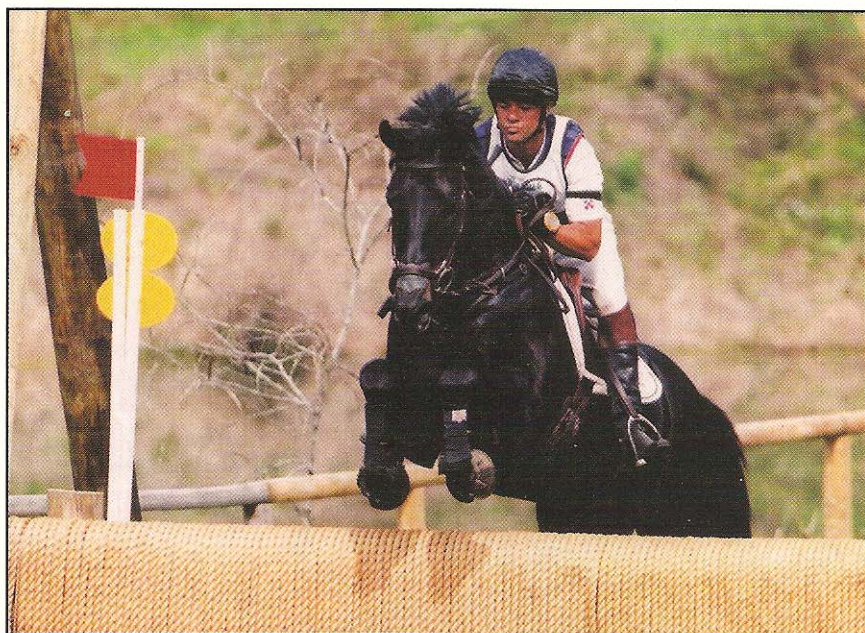


Chiacchia and Fisher Start World Cup Season with Wins



Darren Chiacchia and Windfall 2 held the lead and took top honors at Red Hill.

Laurie Weiner

THE 2004 FEI EVENTING WORLD

Cup season kicked off for the U.S. with events at Red Hills in Tallahassee, FL, and Galway Downs in Temecula, CA. Darren Chiacchia, riding Timothy Holekamp's stallion Windfall 2 took the top spot at Red Hills, March 12-14. Chiacchia and the 12-year-old Trakehner started with a dressage score of 41.7 and never relinquished the lead, adding only 4.8 time penalties on cross-country and jumping clean over the stadium course to finish with a final score of 46.5, more than 8 points ahead of second place finisher Australian Phillip Dutton riding Nova Top.

At the Galway Downs World Cup Qualifying and International Horse Trials, Robyn Fisher of Santa Rosa, CA, rode her own Le Samurai to take the top prize. Robyn and Le Samurai, a nine-year-old Holsteiner/Thoroughbred gelding, were in second place with a score of 46.6 following dressage, but produced a quick, clean cross-country round with only 3.6 time penalties on a day where beating the clock proved to be difficult. Gina Miles, riding McKinlaigh, who were the third place finishers at the 2003 FEI World Cup Finals in France, had the only double clear of the day and moved into second place with only 1.3 penalty points separating the top two finishers. Sunday's stadium phase was the deciding factor and Le Samurai jumped clean and fast to maintain their score of 50.2 and the win.

The U.S. will host two additional FEI World Cup Qualifiers at Rebecca Farms in Montana on July 23-25, and at Over The Walls in Massachusetts on July 30-August 1. The top five qualified U.S. riders will be able to attend the World Cup Finals, to be hosted once again in Pau, France, October 20-24, 2004.

■ TORRI NAHORNIK

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