

45TH Massachusetts Horsemen's Council's Days of Champions 2026

For Immediate Release by Melody Taylor-Scott Ohlwiler
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The 45TH Massachusetts Horsemen's

Council's Days of Champions hunter seat medal finals, held at Three County Fairgrounds in



1 Bill Worthington and Felicia Knowles

Northampton, MA, was well attended. Show Chair Felicia Knowles and Manager Bill Worthington presented another successful final enjoyed by exhibitors, family, and trainers. Judges this year were Kerry Kocher of Centre Hall, PA, Jenny Darst of Winston, GA, Walter J. Lee of Keswick, VA and Oliver Brown of Culpepper, VA.

New upgrades to the arena include stronger Wi-Fi, removal of the old racetrack rail and enlarging the ring from an oval to a 120' by 220' rectangle!

Judge and Course designer Kerry Kocher took advantage of the new configuration creating flowing courses with ample room for numerous jumps. Building technical tracks with bending lines and sweeping roll back turns to single fences, requiring riders to demonstrate their ability to 'ride off their eye' to find their distances.



2 Walter J. Lee and Oliver Brown

Thursday, warm up day, went smoothly with crisp fall weather. Following the warmups, the USHJA Zone One Q&A with judges Walter J. Lee and Oliver Brown. Trainers and competitors asked questions and received educated and informative if sometimes humorous answers.



3 Olivia Herfert

Friday the Adults competed with 21 younger and 39 over thirty in their respective divisions. In the 18-30's, **Olivia Herfert**, trained by **Kimberley Herfert**, won her open eq, rode to the top of the medal in the first round, and stayed on top in the second round to win the **Woodridge Farm, Inc sponsored 2026 MHC DOC Adult Medal 18-30 Championship** with no test! **Reserve Ch.** went to **ANNA LEIGHTON** trained by **Sheryl Mac Leod**.



Between rounds the **MHC HOTY** award was given posthumously to “**ET**” owned by **Caitlin C. Geary**.



4 Lori Donfrancesco

The Adult 30 and Over Medal, held in the afternoon and **sponsored By Back Bay Farm, Robin Peterson**, saw **LORI DONFRANCESCO**, trained by **Amber Vera**, place second in her open eq, then dominated the Over 30 Medal. Riding to the top in the first round and staying there through the second round to win the **2026 MHC Days of Champions Adult Over 30 Medal Championship**. **Reserve Ch.** went to **KATY BALDINI FERBERT** trained by **Kristen L. Bumpus**.

The always much appreciated **Presidents Diner**, catered by **Spoletto's Restaurant**, was served

up in the hospitality area of the arena at the end of the show. The diner was well attended by hungry trainers and riders, parents, staff, and friends.



5 ELOUISE GUTZLER

Saturday was Mini Medal Day with 26 Adult and 50 younger Mini Medalists competing. Despite weather predictions of a Nor'easter, the rain mostly held off for the day.

The younger Mini Medal was dominated by **ELOUISE GUTZLER**, trained by **Ann Dotoli**,

won her open eq, was called on top after the first and second round to win the **MHC Days of Champions Mini Medal**, **sponsored By Horseworks Insurance Specialist**. with no further testing! **Reserve Ch.** went to **PEYTON WAUGH** and trained by **Amber Viera**.



6 ALEXA E. BRUONO

For the Adult Mini Medal, **ALEXA E. BUONO** trained by **Jessica Roberts**, also pulled off the day's hat trick and won her open eq, then placed on top of the first round and stayed there through the second round to win the **MHC Days of Champions Adult Mini Medal**, sponsored By **Sheila & Shirley Murphy**, Reserve Ch. went to **KATE COTTER** trained by **April M. Bilodeau**.

Junior day, held on Sunday, saw 56 intrepid Juniors competing in intermittent bands of rain compliments of the Nor'easter that finally made it out to Northampton.



8 Sidonie Abren!

Between rounds the **2026 MHC Sportsmanship award** was presented to **Sidonie Abren!**

The **MHC Junior Medal Championship**, sponsored by **Corinthian Insurance** of Medway, MA, featured the show's only medal test and several shifts in the standings.



9 MADELYN HUSON

Madelyn Huson, Stella Taglienti, and Olive Gutzler were among the top four riders called back to test after trading positions throughout the afternoon's standings. An unfortunate error in execution of the call back instructions by two of the finalists ultimately reshuffled the final placings.

Congratulations on winning the hotly contested **2026 MHC-DOC Junior Medal Championship** goes to, **MADELYN HUSON** trained by **Amber Viera**. Reserve Champion awarded to **STELLA TAGLIENTI** also trained by **Amber Viera!**

Please visit the **Massachusetts Horsemen's Council**
<https://www.mahorsecouncil.com> for all the information.
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