

Eric Lamaze goes two-for-two in \$30,000 WEF Challenge Cup

It was a case of déjà vu as Eric Lamaze and Rosana du Park stood in the winner's circle following the \$30,000 Ruby et Violette WEF Challenge Cup Round II Jan. 15 at the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida.

The pair had enjoyed exactly the same result one week earlier in the opening round of the 12-week WEF Challenge Cup Series. For their second win, Lamaze and Rosana du Park were up against 72 other entries. Thirteen found their way to a clear round over the track set by course designer Luc Musette of Belgium. Lamaze, of Schomberg, and Rosana du Park were only the second pair back to challenge the shortened jump-off course. Much like a week earlier, when he had been the first one back for the jump-off, Lamaze once again set a blistering pace of 39.78 seconds and left it up to the rest of the field to try to catch him. None who followed were able to post a time of less than 40 seconds, with Lamaze's long-time Canadian teammate, Ian Millar of Perth coming closest with a time of 40.75 seconds for second place riding Dixon. Kent Farrington of the United States took third after crossing the timers in 40.92 seconds with Waomi.

"We knew we had to go for it, but she is naturally so quick in the air and dependable in the roll-backs," said Lamaze of his jump-off strategy with Rosana du Park. "When a horse is good and they're careful, everything suits them. To be honest, I think she is very competitive. I can ask her to go fast in a straight line, or turn very sharp to anything, and she gives 100 per cent. I think she is a great mare and is going to win a lot."

Rosana du Park, a 10-year-old bay selle francais mare, was purchased at the end of 2012 by Artisan Farms LLC in partnership with Lamaze's Torrey Pines Stable. Following two years of careful and deliberate development, including being campaigned by Torrey Pines Stable rider Carly Anthony, Rosana du Park is now stepping up to the grand prix ranks.

"Carlene and I are thrilled with today's win," said Andy Ziegler, who owns Artisan Farms LLC with his wife, Carlene. "Eric and his team have done an extraordinary job bringing Rosana along, and it is nice to see the results of their hard work."

In addition to his win in the \$30,000 Ruby et Violette WEF Challenge Cup Round II, Lamaze also claimed a \$3,000 bonus for the second week in a row in the SSG Gloves "Go Clean for the Green" promotion for wearing SSG Digital riding gloves on his way to victory.

The pair of wins signals good things to come for Lamaze on the 12-week Winter Equestrian Festival circuit. With a stable full of top horses, there is no doubt that Lamaze will soon make another trip to the winner's circle.

"I came to this circuit with fantastic horses," said Lamaze. "I have some new upcoming horses that are now ready to perform like Rosana and Check Picobello Z. I have a new stallion still in quarantine, Houston, that I think a lot of that is going to be coming out in a couple of weeks. Fine Lady is going to make her debut next week. And Powerplay and Zigali are still in the barn!"

"I planned this," continued the 2008 Olympic Champion. "I stopped my season after Barcelona (at the beginning of October) to rest some horses, and tried to arrive here with fresh horses. So far, it's paid off. I have to thank Carlene and Andy Ziegler for their support."