



Rayne Dubois and Ferraro K on their way to victory in the Running Fox CET Medal National Final at the 2019 Royal Horse Show.

## YOUNG GUNS! PROFILING RAYNE DUBOIS

*By Emily Randolph*

Incredibly, in one year's time, Rayne Dubois went from having never before competed in the equitation ring to winning Canada's most prestigious title, the 2019 Running Fox CET Medal National Final. The victory at the Royal Horse Show in Toronto, ON, marked a career highlight for the 17-year-old rider from Ottawa, ON, and was a testament to her hard work and dedication, solid training, and a strong support system.

### **A Riding Camp, An Equestrian Fairy Godmother, and A Strong Foundation**

One of three children, including two younger twin brothers, Dubois got her first introduction to horses thanks to a close family friend, Elizabeth White. For Dubois' 12th birthday, White gave her the opportunity to attend a riding camp at Partridge Acres in Ottawa, ON, sparking Dubois' love of horses and the beginning of White's support of Dubois' equestrian endeavors.

"I pretty much owe all of my success to her," said Dubois of White, who has supported Dubois' riding and competition pursuits ever since that first fateful riding camp. "She gave me the biggest opportunity in the world, and she still does. All of the connections I've made, all the places that I've competed, and the horses that I've had are all because of her. I'm super grateful every day that she suggested I try riding camp!"

With White's help, and the encouragement and loving support of her non-equestrian parents, Dubois continued riding at Partridge Acres for a few years before beginning to train at the Ian Millar School of Horsemanship at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa, ON, in 2016.

It was at Wesley Clover Parks that Dubois first began competing in the jumper ring and built her strong foundation. It was also where she met Karen Sparks, Executive Director of Wesley Clover Parks, who would ultimately connect her with her CET Medal Final winning mount, Ferraro K, an 18-year-old gray Danish Warmblood gelding owned by the Brookstreet Stables Corporation.

"Rayne was one of our early students at Wesley Clover Parks," said Sparks, who offered her longtime partner, Ferraro K, to Dubois and White for lease. "She was committed. She is a real horsewoman overall and is not just learning to ride; she loves learning about horses and being around horses in general."

"We clicked; it was awesome!" said Dubois of her partnership with Ferraro K, who she began leasing in April of 2019.

It would mark the beginning of the next chapter in her riding career.

### A Royal Finale with Ferraro K

At the same time Dubois began leasing Ferraro K, she moved to Millar Brooke Farm to train with Amy, Jonathon, and Ian Millar and Kelly Soleau-Millar – and to begin a year of seeing many of her dreams realized.

“The opportunity to even ride at Millar Brooke is amazing,” said Dubois of training with the ‘first family’ of show jumping. “I once walked into the barn and saw all of the Millars riding in the same ring, and I couldn’t believe I was part of the same program.

“You don’t just learn in your lessons,” continued Dubois. “You come and watch them school horses. They encourage you to watch other lessons before yours so that you learn the lines. Our barn manager stresses the importance of knowing our horses, knowing how to care for them. You’re learning all the time.”

From the beginning of her time at Millar Brooke and with Ferraro K, Dubois took full advantage of the opportunities presented to her. She also worked hard to develop her relationship with the horse affectionately known as “Jose” around the barn.

“I tried to be out at the barn as much as possible to build our connection and our partnership, because with a six-month lease, and that short a period of time before showing, I really wanted to get that dynamic as smooth as possible before we had to go into the show ring,” said Dubois, whose efforts paid off in spades as she began to move up to the 1.20m jumper division and qualified for the CET Medal Regional Final in Ontario.

“I totally did not expect it to turn out the way it did!” said Dubois of her highly successful 2019 show season. “We went into it kind of just saying, ‘We’ll try the equitation, and we’ll also move up in the jumpers. Let’s just have fun with it.’ I had an amazing horse to do it on. He was basically teaching me the ropes in terms of the equitation.”

Together, Dubois and Ferraro K made it past the Regional Final to qualify for The Royal, where Dubois finished second in the Flat & Gymnastics Phase and first in the Jumping Phase before clinching the overall Running Fox CET Medal National Final victory.

“It was a perfect culmination of factors that worked out for a special Royal for Rayne,” said Sparks. “Ferraro K was feeling his best. She was in her groove. The course suited him. He’d been there before. It was meant to be! It was a really, really special Royal for the two of them.

“Sometimes when you go to the CET Final there’s an obvious favourite,” continued Sparks. “I don’t know that Rayne would have considered herself to be that favourite, and I think the win meant so much more because of that; nobody expected them to win, and it just all worked out. It’s a memory that we’ll all treasure. Rayne’s a really special girl, and it meant a lot to see her win. It meant a lot, too, that the horse was a big part of that.”

Dubois echoed Sparks’ sentiments on the day that she will remember forever.

“This has been the biggest thing ever in my riding career – winning the CET Final – hands down!” exclaimed Dubois who is currently studying psychology at Ottawa’s Carleton University.

The Royal marked Dubois and Ferraro K’s final show together, an exciting conclusion to a successful year, and a sensational beginning to Dubois’ future show career.

“I would love to move up in the jumper ring this year,” said Dubois, who is honing her skills by taking weekly dressage lessons with eventer Sean Jenkins while the Millar Brooke Farm team competes in Florida for the winter.

“Further in the future, I would definitely like to get up to the Under 25 division and then hopefully the Canadian Championships at The Royal,” continued Dubois of her long-term goals. “I’d say that in a five-year span, that’s a goal that I’m trying to reach, step by step!”

If Dubois’ 2019 season was any indication, she will not only reach her goals one step at a time – she may do so with a few leaps and bounds thrown in!



Rayne Dubois (left) with trainer Kelly Soleau-Millar of Millar Brooke Farm, where Dubois began riding in April 2019.



Rayne Dubois and Ferraro K competing at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa, ON, where Dubois spent three years riding at the Ian Millar School of Horsemanship.