



# AGDF TIMES

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2014 Adequan® Global Dressage Festival

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## Lars Petersen and Mariett Return to Freestyle Winner's Circle at AGDF 10



Lars Petersen and Mariett won another Friday night freestyle at AGDF 10 CDI W.  
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Denmark's Lars Petersen and Marcia Pepper's Mariett clinched yet another first place prize in the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle CDI W, presented by Today's Equestrian and GF Enterprise LLC. Petersen and Mariett, a 16-year-old Danish Warmblood mare out of Zendi by Comeback II, handily won the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle with a top score of 79.950%. Second place went to American Tina Konyot and Olympic partner Calecto V for their score of 77.975% and Mikala Gundersen of Denmark finished third with My Lady on a score of 76.500%.

On Thursday of AGDF 10, Petersen described Mariett as a little rusty after several weeks away from the show ring, but she made it clear on Friday evening that she is never one to sleep on. The pair were just shy of an overall score of 80, earning marks of 81.125% and 82.125% from the judges at E and H respectively, which Petersen said were their highest yet.

"She was really good to ride today. She was with me and she stayed through. If I have to be able

to do it without mistakes, she has to be like that because I have so many transitions in it. I was very happy with her today," Petersen explained.

Starting out the AGDF 10 week on Thursday was the FEI Grand Prix class. Mikala Munter Gundersen (DEN) broke her streak of third place finishes with a victory on Janne Rumbough's My Lady. Gundersen topped an impressive field of 32 riders from eight countries around the world with My Lady, a 14-year-old Danish Warmblood mare out of Marion by Michellino. My Lady and Gundersen were the final pair to go, edging out fellow Dane Lars Petersen with a score of 73.120%. Petersen finished second with Mariett on a 72.700%, while American Catherine Haddad-Staller and Mane Stream Hotmail rounded out the top three with a 71.560%. Gundersen was also the recipient of the Champion Equine Insurance Dressage Style Award, presented by Laura Fetterman.

Later on Thursday, junior riders were out in full force to contest the FEI Junior Team class, presented by

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## Riders Experience World-Class Competition Atmosphere at AGDF 11 National

The eleventh week of competition of the Adequan Global Dressage Festival (AGDF) concluded on Thursday, March 23, at The Stadium at the Palm Beach International Equestrian Center (PBIEC) in Wellington, FL. The AGDF 11 National show presented the unique opportunity for riders to compete at a world-class facility while contesting national level competition.

Riders from around the globe competed in the AGDF 11 National, including German Marcus Orlob and his mount Shakespeare RSF. The

pair earned a top score of 72.947% in the FEI Intermediaire-1 class on Thursday. Shakespeare RSF is a ten-year-old Hanoverian stallion out of EM Acapella by Sandro Hit and is owned by breeder Maurine Swanson.

American riders enjoyed several notable victories throughout the week as well. Jan Brons rode Alpha's Why Not, owned by Patricia Hernandez, to the top of the FEI Intermediaire B class. The 11-year-old Hanoverian gelding (Friedarike G x Waikiki) scored a 71.310% with Brons to win the class.

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Rick Rockefeller-Silvia and Rubinero 2 won the FEI Intermediaire-1 Freestyle class during AGDF 11. © SusanJStickle.com



# A Conversation with U.S. Para-Dressage Athlete Derrick Perkins



U.S. Para-Dressage athlete Derrick Perkins and NTEC Hans competed at the CPEDI 3\* at AGDF 10.  
© Elena Lusenti

Derrick Perkins from Sugar Land, TX, was recently classified as a Paralympian Emerging Athlete and earned his qualifying score for the selection trials for the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games while competing at the AGDF CPEDI 3\*. Derrick, a United States Air Force Wounded Veteran, is originally from Brooklyn, NY, and was stationed at Bergstrom Air Force Base in Austin, TX, while going to school at the University of Houston. After getting injured while on active duty, Derrick dedicated himself to school full-time and ultimately earned his bachelor's degree in psychology. He ran a successful therapy program with his church before eventually returning to school to earn his master's in social work.

Derrick is classified as a Grade Ia Para-Dressage athlete. All athletes are classified according to their functional profile, not based on riding ability or the horse that they ride. They are classified through a series of mobility tests with trained professionals, usually physical therapists. Grade Ia is a walk test, Ib is a walk-trot test, III is a walk-trot-canter, as is Grade IV. Each test requires a variety of demanding technical requirements, with all of the same movements able-bodied dressage tests ask for, except for piaffe and passage. Riders need a FEI level horse with superb gaits, transitions, and movement, but are also able to work with a rider who lacks mobility, balance, strength, leg aids, or voice.

Para-Dressage athletes compete in the Paralympics, a separate event from the Special Olympics. Paralympians are restricted to those with physical disabilities.

Derrick currently trains with United States Para-Dressage Chef d'Equipe Kai Handt at the North Texas Equestrian Center. He also continues to go to the therapeutic riding center that originally sparked his interest in Para-Dressage, SIRE – Houston's Therapeutic Equestrian Centers. Derrick also serves on the Board of Directors for the Texas Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

## What did you do in the Air Force?

I was an aircraft electrician. I worked on aircraft electrical systems; the official title is Aircraft Electrical System Specialist. They like titles (laughs). I loved it. I loved getting up in the morning and going to work. Going up to the flight line and hearing the jets roar, watching the jets take off. [Pointing up] 'I worked on that one, it better stay up there!' [laughs]. That was exciting. I miss it sometimes. I stay connected through my veterans' organization.

## How did you first become involved with Para-Dressage?

After my injury, a friend of mine recommended therapeutic horseback riding, so I went out and tried it. I thought it was going to be a recreational thing and got a rude awakening! It's work!

I started doing some schooling shows, and I was hooked. One lady that used to be part of the therapeutic program, she was a Paralympian. I noticed her picture on the wall one day. She mentioned to me that I should get going, and that was it! I met Kai Handt. I went out [to the North Texas Equestrian Center].

## Did you have anything to do with horses before you got involved in therapeutic riding?

I grew up in New York, and we used to go to upstate New York to some little dude ranches. Basically, you just sit on the horse, you just have to watch out for tree limbs.

## What was the most difficult part of learning how to ride?

My balance challenges. I got injured back in 1988, so for twenty years I've been sitting in a wheelchair. I've done all kinds of wheelchair sports, but being able to get out of a wheelchair and onto a horse, and then pretty much into a standing position was the challenge. My legs were kind of locked. Just working my abductor muscles, and all the tendons attached to my hip. The myofascial joint is where all the tendons and blood vessels all attached to the hip in your inner thigh. So that was the biggest problem. Even today, it's a challenge.

## Have you noticed progress with riding?

Oh, yeah. I had been riding in the therapeutic riding, but competitive riding is a little different in that it's getting on a huge horse [and riding unassisted]. Waking up those muscles that I hadn't been using.

## Did you start riding pretty soon after your injury?

No, I was injured in '88 and I started riding in '09. I started competing in schooling shows with the therapeutic program in 2010, but that was just at the Houston Rodeo. It's called the Top Hands Horse Show. All the therapeutic centers from around the state participate. I started competitively on [the Paralympic] level last year. This is my first show out of the state of Texas. Last year is when I really got competitive, so here I am!

## What was the biggest difference in riding competitively than with the therapeutic riding program?

Obviously you have to ride independently. It was a big transition from the therapeutic riding center, because I had a horse leader, two side walkers, and the instructors yelling at me [laughs]. It was a whole team. I started riding with Kai, and they get you on the horse, you take the reins, and you go on your own.

The first few times I asked someone to help me warm-up, but that was the biggest challenge - the independent part. Even now, I still ride at the therapeutic center once or twice a week, and when I go back I kind of regress a little bit! They're good at pushing you though.

## What's been some of the more rewarding parts of being a Para-Dressage athlete?

For me, it's still therapeutic riding. I'm still getting stronger and better. Obviously, it's nice to be on this stage, especially on this level. It was awesome to go into [The Stadium for the Para-Dressage exhibition during "Friday Night Stars"].

The fact that it's representing the USA [is also rewarding]. It's kind of a change, for years I did that with the Air Force and then being in sports on the Olympic level. I thought my entry would be taekwondo. When I was active duty, that's when I really got serious. I was looking forward to going that route, but then I got injured. Being able to participate now, and potentially participate - I will participate - on the Paralympic team and represent the U.S., is a big motivator. I got my qualifying score yesterday, so I was really excited about that.

## What other wheelchair sports did you do before riding?

I did wheelchair bowling, archery, downhill skiing - that was the most challenging - and track and field. It's part of a VA [Veterans Affairs] program. Every year they have the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. I haven't participated in that since I got into competitive riding. The horses are my life.

[Wheelchair sports are] fun and good, but it's still in a wheelchair. It's a beautiful feeling getting on a horse and actually going out for a walk, especially on trail rides. Once I started going out on the trail, I was really hooked. I was like, 'Okay, let's go for a walk.'

## Can you tell me about the horse you've been riding?

I started out with NTEC Richter Scale my first two shows, and we were experimenting with several horses, and things kind of clicked with NTEC Hans. We had some communication challenges in the beginning, mostly mine, because he didn't understand my leg position or the pressure I was giving him. After a while, he understood. It was a lot of things I was doing! Even with your challenges, you [are still responsible for communicating effectively].

I've been working on [our bond] more lately, giving him more affection. When we got here, Kai was telling me I need to talk him, and I was like 'What do I say?' And then the groom that's been helping me, John Stevenson, he was telling me just to touch him on the neck to let him know I'm here for him. That's why [riding in The Stadium during the Para-Dressage exhibition] was such a good experience. He was a little nervous and distracted, so [I was focused on] keeping him moving forward. We're bonding, but I'll eventually move up to another horse.

## What has your experience at the AGDF been like?

This week has been challenging. It's been overwhelming! I had vehicle problems right up until [I had to leave for Florida]. I had to get a new one, and it took a month to get everything together, so it was a challenge to get back and forth [to the barn] and train as much as I wanted to. Then, I took a fall, so I had to get over that. I got off a horse Friday morning and had my last ride before I came here. Then I got in my van and headed east. So that was three days that I didn't ride, so the first day I got on a horse it was really challenging.

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Yeguada de Ymas. Paula Matute (ESP) topped the class aboard Firmamento Ymas on a score of 68.108%. American Bebe Davis finished second with Rotano on a score of 67.893%. Cassie Schmidt, also of the United States, was third with Velasquer after earning a score of 66.396%. Eight riders contested the class overall, the highest number of the AGDF season.

Neve Myburgh (GER) topped Friday morning's FEI Prix St. Georges with Lexington Star, an 11-year-old Hanoverian gelding out of Diana by Londonberry. The pair bested a field of 24 horse and rider pairs from 11 different countries with a high score of 70.482%. Olivia LaGoy-Weltz (USA) finished second aboard Rassing's Lonoir on a score of 69.342%, and Canadian Shannon Dueck and Cantaris were third with a 67.939%.

The Young Rider Team class also enjoyed an unusually high amount of entries, with 11 riders taking part. Juan Matute Jr. (ESP) achieved the high score for the class, a 69.158%, aboard Quantico. Second place went to Taylor Yamamoto of the United States with Domino; the pair earned a 67.939%. Canadian rider Laurence Tetrault rounded out the top three aboard Michelangelo with a score of 65.307%.

In the Para Team Grade IA class, Roxanne Trunnell (USA) and Nice Touch took the top placing with a score of 71.957%. In the Grade IB class, Ashley Gowanlock (CAN) and Collegiate Sweet Leilani scored 71.333% for the win.

Lauren Barwick (CAN) and Ferdonia 2 won the Grade II class with a score of 70%. On a score of 67.105%, Angela Peavey (USA) and Ozzy Cooper won the Grade III class. Riding Sebastian, Mary R. Jordan (USA) won the Grade IV class with a score of 66.429%.

Olivia LaGoy-Weltz (USA) and Rassing's Lonoir topped Saturday's FEI Intermediaire-1, presented by Mike and Roz Collins. LaGoy-Weltz bested a field of 23 riders representing 10 different countries aboard "Lono," her 10-year-old Danish Warmblood gelding out of Lorani by De Noir.

LaGoy-Weltz and Lono earned a score of 71.754% for first place, with second and third place riders finishing just shy of her score. Neve Myburgh (GER) and Lexington Star earned a 71.667% and fellow German Marcus Orlob and Shakespeare RSF finished third with a score of 71.623%.

CPEDI 3\* competition was in its second day of competition on Saturday, with FEI Para-Dressage Individual Tests awarded top honors. Roxanne Trunnell (USA) won the Grade Ia class aboard Nice Touch. The pair earned a high score of 70.507% to ride away with the blue ribbon. Fellow American Sydney Collier emerged victorious from the Grade Ib Individual test with Willi Wesley and a score of 70.172%.

Lauren Barwick of Canada and Ferdonia 2 earned top call in the Grade II class with a score of 71.238%. In the Grade III class, it was Angela Peavy (USA) on top again, this time with Lancelot Warrior. Peavy rode Lancelot Warrior to a 68.984% to finish first. Grade IV crowned Mary R. Jordan (USA) its winner with Sebastian and a score of 67.659%.

Canada finished first in the team standings for CPEDI 3\* competition with a total score of 418.803. Team USA was second with a cumulative score of 410.536.

The FEI Young Rider and Junior classes enjoyed another day of big entries. Juan Matute Jr. (ESP) took home another first place prize in the Young Rider class with

Quantico, who he piloted to a 69.430%. Second place went to Canadian Laurence Tetrault and Michelangelo for their score of 66.316%, while Taylor Yamamoto (USA) rounded out the top three with Domino with a score of 65.614%.

In the FEI Junior class, it was Bebe Davis that dominated. Davis took first place with Fievel Mousekewitz with a 68.202% as well as second place with Rotano and a 67.807%, while Paula Matute earned third place with Firmamento Ymas on a score of 67.193%.

Belinda Trussell (CAN) rode to the top of the FEI Grand Prix Special, presented by Today's Equestrian and GF Enterprise LLC, with An ton on Sunday morning. Trussell and Robyn Eames' Anton, a 14-year-old Sachsen gelding out of Shirley by Anteaues, finished first out of 13 riders representing six different countries with a score of 72.431%. Second place went to American Shelly Francis and Danilo for their score of 69.686%. Canada also finished third thanks to Ashley Holzer's ride on Tiva Nana, which earned a score of 68.196% for third place.

Later in the afternoon, Shannon Dueck (CAN) topped the FEI Intermediaire-1 Freestyle aboard Elizabeth Ferber's Cantaris with the pair's best score yet. They finished first with a 71.625% for the top finish. Second place went to Antonio Rivera Galarza (MEX) and Wimbledon Banamex for their score of 68.542%. Paula Matute (ESP) picked up the third place prize on a score of 68.250% with Tarpan Ymas.

CPEDI 3\* Para-Dressage competition also concluded on Sunday, with all five competition grades contesting their freestyle tests. Canadians won three of the five classes, with Robyn Andrews and Fancianna taking home the blue ribbon in the FEI Para-Dressage Freestyle Grade Ia for their score of 71.167%.

In Grade II, it was Canadian Ashley Gowanlock and Collegiate Sweet Leilani finishing first with a score of 71.417%. Lauren Barwick, also of Canada, picked up another blue ribbon with Ferdonia 2 thanks to a score of 76.167%.

The USA emerged victorious from Grade III; Angela Peavy earned another first place finish with Ozzy Cooper with a score of 72.750%. Mary R. Jordan scored another win for the Americans, topping the Grade IV Freestyle with Sebastian and a score of 71.583%. For more information and full results, please visit [www.globaldressagefestival.com](http://www.globaldressagefestival.com). ■

Laura Cardon

Riders Experience World-Class Competition Atmosphere at AGDF 11 National  
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Fellow American Rick Rockefeller-Silvia won the FEI Intermediaire-1 Freestyle class with a score of 71.375% aboard Rubinero 2, a 14-year-old Oldenburg stallion out of Faola by Rubenstein 1. Rubinero 2 is owned by Dawn Bernardo.

The FEI Test of Choice gave competitors the chance to tweak the details of any test on the FEI levels in the grand setting of The Stadium. With stadium seating lining one side of the ring and the Global Pavilion bordering the other, The Stadium provided a high caliber atmosphere for those also wishing to gain experience in an international environment.

Chase Hickok, also of the United States, earned first place in the FEI Test of Choice, opting to perform the FEI Young Rider Grand Prix 16-25 test with Sagacious HF. Hickok scored a 70.349% to win the class with Sagacious HF, a 15-year-old KWPN gelding (Judith x Welt Hit II) owned by Hyperion Farm and bred by G. van du Boogard.

Visit [www.globaldressagefestival.com](http://www.globaldressagefestival.com) for full results! ■

Laura Cardon

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The second day it got better. The third day, I was like, 'It's time to get it going.' I was able to ride independently into the arena and then I came out [the last] morning and felt good. Once it was time to go, I was ready. There were things I could have done better, but I'm thankful I got the qualifying score. Now I can push it a little bit [to ride better in the following days]. I want that blue ribbon! ■

Laura Cardon



**Friday Night Stars Welcomes**  
**the Frost School of Music**  
for a special finale performance  
with Max Moreno, Ryan Craig,  
Mary Claire Curran, and Jennifer Voigt  
with piano accompaniment by Jared Peroune.

Visit the Global Pavilion Lobby to see a special display by **Swarovski Crystal** of their equine collection, Esperanza!