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Rancho Mureita Equestrian Center Hosts Top Show Jumpers at the Second Annual Sacramento International Horse Show

Saturday Evening \$75,000 Grand Prix Show Jumping Event Draws a Packed House and Did Not Disappoint

RANCHO MURIETA, Calif. – The thrill of show jumping took center stage at the World Class Murieta Equestrian Center in Rancho Murieta, November 3-8, 2009. The nation's best show jumping riders, including 2008 Olympic Show Jumping gold medalist, Will Simpson, competed at the only high-caliber show jumping event in Northern California: The Second Annual Sacramento International Horse Show (SIHS).

Horse and rider teams' raced against the clock for money (upwards of \$100,000), prestige and a place on the 2010 World Cup team. Results from the SIHS will partially determine which U.S. riders will be eligible to compete in the 2010 World Cup to be held in Geneva, Switzerland. Among those competing were several international Olympians representing countries such as Argentina, Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand and the United States.

The marquee event, the \$75,000 Sacramento Grand Prix, was the highlight of the show and certainly did not disappoint. The Grand Prix course was extremely difficult and proved to be challenging for several of the horse and rider teams. The course, designed by 2008 Beijing Olympic course designer, Leopoldo Palacios, took 34 horse and rider teams to task with only three successfully completing the course.

"You could hear a pin drop as each rider entered the course. The crowd was sitting on the edge of the seats the entire night," said Dale Harvey, show manager for the Sacramento International Horse Show. "Palacio's course included 13 difficult elements and tight corners to due to the size of the arena, which made for a great night of competition not only for the riders but for the crowd as well."

This is only the second World Cup Qualifier to come to the Sacramento area as horse show managers recognize the growing support for the equine industry. With nearly 1.9 million Americans owning horses nationwide and 1.9 billion dollars in taxes derived annually from the horse industry this sport is not only growing in popularity, but in importance as well. The average cost of a Grand Prix competition horse can range from \$300,000 to \$400,000 all the way up to several million dollars.

Started in 1979, the FEI World Cup Jumping Final is an annual indoor international showdown among the world's best show jumping horses and riders. Approximately 45 riders qualify from 13 leagues around the world. In the 30 finals held through 2008, United States riders have emerged with the most titles, having won the championship seven times.

Other high profile events during the week included the \$25,000 Welcome Grand Prix, sponsored by The Haley Foundation, \$5,000 Toyota Ride & Drive pitting riders against each other on horseback as well as behind the wheel of a 2010 Toyota, and the \$5,000 Open Jumper Five Bar Class. On Sunday afternoon, the circuit's top juniors and amateurs competed in the \$25,000 Junior/Amateur Grand Prix.

Interested fans can find post show information on the show's official Web site at www.sacramentointernationalhorseshow.com or www.jumpsacto.com. Next year's event will be held in the beginning of November 2010 (Welcome Week, November 2-7 and the SIHS will be November 9-11).

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