Ben Maher Victorious Over Eric Lamaze in Battle of Olympic Gold Medalists at Royal Horse Show

Toronto, ON – It was a true battle of excellence as Olympic team gold medalist Ben Maher of Great Britain nudged Canadian Olympic individual gold medalist Eric Lamaze for victory in the $85,000 Big Ben International Challenge on a stage for a battle of epic proportions.

As the 10th rider back for the jump-off, Lamaze set a blistering pace in front of the home crowd, slicing and dicing around the shortened track before galloping through the timers in medal as a member of the British team at the 2012 London Olympics.

"[Tic Tac] deserved this win," continued Maher of the 16-year-old Belgian Sport Horse stallion. "He's been knocking at the door. He didn't jump many shows, but he

Great Britain's Ben Maher and Tic Tac won the $85,000 Big Ben International Challenge on Thursday evening, November 7, at the Royal Horse Show in Toronto, ON. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography

Canadian Olympic gold medalist Eric Lamaze finished in second in Thursday night's $85,000 Big Ben International Challenge. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography

Margie Engle, Ben Maher, and Eric Lamaze stood atop the podium as the top three in the $85,000 Big Ben International Challenge, held on Thursday, November 7 at the Royal Horse Show. Photo by Ben Radvanyi Photography

Thursday night, November 7, at the Royal Horse Show, held as part of the 97th Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto, ON.

Canadian course designer Michel Vaillancourt set a testing track that allowed the best horses and riders in the world to showcase their skills in front of a packed house in the Coca-Cola Coliseum. A total of 15 riders qualified for the jump-off, setting the 37.17 seconds. Next to challenge, Maher used Tic Tac's huge stride to his advantage. When the clock flashed 36.75 seconds, Maher moved to the top of the leaderboard and remained there to take the win for owner Jane Clark.

"I think a lot of people didn't like me in the stadium here this evening to beat Eric, but it's sport; I always try my best!" said Maher, 34, who won a team gold had a couple of second places, so it's nice to win a class with importance like this this evening."

While Lamaze, 51, was forced to settle for second with Fine Lady 5, he currently leads both the GroupBy Leading International Rider and Leading Canadian Rider standings, helped by a win in the $37,000 Jolera International Strength and Speed Challenge on Wednesday, November 6.

Third place in Thursday night's class went to Margie Goldstein Engle, 61, of the United States who stopped the jump-off clock in 37.61 seconds riding Dicas, owned by Gladewinds Partners, LLC.

Earlier in the day, Daniel Coyle of Ireland claimed the win in the afternoon's featured $37,000 Brickenden Trophy. Riding Farrel for owner Ariel Grange, Coyle topped a 12-horse jump-off after posting the winning time of 31.85 seconds. Next into the Coca-Cola Coliseum, 18-year-old Brian Moggre of the United States made a valiant attempt to catch the leading time riding MTM Flutterby, but he settled for second place when the clock flashed 32.28 seconds. Australia's Rowan Willis took third place with a time of 33.29 riding Calisto 26, while Lamaze and his mount, Chacco Kid, were fourth with a time of 33.68 seconds.

For more information, visit royalfair.org/horse-show.

$85,000 Big Ben International Challenge – Final Results
Thursday evening, November 7
Rider Nation Horse Faults Time
1. Ben Maher Great Britain Tic Tac 0:0 36.75
2. Eric Lamaze Canada Fine Lady 5 0:0 37.17
3. Margie Engle United States Dicas 0:0 37.61
4. Jos Verlooy Belgium Varoune 0:0 38.59
5. Laura Kraut United States Confu 0:0 38.65
6. Beezie Madden United States Garant 0:0 38.83
7. Mario Deslauriers Canada Amsterdam 27 0:0 39.06
8. Ali Ramsay Canada Lutz 0:0 39.63
9. Brian Moggre United States MTM Vivre le Reve 0:4 37.20
10. Rowan Willis Australia Cartouch III 0:4 38.08

$37,000 Brickenden Trophy – Final Results
Thursday afternoon, November 7
Rider Nation Horse Faults Time
1. Daniel Coyle Ireland Farrel 0:0 31.85

Daniel Coyle of Ireland raced to victory riding Farrel in the $37,000 Brickenden Trophy on Thursday afternoon, November 7, at the Royal Horse Show. Photo by Jump Media

2. Brian Moggre United States MTM Flutterby 0:0 32.28
3. Rowan Willis Australia Calisto 26 0:0 33.29
4. Eric Lamaze Canada Chacco Kid 0:0 33.68
5. Shane Sweetnam Ireland Karlin Van't Vennehof 0:0 34.24
6. McLain Ward United States Cadans Z 0:4 31.79
7. Erynn Ballard Canada Fellini S 0:4 34.46
8. Bertram Allen Ireland GK Casper 0:4 36.31
9. Kent Farrington United States Jasper 0:4 36.44
10. Daniel Bluman Israel Gemma W 0:4 37.21