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Toronto, ON, Nov. 9, 2019 – Barbara Ruziska, 23, of Ijamsville, MD crossed the border to become the 2019 Under 25 Jumping National Champion on Nov. 9 at the Royal Horse Show in Toronto, ON.

A total of 16 Under 25 (U25) athletes from across the country came to compete for top honours at the series finale. At the close of the two-part \$25,000 U25 National Championship, presented by Uplands, Ruziska was tied for the title with Lexi Ray, 20, of Campbellville, ON. Although both riders accumulated seven points in total across the two phases, the placings in the final round were designated to break the tie, giving Ruziska the Championship title while Ray was named Reserve Champion.

Barbara Ruziska Rides To The Top Of Under 25 Jumping National Championship



Barbara Ruziska of Maryland crossed the border to become the 2019 Under 25 Jumping National Champion with Dynamite on Nov. 9 at the Royal Horse Show in Toronto, ON.

Photo Credit - © Cealy Tetley - www.tetleyphoto.com

Ruziska had a challenging start in the \$12,500 Alfred Rogers U25 Championships Round 1 on Nov. 7 over the technical track set by Canadian Olympian and FEI-4 Course Designer, Michel Vaillancourt. However, she returned to the Coca-Cola Coliseum on Nov. 9 to claim Round 2 aboard Dynamite, her 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding sired by Numero Uno.

"We had a couple rails in Round 1, so I really came in to Round 2 hoping just to get around, have a really good round, and ride better – and doing that paid off," explained Ruziska.

The duo laid down one of only two clear trips in Round 2, which proved every bit as technical as the initial round and saw three athletes eliminated. Having earned her hard-fought berth to the jump-off, Ruziska took every inside turn and crossed the timers in an impressive 39.88 seconds. However, a toe on a rail at a one-stride combination (which proved to be the penultimate oxer of the day, falling repeatedly during the first course) added four faults to her score.

Nora Gray, 24, of Owen Sound, ON had the advantage of going second in the jump-off with her 15-year-old Danish Warmblood gelding, Dior (Carmargue x As di Villagana). Although she had the time, stopping the clock in 38.16 seconds, Gray lowered two rails for eight faults and second place, which safeguarded the title for Ruziska.

"I've been coming to Canada for a couple years now, and it's always been a dream of mine to come out to this awesome show, so it's really exciting to be able to make my mark here," said Ruziska, who trains with Canadian Show Jump-

ing Team athlete, Erynn Ballard. "I've been riding with Erynn for the past three years straight, and on and off through my junior career as well. She is an amazing trainer and it's totally worth the trip and the driving. The people out here at the shows are just so welcoming, and it's always fun."

Ray came by her Reserve Championship after an impressive win in the \$12,500 Alfred Rogers U25 Championship Round 1 aboard Jewel 8 (Kannan x Indoctro), a 10-year-old Belgian Warmblood mare she acquired from Canadian Olympic Champion, Eric Lamaze.

Held as a speed round with faults converted into added seconds on the clock, Ray wasted no time around the track, negotiating all 12 obstacles and 14 jumping efforts in a time of 53.36 seconds to edge out Jacqueline Steffens of Harriston, ON, who rode Freaky Liefhebber to a time of 54.75.

Even though it proved not to be Ray's day in Round 2, after she encountered challenges at the tricky triple combination and wide final oxer on course, resulting in elimination, the seven points she carried forward from Round 1 earned her the Reserve Champion title.

"It feels really good to be Reserve Champion, and I couldn't be happier with my horse," said Ray, who also contested the Canadian Show Jumping Championships during the opening weekend of the Royal Horse Show on Nov. 1 and 2, finishing in sixth place overall against a stacked field of veteran Canadian Show Jumping Team members and Olympians. "Obviously, today didn't go as planned, but we all have our days, and I just want to be thankful for Jewel and move on.

Eric Lamaze picked her for me and she's the best horse I've ever had."

As the National Champion, Ruziska received a saddle provided by Antares Sellier, and a cooler presented by the Equestrian Canada (EC) Jumping Committee. In addition, plates for the class winners and prize money were generously donated by the Uplands Charitable Foundation in memory of the late Alfred Rogers.

For full results from the 2019 U25 Jumping National Championship, visit www.royalfair.org.

About the U25 Series

The U25 series is part of the Young Riders Development Program, which was spearheaded by the EC Jumping Committee to help increase participation and improve performance at the FEI Children, Junior and Young Rider level. By providing youth with a pathway to become involved in the sport of jumping from an earlier age, the Jumping Committee is paving the way for a strong pool of future Canadian Equestrian Team athletes to represent Canada on the world stage. More information on the U25 series can be found at www.equestrian.ca/sport/jumping/athlete-development.

\$12,500 Alfred Rogers U25 National Championship –

5th / Channele Sjolander / Oakville, ON / Cuenta Atlas / Channele Sjolander

6th / Mackenzie Wray / Loretto, ON / Jewel LVP / Makim Holdings Inc.

7th / Christine Carlsen / King, ON / Monchiniquie / Valhalla Equestrian

8th / Nora Gray / Owen Sound, ON / Dior / Nora Gray

9th / Emma Slaunwhite / Sutton, ON / Truly Canadian / Tara Pengelly

10th / Alex Jamael / Mactaquac, NB / Cassini Quid / Martie Murphy

\$12,500 Alfred Rogers U25 National Championship – Phase II

Placing / Rider / Hometown / Horse / Owner

1st / Barbara Ruziska / Ijamsville, MD / Dynamite / Barbara Ruziska

2nd / Nora Gray / Owen Sound, ON / Dior / Nora Gray

3rd / Natalie Dean / Palo Alto, CA / Ceitasi / Marigold Sport Horses

4th / Channele Sjolander / Oakville, ON / Cuenta Atlas / Channele Sjolander

5th / Dannie Murphy / Charlottetown, PEI / Isabeau De Laubry / Martie Murphy

6th / Sara Tindale / Campbellville, ON / Djibab Van De Linthorst / Sara Tindale

7th / Emma Slaunwhite / Sutton, ON / Truly Canadian / Tara Pengelly

8th / Mackenzie Wray / Loretto, ON / Jewel LVP / Makim Holdings Inc.

9th / Jacqueline Steffens / Harriston, ON / Freaky Liefhebber / Double C Stables

10th / Christine Carlsen / King, ON / Monchiniquie / Valhalla Equestrian

11th / Alex Jamael / Mactaquac, NB / Cassini Quid / Martie Murphy

12th / Victoria Lombart / Saint Lambert, QC / Electric Socks / Anne Laplante



Lexi Ray of Campbellville, ON earned the Reserve Champion title in the 2019 U25 Jumping National Championship after a speedy victory aboard Jewel 8 in Round 1 on Nov. 7 at the Royal Horse Show.

Photo Credit - © Cealy Tetley - www.tetleyphoto.com

Phase I

Placing / Rider / Hometown / Horse / Owner

1st / Lexi Ray / Campbellville, ON / Jewel 8 / Lexi Ray

2nd / Jacqueline Steffens / Harriston, ON / Freaky Liefhebber / Double C Stables

3rd / Sara Tindale / Campbellville, ON / Djibab Van De Linthorst / Tindale Farms

4th / Dannie Murphy / Charlottetown, PEI / Isabeau De Laubry / Martie Murphy

5th / Jacqueline Steffens / Harriston, ON / Freaky Liefhebber / Double C Stables

6th / Christine Carlsen / King, ON / Monchiniquie / Valhalla Equestrian

7th / Alex Jamael / Mactaquac, NB / Cassini Quid / Martie Murphy

8th / Victoria Lombart / Saint Lambert, QC / Electric Socks / Anne Laplante

9th / Jacqueline Steffens / Harriston, ON / Freaky Liefhebber / Double C Stables

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