

Quinn Pays Her Dues For \$50,000 USHJA International Chicago Hunter Derby Victory

After years working behind the scenes, this young professional is making a name for herself in the ring.

BY KIMBERLY LOUSHIN
PHOTOS BY AULLMYN PHOTOGRAPHY

For two years Erica Quinn worked quietly behind the scenes, putting effort into a number of top mounts and then watching on the sidelines as they won championships and derbies with Kelley Farmer in the irons.

But this year she received the ride on two standout horses, and all those hours of work came to fruition with a win in the \$50,000 USHJA International Chicago Hunter Derby, held Sept. 9-11 in Antioch, Ill., with Celtic Fire.

“This was our first show competing on the grass with this horse,” said Quinn. “The more difficult the venue, the more this horse shines. He really liked it in the big field, up and down the

Former jumper Celtic Fire earned his first derby blue at the \$50,000 USHJA International Chicago Hunter Derby with Erica Quinn in the irons.



hills. He handled it quite beautifully.”

Quinn got the ride on the 9-year-old stallion this June when “Fire” made his hunter debut in the high performance division at Country Heir II (Ky.), finishing fourth in the derby there. The Dutch Warmblood (Vittorio—Mona Liza, Corofino I) was imported in July 2015 to be a jumper prospect for Kaitlin Campbell, whose top mount Rocky W is 18 this year.

“[We] all enjoy following Kaitlin in the jumpers, and it was exciting,” said Rachel Kennedy, whose ESP Farm owns Fire along with CF Partners, Douglas Wheeler and Paula Hallman. “The funny thing is that when I showed them the video of the horse, they all thought, ‘Well, if nothing else he could be a really fancy hunter,’ and we all laughed about it.”

Campbell showed the horse in a number of grand prix classes, but when she announced her plans to move to the West Coast, Kennedy decided it would be worth seeing how Fire handled the hunters. So she went to Larry Glefke of Lane Change Farm to help with the transition, where Quinn got the leg up.

“He went so nicely that I said, ‘Why don’t you go ahead and show him that week in Kentucky?’ And he went beautifully,” said Kennedy.

“The first time I did a handy, and I made turns, he got a little bit up, like, ‘Oh, OK we’re going,’ and then he took a breath and was like, ‘OK, this is my job. I get it,’” said Quinn, 28. “He is a sensitive horse, so I could see where if you wanted him to go back into the jumper ring, I’m sure you could rile him up pretty quickly, but I think he really likes his life as a hunter.”

After that week Fire went home to Kennedy’s farm in Brookeville, Md., and she rode the stallion to multiple high performance division tricolors. When Quinn first showed Fire, Kennedy made her a promise that she’d get to compete him in the USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship (Ky.). The week of the championship, Fire went back into Lane Change’s care, so Quinn could reacquaint herself with him.

A missed lead change in the classic round in Kentucky prevented

them from returning for the handy, but they earned 10th in the Derby Challenge round. Since Lane Change had Chicago next on their schedule, and Kennedy felt it was a good next step for the horse, Fire stayed with them leading up to the show.

“I was so excited for her,” said Kennedy. “It’s a really good feeling to know that you can [help someone]. It’s the same feeling you’d get with Kaitlin when she would win a grand prix. It’s an emotional feeling; you can help someone accomplish that. That’s how it was for me: People would offer me opportunities, so that I could accomplish things. I was really proud of her.”

“She does it all. She ships Larry’s horses there, and she helps get them all prepared,” Kennedy continued. “It’s not like she shows up before the class. She works her butt off. That was the cherry on top for her, and I’m really, really happy for her.”

Prior to starting at Lane Change two years ago, Quinn spent four years working for Debbie Stephens.

“She did a lot for me in that she put me in my first grand prix [classes],” said Quinn, of Maineville, Ohio. “She would get hunters to sell, and she would put me in the ring on them. Debbie really gave me an opportunity to show again.”

After that Quinn took a job working at a farm on Long Island, N.Y., but the desire to attend the best shows with top horses prompted her to take the job with Glefke and Farmer. This June Farmer handed over the reins to Need I Say, a horse she co-owns with Danielle Brown Swanston, and with him Quinn earned her first derby blue in the \$50,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby, held at the Tryon International Equestrian Center (N.C.).

“I’m just thrilled to get the opportunity to show [at Chicago],” said Quinn. “For Kelley and Larry for believing in me, for Rachel for giving me the ride—I can’t thank them enough.”

Quinn will ride Fire through Capital Challenge (Md.), and Kennedy plans to show him

**\$50,000
USHJA INTERNATIONAL HUNTER DERBY
Antioch, Ill.—Sept. 9-11**

Judges: Panel 1: Sue Leep, Rob Bielefeld; Panel 2: Brian Lenehan, Rick Fancher

HORSE/RIDER	1ST ROUND		2ND ROUND		TOTAL
	PANEL 1 SCORE/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 2 SCORE/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 1 SCORE/BONUS/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 2 SCORE/BONUS/ HEIGHT OPTION	
1. Celtic Fire/Erica Quinn	87/4	88/4	80/5/4	86/5/4	367
2. Kodachrome/Kelley Farmer	89/4	87/4	81/8/4	77/7/4	365
3. Need I Say/Erica Quinn	82/4	87.5/4	77/5/4	89/7/4	363.5
4. Editorial/Meagan Murray	82/4	82/4	82/7/4	85/7/4	361
5. Black Jack/Tommi Clark	74/4	76/4	83/8/4	83/7/4	347
6. Clever Conversation/Kelley Farmer	67/3	62/3	87/8/3	92/6/3	334
7. Corvine/Carl Weeden	86/3	85/3	68/7/4	65/4/4	329
8. Bonfeuer/Serah Vogus	79/3	77/3	75/4/0	80/4/0	325
9. Happy Hour/Mindy Coretz	83/4	74/4	65/6/2	73/7/2	320
10. Oak Grove/Rush Weeden	80/2	80/2	66/4/0	71/4/0	309
11. Fernelli/Carl Weeden	85/0	84/0	45/5/0	47/5/0	271
12. Hennessy/Emma Green	40/0	39/0	79/4/0	84/5/0	251
13. Chicago/Ehrin Rittmueller	39/0	39/0	71/5/0	78/4/0	235
14. My Guardian Angel/Brianna Laheta	72/3	72/3	40/0/1	40/1/1	231
15. Extraordinaire/Tommi Clark	57/4	57/4	30/6/2	20/6/2	191

19 horses competed.

in their first derby together at the Jump For The Children Benefit Show (N.C.). After they head to Florida, Kennedy wants to breed Fire to a hunter mare in hopes he'll produce her next top mount. The stallion has one mare in foal now, a jumper owned by Randy Johnson, which Kennedy jokingly refers to as their test baby. "It's going to be a fancy test baby, believe me," she said.

"You would never know he was a stallion," said Quinn. "He doesn't act like one at all. He has the best temperament I've seen in a stallion. He's very sweet; he's very low key. He has a wonderful canter. That's one of the best things about him—his canter, the rhythm. If you just stay on that rhythm, it's really quite nice and lovely to ride. I can't really say enough nice things about the horse."

The Right Warm-Up Fence

As Doug Boyd cantered Calido's Son around the morning before the \$5,000 USHJA National Hunter Derby, he searched for the perfect fence to gauge the horse's attitude. He found it in an unconventional obstacle: a picnic table.

The pair cantered over it twice, and the gelding never flinched, even pricking his ears on take-off.

"I'm telling you, he doesn't care," said Boyd. "You could have stood it up on its side, and you could have cantered right down, and he would have jumped it."

In a venue that features a number of unusual obstacles, the picnic table proved to be just the thing to keep "Calido" sharp enough to earn the blue ribbon later that day.

"It's always exciting to win, and he's such an amazing horse to win on too. He's so solid to the jumps. It doesn't matter what they build, he doesn't ever question anything," said Boyd. "He's easy to prepare. He's quiet to ride. He couldn't be any more special, and he's such a competitor."

Boyd didn't have a lot of time to celebrate the victory, as he was also competing at the Evergreen Invitational, another charity horse show held just down the road from the Chicago Hunter Derby, where he



was showing jumpers.

While juggling two shows meant Boyd had a lot of running around to do, he makes a point to put the Chicago Hunter Derby on his schedule whenever he's got a horse to ride, and his Sapphire Riding Academy has sponsored the national derby for the past three years.

"I just love it here," said Boyd, who is based nearby in Mettawa, Ill. "It's a traditional, vintage-style hunt course—uphill, downhill, on the grass. It takes four to five minutes a horse to go around the course. It's just beautiful to have a nice gallop between the jumps and know he's going to jump a 12 every time on a scale of 1-10. It's just a super horse. I really love him."

Boyd paired up with the 12-year-old Holsteiner (Calido I—Pustebblume, Narew xx) owned by Mimi Rothman in June of last year. Though Rothman hasn't started showing the gelding yet, she does ride him at home. She hopes to make her show ring debut

Doug Boyd thinks he's found a once-in-a-lifetime horse in Calido's Son, and they won the \$5,000 USHJA National Hunter Derby in Chicago.

with him this winter.

"We feel so fortunate to have found him, and he's such a once-in-a-lifetime creature for us," said Boyd. "He pretty much has a forever home, though everybody tries to buy him at every horse show.

"He acts like the king. He has such a presence around him," he continued. "He's got a great jump without getting you jumped out of the saddle. When you ride him, you know that he's a special horse." 🐾

► Chicago Hunter Derby

Antioch, IL—Sept. 9-11.

▲ **USHJA Nat'l. Htr. Derby** - 1. Calido's Son, D. Boyd, 368; 2. Poetry, C. Weeden, 357.5; 3. Poetic, R. Sassmannshausen, 347. ▲ **USHJA Internat'l. Htr. Derby Welcome Stakes** - 1. Corvine, C. Weeden, 87; 2. Hennessy, E. Green, 84; 3. Celtic Fire, E. Quinn, 79. ▲ **USHJA Nat'l. Htr. Derby Welcome Stakes** - 1. Calido's Son, 91; 2. Naples Bay, R. Weeden, 90; 3. Poetry, 87.