

April 21, 2005

Vegas Update Hello, West Coast Active Riders!

Greetings from Las Vegas, where your West Coast team joins their East Coast brothers and sisters to do battle in the 2005 FEI World Cup Finals!!!! A lot of you are here already- ticket sales have been absolutely through the roof for this event, and many of those tickets went to Californians. Big thanks to Tim Keener and John Quirk for everything they do, but especially for organizing our special WCAR seating session!

The action starts tonight, Thursday, at 7:00 p.m., with Round I of the Show Jumping Finals, but don't forget that the Dressage Finals are here as well- how cool is that? On Monday morning, we all got to warm up in the competition arena with the dressage riders, which was so much fun. Of course, for those of us who, like me, spend most of their flat work trying to convince their horse not to shake his head and (please!) not to buck me off (!), it was more than a little intimidating to be surrounded by world famous dressage riders doing the most effortless, incredible dressage you could imagine....by Tuesday, they had separated all of us again into two sessions!

So far, we've had our vet inspection, which went well for all the Americans and all the jumping riders, in fact, and have had two warm up classes. Most of the Americans showed in the first warm up, which is 1.40 meters, and allows you to do basically whatever you want in the ring for 90 seconds. I saw most of our horses jump and I can assure you that they are all on top form. Great luck not only to our international group of Richard, Joie, Nicole and Gaby, but also our national riders Mandy, Francie, Misti, Ali, Mark, Cathleen, Molly and Guillermo. If today was any indication, you're going to have a GREAT week! All the horses jumped beautifully and everyone looks really confident and excited.

And the ring at the Thomas and Mack is super: small, of course, but the atmosphere is incredibly dynamic and lively- just like Las Vegas! The footing in the arena is fantastic, and Robert Ridland, who makes sure that every possible detail is in order for horse and rider, organized not only a larger schooling ring, but a lunging ring, a handwalking area, and a terrific stable area. Thank you Robert, for everything you do!!!

For those of you in Vegas, we'll see you tonight, and if you've got team spirit, now's the time to show it! Feel free to bring signs, cheer loudly, and paint your face! Remember, seven of the World Cup Riders were born and bred in California (Anne Kursinski, Meredith Michaels, Richard Spooner, Joie Gatlin, Lauren Hough, Candice King and Gaby...and then of course Nicole, whom we kidnapped....) so let's get behind a Californian victory!

That's what I'm talking about!