

# The Royal<sup>®</sup>

AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

## Who's Who of the 94th Annual Royal Horse Show

By Lindsay Brock/Jump Media



Charlie Johnstone (left), CEO of The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, congratulated McLain Ward on his win alongside Connie Sawyer, Manager of the Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping North American League and Iain Gilmour, Chairman of the Royal Horse Show following the \$130,270 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Toronto. Photo by Ben Radvani Photography

The red carpets were rolled away until next year, the horses have moved on to their next destination, and champions were crowned as The Royal, Canada's most beloved horse show, came to a close in November. The 94th annual Royal Agricultural Winter Fair played host to another iconic edition of the Royal Horse Show in the heart of downtown Toronto where the stars of horse sport basked in the pomp and circumstance that defines one of North America's last remaining traditional indoor horse shows.

It's not often that one sees tuxedos standing by schooling rings or ball gowns waiting at the ingate, but at The Royal, formality is embraced and upholding tradition is welcomed by those fortunate enough to experience The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Here's a look back at who was there, who won what, and who will be seeking to defend their championship titles in 2017:

### McLain Ward Goes Four for Four at The Royal

One man who is no stranger to being the subject of cheers in the Ricoh Coliseum is McLain Ward. Three-time Olympic medalist and now four-time grand prix winner at The Royal, Ward topped the

\$130,270 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Toronto in the irons of his 2016 Rio Olympic mount, HH Azur. With his wife, Lauren, and daughter, Lilly, leading the cheers from the stands, Ward views The Royal as much more than just another horse show.

*"It's like my vacation every year," he said. "I actually enjoy it more than a vacation!"*

*"This venue has been very good to me, so it's like coming home," continued Ward. "When you have a horse like Azur, it makes life a lot easier and you just try to stay out of her way. She normally gives a great performance and, every once in a while, I don't mess it up."*

With a new Longines DolceVita time piece on his wrist, Ward has his sights set firmly on making an appearance at the 2017 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Final to be held from March 29 to April 2 in Omaha, Nebraska. With yet another win in Toronto to his credit, Ward is well on his way to securing a starting place in the line-up.

### Charlie Johnstone Welcomes the World to the Royal Horse Show

The Royal played host to the \$130,270 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Toronto, one of only four Canadian events included in the Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping North American League, for the second time in 2016. As gaining valuable points towards qualifying for the 2017 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Final becomes increasingly pivotal, the Royal Horse Show was an important stop on show schedules for riders around the world hoping to qualify.

Charlie Johnstone, CEO of The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, who is also in his second year at the helm of the event, was quick to speak to the importance of the Royal Horse Show being part of the Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping North American League.

*"We are thrilled to have the Longines World Cup Jumping in Toronto," said Johnstone. "The Royal has a long tradition and history of world-class events. To have an event of this status and to have these competitors and their horses here participating and putting on such a world-class event in Toronto is what The Royal is all about. As we move forward, we want to continue this partnership. It's been great for the event, and great for our fans."*

### David Will Thrills in Royal Debut

With nine countries represented at the Royal Horse Show, world-class talent was common within the international show jumping



McLain Ward of the United States went four for four, claiming the Wednesday night feature for the fourth year in a row. He and HH Azur successfully defended their title in the \$130,270 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Toronto. Photo by Jump Media



David Will (left) of Germany, pictured on Calista, scored back-to-back wins in international show jumping competition in his Royal Horse Show debut. Photo by Jump Media



Nick Skelton (right) thrilled show jumping fans with an appearance at the Royal Horse Show aboard his partner Big Star, the mount that carried him to the 2016 Olympic gold medal. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography

division. However, it was still possible for a newcomer to jump into several top placings, as David Will of Germany proved. Will scored back-to-back victories in the \$35,000 International Accumulator riding Cento du Rouet and Friday night's \$50,000 Weston Canadian Open aboard Calista. Adding to his break-out star status, Will had never even set foot on Canadian soil prior to his Royal Horse Show debut.

*"My first time in Canada couldn't have been any better!" said Will. "It's a great show, especially for us riders. There's a really good crowd that pushes us to do our best. You feel that all of the people are involved in horse sport, and they really know if you are doing well. It's just great!"*

Will's two wins were just a small piece of the widespread success enjoyed by international riders at The Royal. Of the nine nations that were represented in the international show jumping division, four different national anthems played as riders from Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, and the United States all enjoyed victories.

### Nick Skelton and Big Star Dazzle at The Royal

Great Britain's Nick Skelton has a long history of competing at the Royal Horse Show, dating back to the late 1970s. Almost 40 years later, the newly crowned Olympic Champion arrived in Toronto with none other than his gold medal mount, Big Star. While Skelton considers The Royal to be one of his favorite shows, his 13-year-old Dutch Warmblood stallion is surprisingly unseasoned when it comes to competing indoors.

*"He hasn't jumped indoors very much, funny enough," said Skelton, noting that The Royal was Big Star's only FEI-sanctioned North American competition of the entire year, indoors or out. "This is only his fourth show indoors. He came here when he was eight years old and I wouldn't say that indoors is really his forte, but I was very pleased with him both times."*

While it may have only been Big Star's fourth time showing indoors in his entire career, he and Skelton did not disappoint, posting several top finishes including a third place finish behind McLain Ward and Kent Farrington in the \$130,270 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Toronto.

### Tiffany Foster Returns to her Royal Roots

Tiffany Foster, who hails from North Vancouver, BC, has been steadily ascending to the top of the international show jumping scene for the past several years and, this year, she brought some of that success home to Canada. Alongside her fellow 2016 Rio Olympic

teammate Amy Millar, Foster headlined the list of Canadian show jumping athletes at The Royal.

Foster received a special homecoming at The Royal as, exactly 15 years earlier, the up-and-coming rider had won both the 2001 Running Fox CET Medal Final as well as the Jump Canada Medal, the two most prestigious equestrian finals held in Canada, at the 2001 Royal Horse Show. Her return as a two-time Olympian following a 15-year absence was met with roaring approval from the fans.

*"There is always great atmosphere at The Royal," said Foster. "The Canadian crowd always gets behind us, and raises the roof in Toronto!"*

While at the Royal Horse Show, Foster, ranked 21st in the world, was presented with the Whitaker Award, given to the highest-ranked Canadian competing at The Royal. She also accepted the 2016 Jump Canada 'Owner of the Year' award on behalf of her owners, Andy and Carlene Ziegler of Artisan Farms, in a special presentation held prior to the \$130,270 Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping Toronto.



Two-time Canadian Olympian Tiffany Foster returned to home soil to compete at The Royal for the first time in 15 years. Photo by Jump Media

### Ian Millar Takes Record 12th Greenhawk Canadian Show Jumping Championship

One rider who always stirs up enthusiastic reactions from spectators at The Royal is Canada's own Ian Millar. The ten-time Canadian Olympian proved his crowd-favorite status yet again by winning a record 12th Greenhawk Canadian Show Jumping Championship title.



Ian Millar, 69, (left) won a record 12th Greenhawk Canadian Show Jumping Championship title riding Dixson at the Royal Horse Show. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography



Reigning Olympic champion Michael Jung (right) of Germany claimed victory in the \$20,000 Horsecare Indoor Eventing Challenge riding Cruising Guy at The Royal. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography

Canada's own Megan Lane won the \$20,000 Royal Invitational Dressage Cup, presented by Butternut Ridge, at The Royal. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography



Having last won the Greenhawk Canadian Show Jumping Championship in 2014 riding his London Olympic mount Star Power, Millar took the title this time around aboard Dixson. The win marked an incredible comeback following two sinus surgeries that sidelined Dixson earlier in the year and ultimately kept Millar from competing at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

*"Most every country has a national championship, and it's always a matter of great pride to the rider that wins it," said Millar, 69. "We have the best indoor competition in the world right here at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, and that's a real honor."*

While Millar was pleased with his win, he acknowledged an even bigger source of pride when his children, Jonathon and Amy Millar, both finished in the top five in the Greenhawk Canadian Show Jumping Championship standings.

*"I'm most pleased about their results - they did a great job," concluded Millar.*

### Eventing Sensation Michael Jung Claims Horsecare Indoor Eventing Challenge

While show jumping headlined much of the Royal Horse Show, the event is a true representation of multi-disciplinary competition at the highest level. The \$20,000 Horsecare Indoor Eventing Challenge welcomed true eventing royalty to Toronto. Reigning Olympic champion Michael Jung of Germany claimed victory in his \$20,000 Horsecare Indoor Eventing Challenge debut after pocketing individual gold and team silver medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Jung welcomed the challenges of indoor eventing over courses designed by Captain Mark Phillips of Great Britain, which combined technical show jumping fences with thrilling cross country obstacles inside the Ricoh Coliseum. Making his win even more impressive, Jung pulled off victory with a catch ride when his own mount was unable to make the trip. Having selected his mount from videos of three horses, Jung only sat on his winning mount, Cruising Guy, for the first time a few hours before the event.

*"I really liked this show," said Jung. "I've ridden many of Mark's courses outside, but it's totally different inside. He did a great job and it turned out to be good competition."*

### Megan Lane Dances to Debutant Victory

Canadian Olympic dressage rider Megan Lane not only checked competing at the Royal Horse Show off her bucket list, but did so in winning style. Fresh off their Olympic debut in Rio, Lane and Caravella, her partner since her North American Young Rider Championship days, won the \$20,000 Royal Invitational Dressage Cup, presented by Butternut Ridge.

Earning an impressive score of 76.75% riding to the same freestyle she performed as part of Canada's silver medal team at the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto, Lane's Royal Horse Show debut was one to remember.

*"It has been a lifelong dream of mine to compete at The Royal," said Lane. "To have this dream come true, on top of riding an amazing test on the partner I've grown up with, is pretty surreal to me."*

With her successful outing in Toronto, Lane's focus now shifts to competing at the 2017 Reem Acra FEI World Cup Final in Omaha, Nebraska, next spring