

## Keep Reading To...

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- Get to know Dr. Katie Atwood
- Meet our newest filly of foaling season 2021 at PBEC
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## What To Expect BEFORE Your Mare Is Expecting

Breeding is not typically on the forefront of owners' minds when it comes to their high-performance sport horse mares. The focus is mostly on keeping those mares at their best, in terms of health, athleticism, and performance. Breeding plans are usually reserved for well after their competition schedules wind down.

Often, when sport horse mares are injured and their careers are either put on hold or cut short altogether, breeding becomes the next best option for the owner to consider. Depending on the injury sustained and overall health and age, breeding can be a great alternative for the out-of-work mare. However, modern reproduction techniques have made breeding the sport horse mare not just an option reserved for after their careers have come to a close. Through embryo transfer, mares can produce multiple foals during the same season all while continuing top-level training and competition schedules.

The decision to breed includes several unknown factors, so we asked Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian Dr. Katie Atwood to guide us through the process of examining a mares' reproductive health and the different options for creating a foal.



Dr. Atwood analyzes a stallion's semen through PBEC's CASA system, allowing vets to determine the concentration of sperm and its motility, morphology, vitality, DNA fragmentation, and acrosome reaction. Photo by Jump Media

### Start With a Vision for the Future Foal

The first step when embarking on the breeding process is to choose the stallion. This decision hinges entirely on what the owner's vision and end goal may be for the future foal.

"There are countless breeding stallions across all different breeds and disciplines, and it all comes down to the owner's opinion and preferences," said Dr. Atwood. "If I have personally met the stallion, I can comment on their disposition, but I do not make recommendations on one stallion versus another. As the veterinarian, I pay attention to their health and fertility versus the external qualities that do not play a role in reproduction. I let the professionals – owners, riders, and trainers – make those decisions."

### Evaluate the Mare's Reproductive Soundness

After assessing the mare's overall health and taking into account her breeding history, Dr. Atwood will begin with the reproductive soundness exam. This usually includes a rectal ultrasound and palpation of the uterus, ovaries, and cervix. Dr. Atwood also typically performs a vaginal speculum exam to examine the quality of the mare's cervix. All the information that Dr. Atwood gathers during this step helps to determine what stage the mare is at in her estrous cycle, identify any potential issues, and establish the next steps.

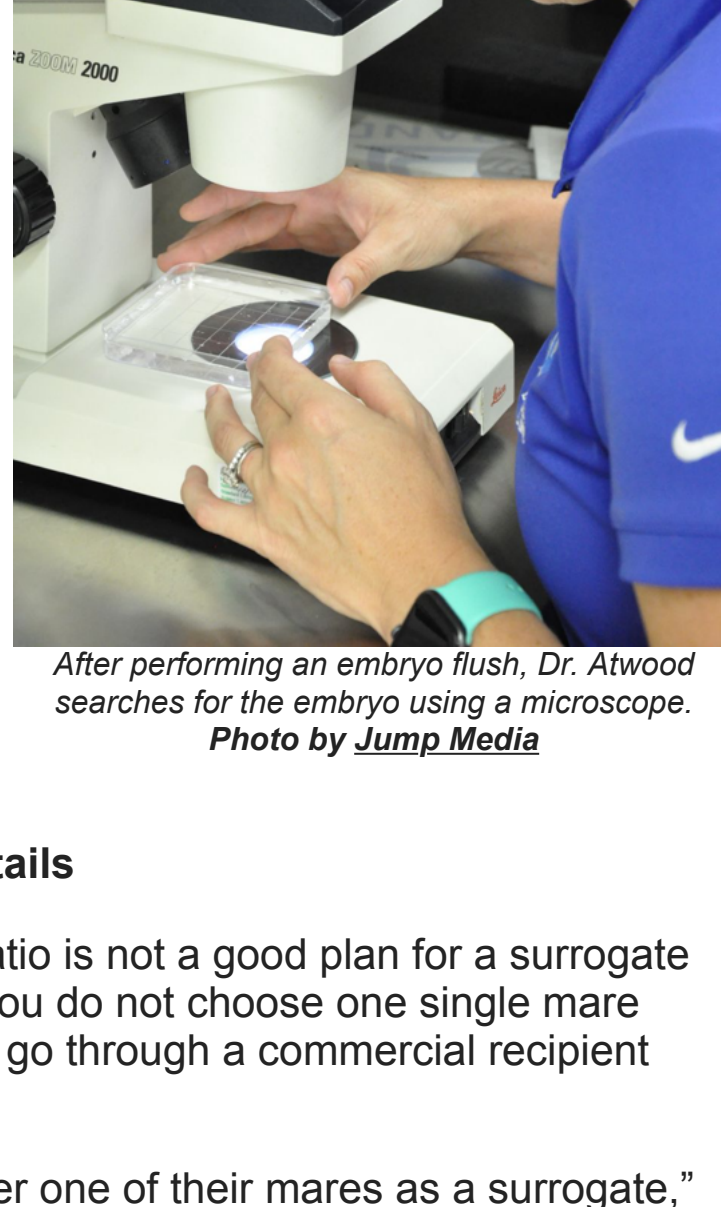
"When performing that first ultrasound, I look for endometrial cysts, fluid or air, and mucus in the uterus," said Dr. Atwood. "I examine both ovaries to make sure they appear normal and are cycling normally. There are a lot of elements that can change depending on the time of year and where the mare may be in her cycle. But if we are examining her during breeding season, then I can evaluate whether or not there are any abnormalities."

During the ultrasound, Dr. Atwood will look for signs of Endometritis, an inflammation and infection of the most superficial layer of the uterus and a big reason why mares can't get pregnant. It is important to identify issues such as this before taking any further steps.

### Considering a Surrogate Mare

Using a surrogate mare is one of the most popular routes for breeding sport horse mares. This process requires an embryo transfer, meaning that an embryo from the donor mare will be transferred to a surrogate, or recipient, mare to carry the foal to term. Embryo transfer has become a leading method for breeding as it relieves many of the owner's concerns regarding the mare's health and carrying the foal. It also allows the mare to be bred at an ideal reproductive age without any interruptions to their training and competition schedules.

"The average gestation period for a horse is 11 months and you're only producing one foal per year with traditional breeding," commented Dr. Atwood. "Embryo transfer allows the mare to produce multiple foals per year while remaining in their normal routine."



After performing an embryo flush, Dr. Atwood searches for the embryo using a microscope. Photo by Jump Media

### What the Surrogate Mare Process Entails

Dr. Atwood cautions that a one-to-one ratio is not a good plan for a surrogate mare. In other words, she advises that you do not choose one single mare you'd like to be the surrogate, but rather go through a commercial recipient herd.

"I advise clients to not just rely on another one of their mares as a surrogate," said Dr. Atwood. "In a perfect world, I would line up three recipient mares for every donor mare. The donor and recipient mares have to be on the same cycle because if you are going to take an embryo out, you have to put it in a uterus that's ready for that embryo."

[Read More](#)

## Meet Our Team: Dr. Katie Atwood, DVM

Dr. Katie Atwood is a native of Jacksonville, FL, and joined the Palm Beach Equine Clinic team in 2017. She completed her bachelor's degree in Animal Science with a minor in Chemistry at Berry College in Rome, GA. Dr. Atwood then attended the University of Florida for veterinary school and completed an internship and reproduction fellowship with a world-renowned equine hospital in Kentucky. Her primary focus is equine reproductive services, emergency medicine, and preventative care.

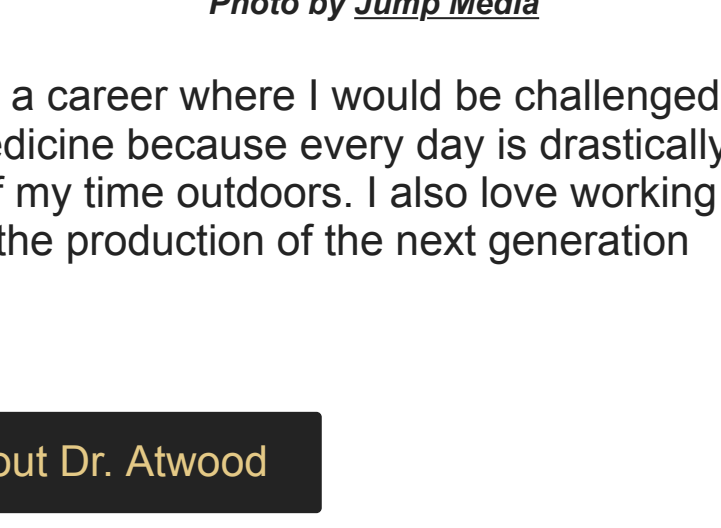


Photo by Jump Media

"I have always loved horses and wanted a career where I would be challenged every day. I chose to practice equine medicine because every day is drastically different, and I am able to spend most of my time outdoors. I also love working with athletes and being able to assist in the production of the next generation of elite equine athletes!"

[Learn More About Dr. Atwood](#)

## Plus... It's a Girl!

### Dr. Kathleen Timmins-Gobin Welcomes Her Own Filly at the PBEC Hospital

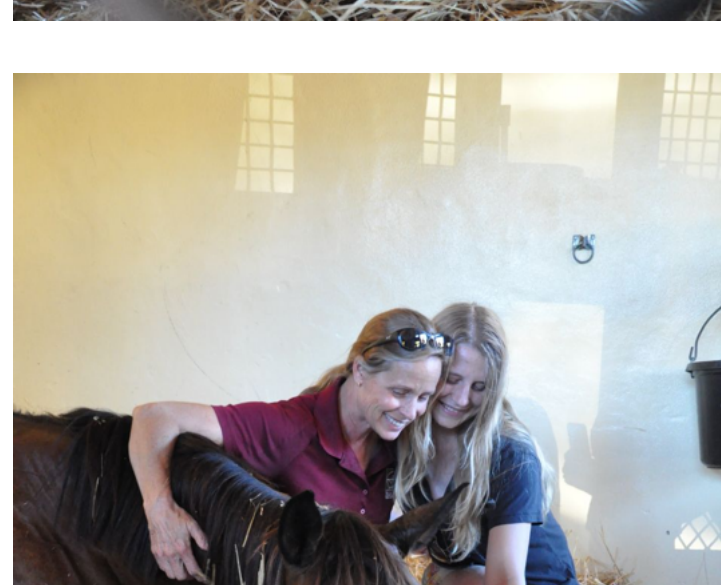
Dr. Kathleen Timmins-Gobin's mare, Princess, gave birth to a beautiful filly at the end of February. She was safely delivered at PBEC with the help of Dr. Katie Atwood. Mother and foal are home and doing well.

"I am so thrilled that she is healthy and happy, and we couldn't have gotten any luckier with her markings," Schuyler Gobin, Dr. Timmins-Gobin's daughter, said of their new addition. "We hope one day she'll be competitive in the jumpers. Special thanks to Katie [Atwood] and everyone else at Palm Beach Equine Clinic who helped us through the process."

The whole team turned out to watch the birth and everyone from PBEC sends congratulations to the proud mother, healthy baby, and happy owners.



Dr. Timmins-Gobin and her mare, Princess, admire the newborn foal. Photo courtesy of PBEC



Dr. Kathleen Timmins-Gobin (left) with her daughter, Schuyler Gobin, her mare, Princess, and new baby. Photo courtesy of PBEC

## PBEC Now Accepting Applications for Internship Program

Palm Beach Equine Clinic offers an internship program for those seeking experience in all facets of equine medicine and surgical procedures. An internship with Palm Beach Equine Clinic can kickstart a veterinary career by giving recent DVM graduates clinical experience on a variety of equine medical conditions before they advance into associate positions.

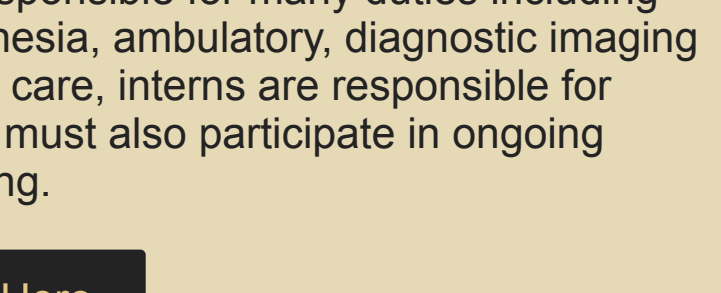


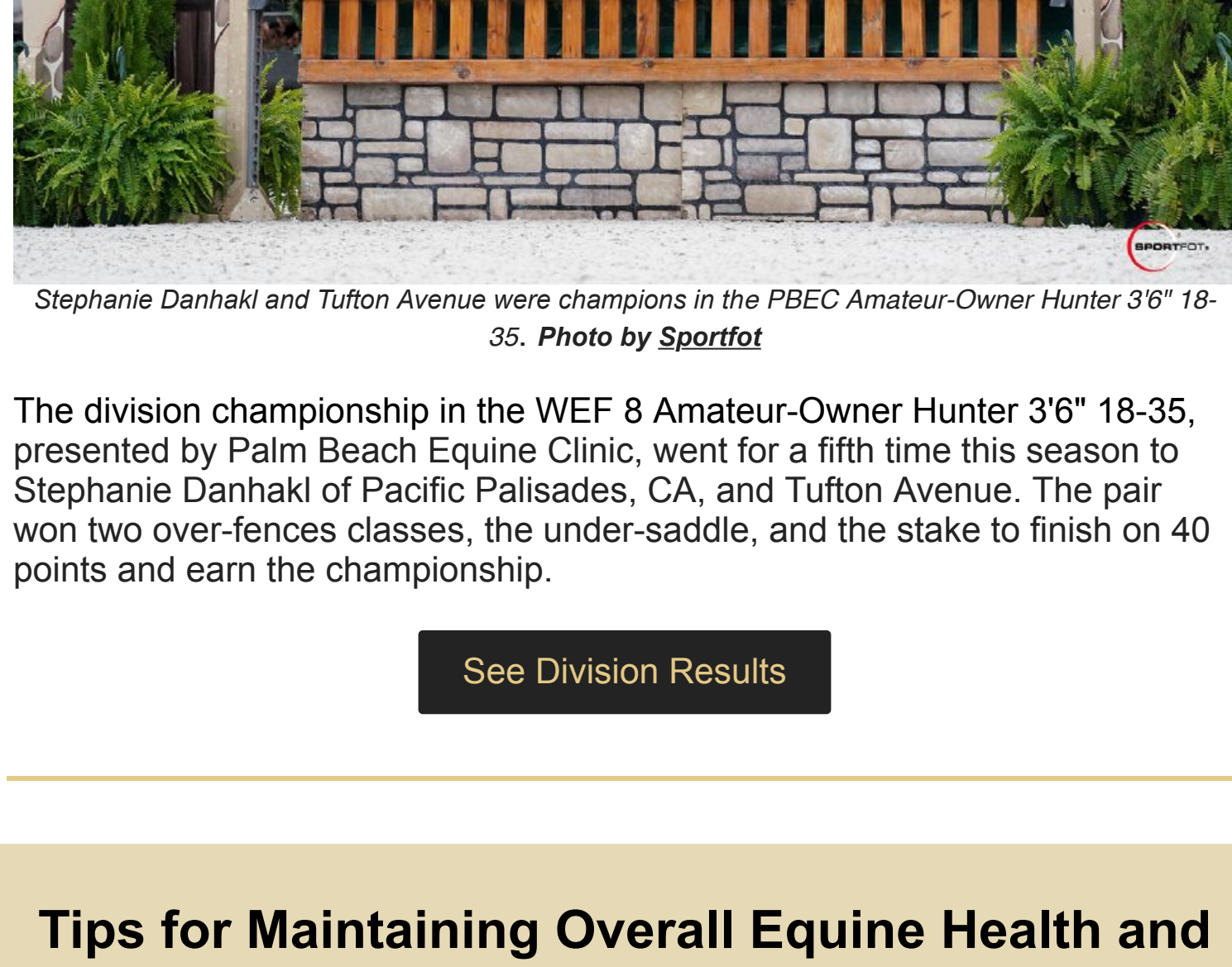
Photo courtesy of PBEC

Palm Beach Equine Clinic interns are responsible for many duties including hospital patient care, surgery and anesthesia, ambulatory, diagnostic imaging and, emergency care. Outside of patient care, interns are responsible for keeping up proper, detailed records and must also participate in ongoing education through research and journaling.

[Apply Here](#)

## Tufton Avenue Takes Amateur-Owner Hunter Championship During WEF 8

### Stephanie Danhaki and Tufton Avenue Named Champions in PBEC Amateur-Owner Hunter 3'6" 18-35

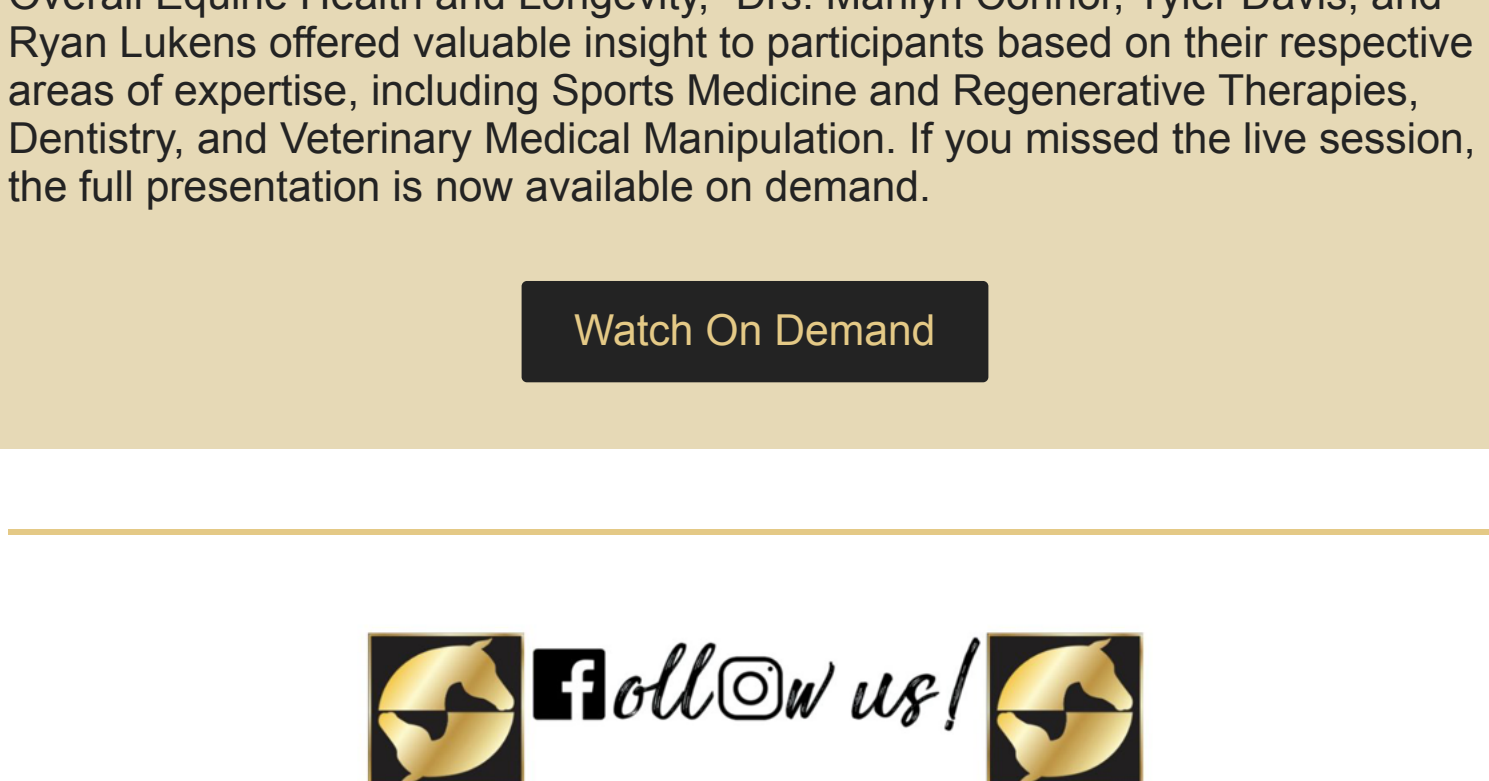


Stephanie Danhaki and Tufton Avenue were champions in the PBEC Amateur-Owner Hunter 3'6" 18-35. Photo by Sportfot

The division championship in the WEF 8 Amateur-Owner Hunter 3'6" 18-35, presented by Palm Beach Equine Clinic, went for a fifth time this season to Stephanie Danhaki of Pacific Palisades, CA, and Tufton Avenue. The pair won two over-fences classes, the under-saddle, and the stake to finish on 40 points and earn the championship.

[See Division Results](#)

## Tips for Maintaining Overall Equine Health and Longevity Now Available On Demand



As a proud sponsor of the 2021 PBIEC Educational Series, presented by Adequan®, PBEC vets hosted a virtual educational webinar during the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) 2. During the session, entitled "Tips for Maintaining Overall Equine Health and Longevity," Drs. Marilyn Connor, Tyler Davis, and Ryan Lukens offered valuable insight to participants based on their respective areas of expertise, including Sports Medicine and Regenerative Therapies, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medical Manipulation. If you missed the live session, the full presentation is now available on demand.

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