

Nation's Top Hunters in Tampa for Three Weeks

Tampa Equestrian Festival underway.

Many of the country's best hunt-seat riders are competing over the next three weeks during the Tampa Equestrian Festival, March 19 - April 6, at the Bob Thomas Equestrian Center at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa, Fla.

The outstanding hunter horses that will be competing demonstrate the qualities that are essential in the sport of foxhunting, including the ability to carry the rider safely and comfortably over obstacles found in the hunt field. The sport has evolved into judging horses' form over jumps and the way they move across the ground.

Horses are divided into sections that relate to either the experience of the horse or the status and age of the rider. "Green Conformation" and "Regular Conformation" hunters are judged on their performance over fences as well as their conformation. "Green Working Hunters" are divided into sections for horses in their first year or second year of rated showing, and "Regular Working Hunters" are the most experienced show hunters. "Pre-Green" divisions are for rookie equines in their first year of competition.

One new event that will be held this year in accordance with the Tampa Equestrian Festival is the \$20,000 ASG Software Solutions USHJA International Hunter Derby, which will be held at Wrenwood Farms in Naples, Fla., on April 6. Hunters at this event will compete in a grass field over the rustic, natural obstacles that were once found in the earlier days of hunter competitions. The theme of the event is "Tradition, Tailgate, Top Hats & Tails," and brings the authentic feel of the traditional derby back to life for both spectators and riders.

Several series awards will be given to outstanding hunters at the American Invitational, which is the culminating event of the three-week series. The King-Kaplan Family Junior Hunter Series Award will be given to the owner of the horse that has earned the most points in the Small and Large Junior Hunter Sections, and there will also be high-point series awards given to the overall champions in each division.

More information about the hunter classes in Tampa and the prize list can be found online at www.stadiumjumping.com.