

# Weber Finds Time to Win Sixth Consecutive USEF National Four-in-Hand Championship; Graburn Narrowly Defeats Ying in USEF Single Horse Championship at Live Oak International

By Joanie Morris

Ocala, FL - Chester Weber added winner and his sixth consecutive USEF National Championship to his list of titles at the Live Oak Plantation Combined Driving Event presented by Budweiser. Not only did he win the FEI Team Horse Division he also played host, presenter, bloodstock agent, farm manager and competitor.

"I want it seven times because nobody has ever won it seven times," said Weber of his championship run. "So if I win it seven times in a row that's some sort of feat."

Weber's beautiful Live Oak Plantation opened its gates to the community and hosted thousands of spectators over the three days.

"It is without a lot of complications because (organizer) Susan (Gilliard) is a star at what she does," said Weber. "We have most of the running of this event worked out in advance. We get everything done well, well in advance and that makes competing at an event you organize quite a bit easier."

The CAI-A Ocala, also serves as a USEF Selection Trial for the 2008 Four-in-Hand World Championships to be held in Beesdt, Holland September 4-7.

"I have one other horse I haven't driven this year at all," said Weber. "I drove him at Aachen. He's a lead horse in the dressage and that should help get my scores back under 40. The marathon team is pretty good, going better and the cones team is good so I feel good about it."

Weber had a significant lead after the dressage and although he was slightly slower than rival Jimmy Fairclough on the marathon his performance in the cones was plenty good enough to maintain his lead on a score of 140.72. Para, Jamaica, Senate and Boy put on a very confident display in the cones, the phase Weber considers to be this teams strongest. Fairclough remained second.

The second USEF National Championship followed the teams and the cones proved influential in the hotly contested Single Horse division. Also a selection for the 2008 World Driving Championships to be held in Jarantow, Poland August 28-31.

Marathon winner Sterling Graburn put in a dynamite double clear round in the cones which put the pressure on his girlfriend Wendy Ying who was the two-day leader. Ying also drove an awesome round with her horse but had a mistake at the last set of cones to bring her final score to 134.54 just over a point behind her boyfriend.

"I was really happy with my cones," said Graburn who finished on 132.82. "I've had issues with the cones in the past. Mostly horse issues but I had to convince people that it wasn't me. He's a much better horse and he's given me a lot of confidence driving cones."

Graburn and Ying's horses are 3/4 brothers, by a Welsh Cob stallion out of mares that are half sisters, the matching 'sport cobs' as Ying has dubbed them put on impressive displays all weekend in all three phases.

"It's fun because Wendy and I are a couple, the horses are brothers and we have champion and reserve champions in the same house and the same barn," said Graburn of his first national championship title.

Ying, Graburn and David Schneider were also the winners of the unofficial team competition sponsored by Bill Peacock. 'Team Purple' was impressive and took home the champagne for their efforts.

In the FEI Team Pony division two-day leader Lisa Stroud maintained her command of the division with a stellar cones performance with her team of gray Connemara ponies. The West Grove, PA driver finished on a score of 152.18, closely followed by Boots Wright who was second.

"They are always fabulous, they save me," said Stroud. "These ponies make me look good."

Stroud didn't appear to need saving, she drove a very confident cones phase, something she has been working on over the last year.

"It is a little bit nerve racking," said Stroud. "I've had a good year in cones. I was second at the worlds in cones under duress so I am much more confident about it. Success breeds success. I have a lot of confidence in this team and I thought this was a great course. I like a challenging cones course."

Larry Poulin and his immaculate pair drove confidently in the FEI Pair Horse division and was less than a point behind overnight Keady Cadwell going into the cones. Both drivers had two obstacles down and Cadwell exceeded the time but her score of 131.4 was enough to hold the lead and give the experienced driver another victory.

Cadwell, of Southern Pines, NC drove Splash and Unique accurately all weekend and she maintained her composure after making a mistake at the very first set of cones. Splash, a 5-year-old KWPN was fascinated by his surroundings but maintained his composure.

"I'm very happy with my horses," said Cadwell. "I drove my five-year-old and he went in there and first he said, 'this is a lot of people and there are a lot of tents and then he said I get the hang of this. He's going to be really good at cones."

The Cadwell name is synonymous with driving and Keady's sister Miranda wasn't to be outdone by sibling rivalry. They train and drive together and the Cadwells grew up in Pennsylvania with Graburn. With a score of 129.4 'Randy' convincingly won the FEI Single Pony Division with Kabaam, a 5-year-old, that has had great success since he began driving last year.

"Actually the cones is the phase that I get the most nervous before but I don't know why because I've always driven the cones fine but I get very nervous," said Randy.

Kabaam has plenty of personality and he is going to join a pair to learn a bit more about the marathon from one of Cadwell's World Championship team from 2007.

"He's a bit of a ham," said Randy. "He's fun to be around. He's cheeky, he knows he's the man. This is his fifth show ever."

For complete results please see: [www.cailiveoak.com](http://www.cailiveoak.com), for more information please contact Joanie Morris, USEF High Performance Communications manager at: [jmorris@usef.org](mailto:jmorris@usef.org).