

Canada's Spruce Meadows Summer Tournaments Underway

The best show jumpers in North America vie for prize money and prestige.

June 10, 2008

The 2008 Summer Series of Spruce Meadows is underway, featuring the finest North American show jumpers. American rider Beezie Madden claimed the Nexen Cup Derby on Sunday about her fabulous stallion Judgement. Now the series moves on to the Continental tournament, June 11-15, where competitors vie for \$323,000 in prize money. The Continental is followed by five more tournaments that wrap up Sept. 7.

Spruce Meadows is one of North America's most prestigious venues. What was formerly a cattle feed lot on the prairies of Alberta has now become a Canadian jewel.

Construction of Spruce Meadows began in 1973 and the official opening was in 1975. The very first tournament was held at Spruce Meadows in 1976 and offered total prize money of \$174,000. Roughly a dozen people made up the audience that day. This was the first crowd to clap their hands in time to "Radetsky's March" -- the now renowned "Victory Ride" of Spruce Meadows.

Spruce Meadows has evolved immensely since its early days. The tournaments now attract more than 450,000 spectators annually. An army of more than 500 volunteers, the life-blood of Spruce Meadows, helps run summer tournaments. But of course, the biggest spectacle are the elite equine show jumpers, of which up to 1,000 can be found on the grounds at any given time during the tournaments.

For more information, visit www.sprucemeadows.com