

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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JOIE GATLIN AND SUNCAL'S KING WIN \$75,000 ULTIMATE EQUINE GRAND PRIX AT INDIO DESERT CIRCUIT IV

INDIO, CA (March 1, 2005) -- Joie Gatlin and *Suncal's King* captured the \$75,000 Ultimate Equine Grand Prix during week IV of the HITS Indio Desert Circuit. A field of thirty horse/rider combinations competed over Olaf Petersen's first round course. Seven horses advanced to the jump-off, and Gatlin was the only double-clear.

The \$75,000 Ultimate Equine Grand Prix was a qualifying event for the F.E.I. World Cup of Show Jumping. Riders compete for points to be among the top three riders from the West Coast League who will have the honor of representing the U.S. at the World Cup Finals to be held April 20-24 in Las Vegas, Nevada. With this win under her belt, and only one World Cup qualifier left for the West Coast League, Joie Gatlin is in second place in the rankings with 75 points. Nicole Shahinian-Simpson is top in the rankings with 87 points, and Richard Spooner and Gabriella Salick are in joint-third place with 65 points. The final World Cup qualifier--the \$150,000 Ford Grand Prix of the Desert will take place on March 13th.

Joie Gatlin and *Suncal's King* were the first to attempt the jump-off course. Gatlin rode a perfect round in a time of 40.91 seconds. Now the challenge was on to beat her time, and the next five riders took a shot at it.

Rich Fellers and *McGuinness* shaved over three seconds off Gatlin's time, but a rail down meant he had to settle for second place in the competition. Nicole Shahinian-Simpson and *El Campeons So Long*, winners of the \$75,000 Bayer Grand Prix in week III, were third in the order and four faults in a time of 38.81 seconds gave them third place in the class.

Joie Gatlin's clear round had put the pressure on, and each successive rider failed to match her performance. Gabriella Salick and *Sandstone Laurin* also pulled a rail in a time of 38.96 seconds for fourth place. Duncan McFarlane and *Eezy* had twelve faults in a time of 41.34 seconds for sixth place.

With two horses left to jump, and Richard Spooner in the irons, it looked like Gatlin's lead might come to an end. Spooner's first trip was aboard his steady team-mate *Robinson*. A surprise refusal and then another forced Spooner and *Robinson* to leave the ring. Spooner returned to the ring aboard *Millenium*. The pair had a knockdown at the second obstacle, and it was all over. Joie Gatlin took the win in the \$75,000 Ultimate Equine Grand Prix, moving her up to second place in the West Coast League standings.

In other competition, Rich Fellers and *McGuinness* won Friday's \$30,000 Ariat Challenge, besting a field of 28 riders with a time of 64.29 seconds, over a second faster than Richard Spooner and *Bradford* who finished in second place. Spooner also took the third place spot aboard *Quirino 3*.

Jessica Helms of Newport Beach, California and *Meatrine* won the \$10,000 Surpass Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper High Classic.

The \$5,000 Platinum Performance Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper Low Classic drew a huge field of 53 horse/rider combinations. Twelve riders advanced to the jump-off in what proved to be a very exciting competition. The rounds got faster and faster, and the second to last competitor, Carly Anthony riding *Castaway Ladd*, emerged the final victor. Anthony blazed past the timers in 40.32 seconds with all the rails up.

Other major award winners at Indio Desert Circuit IV included:

HBO Junior Medal Winner – Paris Sellon, Los Angeles, CA
Charles Owen Children's Medal Winner – Hannah Goodson Cutt,
Charles Owen Adult Medal Winner – Camilla Cleese, Monticeto, CA
Farnam Adult Hunter Division – *Enchanted* ridden by Cathy Hayes, Los Angeles, CA
Adequan® Open Hunter Division – *Diva* ridden by Katie A Taylor, Tarzana, CA

The 2005 Indio Desert Circuit runs for six weeks from January 25 through March 13. Show jumping will resume at the HITS Indio Desert Horse Park on Tuesday, March 1, and the next Grand Prix show jumping event will be the \$30,000 Ariat Challenge on Friday, March 4. The \$75,000 Footings Unlimited Grand Prix will finish out the week on Sunday, March 6 at 1:00pm.