

Only Always Crowned Grand Hunter Champion at Devon Horse Show

JUNE 1, 2022 by [EMMA MILLER](#)

Devon, Pa. – June 1, 2022 – Professional hunter divisions wrapped up at the Devon Horse Show Wednesday, June 1, with the crowning of the Grand Hunter Champion. Presented with the Fourth Sally Deaver Murray Memorial Challenge Trophy donated by Mrs. Ernest Scott and Mr. and Mrs. Stillman F. Kelly 2nd, Nick Hanes was named the victor for his many stellar performances in the Dixon Oval.



Only Always

Hanes and Only Always, a 10-year-old Warmblood gelding owned by Balmoral, produced impressive rounds Monday and Tuesday in the Green Conformation Hunter division, helping them come out on top of the leaderboard across all the hunter divisions. The pair started off strong with a win and score of 88 in Monday's over fences class, a second place finish and score of 87 in the second over fences, and third place finish in the under saddle. Combined with wins in both Tuesday's handy with a score of 88 and the stake with a score of 89, Hanes and Only Always were named champions of the Green Conformation Hunter division, taking home the Just For Fun-Two For One Challenge Trophy with 45 points. Their consistently high scores helped them secure the Grand Championship at the conclusion of Wednesday's hunter classes.



Nick Hanes and Only Always

Scott Stewart was named the Leading Hunter Rider, receiving the Hope Montgomery Scott Perpetual Trophy. Stewart has received the award 16 times over the years, including each year of the Devon Horse Show since 2015 with no signs of letting up in his domination.



Leading Hunter Rider Scott Stewart

The Leading Lady Rider Award was given to Amanda Steege as the High Performance Working Hunter with the most points accumulated in the Regular Working Hunter Section. Steege was presented with the Tarad Hill Perpetual Trophy on a total of 26 points aboard Lafitte De Muze, an 11-year-old Belgian Warmblood gelding owned by Cheryl Olsten. The Devon Leading Groom Award and the Gerald Johnson Memorial Perpetual Trophy was presented to David Vega.

Hunter competition at the Devon Horse Show will continue Thursday, June 2, with the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby, sponsored by the Wheeler Family, set to start at 12:00 p.m.

FROM THE WINNERS CIRCLE

Carleton Brooks – Devon Grand Hunter Champion owner

On Only Always:

"He definitely has lived up to our expectations. Beyond this, I think there are still great things to come, much bigger. He's very, very brave, we've never thought about the derbies. He does enough divisions every week. I watched him jump two jumps on the video and said, 'Buy him.' The first thing was his presence, then his balance, his proportions, how he landed, he cantered away from the first jump. It was a line I saw first and you always go with your first instinct. I watched more and he actually was better. We were told that we 't go at him hard, he's sensitive. He's extremely intelligent – he lanterns something, you let it sit for a little bit and then he's got it, as he proved here. He's never been in this type of environment before in America. We gave him time to take a deep breath. When he arrived, I brought him on Friday night. We just let him hang out. He absorbed everything, and came out the next day as if he had been here before. He had done a couple of jumper classes with an amateur in Europe in an indoor ring. We gave him whatever he needed to get where he is now. I'm a big believer in fitness. A lot of people want to just go at it, instead we do a lot of walking. We have one hill in California on a road, so we walk up and down the hill and spend a lot of time just watching him settle in. The fitness at the walk is our number one go-to."



On competing in the High Performance Conformation Hunter division:

"I think it's an integral part of our horse show, and unfortunately most people don't want to put the effort into it. No one pays attention to the details. I think if you're not trying to raise your standards, you are definitely lowering your standards, I don't think there's a plateau."

On choosing Nick as Only Always' rider:

"[Nick Hanes] and I have a lot of similarities I believe, and he thinks of the whole horse. When he watches everyone else go on course he's actually watching how to ride his horse. He capitalizes on that and with this horse, he was great to work with because he knew we had to take our time. He got into it and when he realized how great he really is, and it allowed me to channel what we did and it worked out. Nick thinks like a horse, he is one of those. He does not have any set way, so I think to develop a top horse you have a base system but you have to be able to do whatever the horse needs."

On the Devon Horse Show:

"Devon is tradition. I still believe it's the ultimate, you have to be consistent with the whole division. With the outside surroundings it's actually a performance facility, you have to perform. It has all of the outside distractions. The ring is on a gigantic slope so the horse has to be very well balanced here. I think it's the ultimate. We don't have one-ring horse shows anymore. You are front and center here. Devon doesn't make or break you but it sure tells you that you are on the right track when you are successful."

Scott Stewart – Leading Hunter Rider

On his busy career:

"I have a discussion about cutting back all the time with Ken [Berkley]. It's hard to cut back. For me I have a lot of young horses, two and three-year-olds, and if you cut back then you don't really pipeline them coming along. So far I'm sound and everything. I don't actually show all that much. In Florida I show eight or nine times, maybe 10, but I don't show that many. I'll go to Upperville next week, then I will come back here for Brandywine for some of the young ones, then I won't show again until Bluegrass in August, so my summer is light. My horses that I show myself, ideally they do 12 or 13 shows per year. It's pretty much the same schedule every year, it doesn't vary too much."