

Age before beauty—Seasoned rider, Todd Minikus and Olinda, capture the \$75,000 Footings Unlimited Grand Prix at HITS Saugerties

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SAUGERTIES, NY (June 18, 2007)—Todd Minikus and his mount Olinda negotiated the only double-clear round in Sunday's \$75,000 Footings Unlimited Grand Prix, as he swept both Grand Prix classes at HITS Saugerties last week.



On Thursday, he took home \$7,500 in prize money when he bested the field in the \$25,000 Ariat Grand Prix. Sunday he outlasted a field of 22 horses, including nine in the jump-off to collect \$22,500 in prize money for owner Houlihan Lawrence.

The \$75,000 Footings Unlimited Grand Prix also marked the second time in as many Grand Prix classes that Minikus edged out teenager Addison Phillips and her mount Trezebees. Thursday was Phillips' birthday and Minikus took advantage of the last-to-ride position to push the 18-year-old into second place. Yesterday, Phillips had the fastest time of the riders with four faults before Minikus entered the ring and went clear in the jump-off.

“Age before beauty,” joked Minikus, who is preparing for the Pan Am Games this summer. “Addie is a great kid with a fantastic horse. She will have many more chances in her career.”

Minikus and Pavarotti started off the jump-off that included four Olympians, including Minikus, who was an alternate on the 2000 Olympic team. He had one rail down and stopped the clocks at 39.846. However, when the star-studded class was over Minikus and Pavarotti would finish in fourth place.

After that it was Laura Bowery and Epir (seventh place), Danielle Torano and Vancouver D' Auvrey (sixth place) and Margie Engle and Hidden Creek's Perin (eighth place) who each challenged Olaf Petersen's jump-off course without any success before McLain Ward and Larioso entered the ring, fifth in the jump-off.

Ward and Larioso had an unlucky rail down and stopped the clocks at 39.763 to take over the lead. But the duo's time would not hold up as they finished in third place.

Phillips and Trezebees were next to go in the jump-off and moved into the lead when they finished with four faults in a time of 38.352. Minikus and Olinda were next to go in the jump-off and their clear effort set the Great American Time to Beat at 41.351.

“I can't believe my time was three seconds faster,” said a frustrated Phillips. “I just get so excited when I am in the big classes and sometimes I go too fast and forget about my time.”

With the victory, Minikus earned some valuable points for the USGPL standings. This means that he increased his chances of being on the list of the riders who will be invited to participate in the \$100,000 USGPL Invitational Grand Prix at HITS Culpeper in late September.