



Former Eventer with Incredible Comeback Story Leads Lineup of Saturday Champions at US Dressage Finals

Sarah Pyne scored an emotional win on Saturday, November 1, at the [2025 US Dressage Finals](#) presented by Adequan®, which runs October 30 to November 2, 2025, at World Equestrian Center (WEC) in Wilmington, OH.

The residential architect's former eventer Dirhon C "tried to die" three years ago and has since been rerouted to a dressage career, which he has taken to with aplomb. The duo won the [Fourth Level Adult Amateur \(AA\) Freestyle Championship](#) with 72.9% to a Johnny Cash compilation, and Pyne punched the air on her lap of honor.



Since switching careers, Sarah Pyne's former eventer Dirhon C has excelled in dressage, winning the AA Fourth Level Freestyle Championship at Finals with 72.9%. Photo by [SusanJStickle.com](#)

"On Christmas morning we found him panting with a temperature of 107.3 degrees," explained Pyne of the now 13-year-old Holsteiner. "We called all the vets and ruined everyone's holiday; we threw everything at him. For about six weeks we couldn't lead him out of the stall because he would try to collapse. He had *EHV-5* [equine herpes virus] and, as a result, he doesn't have very good lung capacity now, so after six years of eventing together, we switched sports."

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Riders On a Roll

Both Emily O'Neill and Katrina Heilbroner came hot off Second Level Regional Championship wins in their respective regions and repeated the feat at Finals.

Heilbroner rode Odanse GS, her own six-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare to the top of the leaderboard with 72.842% in the [Second Level AA Freestyle](#). The private chef edited her Adele and Madonna music together herself. Heilbroner, who trains with Jannike Gray and Heather Mason, won the AA Training Level Championship in 2024 on the Franklin x Vivaldi mare.



Katrina Heilbroner's Franklin mare Odanse GS, who won the AA Training Level Championship in 2024, topped the Second Level AA Freestyle this year with 72.842%. Photo by [SusanJStickle.com](#)

O'Neill captured both the blue ribbon in the [Second Level Open Freestyle](#) and fifth place on Lory Eighme's 13hh Dartmoor pony stallion, Fiddlemaker's Line Drive. Her winning ride came on Johanna Walters' six-year-old MW Empire, with 75.798%. She has ridden the Escamillo x San Amour gelding since finding him as a just-backed three-year-old at his breeder Jen Vanover's Maplewood Warmbloods.

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More Wins For Morin-Graham and Mason

Christina Morin-Graham brought her winning show tally to five on Saturday when she headed up both the [AA Grand Prix Freestyle](#) and the [Intermediate I AA Freestyle](#) on her talented mares.

In the Grand Prix, she topped the class riding her 16-year-old Damon Hill daughter DSP Dauphin to 72.633% and slotted into the reserve spot on her other horse, the 15-year-old Mondlicht, by Sarkozy x Ravallo, with 71.192%.



Mason's second victory of the day, in the First Level Open Championship, was achieved with her gangly four-year-old Rock It P, with plus-73%. Photo by [SusanJStickle.com](#)

Heather Mason logged two more wins bringing her Finals titles total to four. She lay down an unassailable ride as the first to go in the [Intermediate I Open Freestyle Championship](#) on Manuscript SCF. The eight-year-old Jazz gelding scored 73.325%.

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A Little Sports Car

Going back to basics has worked wonders for Lucy Tidd's [Third Level AA](#) champion, Kayla. The spicy 10-year-old mare by Ferdeaux performed a 68.958% test, which proved the best of the 24 starters in the four-hour class.



Small animal vet Lucy Tidd and Kayla snatched the Third Level AA title with 68.958% in a class of 24 starters. Photo by [SusanJStickle.com](#)

"She's really hot and gets anxious, so with my trainer Jeremy Steinberg we spent the last year going back to work on the basics and she's been so good at this show," said the Maryland-based rider who has owned Kayla for six years after finding her in the Netherlands. "She's a lot of fun, like a little sports car. I'm super happy with the effort she put in. Hopefully now we'll be able to start progressing again."

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Finals Debutante Shines

The new partnership of Katie Cumberford and the 10-year-old Danish mare Schnell's Alley Cat is going from strength to strength, culminating in a win in the [Fourth Level Open Championship](#). The mare, who is by the Ampere son Antobello, scored 70.972% on her Finals debut despite a big crash during her test.



Katie Cumberford and her partner of just six months, Schnell's Alley Cat, took the Fourth Level Open title with 70.972%. Photo by [SusanJStickle.com](#)

"We had a mistake in our extended counter when a table fell over, so she swapped leads," explained Cumberford. "But even with that she's just so good and handled the atmosphere well."

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Competition continued on Saturday, November 1, and a further media release covering the remaining day classes and the evening's gala session will follow. The [full digital show program is available here](#). Follow the action via the [USDF Facebook page](#), [USDF Instagram page](#), and the [US Dressage Finals website](#), plus [live online streaming from the Sanctuary Arena](#) on USEF Network with expert commentary from Kathy Connelly.

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About USDF

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