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Cc: wcequitation@aol.com

Subject: PRESS RELEASE: 2008 US World Cup Teams Selected

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U.S. Saddle Seat Equitation World Cup

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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To: All Saddle Seat Publications, organizations and websites
From: Christy Judd O'Donnell, Executive Secretary, US World Cup
Subject: US Selects 2008 world cup teams

The US Saddle Seat Equitation World Cup is pleased to announce the members of its teams for 2008. Twenty three-gaited and ten five-gaited finalists competed for positions on the teams at William Woods University in Fulton, Missouri over the weekend of February 22-24. Five riders and an alternate were selected for each of the teams.

These outstanding riders will represent the United States at the 2008 International Saddle Seat Equitation World Cup event. The prestigious international competition will be held September 21-28, 2008 in Tulbagh, South Africa.

"The 2008 World Cup trials were a tremendous example of the depth of exceptional saddle seat athletes we have here in the United States," said Ellen Beard, Executive Director. "The finalists represented the Saddlebred, Arabian, National Show Horse and Morgan breeds, and all share the common goal of achieving the pinnacle of Saddle Seat Equitation competition. The combination of talent from both the equitation and horsemanship aspects of the discipline leave me quite confident that our teams are up to the challenge of taking on the best saddle seat riders from around the world in 2008."

The members of the 2008 US Saddle Seat World Cup Teams are:

THREE-GAITED

Emily Abbott (Whitestown, IN)
Jacqueline Beck (Aliso Viejo, CA)
Brittany McGinnis (Fishers, IN)
Victoria McHenry (New Orleans, LA)
Eleanor Watkins (Louisville, KY)
Angela Darrow (Alternate) (Hartland, WI)

FIVE-GAITED

Brittany Baird (Hinsdale, IL)
Brooke Jacobs (Georgetown, KY)
Mackenzie Lyttle (Huntington Beach, CA)

Jessica Moctezuma (Hardwick, NJ)
Cydni Simmons (Burlington, KY)
Calee Dillon (Alternate) (Dallas, TX)

William Woods University again served as the site for and provided the horses used in the trials. Gayle Lampe, Laura Ward and their staff and students at William Woods continued their outstanding efforts to ensure that the competition was fair and went smoothly. The trials are designed to prepare riders for the unique atmosphere of the International event.

The Team Selection Trials consisted of two days of competition during which riders completed two rail sessions, two individual patterns and one personal interview. Scoring was equally weighted among the riding portions to total 90%, while the interview accounted for the remaining 10% of each rider's total score. A distinguished panel of judges scored the event. The judges included: Lewis Eckard, Maria Gilman, Patty Kent, Ray Krussell, Liz McBride-Jones and Renae Van Zomeren.

Riders from all Saddle Seat breeds were eligible to compete for membership on the 2008 teams. The purpose of the Saddle Seat World Cup is to promote the discipline of Saddle Seat Equitation on an international level. The diversity involved in Saddle Seat Equitation in the United States creates the unique opportunity to draw from an expanded pool of top riders.

For the three-gaited team, seven finalists earned their bids to the trials by winning one of several designated qualifying finals or by virtue of a breed association nomination. The remaining finalists for the three-gaited team were chosen from a pool of applicants. In addition, ten finalists competed for the honors of Five-Gaited Team membership. Two automatic bids for this team were extended to the winners of the Five-Gaited Horsemanship Finals and the NSH Five-Gaited Horsemanship Finals. The remaining eight five-gaited finalists were chosen from a pool of applicants.

Once again riders were permitted to apply for both the three- and five-gaited teams but had to submit separate application materials and fees for each team. However, riders were asked to designate their team of preference prior to the competition. In the event that a rider qualified for both teams, they were assigned to their first choice team. US rules state that a rider may only represent the US on one team. A total of five finalists competed for membership on both teams.

All finalists were honored at a dinner held on Saturday evening and the teams were announced at an awards luncheon on Sunday, the final day of the trials.

For more information on the US Team Selection process or the 2008 international event—including sponsorships and contributions—please contact Executive Secretary Christy O'Donnell (e-mail at WCEquitation@aol.com or telephone at 813-760-0465).

The mission of the US Saddle Seat Equitation World Cup is to expand the presence of Saddle Seat Equitation on both national and international levels through team-based competition and promotion of the discipline by our athletes and officials. The US Saddle Seat World Cup is a registered 501(c)(3) corporation.

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PRINT QUALITY PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST - call 813.760.0465 or e-mail with specs

Photos by Jane Jacobs



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2008 Three-Gaited Team USA (L to R):
Jacqueline Beck, Angela Darrow, Emily Abbott,
Victoria McHenry, Brittany McGinnis and Eleanor Watkins



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2008 Five-Gaited Team USA (L to R):
Mackenzie Lyttle, Calee Dillon, Jessica Moctezuma,
Brittany Baird, Cydni Simmons and Brooke Jacobs

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