

Toronto's Royal Horse Show

By Emily Randolph/Jump Media / Photos by © Ben Radvanyi Photography



Ireland's Bertram Allen, 24, made his inaugural trip to The Royal a memorable one, topping the \$210,000 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Toronto aboard GK Casper.

New Crowns New Champions



When Ireland's Bertram Allen and GK Casper raced across the finish line of the \$210,000 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Toronto as the last pair to go, the sold-out Coca-Cola Coliseum erupted into thunderous applause.

Allen, 24, had just claimed victory in the CSI4*-W Royal Horse Show's culminating class in front of a packed house, an audience that is one of the most engaged and knowledgeable in North America. Staunchly maintaining the time-honored tradition of a black-tie dress code, the Royal Horse Show audience includes men in tuxedos and women in ball gowns who provide a spectacle befitting the top-class horse sport seen in the ring.

The rich tradition of the 97th Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, of which the 2019 Royal Horse Show held from November 1-10 is an integral part, brings out the best dressed in a manner reminiscent of days gone by. This year's international rider list, chock-full of Olympic gold medalists from around the world including Beezie Madden and McLain Ward (USA), Eric Lamaze (CAN), and Ben Maher (GBR), attracts true fans of equestrian sport. It's the thrill and excitement of classes such as the \$210,000 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Toronto on closing night that sells out the stands in Canada's largest city year after year.

On closing night, the 22 invited entries faced off over a challenging track set by Canadian course designer and Olympic individual silver medalist Michel Vaillancourt. While the entry list was full of veterans and past winners of the class, including Ward as the defending champion, fresh faces stole the show with an exhilarating, four-horse jump-off.

One by one, 18-year-old Brian Moggre of the United States, world-ranked number four Ben Maher, 2019 European Championship team gold and individual bronze medalist Jos Verlooy of Belgium, and Allen returned for the short course, each setting faster and faster leading times.

Maher, 36, and Tic Tac, owned by Maher and Jane Forbes Clark, crossed the jump-off finish line in 36.32 seconds. Moggre and MTM Vivre le Reve, owned by Major Wager LLC and hot off their World Cup™ victory one week earlier at the National Horse Show, did it in 35.83 seconds. Then Verlooy, 23, and his European Championship partner Igor, owned by Graziella Janssen and Eurohorse, threw down the gauntlet with a new leading time of 35.41 seconds.

Just when Verlooy's time looked unbeatable, the final pair to return, Allen and GK Casper, left it all on the line and flew to the finish in 34.70 seconds to capture the win in Allen's Royal Horse Show debut. One of the most thrilling jump-offs in recent memory, it was an exciting finale for the 10-day Royal Horse Show and its sold-out crowd of 6,631 spectators.

"I knew he could be very competitive over here for the few weeks," said Allen of GK Casper, an 11-year-old Holsteiner stallion (Canto 16 x Quantum) owned by Ballywalter Farm. "Actually, he'd been jumping fantastic. We were just missing the last bit of luck putting it to bed. It all came true today."



The 97th Royal Agricultural Winter Fair attracted thousands of visitors of all ages and welcomed sold-out crowds to the Coca-Cola Coliseum during much of the 10-day Royal Horse Show.



Jos Verlooy, 23, and Igor finished runner-up following an exciting jump-off for the \$210,000 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Toronto



Eighteen-year-old Brian Moggre of the U.S. concluded a successful first trip to Toronto's Royal Horse Show with a third place finish in the \$210,000 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Toronto with his mount MTM Vivre le Reve.

The win came on Allen's final night of his inaugural tour of the North American indoor circuit, which included a stop at the National Horse Show in Lexington, KY, the week prior to The Royal. Allen made his first trip to Toronto at the prompting of his good friend and frequent Royal Horse Show competitor, Verlooy.

"At the beginning of the year, I called Bertram, and I said, 'Let's do a tour in America.' I actually regret it now!" laughed Verlooy after finishing second to Allen. "I always love to come over here and do these shows. I always want to do well at The Royal. The atmosphere is incredible at this show, and that gives you an extra boost. It gives you extra motivation to do well. I'm very happy with my second place."

"It's a super show, even far beyond the equestrian side of it," added Allen, who made the most of his time at the world's largest indoor agricultural fair. "We've been walking around all week looking at the cows and the trade stands, and we've really enjoyed it."

The cows and trade stands enjoyed by Allen and Verlooy are only a small part of what the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair has to offer, which includes expansive vendor and food offerings, cooking classes with renowned Canadian chefs, special entertainment stages, Super Dogs agility performances which are a favorite with the kids, and the best in Canadian agriculture - including 1,400-pound record-setting pumpkins; cow, goat, and sheep judging; and even butter sculpture competitions - all run in conjunction with the renowned 10-day Royal Horse Show.

Eric Lamaze Makes Triumphant Return to Toronto

The uniqueness of The Royal is part of what convinced 2008 Canadian Olympic gold medalist Eric Lamaze to make his return this year, having last competed in Toronto in 2011.

"I said that when I come back to The Royal, it's going to be to win!" said Lamaze, 51, who relocated his training base from nearby Schomberg, ON, to Europe in 2006. "If I'm going to be on my home ground, I wanted to bring the best!"

That is precisely what Lamaze did, opening the CSI4*-W Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) international show jumping division at The Royal with a win in the \$37,000 McKee Family International Challenge aboard his 2016 Rio Olympic individual bronze medal partner, Fine Lady 5.

"It's an opening class, but I go to the show to win," said Lamaze, following his victory. "I feel that if you start on a winning note, the odds are you will feel in the mood to keep it up!"

And keep it up he did! The following evening, Lamaze rode Fine Lady 5, owned by Andy and Carlene Ziegler's Artisan Farms and his own Torrey Pines Stable, to a painstakingly close second-place finish in the \$85,000 Big Ben International Challenge. On Friday night, the pair again finished second, this time in the \$50,000 Canadian Open International Challenge.

With three other top placings in the international division riding Chacco Kid, Lamaze delighted his legions of fans by easily claiming the Leading International Rider and the Leading Canadian Rider titles, both presented by GroupBy. In addition, Fine Lady 5 claimed the Leading Canadian Horse award, presented by Lothlorien Farm.



In a triumphant return to the Royal Horse Show, Eric Lamaze and Fine Lady 5 won the \$37,000 McKee Family International Challenge.



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Ben Maher Wins Battle of Olympic Gold Medalists

While Lamaze came to the show to win – a mission he accomplished – the competitive field, including five riders ranked within the top 14 in the world, were not going to let him ride away with victory easily. In the \$85,000 Big Ben International Challenge, Olympic team gold medalist Maher held off Lamaze for the top spot.

“A lot of people in the stadium didn’t like me beating Eric but it’s sport; I always try my best!” said Maher, 34, after snatching victory from the home side favorite riding Tic Tac, a 16-year-old Belgian Sport Horse stallion. “Tic Tac has been knocking at the door. He didn’t jump many shows, but he had a couple of second places, so it’s nice to win a class with importance like this.

“It’s great to be back here,” continued Maher who returned to Toronto following a 10-year absence. “It’s an amazing atmosphere. I’m a little older now and a little more experienced. It’s always great to ride in an arena like this.”

Finishing in third behind Maher and Lamaze in the \$85,000 Big Ben International Challenge was another Olympic veteran, the USA’s Margie Engle aboard Dicas. Engle’s consistent top-10 finishes throughout the week earned her the Royal Horse Show’s inaugural Leading Lady Rider Award, presented by Martha W. Jolicoeur of Douglas Elliman Real Estate. In recognition of winning the title, Engle was presented with a custom pendant necklace from Horse Feathers Jewelry that was hand-picked on-site at The Royal by the Wellington, FL, based realtor.





Olympic gold medalist Ben Maher rode Tic Tac to victory in the \$85,000 Big Ben International Challenge.



The win in the \$37,000 Jolera International Strength and Speed Challenge went to Kent Farrington and Austria 2.

Daniel Coyle, Kent Farrington, Brian Moggre, and Rowan Willis Race to Wins

Also adding their names to the list of FEI class winners at the 2019 Royal Horse Show were Daniel Coyle, Kent Farrington, Moggre, and Rowan Willis.

U.S. Olympic team silver medalist Kent Farrington and Austria 2 bested in the \$37,000 Jolera International Strength and Speed Challenge.

"The horse is naturally very quick, which is a big advantage, especially in a small indoor ring," said Farrington of Austria 2, an 11-year-old Holsteiner mare (Casall x Corrado I) owned by Take the High Road LLC. "She's a really feisty mare. That's actually my favorite type of horse. She's small. She's light. She's extremely

athletic and very fast, so for me it's a super horse.

"I think this is the best indoor show that we have in North America," continued Farrington, who won the feature event, the \$210,000 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Toronto, in 2017. "There is always great support from the Canadian crowd. It's a small group of riders but a strong group of riders. It always feels good to win a class here."

Willis, who was competing at the Royal Horse Show for the second year in a row, echoed Farrington's sentiments after winning the \$50,000 Canadian Open International Challenge with Blue Movie.



Australia's Rowan Willis and his own Blue Movie won the \$50,000 Canadian Open International Challenge over Eric Lamaze and Fine Lady 5 on Friday night.

"This is a great show, and it's nice to ride in that atmosphere every night against some of the best riders in the world," said Willis, who hails from Australia and is now based in the United States. "When you have a crowd as fantastic as tonight, it's hard not to give it your all!"

Experiencing the sold-out crowds for the first time was Moggre who, in addition to finishing third in the \$210,000 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Toronto, won Saturday afternoon's crowd-favorite, the \$25,000 Canine/Equine Challenge. Paired with an agility dog, Moggre and MTM Flutterby, owned by Major Wager LLC, flew over a speed course before their canine partner raced through its own agility course in the fastest time.

"This horse show is incredible," said Moggre. "When I got the first email that I was on the wait list, I was hoping every day that I was going to get in! This is a wonderful show that I would love to be invited back to. My horses seem to like it as well. It was a great show for the end of the year. It's my last show of 2019 and last show of my actual junior career. It was very special to do that here, and I think it meant a lot to me and to everybody on my team to be invited here."

Coyle, 24, also claimed a win for Ireland, topping the \$37,000 Brickenden Trophy on Thursday, November 7, riding Farrel for Canadian owner Ariel Grange.



Riding Count Me In, Beth Underhill was crowned the 2019 Canadian Show Jumping Champion



A New Canadian Champion is Crowned

Prior to riders from all over the world claiming FEI victories at the Royal Horse Show, all eyes were on homegrown talent during the opening weekend of The Royal, featuring the \$125,000 Henry Equestrian Canadian Show Jumping Championship and the crowning of the nation's newest show jumping champion.

This year, the title was awarded to Olympian Beth Underhill. Underhill rose to the top of the field following consistent performances over three rounds of competition held Friday and Saturday evenings, narrowly edging out 2017 Canadian Champion Amy Millar riding Truman, for the win in an exciting conclusion to the championship.

"It means the world to me," said Underhill of her win aboard Count Me In, owned by Sandy Lupton and Robert Caswell. "I was watching the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Mounties performing the Musical Ride earlier this evening, and I was actually getting quite emotional. I felt so proud to be a Canadian. I said to myself in that moment, 'Make tonight count.' It really inspired me. With a horse as lovely as Count Me In, I always try to give him the best ride that I possibly can, and he gave me his all."

Just as the crowd would show its appreciation for Allen's winning performance a week later, Underhill's victory elicited cheers and standing ovations from the full seats of spectators enjoying the action and all contributing to what Underhill identified as making the Royal Horse Show so special.

"We've got people on their feet and really giving us their support," said Underhill. "It raises the sport to a whole other level. This is what makes show jumping so special at The Royal."

Learn more about the Royal Horse Show by visiting www.RoyalFair.org.



Eric Lamaze was awarded the Leading International Rider and Leading Canadian Rider titles, presented by GroupBy, as well as the Leading Canadian Horse Award for Fine Lady 5, presented by John Grange (left) and Ariel Grange (right) of Lothlorien Farm.





The iconic Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Musical Ride highlighted the Royal Horse Show's opening weekend.