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EVERGREEN  
INVITATIONAL®

**Laura Linback and Whittaker MVNZ**  
**Take First in 2012 Evergreen Invitational \$75,000 Grand Prix**  
*Bristol, Wisconsin Event Raises \$1.175 for Charity*

BRISTOL, WI — September 8th — The 2012 Evergreen Invitational was a huge success on Saturday with a \$25,000 Junior/Amateur Owner Classic and \$75,000 Grand Prix. The classic, which kicked off the event, was won by Meagan Nusz and Vesuvius. In the Grand Prix the blue ribbon went to Laura Linback and Whittaker MVNZ, who had the only clear ride of the class.

Hosted by MK Pritzker and The Woman's Board of Northwestern Memorial Hospital and presented by Northern Trust, the 4th biennial equestrian charity event attracted over 600 guests, who came to support the equestrian sport and to witness nationally and internationally ranked riders compete. More than \$1.175 million was raised from the competition. Proceeds will benefit historically under-funded women's health programs at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Alex Parrish set the pace as the first to ride in the \$25,000 Junior/Amateur Owner Classic sponsored by R. Bruce Duchossois and H 'n D Stables. She rode a solid first round and accumulated zero faults on her bay mare, Valentina 156. Melissa Orlick-Zbierski and Meagan Nusz soon followed with clean rides and joined Parrish in the second round. The fourth fence of the course, a liver pool vertical, going toward the in-gate didn't seem to phase their horses, which was the most troublesome jump for the rest of the competitors.

It was Nusz and Vesuvius who came out on top, the fastest of the three with a time of 39.1 and zero faults. Parrish was right on her tail with a time of 40.78 and zero faults. Orlick-Zbierski and Viekie, owned by Isotropic, took third with a time of 42.07 and four faults.

"The jump off was very self-explanatory," said Nusz. "It was mostly about keeping a consistent pace. On big open fields like this, that's the key." Knowing that her mount had a large step, Nusz planned to leave out a stride in the bending line from fence one to two to keep on time with Parrish. "I just let him continue down there. I matched her pace everywhere else, and knew I was in the lead. I could take my time, but not under ride."

Not having jumped for over a month, Parrish was pleased with her second place ribbon. "I hacked three horses last weekend and that was it," she admits. "So, I felt very good."

As predicted, Richard Jeffrey created another challenging and unique course for competitors in the \$75,000 Grand Prix. He utilized an oxer-vertical-vertical triple combination, hedge jump, standalone verticals and oxers, a liverpool, an vertical-oxer double combination, in a course that was straight forward, but still technical.  
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In the \$75,000 Grand Prix, it was Laura Linback of Mundelein who really got the crowd going on the sunny afternoon. The blue ribbon was hers after putting down the only clear ride out of 23 competitors. She was fortunate to have two horses in the class. Her first horse, HH Dauphin, had an unfortunate eight-fault total. Her first mount was seamless to the liver pool, but dropped poles at the second fence of triple combination and double combination.

With more determination and better sense of the tricky spots in the course, Linback and Whittaker MVNZ laid down a seamless ride. “He’s a little tentative at the open water, so for me that was a challenge,” said Linback. “The rest for him – a piece of cake.” It was the 9-year-old gelding’s fifth Grand Prix win since May. “He’s an absolute darling,” she said of her horse. “Perfect for me, a match made in heaven.”

Second to fifth place holders all accumulated four faults, which included (in order) Steve Schaefer and Caribe; Maggie Jayne and Thomas Edison; Nick Novak and Rendevous 22; Karen Cudmore and Twister.

The triple combination toward the end of the course seemed to be the troublesome spot for most horses and riders. “It caught more of us off guard than it was expecting to,” said Steve Schaefer who dropped a pole at the second fence of the triple. “You were really forward throughout the course and then you had to be technically very clean. I ended up galloping in a little too much and got a little flat jumping to B.”

Even with the pole down, Schaefer was still pleased to have taken second. “My horse was fantastic. That’s a good feather in his cap,” he said of Caribe, his 9-year-old gelding. “I’m very proud of him.”

“Although a jump off would have been exciting to have seen in the Grand Prix, we’re still so pleased with the performance of all the talented horses and riders,” said MK Pritzker, event founder, owner of Evergreen Farm. “We truly couldn’t be happier with the turnout, the beautiful weather and the generous support for the Evergreen Invitational.”

The Evergreen Invitational is a favorite among the country’s top riders, who are thrilled to return to the event. “This is what we do every day, this is what we work for every day,” said Nusz, a returning competitor. “So when we can come and win and have people cheer us on, make an effort for our effort, it’s a real nice feeling.”

“Where do we ever get to show where the crowd is excited,” added Linback, who’s been riding in the Evergreen Invitational since its inaugural year in 2007. “We’re happy to be the entertainment.”

Steve Schaefer was happy to compete on the grass field again. He had decided to withdraw a few years ago when the event was nearly rained out. “They treat the riders and horses like we’re athletes and we’re important,” he said. “It’s a fantastic place to come and show.”

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