

2016 Massachusetts Horsemen's Council Days of Champions

A Weekend of Grand Slam Wins!

For Immediate Release

by Melody Taylor-Scott

www.EvergreenWebAndMediaServices.com

Each year, at the end of September, there is a migration of Massachusetts riders, trainers, grooms, support staff and family members to the Three County Fair Grounds arena in Northampton, MA. They come to compete for title of the year's best in the prestigious Massachusetts Horsemen's Council "Days of Champions" equitation Medal Finals and 2016 is the 35th anniversary of this challenging competition. Show Chair Felicia Knowles and Manager Debbi Tate, Judges; Meg Shulman of Littleton, CO, Meg Black of Deer Isle, ME, Carol Coleman of Wellington, FL, and Scott Alder of Chelsea, MI also the Course designer, together with a tireless crew presented a well-run three days of competition for over 300 competitors.

On Friday the Younger Medal, sponsored by Back Bay Farm, and Older Adult Amateur Medal sponsored by Woodridge Farm, ended with a fabulous 'Grand Slam' as both riders won their respective Open and Medal classes!



Hannah Brown, trained by Brooke Farr, started the phenomenon by winning the Younger Adults, repeated by **Kristina Lyons** who trains with Ashleigh Stewart winning the Older Adults!



Competition was tight with 58 entries in the younger and 45 in the older Adult Medals. Both young women rode consistently over the technical courses to rise to the top and stay there. The day ended with the wonderful President's Exhibitor Party featuring a delicious hot buffet catered by Spoleto's Restaurant of Northampton, that hit the spot after a long day of competition.

Saturday dawned chilly and wet, but the hot coffee and food offered in the hospitality room organized by Susan Cooper and the covered warm-up ring, helped keep riders dry and enthusiasm up. Following the Medal, everyone enjoyed the President's Exhibitor Party & Buffet catered by Spoleto's Restaurant. The day started with five open classes prior to the featured Junior Medal, sponsored by Corinthian Farm and Equine Insurance of Medway, MA, with 112 competing for top honors.

Grace Jackson who trains with Ann Dotoli took the lead in the first round and held it till the test. The course looked deceptively simple but in fact was a technically challenging ride, including a bounce in the first round. Calling back the top 6 to ride without stirrups, what seemed like a straight forward test of canter three fences then halt and jump a trot fence and return to line, proved to have a real 'Gotcha' in it.



Four of the top six rode their test, halted then went straight to the trot fence. Emma Fletcher, riding third at the call back proceeded to ride her test, halted, and to the collective gasps of the audience trotted past the trot jump, then calmly rolled back and jumped it in the direction it had been jumped on course. Then later, class leader Grace Jackson also rode the same track, although a bit deep at the trot fence. The test did not say to jump the trot fence in reverse.

Emma Fletcher who trains with her mom Kathy of Grazing Fields Farm, rose to the top to be chosen 2016 MHC Days of Champions Junior Medal winner, producing yet

another Grand Slam, winning both her open and medal classes, and on her birthday to boot! **Grace Jackson**, also winning her open class was named Reserve Champion with **Miles Holman** moving up from sixth to third.

Sunday was Mini Medal day with 71 competitors entered. The course enabled the younger riders to choose a

path best suited to their horse or pony's stride and show their ability to ride off their eye. In yet another Grand Slam win, **Annalise Manoog** won her open class and won the 2016 DOC Mini-Medal Championship, providing yet another trip to the winners circle for trainer Kathy Fletcher. **Casey Van Nostrand**, training with Abbie Callaghan was named Reserve Champion.

For more information, visit the MHC on Facebook and the web at www.MaHorseCouncil.com.

