

Equestrian park gets a good workout ? Jordan MacPherson Claims \$35,000 Grand Prix

By Bill Rea

Captain Canada probably put it best Saturday.

“The only thing better than winning is watching your student win.”

Those were the words of Olympic medalist Ian Millar after he was just squeezed out of first place in Saturday's \$35,000 CSI2* RAM Equestrian Grand Prix at Caledon Equestrian Park. He was bested by his student Jordan MacPherson of Toronto.

It also provided a good test for the Palgrave facility. It's run by Equestrian Management Group (EMG), which is busy with the efforts to get the park ready to host the equestrian events at the 2015 Pan Am Games.

Millar said he was pretty impressed with what he's seen so far.

“I'm so proud of what the EMG Group is doing,” he declared. “This is going to be the best facility that I've ever seen at the Pan Ams.”

“That's what we're shooting for,” commented EMG Managing Partner Craig Collis. “That's the point.”

Millar is also enthused at the plan for indoor arena facilities at the site. That will mean indoor events can be held locally leading up to the Royal Winter Fair in the fall.

“With that flexibility, it's a game-changer,” Millar declared.

“This is beyond significant, what's happening here,” he added.

Five riders were able to pass the test set by two-time Olympic course designer Leopoldo Palacios of Venezuela, successfully negotiating the first round track to advance to the all-deciding jump-off. There was almost a sixth. Beth Underhill of Schomberg turned in a clear round, but took a fraction of a second too long to do it, ending up with one time fault with her entry, Viggo.

Millar, a 10-time Olympian, led off by guiding his 2012 London Olympic mount Star Power to a second clear round in a time of 36.70 seconds. His early lead would be short-lived, however, as his student MacPherson followed with Piccobello du Val de Geer, her partner of the past three years. A fast pace and tight turns soon saw MacPherson flying through the timers in 34.50 seconds, slicing more than two full seconds off Millar's time.

“Ian went before me and set the track,” said MacPherson, 23. “I watched him go, and knew what I had to do - pick up the pace, and keep going!”

MacPherson was nervous as three riders were still to follow. Colombia's Roberto Teran was on the pace until two rails fell near the end of the shortened track to leave him fifth in the overall standings with Tam Tam Hero, owned by ARK Partners. Jill Henselwood, Millar's silver medal teammate at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, was clear but a time of 38 seconds saw her finish in fourth with New Idol Z, a nine-year-old grey Zangersheide mare owned by Juniper Farms. Ainsley Vince of Burlington was the final challenger, but a time of 37.89 seconds with her grey mare, Darling, left her third in the final placings for The Darling Group.

“It's a fast horse and she knows her job,” MacPherson said after accepting her red ribbon.

Millar said he's ridd



Ian Millar and Star Power easily cleared this tricky jump Saturday.



Caledon resident Chris Sorensen was guiding Wriomf over this jump, one of two mounts he had entered Saturday.

en 14-year-old Belgian Warmblood mare, as has his daughter Amy. But it quickly became clear there was a synergy between MacPherson and the horse.

?We thought she'd be a fantastic horse for Jordan,? he remarked. ?This horse was better for Jordan than anyone else.?

Jay Hayes from Orangeville had taken top spot the previous week in the \$20,000 Ram Equestrian Grand Prix at Palgrave on Riva, but they didn't have the same good fortune Saturday. One railing came down during their round, and with four jump[ing] faults, they had to settle for seventh place.

Chris Sorensen of Caledon East had two mounts in the event. He picked up four jumping faults on Wriomf to come in ninth, behind Vince on Frieda. Sorensen also competed on Bobby, but they knocked down two railing for eight faults and a 12th place finish.

Belfountain resident Yann Candele was competing aboard Carolla Z, and they finished in 11th place with four faults.

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