

# Area V Celebrates New Beginnings With An Adult Team Championship

*Nothing seals new friendships like a victory in The Chronicle of the Horse/USEA novice ATC.*

BY LINDSAY BERRETH AND MEGAN BRINCKS



Area V Team #1 won *The Chronicle of the Horse*/USEA Adult Team Championship at the novice level. (From left) Cherye Huber on Barnabus celebrated with USEA President Diane Pitts, teammate Jessica Pye on DeeJay, USEA CEO Jo Whitehouse, Hannah Smitherman on Sir Lamb Chop and Sharon Choney of Nutrena. (Not pictured: Sunny Shepard and Fast Front.) LINDSAY BERRETH PHOTO

**H**annah Smitherman was on top of the world after the 2013 Nutrena/U.S. Eventing Association American Eventing Championships, taking home the senior beginner novice amateur title with her PMU rescue horse Buster Brown.

They successfully moved up to novice later that year, but then the gelding died after a bout of colitis.

Distraught and discouraged, Smitherman thought her shot at the AEC this year was over—until her trainer, Angela Grzywinski, found her

the perfect horse, Sir Lamb Chop.

“She has such a great eye for horses,” said Smitherman. “We had some big shoes to fill. That partnership is so important, and she matches personalities. In six months, it’s kind of just clicked recently.”

The pair qualified and made the trek to this year’s AEC in Tyler, Texas, Sept. 25-28 (p. 92), finishing as the reserve champions in the senior novice amateur division and leading the Area V Team #1 to the novice win in *The Chronicle of the Horse*/USEA Adult Team Championships on a total score of 94.0.

“I kind of thought my AECs were over for this year,” said Smitherman of losing Buster Brown, a draft cross. “He was great. You lose a horse, and it’s hard. He got antibiotics because he got a cut on his leg and got some tendonitis; I guess draft horses are pretty sensitive to antibiotics, and he got a bad colitis and a bad infection.”

Smitherman, 43, had only competed Sir Lamb Chop, a 13-year-old Percheron cross, twice this season before the AEC, but the pair put in a solid performance.

“I always say, ‘It’s hard shoes to fill, but we can have more than one pair of shoes,’” she said.

When the ATC divisions were light on entries, organizers decided to pool eligible adult riders together to form teams (see sidebar). Smitherman, Fort Worth, Texas, knew one of her teammates, Cherye Huber, and enjoyed meeting Jessica Pye and Sunny Shepard.

"I think riding brings different walks of life together, and it's our commonality," Smitherman said. "It's really fun to meet different people. You end up finding other things in common too and end up making friends that you see every other weekend."

Smitherman works as a pediatric ER physician, and she appreciated the time away from her job for the weekend.

"I really couldn't do this if my husband didn't pitch in and help with the kids," she said. "Most amateurs have jobs and families, and this is our hobby. That's why the team aspect is really fun too, because it adds the social aspect in addition to the sport. I feel like we adults need that social aspect too."

For Huber, 56, of Dallas, the weekend was a chance to let her stress melt away after a tough week at her job as a psychiatrist. She rode her homebred 6-year-old Swedish Warmblood by Consul, Barnabus.

"It's really nice for me, because he holds a special place in my heart," she said. "I was really happy with his cross-country. Dressage, I didn't mark as well as I usually do, but I had a rough work week before, so it's hard to get your head in the game when you work and this is your hobby."

Huber, who's married to professional eventer Mike Huber, came to the event just for the AEC, but she was happy she elected to ride for a team as well.

"I think for us amateurs that have other jobs, you get here, and you maybe haven't gotten to ride the week before as much as you wanted to, so we really support each other," she said. "In the warm-up, we're like, 'It's going to be OK! It's fun.'"

Pye came to the Texas Rose Horse Park specifically to compete in the ATC, and she left with two blues, one for the team and one as the winner of the separate ATC novice division with Jo Ellen Krueger's DeeJay, a 6-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding (San Remo—Titania II).

### THE CHRONICLE OF THE HORSE/USEA ADULT TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS Tyler, Texas—Sept. 25-28

#### ►PRELIMINARY

TEAM	TOTAL
<b>1. AREA V &amp; VII RUN FOUR ROSES</b>	<b>109.0</b>
Light In The Dark/Catie Cejka	31.3
Change Order/Alexandra Wikstrom	35.7
Santarae/Louise Leslie	42.0
Viva La Diva/Kelley Kays-Everett	(122.8)
<b>2. AREA IX</b>	<b>112.7</b>
Warlord/Darlene McInnes	28.3
Princess Pavan/Christina Henriksen	39.4
Ginnetts Manricko/Julia Spatt	45.0
<b>3. AREA IV, VI &amp; X</b>	<b>152.7</b>
Noblesse Oblige/Heather Drager	41.5
Best Etiquette/Camie Stockhausen	47.2
Willoughby Bay/Joy Simon	64.0

Also competed: 4. Area III & VIII (Midnight Special/P. Kimmel, Daisy/I. Lampton, Awesome Commander/C. Duncan) 153.3.

#### ►TRAINING

TEAM	TOTAL
<b>1. AREA II, III &amp; VIII</b>	<b>107.2</b>
Diamond Legacy/Melissa Fox	31.4
Special Performance/Pamela Kimmel	33.6
Fernhill Chaos/Brie Murray	42.2
It's Friday/Jyl Lavera	(70.7)
<b>2. AREA II, III &amp; V</b>	<b>116.1</b>
Anegada/Adele Baker	31.8
High Maintenance/Carrie Poloson	40.9
Drop The Buck/Cindy De Porter	43.4
NZ Bay Of Islands/Jean Fowler	(R)
<b>3. AREA X</b>	<b>321.1</b>
KER Action Hero/Anna Kjellstrom	37.6
Patriot's True North/Shawn Ortiz	138.6
NZ Valentine/Kelly Dray	144.9
Cedar Hill/Susan Philpott	(E)

Also competed: Area IV & V (Zigana/M. Marks, Jesabelles Shadow/T. Shaft, Shotgun Willie/S. Reimers, Cavalier/C. Meehan), E.

DeeJay was a former dressage horse and has been jumping for about a year.

"We got him and didn't know what we had, but he's turned into something really cool," said Pye, 28,

#### ►NOVICE

TEAM	TOTAL
<b>1. AREA V #1</b>	<b>94.0</b>
Sir Lamb Chop/Hannah Smitherman	29.0
DeeJay/Jessica Pye	32.5
Barnabus/Cherye Huber	32.5
Fast Front/Sunny Shepard	(W)
<b>2. AREA VI &amp; VIII</b>	<b>97.0</b>
Our Questionnaire/Carrie Landry	29.5
Saint Louie/Britt Sabbah	30.0
Southern Belle/Sarah Lipetz	37.5
Night Flight/Tracy Scott	(40.0)
<b>3. AREA III &amp; IV</b>	<b>101.2</b>
Deputy Deuce/Ryan Bean	29.5
NZ Jewel/Jean Fowler	33.0
It's Teddy/Sharon Anthony	38.7
Da Capo/Angela DeBoer	(62.1)

Also competed: 4. Area V #2 (My Shamrock Paddy/R. Rickly, Win/Win Situation/J. Denton, Baxter VIII/C. Ferrell, Rio Paisano's Juliet/C. Green), 105.5; 5. Area V #3 (Christoff/J. Markham, Scotland Yard/L. Fogg, Sportsfield Ryan/C. Peterson, Falconwood's Defender/W.J. Everett), 110.9; 6. Area VII & IX (Enchanted/K. Hardy, Storm Of The Century/S. Richards, GottaFeeling/C. Cejka, Proud Will Power/M. Smith), 113.5; 7. Area X "X-Factors" (On The Fly/A. Armijo, Bucky O'Hanlian/K. Storm, Stina/C. Lazzaretti, Wyatt Earp/L. Vesper), 143.3.

#### ►BEGINNER NOVICE

TEAM	TOTAL
<b>1. AREA II &amp; II</b>	<b>103.0</b>
Santos/Jenna Calcaterra	30.5
Reseda De Fleyres/Sher Schwartz	32.5
Sterling Silver/Justin Hull	40.0
<b>2. AREA IV</b>	<b>107.0</b>
C.D. Dancer/Jill Wagenknecht	23.5
Beautiful Bess/Ruth Rose	38.5
Nearco/Debbie Beam	45.0
Riva's Revenue/Nancy Fronczak	(RF)
<b>3. AREA X FIVE STAR HOBOS</b>	<b>107.5</b>
Lady Black Hawk/Julia Skains	30.5
All Riled Up/Michelle Scarzone	35.5
Las Trampas/Lyn Fagan	41.5

Also competed: 4. Area V #2 (Ragtime Gold/C. Abrams, El Cid/A. Jensen, Martha's Frenchman/S. Agnew, Twilight Hunter/C. Newman), 113.5; 5. Area V (Flagmount's Rebel/R. Bliss, Three Quarter Ton/H. Cozewith, Miaren/J. Stewart, Fuerst See Ruby Falls/M. Bader), 192.3; Area IX (Remark/K. Michel, Gracefully Dun/V. Dudasch, Grand Finale/J. Greer-Slade), E; Area VI, VIII & IX (Kallisto Kalio/S. Batterson, Sir Cantaro CRU/A. Desmond, Lil' Birnie/J. Ramsey), E.



The combined team from Areas II and III won *The Chronicle of the Horse*/USEA Adult Team Championship beginner novice division. (From left) Jenna Calcaterra on Santos posed during the awards ceremony with event official Robert Stevenson, Sher Schwartz on Reseda De Fleyres and Nutrena representatives Sharon Choney and Ruthie Stotler. (Not pictured: Justin Hull on Sterling Silver.) MEGAN BRINCKS PHOTO

Flower Mound, Texas. “He’s a really fun, easygoing, laidback kind of horse. We missed out on qualifying for AECs four times for frustrating reasons, so I wanted to come here before he moved up to training and use the championship course.”

Pye runs her own Pye Equestrian and has ridden to the three-star level. Her previous team experiences were at the FEI North American Junior and Young Rider Championships, so she was excited to have the opportunity to ride on a team again.

“It’s a great way to get people from other parts of the state to get to know each other a little better,” she said. “I think when we go, even at the local shows, you stick to the people you know—you don’t have a lot of time to go venturing off.”

Shepard’s ATC didn’t go the way she planned when her 7-year-old off-the-track Thoroughbred Fast Front (Changeintheweather—Fast For All, Sea Salute) colicked after dressage on Friday. She decided to withdraw, but she stuck around to watch her team win.

A mother of a 4-year-old, Shepard came to the ATC with a painful chest contusion after falling off at her final prep event. She also broke her neck in 2009, which led to some new riding challenges.

“My horse saves my tail all the time!” she said with a laugh. “Like Cherye said, you just don’t always have the time that people who do this consistently can. I can’t ride five days a week. I have conferences, I have a husband, I have to cook dinner. I’m just so grateful.

“Coming back off of breaking my neck in two places, I have this new fear that I’ve never had before,” she continued. “My horse just totally takes care of me. When he colicked, the vet said he was OK, but I just didn’t feel like he was 100 percent. I just didn’t want to do that to him because he takes such good care of me. I can bring him into the jump wrong, and he won’t miss a beat. He won’t punish me for it.”

The 38-year-old from Hot Springs, Ark., noted that she can’t move her head and neck as much since her injury, which occurred when she fell from another horse.

“So I’ve had to learn to ride again without the mobility,” she said. “It’s a passion, and horses—I love them to death—but they’ll beat the snot out of you in every sense of the word. But they’re awesome. It’s a sickness, and I’ve got it bad!”

Shepard runs IPC Stables, a Thoroughbred breeding farm, and often gets her homebreds back to compete in other disciplines.

She’s looking forward to competing in another ATC competition, even if her first experience didn’t go to plan.

“I can’t wait to do it again,” she said. “It’s like a little family.”

### **An Unexpected Ribbon**

While Sher Schwartz waited for the awards ceremony for the senior beginner novice amateur division at the AEC, she struck up a conversation with Jenna Calcaterra. They had met at an event earlier this year in Virginia, and both were riding in the same division at the AEC.

But what Schwartz realized while making idle conversation was that,

## ▶ A New Home For The ATC

**F**or more than 20 years, *The Chronicle of the Horse*/U.S. Eventing Association Adult Team Challenge has brought adult riders together for a friendly team competition in the Eastern, Western and Central regions.

But last year, the USEA Board of Governors voted to change the format and move the ATC to the Nutrena/USEA American Eventing Championships with the idea of creating a celebration of the adult rider.

For the 2014 ATC, riders who wished to compete on a team had to enter the designated ATC division at their level and were not eligible to have their scores count for the AEC as well.

But participation was low in the ATC divisions at the closing date, with none in the beginner novice, four in the preliminary, three in the training and six in the novice—hardly enough riders to make a team, let alone a team competition.

In the end, organizers decided to pull teams of adult riders together from the ATC and AEC amateur divisions to make for a healthier

competition. The preliminary and training had four teams each, and the novice and beginner novice had seven.

Louise Leslie, who sits on the Board of Governors representing Area VII and is also the Vice President of Area Affairs, traveled from Seattle to contest the preliminary ATC division and was a member of the winning ATC team.

“Since it was the first year and a lot of people didn’t understand what we were trying to achieve making just one national, big deal [event], it was a little weak getting the teams together,” she said. “[By pulling riders together] the team competition was very successful, and we achieved our goal there. I would say I could have done a better job explaining it. I wasn’t disappointed [with the low ATC entries]—I was sorry there was confusion about what the ATC division was. People didn’t understand what it was all about.”

Leslie noted that the USEA is hoping to grow the regional adult team challenges that have been created since the elimination of the Eastern, Western and Central ATCs.

Those new regional ATCs will be used as qualifiers for the national ATC championships and will give riders who can’t make the trip to Texas a chance to try a team competition. She said six areas hosted adult team challenges this year.

“Going forward, that’s something that we’re going to be building on, having these local, regional team challenges and then having the big deal at the AECs,” she said. “It’s going to be structured like the Young Riders, in that the areas are going to be able to financially help individuals get there.”

Leslie said the USEA Adult Rider Committee will also rethink the name of the divisions so they can include adult riders whether they’re professionals or not.

“I think we’ll keep the individual adult amateur division [at the AEC] and rename the ATC division something like the Adult Rider division, because the target group for the team competition is the adult amateur, but also for the non-high performance professionals out there,” she said. “We need to set up a division that they can fit in.”

unbeknownst to her, the two women comprised two-thirds of the winning Area II and III beginner novice ATC team.

“I knew I was on a team, because I was checking the scores online,” Calcaterra said. “But then we were talking, and [Schwartz] was like, ‘What team?’”

Schwartz and Calcaterra were joined by Justin Hull, and their collective score of 103.0 earned them prize packages and the winning honors.

Calcaterra, a 39-year-old commodities broker from Culpeper, Va., rode her Santos, a 16-year-old Belgian Warmblood of unrecorded breeding, to finish on their dressage score of 30.5. They’ve been a team for almost nine years, but they’ve only been eventing for two. She purchased the gelding as a

jumper, but when she moved from New Jersey to Virginia, she rediscovered her love for the sport of eventing, in which she had competed years ago.

“I fell in love with it, qualified [for the AEC] last year and came down here, loved it and said, ‘Any year I can, I’m going to come down,’” Calcaterra said. “It really feels like a championship because it’s so far out of my area. It feels more special.”

As for Schwartz, the team’s win was a pick-me-up after an eighth-placed finish in the individual competition with her Reseda De Fleyres, a 9-year-old Selle Français (Sarastro—Reglisse Du Maury).

“I had a disappointing rail, so this makes up for it,” said Schwartz, a 63-year-old clinical psychologist from Waverly Hall, Ga.

“She’s always like, ‘What can I do for you today?’” Schwartz added of the mare she’s had for four years. “She wants to please, always. Cross-country was really fun; it was awesome.”

“Sasa” earned a dressage score of 28.5, and added one rail during show jumping to their score.

Hull, of Gray Court, S.C., rode his Sterling Silver to a dressage score of 40.0, which he kept through the weekend with clean jumping.

### Joining Together

The winning training division team members, composed of riders from Areas II, III and VIII, didn’t know each other before coming to the competition, but they agreed the experience was well worth their trips to the Texas Rose Horse Park. ▶



**The Chronicle of the Horse/USEA Adult Team Championship training division win went to the combined team from Areas II, III and VIII. (From left) USEA President Diane Pitts posed with Melissa Fox on Diamond Legacy, Pamela Kimmel on Special Performance, USEA Senior Director of Programs Rob Burk and Jyl Lavera on It's Friday. (Not pictured: Brie Murray and Fernhill Chaos.)**  
MEGAN BRINCKS PHOTO

The team finished on a total score of 107.2, with Melissa Fox, of Leesburg, Va., earning the squad's best score of 31.4 aboard her 15-year-old Thoroughbred gelding Diamond Legacy (Unfold—Kiwi Trip).

Fox purchased "Gus" eight years ago, and they traveled to Texas for the AEC last year as well, but this was their first time participating in an ATC.

"It's been really competitive this year," Fox said. "I thought some of the questions on cross-country were a little harder—it was worth the trip."

Joining Fox on the winning team was Pamela Kimmel, Versailles, Ky., who rode Special Performance, her 6-year-old homebred warmblood (Ballywhim An Luan ACPS 56 XXXIII—Special Event), to earn a final individual score of 33.6. Kimmel had competed in previous ATC competitions, but she originally doubted she'd be able to continue the tradition this year.

"I like to do it, but with it being in Texas and us in Kentucky, we're not going to be able to send a whole team," she said.

Brie Murray, of Atlanta, rode Fernhill Chaos, a 6-year-old Irish Sport Horse (Chacoa—Kec Donna Diamond), to end on a score of 42.2. And Jyl Lavera wrapped up the winning team on It's Friday, a 15-year-old Thoroughbred (Charlie's Orphan—Silver Cloud). Their score was dropped from consideration for the team score, but Lavera was pleased with their round nonetheless.

"Friday" was owned and competed by Millie Forrest, of Louisville, Ky., until the then 19-year-old rider needed to find a new home for her gelding in preparation for attending college. Lavera was simultaneously deciding to retire her competitive mount.

"She just wanted him to have a good home," Lavera said. "I thought [the cross-country] was really a challenge—for me and him, it was a big challenge. He's not easy to ride, but he's very honest."

### Long Treks Bring Rewards

The Run Four Roses team—comprised of riders from Texas and Washington State and named by member Catie Cejka—captured the preliminary ATC title on a score of 109.0.

"We wanted to coordinate between the Texas Rose Horse Park and Portland, Ore., 'The City of Roses,'" explained Cejka's teammate Alexandra Wikstrom. "And we have a handful of Thoroughbreds, so the Kentucky Derby theme."

Wikstrom, 28, Seabrook, Texas, brought her 9-year-old Thoroughbred gelding Change Order (Fappie's Notebook—Supah Boots) and finished second in the amateur preliminary division in their first season at the level together. Wikstrom works as a project manager for a construction company, and she competed in the AEC last year in the training division but had never done an ATC.

"I really enjoyed it a lot," she said. "I did Young Riders when I was a junior, so I really enjoyed that team experience, and I haven't had that opportunity since then. We stabled together so we could help each other and get to know each other. It was a really great opportunity to meet somebody that I probably wouldn't from out of the area."

Cejka, 31, traveled all the way from Washougal, Wash., with Light In The Dark, a 7-year-old Thoroughbred mare (Raisor's Edge—Bold Surge). A registered nurse in an intensive care unit, Cejka bought her mare for \$500 as a yearling and has trained her through the levels.

"I wasn't so sure [about coming] because it was such a long way, but our area coordinator put it together to bring us down here," she said. "I love the whole team thing. It kind of takes a little pressure off. You want to try harder for your team. I got to meet all these guys, which was really fun. We got team shirts and some other stuff. It worked out really well."



(From left) Kelley Kays-Everett on Viva La Diva, Catie Cejka on Light In The Dark, Louise Leslie on Santarae and Alexandra Wikstrom on Change Order comprised the Area V and VII Run Four Roses team, the winners of *The Chronicle of the Horse*/USEA Adult Team Championship preliminary division. LINDSAY BERRETH PHOTO

As the vice president of area affairs for USEA and an active adult rider herself, Louise Leslie put her money where her mouth was and traveled from Seattle to the ATC, a 34-hour haul.

She brought Santarae, a 14-year-old New Zealand Thoroughbred gelding (Silent Hunter—Santina) and finished second in the ATC division behind Cejka.

The pair has intermediate experience, but Leslie, 51, decided to drop down a level to take some pressure off.

“Since I’m an amateur, if I’m going to travel all this way, I’d much rather travel for a team competition than an individual one,” she said. “If you look at the individual [intermediate] division, an amateur didn’t have a shot. It was really rewarding to come down and have a good time. When they centrally located it, it really added another flavor to the AECs and made it worth the trip.”

Leslie lived in the Dallas area in the 1990s and had competed in ATC competitions previously.

“I had a blast,” she said. “[The cross-country course] really made you ride your lines and pick your spots where you’re going to go if you want to make

time. He had one of the quickest times because I took the straight routes and cut corners. The stadium course really made you sit up and ride.”

Kelley Kays-Everett had a challenging weekend, picking up a couple of refusals on cross-country with Viva La Diva, but the fact that the 17-year-old Belgian-Morgan cross mare of unrecorded breeding just picked up eventing two years ago after foxhunting most of her life was impressive.

“The first horse I had ever gotten to prelim on was her brother, and he was fourth with a novice girl last year,” said Kays-Everett of Winnie, Texas. “It was a challenge to see if I could get her there. She’s a really fun ride.

“We were the senior pair!” she joked. “I didn’t go prelim until I was 50. I had some challenges over the weekend, so I was just glad to complete. I had two runouts on the arrowhead; coming from hunting, it’s been those skinnies sometimes. But after

that, everything went like a machine.”

Kays-Everett, 53, and her husband, W.J. Everett, run Falconwood Equine Center near Houston, but she also works as a general practice veterinarian, mostly working with small animals and exotic pets. 🐾

► **The Chronicle Of The Horse/USEA Adult Team Championships**

**Tyler, Texas—Sept. 25-28.**

▲ **Prel. Indiv. ATC** - 1. Light In The Dark, C. Cejka, 31.3; 2. Santarae, L. Leslie, 42.0; 3. Best Etiquette, C. Stockhausen, 47.2. ▲ **Trg. Indiv. ATC** - 1. High Maintenance, C. Poloson, 40.9; 2. Drop The Buck, C. De Porter, 43.4. ▲ **Nov. Indiv. ATC** - 1. DeeJay, J. Pye, 32.5; 2. It’s Teddy, S. Anthony, 38.7; 3. Baxter VIII, C. Ferrell, 42.0.



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