

Recreation and Sports

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Chicago next hurdle for Jennifer Irwin

By Mike Zrostek

Fourteen years of practice and lessons are paying off for rider Jennifer Irwin who is on her way to Chicago with her horse Power Surge to compete in the Young Riders competition early next week.

The 21-year-old Irwin is the only rider from Ontario who qualified for the Eventing competition which has only two other Canadians competing in the 16-21 age division.

"I've wanted to do this since I was 16. It's a really big competition, kind of like a mini Pan American games because there are riders from everywhere coming," said Irwin, who moved to Georgetown last October.

Irwin began riding when she was seven, taking lessons from her mother. "My parents were really into it, my mother competed and gave me lessons so she taught me quite a bit, my grandparents were very supportive with my riding and surprised me when they bought me the horse I ride now," said Irwin.

"It's a really neat sport where people can have a lot of fun, we give schooling here (Myrddin Stables) and we get people from the age of five to 70. The sport has no limitations in age, you

don't really reach your prime until you're 30 because you learn from experience."

Eventing consists of three elements which combine different aspects of horse riding.

Dressage tests the horse's movements which have approximately 12 various stages including trotting and canter. Each one is marked out of 10. Cross country is staged on a course with obstacles, where the horse is timed while points are deducted for knocking over the obstacles. Also included is stadium jumping.

"Every horse can do eventing but to place well in competitions you need a horse who can dressage very well because you can go clear on cross country, stadium and jumping. Right now dressage is my weakest point and the show jumping is getting better."

Irwin, who has competed for only two years, recently was the top Canadian in Montreal at the Bromont finishing in fifth place. A performance that helped her qualify for Chicago.

To qualify, a rider must have been in at least one three-day preliminary and three intermediate events that must include one clear cross country run. Irwin is

really looking forward to the challenge.

"I'm not really nervous, but there are concerns like if you'll be fit and the timing with your horse. It's exciting because I move up to the events level next year."

Many people think you just get on and let the horse do the work. However, this couldn't be farther from the truth. A tremendous amount of training and practice go into eventing.

Training for Irwin and Power Surge consists of at least one to two hours of riding each day which includes conditioning, galloping and interval training. Along with coaches Edie Carves and Barb Mitchell, work is also done on dressage; jumping on a designed course twice a week and gymnastics.

"With Power Surge, it's like a partnership. It's incredible to see him now. He's right there, he doesn't hesitate at the fences anymore."

Last year Irwin and Power Surge had seven outings without any penalty points and had their first clear stadium run in Collingwood.

Irwin says that jumping is pretty simple when you get the timing down and have a good horse.

"My job is to keep the canter in rhythm, the horse

straight to where he will jump and into jumping position - which is about six feet in front of the mark."

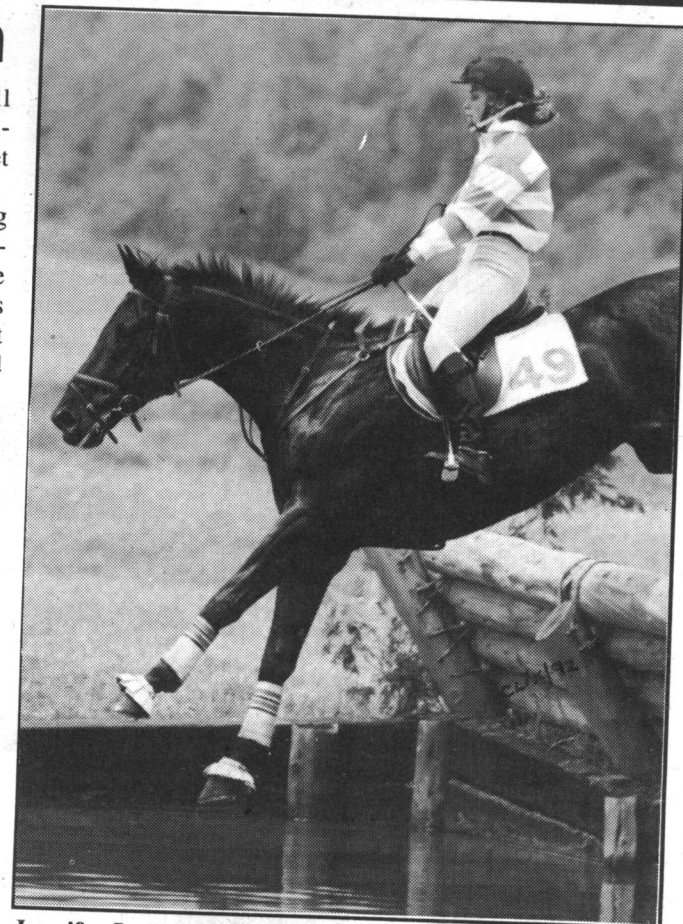
Eventing has been getting some negative publicity lately especially in Europe because of riders and horses getting injured or killed, but Irwin says that should change soon.

"Amendments are being made so that it will be better for both the riders and horses, such as shortening the cross country and changing the number of faults from three to two so riders will have to think more."

Irwin thinks one of the problems is that people don't get the horses in good enough condition.

"Horses are interesting, you have to be careful because they have fragile tendons so they need a progressive schedule and a proper diet so the system stays balanced. If they strain anything they will be out for six months and they really never heal properly."

At the present Irwin is concentrating on her riding and hopes to qualify for the next Pan Am Games and go to a future competition in Maryland in the advanced division. Also on Irwin's list is to make the Canadian squad in the future, teach upper level riding and attend



Jennifer Irwin takes her horse Power Surge gently over a practice jump. She will be leaving this weekend to compete in a Young Riders competition in Chicago.

photo submitted

the University of Guelph.

Irwin also wants to help promote the sport and get younger riders involved.

"I want to see how far I

can go with my riding. I just started competing a couple of years ago so I have various goals I would like to achieve in the future."

HEY SPORTS GROUPS!

Halton Hills This Week wants to publish your teams' results. Drop them off at our office: 232 Guelph St., Unit #9, Georgetown or fax them to us at (416) 873-3918

Hay takes first tournament win

By Mike Zrostek

Georgetown resident Ryan Hay fired an impressive two-under-par 69 en route to his first win on the Accuform Junior Golf Tour

at the Oakville Golf and Country Club last Friday.

The 17-year old was pleased and called the win the "biggest thrill" of his life after the four stroke

victory that pushed him to second place after three events on the tour, right behind another Georgetown resident Mike Kotsos.

"I feel unbelievable, it feels awesome to be up there. It's basically my first victory in golf and now I feel like I can compete with these guys," Hay was quoted as saying.

After recording an eagle early in the round Hay had two consecutive bogeys but kept himself focused and sunk a 30-foot chip shot for a second eagle.

"I guess the eagle told me I can play with the top-ranked players, sometimes I have problems with the mental aspects."

Halton Hills golfers dominated the tournament placing five in the top 10. Michael Evans finished second with a 73; Dave Kotsos was fourth with a 74; Duane Erler placed ninth with a 77 and Mike Kotsos was 10th, also finishing with a 77.

Overall after three events Mike Kotsos leads with 167 points, Hay is second with 164 while Ian Windsor is fifth with 158 points and Dave Kotsos is seventh with 147.5 points.

The tour's fourth event is Aug. 16 at Burlington Springs.

The dreaded ESPN jinx

By Rod Beaumont

Just when you thought it was safe to read the paper, I'm back.

What a difference a year makes! Last year, ESPN would occasionally telecast a Blue Jays game only to berate the Jays players and say they'll choke. This year, they are all for the Northern wonders and our boys in blue have consistently tightened their neckties toward a team choke.

I think the ESPN jinx has arisen and targeted the Blue Jays. Here's hoping Cito Gaston brings in a no-tie rule and our boys return to the form we are used to seeing.

Hey kids, what's the four letter word you're not allowed to say around the arenas nowadays? Yes, you got it - "OMHA"!

Seems the executives from all the leagues - CAHA, OHF, MTHL, etc. have gotten into some power struggle and ego bashing at the cost of hundreds of children. This struggle has the Bantam Tournament in question for teams outside the OMHA, because their execs have

Rodent's Racket

stated they are not allowed to play in non-sanctioned OMHA events.

Not to mention the problem that if someone gets their knickers in a knot and applies the right pressure, teams from out of country and province can't compete either. Not only are local tournaments affected, but the teams inside the OMHA can't compete outside their group in tournaments and playoffs.

I believe these gentlemen in question should merge and form one group called "DUMB" because their actions are just that. After all, minor hockey is for the kids, not a bunch of men and women acting like them.

Do you have a topic for discussion or an opinion on the past week in sports? Write me care of Halton Hills This Week, 232 Guelph St., Georgetown or phone 873-2254. If it makes me go Hmmmm, I'll include it in my column.

Glen Atom girls win division playoff

Glen Minor Ball hosted the Atom boys and Atom girls playoffs tournament on the weekend.

The Glen girls won their division with an 8-7 win over Hornby. All three teams played well.

Hornby and Acton played an exceptional game to advance Hornby to the finals. A full seven innings had to be played as the teams kept pace with tied scores until the bottom of the seventh when Hornby went ahead by one.

The boys playoffs included

two Glen teams and two Hornby teams. The finals game was won by Hornby over Glen Williams by a score of 16-4. All teams played well.

Congratulations to the Glen coaches, Beth Haines, Ron LaFlamme, Jim Hall, John McNally, Bob Eno and S. Norman.

Glen Pee Wee boys playoff tournament is this weekend at Prospect Park in Acton. Also, the Squirt girls playoff tournament will be held in Limehouse this week-

end.

Tyke Teams
Three Glen Tyke teams were in the playoffs in Acton on Friday, Aug. 6 and Saturday, Aug. 7. All games were very close but the Tyke "C" team from the Glen came home with the championship.

Coaches for this team are Cecil Peacock and John Clark.

Congrates to our other coaches, Dave Main, Brent Morris, Gary Hyde and Jack Bergman.



Matthew Grey, of the Glen Williams Atom Boys One softball team slides safely into second base during Saturday's playoff tournament game against Hornby Team One in the Glen. It was a good effort, but Hornby won the game 16-4.

photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW