



Kelly Currie has been working with horses all her life. She plans to continue riding and hopes to compete in the 1996 Olympics.

## Rider Kelly Currie is tops at 13 years old

By BRUCE STAPLEY  
Kelly Currie's life-long affair with raising, training and riding horses has brought her national acclaim at the tender age of 13.

The Ballantrae Public School student, who just completed Grade 6, has been involved with horses on her family's 'hobby' farm on 10th Line North since she was eight.

No stranger to competition, she recently placed first in the Junior Starter Division in a three-day event in Uxbridge. And the Whitchurch-Stouffville Pony Club, of which she is a member, took the Jumper Show Competition at the Eglinton Equestrian Club this year.

The diminutive teen will take part in an average of two or three competitions a month, with her specialty being eventing. Eventing is comprised of a combination of dressage, cross-country and stadium jumping. With her registered Paint named Penny, Kelly will jump three and a half foot hurdles, and tackle six-foot drops.

But like so many other riders who came up through the ranks, competing in the Prince Philip games, she was beginning to wonder how she would apply her talents as she entered her teen years.

She decided this spring to try out for the Canadian Mounted Games Association team, which is made up of five of the country's top riders in the field of horse and rider/gymnastics.

Never since the team was established in 1985 had there been a member make the team as young as 13.

Competing against 25 aspirants, she was successful, and will go with the team to Virginia in August to compete against eight other countries for the international Mounted Games Association's Churchill Cup.

The games association runs team relay competitions where participants ride ponies of 14.2 hands or less. They have developed into a fast, highly-skilled and exciting team sport for young riders.

The games were designed for young people who no longer were eligible to play Pony Club Prince Philip Games because of their age.

The idea is to encourage international exchanges and competitions to spark friendship between young people of different nations.

Kelly and the rest of the team members train twice a week at different locations. The facilities at her family's farm being ideal, the team sometimes trains there.

While she is just excited about being on the team this year, she stands to be included in the team's trip to Great Britain if she holds her place on the team next year.

Kelly's whole life revolves around her interest in horses in horses and riding. She always

does more than her share when it comes to maintaining the family horse operation.

"She'll ride three horses a day (to train them)," claims her mother Darlene.

"She's out there from when she gets home from school until nine or 10 p.m.," she continues. "She looks after all the horses, and she's not afraid to do the messy jobs."

Her weekends are devoted to her horsemanship as well, as she will spend her Saturdays and Sundays from sunrise to sunset training and tending to her chores.

"She's one of those people born with great ability with horses," says Darlene. "And even though she was younger than the others trying out for the Mounted Games team, she was determined to try that too."

She hopes to be able to continue on with the team until she's 21. After that?

"I'd like to make the Canadian Olympic team in the Eventing category in the 1996 Olympics," she states.

As for her discipline, Darlene claims that Kelly is her own worst critic.

"She's harder on herself than anybody."

But as far as Kelly is concerned, she's just doing what she likes to do best. She loves to compete and loves horses.

"I enjoy working with horses — they trust you after a while."

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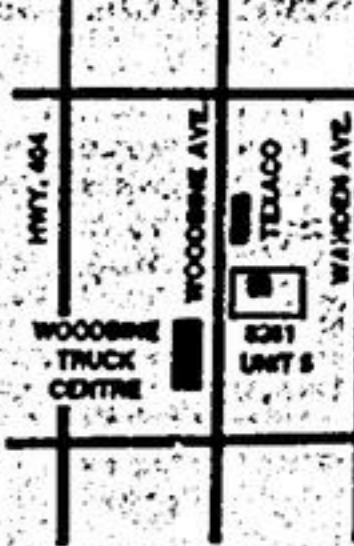
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