



Augusta Iwasaki rode Izar on her way to victory in the ASPCA Maclay Final at the National Horse Show. KIMBERLY LOUSHIN PHOTO

Iwasaki Makes Magic In Her Final Junior Season

She earns top equitation and hunter titles at the National Horse Show and Washington International.

By Mollie Bailey And Kimberly Loushin

Back when Augusta Iwasaki was a pony rider, Nick Hanes came up with a nickname for her: Augusta Colvin. She's lived up to that nod toward former junior superstar Victoria Colvin, most recently at the National Horse Show, held Oct. 26-Nov. 6 in Lexington, Kentucky, where she topped the ASPCA Maclay Final and the National Horse Show Hunter Classic.

"I obviously am so shocked. I can't really believe this happened," Iwasaki said following her Maclay victory. "I went very early this morning, and I thought put in a pretty solid round but definitely not the best round we've ever had, but yeah I just kept fighting all day long and was just hoping to do as best I could. This has been so special. I'm going back to college after this, so this is my last show as a junior, so it's amazing."

For the Maclay, Iwasaki tacked up Izar, a 9-year-old Dutch Warmblood of unrecorded breeding owned by Ashland Farms. She began showing at the beginning of this year and rode him in the WEF Equitation Championship at the Winter Equestrian Festival

(Florida), Devon (Pennsylvania), and the Dudley B. Smith Equitation Championship at the Great Lakes Equestrian Festival IV (Michigan), finishing in the Top 3 at all of them and giving her the confidence to ride him in the Maclay. She also rode him to fifth in the Dover Saddlery/USEF Hunter Seat Medal

Final (Pennsylvania) earlier this fall.

"I've done Izar in a bunch of more high pressure situations, so I knew that I could trust him in this situation," she said. "I thought he was amazing. I think that's a really hard venue for your first finals [season]. It's a hard course, and the jumps are spooky. It's a very high-pressure day. I thought he handled everything really well."

Iwasaki counts on a team of professionals to coach her, including her parents, Chris Iwasaki and Liz Reilly, as well as Ken and Emily Smith, Nora Gray and Erica Quinn. Augusta has been training with Ken and Emily's Ashland Farms team for six years.

"She was always a very soft rider," said Ken. "We've been working on her position to be a little stronger, without losing that softness."

For Reilly, one significant point in Augusta's riding career came during the 2017 \$50,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby at Deeridge Farm (Florida). That's when the then 12-year-old finished Round 1 in 14th place aboard Small Adventure, then came back to nail inside turns that no one else attempted to move up to third in the handy and overall fifth against the pros.

"I'm watching from the in-gate, and it was just unbelievable," said Reilly. "I was thinking, 'What is she doing?' I'm all about being handy, but to me this was crazy. But she nailed it. Her handy was wonderful."

That boldness also paid off in the Maclay, where Augusta moved up from 18th after Round 1 to take the victory.

"We loved her second round. We thought she did a beautiful job," said Michael Tokaruk, who judged alongside Robin Rost Brown. "She was solid on the flat. She just kept fighting, and this is a long day with a lot of phases, and the sum total of her body of work added up to the win. There were others where it was there for them to win, and they just didn't take the bull by the horns, and she kept impressing us and won the class."

ASPCA Maclay Final Lexington, Ky.—Nov. 6	
Rider	Hometown
1. Augusta Iwasaki	Calabasas, Calif.
2. Luke Jensen	Denton, Texas
3. Tessa Downey	Houston
4. Carlee McCutcheon	Aubrey, Texas
5. Isabella David	Holmdel, N.J.
6. Ellie Aronson	Atlanta
7. Addison Reed	Mechanicsville, Va.
8. Stella Wasserman	Los Angeles
9. Alexander Alston	Gahanna, Ohio
10. Kate Egan	Glen Gardner, N.J.

►22 riders competed.

YOUNG ENTRY



Augusta Iwasaki tacked up Attendu De Lannois Z to win the Washington International Horse Show Equitation Final. *MOLLIE BAILEY PHOTO*

Augusta took a similar approach to the NHS Hunter Classic with Small Love, a 9-year-old Hanoverian mare (Chacco Blue—Wisilvia) she co-owns with her parents, to win over several top professionals. She's had "Honey" for a year and will compete her in the amateur-owners next year.

"She's a phenomenal jumper, and she's the sweetest mare I ever met," Augusta said. "She doesn't act marey at all, and she tries really, really hard. She's so fun. She's so athletic, and the jump is unlike anything I've ever felt before."

Those victories come on the heels of her dominating performance in the hunter and equitation rings at the Washington International, held Oct. 24-30 at the Show Place Arena at Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. (Two weeks before the WIHS she also won the Platinum Performance USEF Talent Search Final—East [New Jersey].)

Augusta won the WIHS Equitation Final on Attendu De Lannois Z, as well as the small junior hunter, 16-17, and grand junior hunter titles aboard Shadowfax Equestrian's

Bond, and hunter judges Linda Andrisani and Peter Lombardo honored her with the Best Child Rider on a Horse award to boot.

Iwasaki started out by winning the hunter phase of the equitation class with scores that soared up to 94 points. The Calabasas, California-based rider placed third in the jumper phase, then wowed the judges again after swapping onto Skylar Wireman's Famous for the work-off, winning that phase to take the title by nearly 2½ points over Wireman.

French horse dealer Adeline Nègre sent Attendu De Lannois Z, a 9-year-old Zangersheide (Arko III—Caletina Van De Bremshoeve, Acaletto), to Ken and Emily in 2020 thinking he'd make a great hunter or equitation horse.

"I watched him show in a 3'3" performance class with Daisy Farish, and I was in love with him," said Augusta of the horse she co-owns with Ashland Farms. "I started showing him in just the junior hunters that year because he wasn't ready to do the eq. He really surprised me. He was absolutely amazing during the [Winter Equestrian Festival (Florida)] season the next year. I think the Washington is our best class. I'm just so happy with him."

Augusta counted on her experience as a catch-rider for the final phase, in which the top 10 riders swap horses then repeat the jumper course.

The 18-year-old had a catch-ride as well with Bond, a 10-year-old Italian Sport Horse (Clarimo—Wylandra, Marlon) she rode for Shadowfax Equestrian. In just her third time showing the gelding, she followed up her championship at the Pennsylvania National with another win at WIHS, this time claiming both the small junior hunter, 16-17, division and the grand junior hunter titles.

Owner Isha Swani rode Bond in the junior hunter division, and when she headed off to Princeton University (New Jersey) her sister Raina Swani took over the ride. Raina had other small junior hunters in her string, so she couldn't ride Bond at the fall indoor circuit.

WIHS Equitation Final Upper Marlboro, Md. Oct. 28-29	
Rider	Hometown
1. Augusta Iwasaki	Calabasas, Calif.
2. Skylar Wireman	Bonsall, Calif.
3. Jordan Gibbs	Colorado Springs, Colo.
4. Ellie Aronson	Atlanta
5. Avery Glyn	Petaluma, Calif.
6. Zayna Rizvi	Wellington, Fla.
7. Alexander Aisto	Gahanna, Ohio
8. Baylee McKeever	Brewster, N.Y.
9. Amira Kettaneh	Hollis, N.H.
10. Nicole McMillion	Huntington Beach, Calif.
►40 riders competed.	

Trainer Geoffrey Hesslink said that because Isha and Augusta are close friends, and Hesslink grew up riding with Chris and Reilly of Makoto Farms, it was a natural choice to have Augusta take over the ride for the fall.

"He felt amazing," said Augusta, who topped all three over fences classes with Bond. "He perked up a little bit for the stake, so I thought he was really in his groove and had his game face on. I think his canter and his jump are both amazing. His canter is super rangy. I feel like I have a million miles of stride."

NEW JUMP DESIGNERS IN THE MAKING

This spring, when course designer Bobby Murphy did a guest lecture for Ahna Phelps' competition design class at the Savannah College of Art and Design (Georgia), he proposed an idea: Students could submit jump designs to him for consideration to be built for this year's ASPCA Maclay Final.

Murphy chose three of the designs: Madison Aguilar's Maclay jump, Savannah McCants' brush step jump, which was inspired by historic Savannah, Georgia, homes, and Morgan Henson's twist on the racetrack rail, inspired by her balcony, and used them in this year's courses.

"Really all the credit goes to Bobby; he's been so amazing and so supportive of encouraging the students to think outside the box," said Phelps. "I think probably he ignited a passion in these kids that they didn't even realize that they had."

Before the second round, Murphy chose Aguilar's jump as the winning design. Because Aguilar is on the school's Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association team, which was hosting a competition on Nov. 6, she didn't get to watch the Maclay. But Phelps and McCants did and shared the news with her.

"I cried at dinner because I was like, 'Oh my God, this is amazing,'" said Aguilar, 23. "I never thought that my design would be this big thing. I don't even have words. It was amazing."

Aguilar, Loxahatchee, Florida, submitted seven or eight designs to Murphy, some modeled after fences he used in previous Maclay courses and others inspired by architecture around Savannah. The idea for her winning jump came from an Hermès logo Murphy shared during his lecture.

"So before coming to SCAD, I didn't have a big

Hesslink said that the gelding can get bored at regular shows but seems to recognize when the stakes are higher at championships.

"We say he's kind of dramatic; he's a character in the barn," he said. "He just tells you exactly how he feels. It's funny he has that big neck, and everyone still thinks he's a stallion because he's kind of funny in some ways. In the barn he's not that approachable in the stall. He kind of wants his space, but he always knows when it matters, and he tries really hard to win, so it's a pleasure to have." 🐾



Three Savannah College of Art and Design (Ga.) students designed jumps that were used in this year's ASPCA Maclay Final, and course designer Bobby Murphy picked Madison Aguilar's design as his favorite. *KIMBERLY LOUSHIN PHOTO*

imagination, and I'm not good at drawing," she said. "I was here for the equestrian studies program, but through my years of being here and going to art classes and expanding my learning abilities and doing electives that are fashion and ceramics and painting, I've gotten a lot more creative just being here, and so this fun project came a little easier to me than I thought it was going to."

Phelps was thrilled that this contest gave her students a new perspective on course design and how it relates to the foundational art classes every student takes at SCAD.

"Every course [Murphy] does is a work of art, and I don't think the students ever really realized that, and now I think they look at it so much differently, and with maybe the, you know, I could do this!" she said. "I think it's just opened up a whole new realm of possibilities for them."