

## **DAVID RAPOSA AND AUDI'S FANNY DE LA TOUR WIN \$50,000 HITS GRAND PRIX IN EXCITING CLOSE TO THE 2005 HITS-ON-THE-HUDSON CIRCUIT**

SAUGERTIES, NY (September 6, 2005)--A Grand Prix competition packed with excitement brought a close to the 2005 season at HITS-on-the-Hudson in Saugerties, New York. The hotly contested \$50,000 HITS Grand Prix attracted a field of 38 horse/rider combinations, with only two riders making it through to the jump-off. Course designer Danny Foster of Georgetown, Ontario set the test that defined the field, and kept the spectators on the edge of their seats.

David Raposa and Audi's Fanny De La Tour went sixth in the order and were the first to deliver a clear round. Rails came down for the next thirty riders over Foster's tough course. It looked like Raposa might walk away with the grand prize but Canadian Beth Underhill, who was second to last in the order, didn't let him away that easy. Underhill guided Magdaline clear and forced the jump-off that the crowd had been waiting for.

"I thought it was a technical course," commented David Raposa. "The opening line, vertical to the oxer rode a short four strides so your horse had to ride good straight off the bat. About two thirds of the way through the field I thought, wow, its turning out to be a lot more difficult than everyone was thinking. It was starting to look like I might not have to do a jump-off, and then right at the end Beth went clear. That meant it was time to saddle up again and get back in the schooling ring. Nothing ever comes for free [laughs]."

Danny Foster who shaped an exciting competition with his technical course, shared some insight on the philosophy that guides his course designing. "I try to balance the expectations of exhibitor, spectator, and horse show management. These three are my masters. I believe that going clear at this level of show jumping should be a meaningful event. I like to keep the spectators on the edge of their seats, and have them holding their breath at each and every jump. With limited clears in the first round you create this kind of suspense. I thought we might have had a few more clears in this competition. It just turned out to be a tough test, but those who got through deserved it."

In a competition that delivered show jumping excitement at its best, Raposa and Underhill gave outstanding demonstrations of their show jumping skills. David Raposa was first to go in the jump-off and he gave all credit to his horse for a job well done. "I jumped the first and then turned fast and got too deep at the second. My horse did unbelievable to get over that jump. All I saw was her neck coming down, and I thought here I am in a two-horse jump-off and I'm going to fall off." Raposa clung on and righted himself to the amazement of the crowd. "I got re-organized and had to go 2-3 strides wider to regain my stirrup. So I probably lost 2.5 seconds doing the turn back."

Raposa finished with a clear round in 50.67 seconds. His time left him vulnerable, and Beth Underhill set an aggressive pace to top it. Underhill and Magdaline blazed through the course taking almost four seconds off Raposa's time, but an unlucky rail at 5B left them as runners-up.

Danny Foster who has competed alongside Beth Underhill has a lot of respect and admiration for his fellow Canadian. "I was rooting for her, and she took a good shot at it. It was some great riding, but it just wasn't her day."

HITS-on-the-Hudson was a very successful circuit for David Raposa and Audi's Fanny De La Tour, the pair also won a \$25,000 Grand Prix in week V, and came second in the \$75,000 Footings Unlimited Grand Prix in week II.

Third place in the competition went to Isabelle Lapierre and Noranco. Lapierre left all the rails up with Noranco in the first round but a half second over the time allowed gave them one time fault.