



**RIDER SPOTLIGHT**  
Lars Kersten . . . . . page 9



# Weekly Wire

LINDSAY BROCK  
Editor



WEEK 7

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

## French Dazzles in \$100,000 WCHR Peter Weatherill Palm Beach Hunter Spectacular



The country's best hunter combinations went head-to-head in the \$100,000 WCHR Peter Weatherill Palm Beach Hunter Spectacular. For John French it was a night of firsts as he finally captured the Spectacular win, one that has been eluding him throughout his career.

Patrick Rodes, hailing from Texas, designed the flowing track that offered riders several areas to show off their mounts. Entries for the night class qualified by winning the champion title in their respective divisions at the 3'6" height or above.

From a 42-horse field at 3'6", 3'9" and 4' heights, 12 returned for a handy round. French guided Milagro, a 2015 Hanoverian Gelding owned by Kent Farrington, LLC, to the high score of 94 in the opening round to return for

the handy with a few points in his pocket. They impressed again and scored a 93.5, finishing on a score of 187.5 and the victory.

"I think riding in this kind of atmosphere brings out the best in all horses," said French of the impressive International Ring environment at WEF. "They were all jumping so well tonight, and I think the lights, the crowds and the jumps really showcased the hunters. There aren't a lot of these classes left, so we get excited for nights like this and so do our horses."

"Originally, I wasn't sure if I was going to make that inside turn to the second to last jump, but everyone was going so well that I thought I needed to do it," continued French. "WCHR has done so much for the hunters. The fact that they have these special

*Continued on page 11*

## An Irish Step Up

When Ireland's Darragh Kenny looks back on the opportunities that led to him making his way to the top of horse sport, it started with a little help from a friend. A working student for Missy Clark and John Brennan of North Run, based in Vermont, Kenny climbed the ranks of show jumping inside the competition and furthered his knowledge of being a horseman. Now, it's his turn. On Saturday, fellow Irish rider Francis Derwin Jr. and AHG Whiterock Cruise Down, stood atop the Hermès U25 podium during Derwin's second appearance at WEF after earning a bursary to ride in North America and ultimately work under Kenny.

"I came out last year for a couple of months to work with Darragh; he's been giving me some great help, and it's good to have someone like that behind you," said Derwin, who rides with Kenny's Oakland Stables. "I got

a bursary maybe four years ago and I came over for a couple weeks and Darragh gave me some great help so I came back last year and he said I could come back. He's also given me plenty of horses to ride and I've been getting into the ring a little bit so it's been good getting into the ring and learning more."

Not to be outdone by his pupil, Kenny later won the CaptiveOne Advisors CSI3\* 1.50m Classic. After his win, Kenny noted the fortunate way in which his arrangement with Derwin came about. Derwin and Kenny have an interesting history together that connects and threads the pair through generations of show jumpers.

"My mom used to work for his grandfather and years ago his grandfather," said Kenny of his families' relationship with one of the largest horse sales operations in Ireland. Derwin's father

*Continued on page 11*





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## Bertram Allen & Emmylou Top KASK CSI3\* Grand Prix

The Winter Equestrian Festival's (WEF) Week 6, sponsored by KASK, came to a close on Sunday with the final classics of World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) Week in the International Ring and the KASK CHF140,000 CSI3\* Grand Prix on the grass Derby Field at Equestrian Village. Irish Olympian Bertram Allen and the speedy Emmylou topped a 10-horse jump-off in the day's featured international class.

Ana Catalina Cruz Harris (MEX) designed a testing track for 44 horses. From the second half of the original order, Allen notched a clear round and returned to set an uncatchable pace over the short course.

Coming off a win earlier in the season in the Wellington Equestrian Realty CSI4\* 1.45m with Emmylou, a 10-year-old Irish-bred mare (Billy Mexico x CandyLupe), owned by Ballywalter Stables, Allen bested runner-up Cathleen Driscoll (USA) by nearly two seconds on Sunday.

"The jump-off went to plan," said Allen of his blistering pace. "My horse is naturally very fast so I just tried to keep it as smooth as I could. Obviously, the jump-off was still big and there were quite a few faults in it, so I tried to get the right medium between going fast enough and keeping all the jumps up."

When he crossed the final timers, Allen threw a fist to the sky and gave Emmylou the credit she was due. "She's a special little horse; she tries so hard,



so I get great satisfaction about having the result I did today."

Allen got the ride on Emmylou, the previous mount of Norwegian rider Johan-Sebastian Gulliksen, early last year and set the KASK CSI3\* Grand Prix as a goal this season. "This was her main goal and now we will evaluate where we go from here."

Allen had his eye on Emmylou for nearly a year while she competed under the direction of Gulliksen and is pleased to finally have her as part of his string, noting, "She's a lovely horse in the barn; she's very relaxed and easy going, but when you really start jumping she lights up. I think she likes her job."

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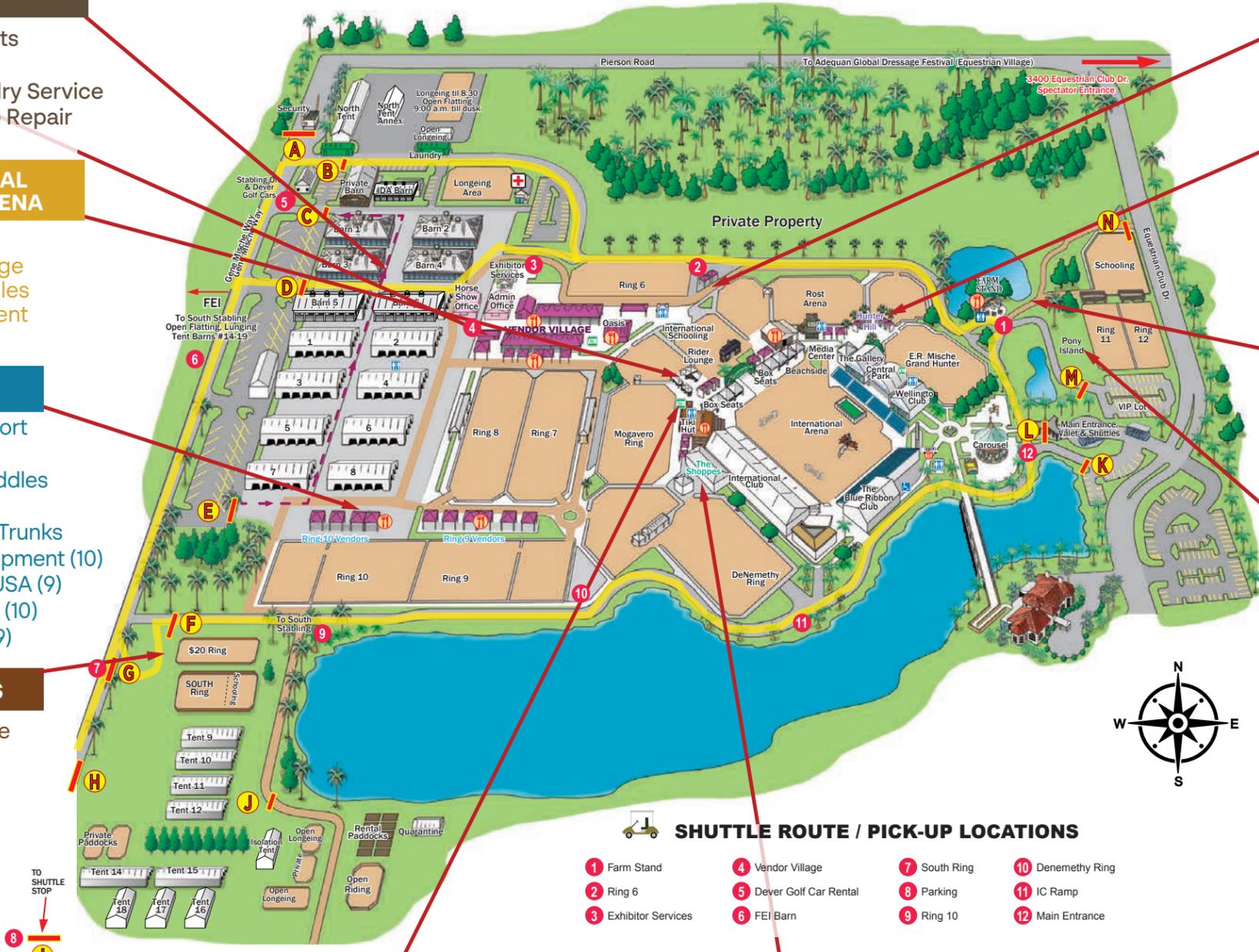
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  - Loopy's Crepes
  - Oasis Cafe
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  - Muddy Paws Ice Cream
  - Nathalie's Cafe
- RING 10**
  - Magdalena's Mexican
- BARN 4**
  - Anonymous Coffee
- PONY ISLAND**
  - Florida Snow
  - Silva's Mexican
- SOUTH BARN**
  - Island Kitchen



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# SPONSOR AWARDS



The Champion Equine Insurance Hunter Style Award was presented to Can Can, ridden by Christopher Payne and owned by Stephanie Ring after they won the stake class in the Rein Family Performance Hunter 3'6" division.



Congratulations South Haven Farm, based in Bartonville, Texas, on winning the WEF 6 VitaFlex Tack Room Award. Pictured: trainer Lizzie Ekong with Moshi and Matcha.



AHG Whiterock Cruise Down, ridden and owned by Francis Derwin Jr. (IRL), earned the Champion Equine Insurance Jumper Style Award after winning the CHF10,000 Hermès U25 Welcome.



Winning groom and Emmylou's caretaker Lovisa Munter was honored with the \$500 Grooms Award, presented by Double H Farm after the CHF140,000 KASK CSI3\* Grand Prix during WEF 6.

ALL PHOTOS BY SPORTFOT

## RIDER SPOTLIGHT: Lars Kersten

After finding his way into show jumping at a young age, Lars Kersten has wanted nothing more than to compete at the top level of the sport. After making a name for himself in Europe, Kersten represented Netherlands in several European circuits. Since stepping up to the five-star level in 2022, Kersten has competed in the FEI Jumping World Cup Western European League, and most recently placed fifth in the first five-star grand prix at WEF with Emmerton.

### How did you get into riding?

My family had an equestrian business at home and my father, Pieter, was a grand prix dressage and show jump rider. Even though it was part of my family, I wanted to be involved in the sport all on my own. I started when I was young, alongside my twin brother Niels, and as the years went on, I became more serious about it.

### What has been the biggest difference between the American show circuit and the European show circuit?

The biggest difference for me is the type of show I'm competing in during this time of the year. It's the indoor season in Europe, and when I left in December after competing in World Cup shows in smaller arenas, I'm now competing on the derby field and under the lights. It's something you need to adapt to quickly, but with a competitive show like, there's no choice but to adapt. Everyone at the top level is really going for it.

### You were the first to go clear in the Fidelity Investments® CSI5\* Grand Prix during WEF 5. What was it like competing under the lights?

It was an amazing experience. I was already impressed by the competition, but the grand prix under the lights was very special. I have only been to one other show with huge crowds, but this experience was electric. Being the first rider to go clear meant a lot to myself and my team, especially when you consider it was my first five star here in Wellington.

### What has it been like representing the Netherlands, and winning team gold at the European Championships for young riders?

I did my first Nations Cup in 2019 and winning it was a dream come true. As a kid growing up in the sport, it was always something I wanted to do. Holland has always been quite competitive, with strong teams of riders, so to just making the team was as honor, let alone ending up as European Champions.



U25 GRAND PRIX

### GRAND PRIX SERIES STANDINGS

1. Ashley Vogel (USA) .....230.75
2. Summer Hill (USA) .....203.5
3. Mimi Gochman (USA) ..... 191
4. Grace Debney (GBR) ..... 188
5. Emma Sargent (USA) ..... 182.5

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1. McLain Ward (USA) .....243
2. Darragh Kenny (IRL) ..... 203
3. Richard Vogel (GER) ..... 190
4. Eduardo Menezes (BRA) ..... 159
- Laura Kraut (USA) ..... 159

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# WEEK 6 • HUNTER AWARDS



High Score award winners from the distinguished World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) Week at WEF.



The USHJA Kavar Kerr Distinguished Service Award was presented to Wellington International COO David Burton.



Louise Serio, Chair of the WCHR Task Force & Carl Weeden, Vice Chair, present the 2022 WCHR Palm Beach Hunter Spectacular Champion Geoffrey Hesslink, the rider of Mon Tresor, with a custom portrait by artist Tori Bilas.



Pavlo, owned by John & Stephanie Ingram, LLC honored as the recipient of the Mark Gregory Memorial Award for Best Conditioned Horse.



Babylon, owned by Marnell Sort horses and ridden by John French & Ariana Marnell, being presented with the Peter Wetherill Cup as the 2022 WCHR Hunter of the Year.

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WEEK 7

FEBRUARY 22-26, 2023



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### An Irish Step Up *continued from page 1*

Francis and Uncle Jim have dominated the horse dealing scene in Ireland for decades.

"Derwin started riding a bit and then his dad wanted to send him to America, so he came to me maybe four years ago for two weeks," recalled Kenny. "He's an unbelievably talented kid. He's only eighteen years old and he's really got what it takes, so it's fun for all of us to have him here."

Kenny often looks back on the step up he got from North Run, and seeks out opportunities to pay it forward. "It's a very good feeling for me because I was lucky when I came here. I worked for Missy and John, and they gave me a huge opportunity. I owe them



everything for being here. "It's nice now that I have my own business to be able to do that for other people," continued Kenny. "I've known Francis since he was a child, about since he was two years old. I've seen the whole progression and I know his family very well and he's more of a relation to me than a friend or fellow rider. He's basically family at this point."

FEBRUARY 22-26, 2023

## WCHR Peter Weatherill Palm Beach Hunter Spectacular *continued from page 1*



classes, it gives us something to strive for throughout the year."

A former West Coast phenom in the hunter ring, French never had the opportunity to point a horse in his regular string at the WCHR Peter Wetherill Palm Beach Hunter Spectacular. "I was usually flying in and borrowing a horse," he said. "Coming in on a horse I know so

well was a nice feeling. I'm just grateful to have a horse like this; he's the most easy going in the barn and so scopey in the ring. We knew the 4' height was going to be his calling. When Kent found the horse, we could have sold him but I didn't want him to leave the barn, so we have him still for special classes like this."

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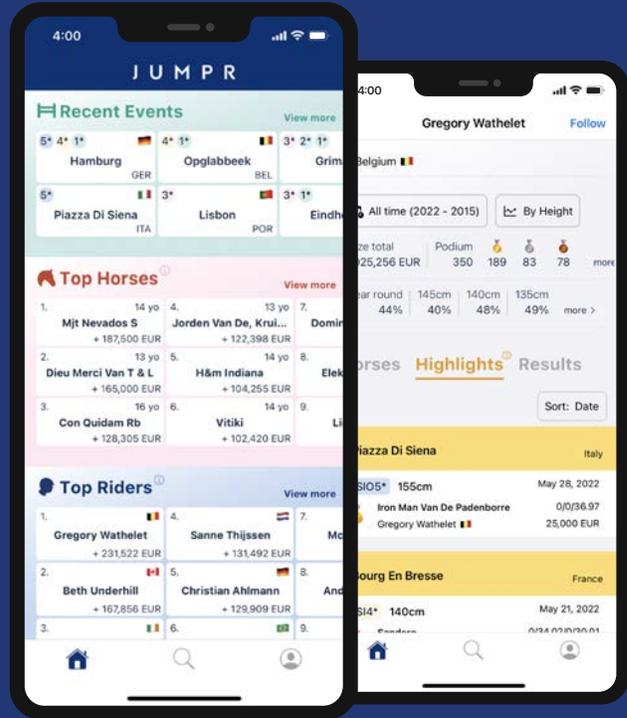


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