told Sue 'this is a star, she really is something special.' I have been bragging about her and I think she's a real grand prix horse.'

'She's fast, she's scopey, she ticks all the boxes,' he added. 'It might take her another year to get there, but I believe she will be really special.'

Coyle, who took over the top string of Lothlorien horses from fellow Irishman Conor Swail last fall, may be from Ireland, but his training base is only 15 minutes from the Caledon Equestrian Park, host of equestrian events for the 2015 Pan American Games.

'It's a great show with great prize money and world ranking classes, and it's great for Sue to be able to jump her horses as local as this is,' said Coyle. 'I think it's extra-special for Sue, as this is like her home crowd. Without Sue and Ariel Grange, I would not be where I am today, and I can never thank them enough for that.'

The CSI2* Classic at Palgrave Phase II marked the second of five weeks of International Equestrian Federation (FEI) competition offered at the Caledon Equestrian Park this year by organizer Equestrian Management Group.

Two weeks of back-to-back FEI-sanctioned show jumping competition returns to the Park with the CSI2* Summer Festival held from Aug. 1 to 6, immediately followed by the CSI2* Caledon Premier II running Aug. 8 through 13. The fifth and final week of FEI competition takes place from Sept. 20 to 24 at the ever-popular CSI2* Canadian Show Jumping Tournament.



Ireland's Daniel Coyle was riding Tienna to victory in the \$86,000 CSI2* Jumper Classic, presented by Case IH. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography