



TRUE NORTH NEWS

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It's the MOMENTS, Not the Ribbons, THAT MATTER

By Caitlyn Shiels for *The Chronicle of the Horse*

This past month marked my third year competing at the U. S. Hunter Jumper Association International Hunter Derby Championship with Durpetti Equestrian LLC's Cassius, and while our ribbons and results may not necessarily reflect it, in so many ways, I think it was Cassius' best year yet.

Leading up to this year's Derby Finals, we already had an edge. After three years together, I know Cassius like the back of my hand, and that's allowed me to really create a program that allows him to perform his best.

So, when we arrived at Kentucky Horse Park, I felt more confident in our preparation and readiness than I ever have, and I felt that Cassius did too.

On Friday, Aug. 16, he walked into the Rolex Stadium like a solid veteran. He felt so confident and so with me the entire way, and I was so proud of him.

Previously, when Cassius would get nervous, I could feel him almost holding his breath or anxiously trotting a bit too fast. This year, there was none of that. I never questioned taking the high options that we had chosen, and Cassius never did either. It felt like one of our best classic rounds together to date—until the final fence.



Caitlyn Shiels and Cassius
Photo by [The Chronicle of the Horse](#)

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From Green Horses to DERBY VETERANS: Bluegrass Festival Wrap-Up

The Bluegrass Festival Horse Show at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY, is a show that the True North team looks forward to every year, largely because the show is the host of the U.S. Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) International Hunter Derby Championship!

This year, in addition to "Derby Finals" Caitlyn Shiels also had the privilege of competing in the Platinum Performance/USHJA Green Hunter Incentive Championships aboard CW Fringe Benefits ("Porter"), a five-year-old Westphalian gelding owned by Corporate Way LLC.



Caitlyn Shiels and CW Fringe Benefits in the Platinum Performance/USHJA Green Hunter Incentive Championships. Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)

"Porter was such a good boy," said Shiels of the gelding who was imported from Europe this spring, after only being started under saddle in November 2018. "His mind is amazing. As a five-year-old, he already has such a steady Eddie brain."



Caitlyn Shiels and CW Fringe Benefits, owned by Corporate Way LLC. Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)

"The first day he really rose to the occasion," said Shiels of CW Fringe Benefits' performance in the Green Hunter 3', held August 13 through 15. "That ring is very hard, and with the flowers and the scoreboard, there's so much going on. He really handled it like a veteran."

"Then, the second day he was even better," continued Shiels. "The three-foot is so easy for him that he just marched around and stepped over the jumps without having to put in as much effort and really showcase his jumping. That likely knocked us a bit in the scores, but I could not be happier with his brain. He acted like he had done it three years in a row. He was super. For the short period of time that we've had that horse, he really rose to the occasion. I couldn't ask for anything more."

Following the conclusion of the Platinum Performance/USHJA Green Hunter Incentive Championships, Shiels turned her sole attention to the USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship with Cassius, owned by Durpetti Equestrian LLC.

Caitlyn Shiels shared more about this year's "Derby Finals" experience in [this blog post for The Chronicle of the Horse](#) (posted above).

Shiels and Cassius ultimately finished fifth in Section B, following a well-executed handy round on Saturday evening, August 17. [Read more about their result and rounds here.](#)



Caitlyn Shiels and Cassius, owned by Durpetti Equestrian LLC. Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)



Caitlyn Shiels and Cassius
Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)

The True North team is now back home in Zion, IL, where Shiels is available for training and instruction of both horse and rider. Learn more by visiting www.TrueNorthStables.com.

Horses For SALE



True North Stables is proud to offer for sale nine-year-old warmblood gelding, **KT Forest!**

"Forest" is perfect for the highly competitive child/adult jumper ready to move up to the low junior/amateur-owner jumpers!

[Learn more about KT Forest here!](#)



Seven-year-old Oldenburg gelding, **Upside**, has been champion or reserve champion every time out this year in the Green Hunters 3'! Upside is a beautiful mover and jumper with a great brain! He is ready to take on a new adventure with a junior, child, or amateur.

[Inquire here for details and videos!](#)



Lago Di Garda is a nine-year-old Hanoverian gelding proudly offered for sale or lease. Lago's owner is off to college, and Lago is looking for his next rider!

[Contact here for videos and more information!](#)

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True North Stables is a full-service hunter/jumper training program, dedicated to horsemanship and to providing top-class riding and training services to both horse and rider. Led by Caitlyn Shiels and with bases in Illinois and Florida, True North Stables offers highly-individualized instruction, horse acquisition and sales assistance, and the opportunity to excel in the sport and in nationwide competition.

ABOUT CAITLYN SHIELS

CONTACT

