ON THE CIRCUIT

CHAPOT, AIKO SWEEP LAKE PLACID GRAND PRIX

BY NANCY DEGUTIS

LAKE PLACID, NY — A tough course over rolling terrain didn't daunt Laura Chapot of Neshanic Station, NJ, and her Aiko as the pair bested three others in a jump-off to claim the $50,000 Budweiser Grandprix of Lake Placid on the last day of the June 26-30 event.

With none of the 37 entries going clean in the initial round, the jump-off went to a quartet of four-faulters that included Chapot, Margie Goldstein-Engle on both Hidden Creek's Alvaretto and Lacosta, and Katie Prudent on her Olympic show-jumping trials mount, Belladonna.

Chapot, 24, and in her second year as a professional, appreciated going last in the elimination round but didn't dwell on her competitors' trips.



Karen Preston

Laura Chapot is all smiles after winning the $50,000 Budweiser Grand Prix of Lake Placid aboard Aiko.

"I didn't watch the others go, but I knew I would have to be fast," said Chapot, who earned the $15,000 winner's check by taking a chance.

The only time-saving move that riders could try was an option to the Swedish oxer, one of eight fences in the tiebreaker. Fractions of a second could be shaved off by taking a tight turn inside the water jump, but that put a horse on a bad angle to the oxer. A safer but slower route was to loop around the water jump to approach the oxer head on.

Prudent and Belladonna led off carefully but still dropped a rail for a 50.163 finish that was good for fourth. Then Goldstein-Engle on Hidden Creek's Alvaretto posted a round that was the one to beat, coming home clear in 45.490. Her round, which would be good for second, ensured that Alvaretto would be one of only two horses (along with Aiko) in the ride-off to go clear; however, it put the gelding a second and a half behind Aiko.

Goldstein-Engle tried to better her next outing with her other horse, Lacosta; but the Holsteiner clipped a rail, ending with four faults in 47.447, putting the bay in third.

Looking at the leading time on the board, Chapot opted to take a risk and "I decided to take the tight turn."

Aiko, a ten-year-old Thoroughbred, was purchased from Californian Megan Johnstone, said Chapot, whose father, six-time Olympian Frank Chapot, worked extensively with the gelding to train him for the jumper arena. The horse was the intermediate jumper champion at the 1995 Devon (PA) show and went Grand Prix late last year. The chestnut helped Chapot win the East Coast qualifying league for last spring's Volvo World Cup finals.

Laura Chapot said that the natural course itself was the deciding factor. "I thought the hills played a big role in it. They made the jumps ride a little bigger," she said.

Course designer Jose Gamarra, of La Paz, Bolivia, agreed, saying that he was surprised to see no clear initial rounds. "For the almost 50 horses with 20 excellent ones in that field, I set this as a big test, as it should be for a $50,000 grand-prix," said Gamarra.

The uneven footing "made some of the distances become more difficult and made some of the jumps a little bigger than they actually were," he said. Although he was pleased with the course overall, "Maybe I made a mistake with jump nine (the Swedish oxer, which riders approached on an uphill slant after the water obstacle). I should have lowered it one hole," said Gamarra, who saw the oxer's bars lowered by 23 contenders in the class.

Wendy Chapot, Laura's older sister, was trying to duplicate her sister's win in the $5,000 Show Jumping Hall of Fame Amateur-Owner Jumper Classic. Chapot, the 1995 Hall of Fame amateur champion, had to give way to Bristol & Black with Paul De Hechavarria up. Last to go in the five-horse ride-off, De Hechavarria and his gelding went clear in 32.02 to outgun Chapot and her True Grit, who finished second with 55.041.



Margie Goldstein-Engle rode Hidden Creek's Laurel to second in the I Love New York Grand Prix. Photo by Karen Preston.

TROUBLE WITH THE WATER AT I LOVE NEW YORK

BY KATE O'HARE

LAKE PLACID, NY — The $35,000 Budweiser I Love New York Grandprix got underway on July 7 in Lake Placid under sunny skies, with gliders from the nearby airport silently passing overhead. However, sun was not the norm for the 1996 I Love New York Horse Show.

Torrential rains on the fourth left the show ring under several inches of water and caused the rescheduling of many classes. More rain fell on the sixth, so the footing was less than perfect when the 48 horses and riders headed out on the course, designed by Robert Jeffery.

The toughest question of the course came at the double combination at fences 11A and B, which came immediately after a water jump. The second rider, Laura Chapot aboard Gem Twist, had a refusal; as did the next team, Megan Johnstone and Grand Star. Asked what went wrong, Chapot replied, "It's hard to have a combination like that after the water." Apparently Gem Twist was so busy paying attention to Chapot's efforts to throttle him back after the water that he had no time to prepare himself for the fence.

The same held true for several riders, who were forced to bring their horses almost to a halt after the water, then failed to have the impulsion to clear 11A. Some who did make 11A ran out of gas at the B portion of the jump.

There were a pair of falls, the worst being Lauren Hough's tumble from Radames. After pitching forward off the horse, Hough banged into the standard of a

(See Circuit, page 57)

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Circuit: Continued from page 31

nearby jump and stayed down for several minutes, holding her knee. She was removed from the course on a golf cart and reportedly refused transport to the hospital.

In all, eleven pairs moved on to the jump-off round: Margie Goldstein-Engle on Hidden Creek's Laurel and Hidden Creek's Alvaretto; Beezie Patton on Dynamite; Amy Shafmaster on Seaford; Nona Garson on Derrek; Olympic team member Leslie Burr Howard on Ulane Du Plessis; Chris Kappler on Zanzibar; Alison Firestone on Major; McLain Ward on Orchestre; Candice Schlom on Mr. Spoon; and Pamela Polk on Apropos.

In the jump-off, trouble befell Shafmaster, who had refusals and withdrew; and Schlom, who had a refusal and a slip at the Budweiser vertical.

The first rider, Goldstein-Engle aboard Laurel, went clear in a time of 42.243 but picked up a rail with her second mount. There were no more clears until eighth rider Firestone took her shot aboard Major. She cleared the course in a blazing time of 41.50. The time and faults stood up through the last three competitors.

Fresh off a win in the third Olympic show-jumping selection trial at St. Christopher's Horse Show in Malvern, PA, the nineteen-year-old Firestone is only seven years older than her bay Belgian Warmblood, with whom she has been competing only since February.

"His best point is that he's so competitive," she said. "He's always wanting to win. Some horses can have all the ability in the world and not want to win. He always tries his hardest. He has the biggest heart in the world."

Trained by three-time Grandprix Rider of the Year Katie Monahan Prudent, Firestone has spent the last couple of summers in Europe, winning classes at Hickstead, England; Hamburg, Germany; and Filot, Belgium. "Every class over there is competitive," Firestone said. "So that really helped me a lot."

Asked about her jump-off strategy, the soft-spoken Firestone replied, "I couldn't take a chance going slow and clean. Margie was fast enough; she didn't give me any room to spare."

For Goldstein-Engle (who increased her lead in the Budweiser AGA Rider of the Year standings with her second-place finish) it meant coming in runner-up to yet another young rider, following her second-place finish to Laura Chapot the week before. Asked if she's looking over her shoulder, Goldstein-Engle replied, "You always are, no matter what."

Goldstein-Engle is still competing despite a herniated disk in her back that she is treating with injections, electromagnetic therapy, acupuncture, and chiropractic. "So far, knock on wood," she said. "Seems like it's doing okay. It's still a little bit sore, but it's not near as bad as what it was a few months ago."

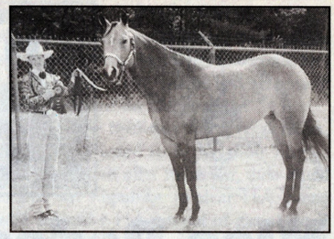
When she was called brave for her determination to keep riding, Goldstein-Engle laughed and said, "Either that or no sense, right?"

NABA Summer Classic

By Lisa Thibeault

SWANZEY, NH — The North Atlantic Buckskin Association's (NABA) 1996 show season got off to a great start with its July 20-21 Summer Classic. For the third year, the show was held at the Cheshire Fairgrounds in Swanzey. The show drew entries from New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

The gelding halter classes were full of top-quality entries. Cool Kansas Kid, owned and shown by David Dale, was the



Lisa Thibeault

Robyn Stevens and Sissy Lee Moore proudly display a blue ribbon from the NABA Summer Classic.

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