For Immediate Release | October 24, 2026
Contact: Jennifer Wood | Jump Media | jwood@jumpmediallc.com

Live Stream | Results | Tickets

Grand Champions and Rising Stars Take Center Stage Before MARS Barn Night Festivities at 2026 WIHS

Upper Marlboro, MD – The 2026 Washington International Horse Show (WIHS), presented by MARS Equestrian™ began with junior hunters and junior/amateur jumpers during the daytime session on Friday, October 23, at The Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, MD. The Grand Junior Hunter 3'6" Championship went to Emi Richard and Capaldi, while Kaitlyn Linck and Mirage were the Grand Junior Hunter 3'3" Champions. Grace Griffin on Larinto VDR and Grace Lowe with Vogue TW won the 1.20-1.25m Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic and division championship, respectively. The night closed with entertaining MARS Barn Night festivities, including special awards and the WIHS Shetland Pony Steeplechase Championship, presented by Artemis Equestrian Farm.

Linck and Richard Are Grand in Junior Hunter 3'3" and 3'6" Divisions

On the fifth day of WIHS, a spotlight shone on junior hunter riders as champions were named across all six divisions. Kaitlyn Linck of Clinton Corners, NY, and Mirage earned the Grand Junior Hunter 3'3" Champion after taking champion in the Large Junior Hunter 3'3" division; Linck was also named Best Child Rider on a Horse. Emi Richard of Middlefield, CT, capped off a victorious day as the Grand Junior Hunter 3'6" Champion aboard Capaldi, following her win in the WIHS Junior Equitation - Hunter Phase.

Linck was awarded the honors in the 3'3" division first, incurring a sense of dejá vu as she yet again piloted a catch ride to the win, this time aboard Charlotte Rossetter's 14-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding, Mirage, who won all three over fences classes.

Kaitlyn Linck rode Mirage to the Grand Junior Hunter 3'3" Championship and was named Best Child Rider on a Horse. ***Photo by Erin Gilmore Photography***

“He [Mirage] got into this show last minute and so his owners asked me at five p.m. the night before if I could do it,” Linck laughed. “The first time I ever rode him was at this show last year, and then I rode him for the first time again this year at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show.

“He’s very simple for me,” she continued. “He takes a bit of leg, but he is so easy to find the jumps on, and I’m used to riding so many different horses that it isn’t hard for me to get back into his rhythm.”

Linck was the recipient of the grand champion title for the Junior Hunter 3’3” divisions in 2025 aboard another catch ride, Sundown.

The award also put the cherry on top of a banner day for Linck, who was second out of the country’s top 40 in the WIHS Equitation Final – Hunter Phase earlier in the day.

Emi Richard had a banner day, including the Grand Junor Hunter 3'6" Championship with Capaldi. ***Photo by Erin Gilmore Photography***

Richard put in top performances over the course of two days aboard Capaldi, the nine-year-old Hungarian Sporthorse gelding owned by River's Edge, in the Large Junior Hunter 3'6" 15 and Under division with two winning rounds and a second in the division's under saddle class.

"I started riding him this winter, and he's a first year horse, so he's on the greener side," she explained. "I really focus on keeping us both calm because I think we both get a little nervous before going into the ring."

For Richard, WIHS is a long-standing tradition that has only gotten better over the years.

"I've been coming to a for a long time, and I think my first time was when it was still in the city, which was a super cool experience," she said. "They do a great job. I think I've done the junior hunters one other time here, but I didn't have this result, so it's very exciting."

Two Graces Show How It's Done

Victory in the $10,000 1.20-1.25m Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic went to Larinto VDR, a 15-year-old Belgian Warmblood gelding by Mr. Blue, ridden and owned by Grace Griffin of Long Lake, MN. The pair finished clear in 32.152 seconds in a jump-off of 10 competitors. Anleigh Ahlert and Mademoiselle-A, a 14-year-old Belgian Warmblood mare by Corland owned by Grier School, were also clear but their time of 32.163 seconds left them in second place. Third place went to Quaddro D.S., a 14-year-old Holsteiner gelding by Quadros owned by Ashland Farms and ridden by Ella Endzweig to a clear round in 33.564 seconds.

Griffin (23) and "Rock" went from bridesmaids – they were second in their classics at Capital Challenge Horse Show and Pennsylvania National Horse Show – to the brides as they took home the win at WIHS as well as the division reserve championship and Leading Amateur Jumper Rider Award.

"I don't know if I can put it into words," said Griffin of her victory. "The second I heard I won, I burst into tears. I start my new job next week, so I'm taking a break from horses for a little while. This has been our farewell tour for the meantime. I hate to say it's "the end," but it's "in the meantime," is what I've called it. I was really hoping to have a good ride and winning it is like the cherry on top."

Grace Griffith made her final show (for now) with Larinto VDR a winning one. ***Photo by Erin Gilmore Photography***

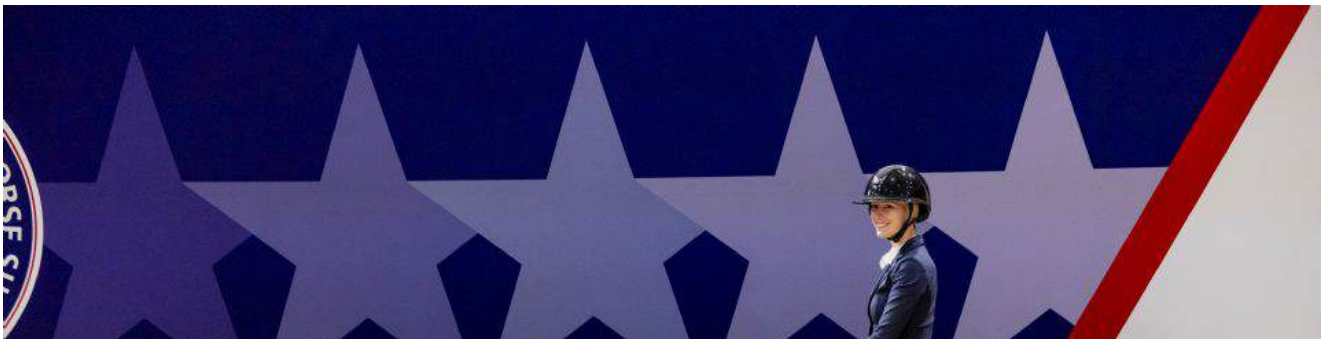
The championship in the division went to Grace Lowe riding her own Vogue TW, who won the first two classes of the division and finished 12 in the classic. Lowe was also named Leading Junior Jumper Rider.

She's incredible," said Lowe of the 10-year-old Oldenburg mare. "I know I can always trust her. She's so fast and so game, and she's such a big confidence builder too."

Lowe, of Arlington, VA, was a member of the WIHS Junior Committee in 2025 and is now a freshman at the University of Florida. Lowe competed in the WIHS Regional Horse Show in the past but mostly attended WIHS as a spectator.

"Growing up coming here, I never thought that I would one day be champion at WIHS," she expressed. "It means a lot to win here because this is such a special show to me and to my family."

Liston Johnson was presented with the Junior Jumper Style of Riding Award.



Vogue TW and Grace Lowe won two classes to take the junior/amateur jumper championship. ***Photo by Erin Gilmore Photography***

Hear from costume class winner McLain Ward about his horse, First Lady

Watch

Watch highlights from Friday's WIHS Pony Jumper Championships, presented by World Wide Technology

Watch

Grand Junior Hunter 3’3” Champion
Large Junior Hunter 3’3”
Best Child Rider on a Horse
Champion: Mirage, Kaitlyn Linck, Charlotte Rossetter
Reserve Champion: Modern Man, Monika Spaeth, Sophia Graham

Grand Junior Hunter 3’6” Champion
Large Junior Hunter 15 and Under
Champion: Capaldi, Emi Richard, Rivers Edge
Reserve Champion: All Inklusive, Charlotte Morassutti, Ava Berman

Small Junior Hunter 3’3”
Champion: Bonne Starlight, Robert Mercer, Frog Pond Stables
Reserve Champion: Celebration, Sabrina Miller, Knees 2 Nose LLC

Small Junior Hunter 15 and Under
Georgetown High Score Junior Hunter Owner/Rider
Champion: Final Cut, Finley Baras, Just Dandi LLC
Reserve Champion: Maui, Katherine Mercer, Frog Pond Stables

Small Junior Hunter 16-17
Champion: Soirée, Elizabeth Rinehart, Charlotte Rossetter
Reserve Champion: Styles, Lilly Herzog, Rivers Edge

Large Junior Hunter 16-17
Champion: Shades of Grey, Anna Tyler, Fairway Ranch LLC
Reserve Champion: Lantos, Madison Stewart, Madison Stewart

Rene Dittmer and "Jalen" Brunson won the Best Costume Award.

The EnviroEquine Best Presented Pony Jumper Award went to Kit Kat and Mattelyn Morrissey.

Emi Richard rode Diaceur to win the WIHS Equitation Final - Hunter Phase.

Kaitlyn Linck was named Best Child Rider on a Horse.

The Kind Wins Award was presented to WIHS Junior Committee member Chloe Footer.

Grace Fennell was presented as the winner of the Laura Pickett Award.

Bella Hopkins and Olney Yes Ma'am won the 13th WIHS Shetland Pony Steeplechase Championship presented by Artemis Equestrian Farm.

The WIHS Shetland Pony Steeplechase Safest Ride Award went to Ophelia Loratto and Olney Lightning Bug.

The 2026 WIHS Junior Committee, supported by TKEQ

MARS Barn Night Contest Winners

Largest Group Contest, winner of a United Metro Golf Cart: Enticement Stables

Best Group Spirit and Mascot, winner of a course design clinic with Kenny Krome: Quinn Haven Stables

Best Star-Spangled Video, winner of a large collection of Corro barn products: Days End Farm Horse Rescue

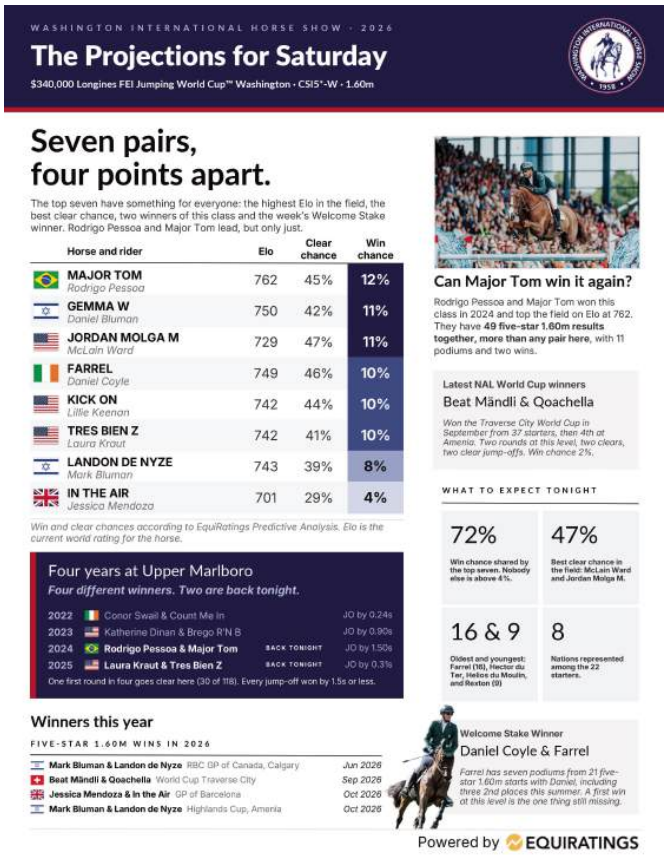
Best Star-Spangled Poster, winner of a custom dry erase board from Grey Pony Designs: Thousand Hills Riding Stables

Farthest Traveled Group, winner of a Corro bucket full of prizes: Everything Little Farm

Want to keep up with the action from anywhere? Watch the 2026 WIHS livestream on USEF Network throughout the week and on FEI TV for the week's five-star classes.

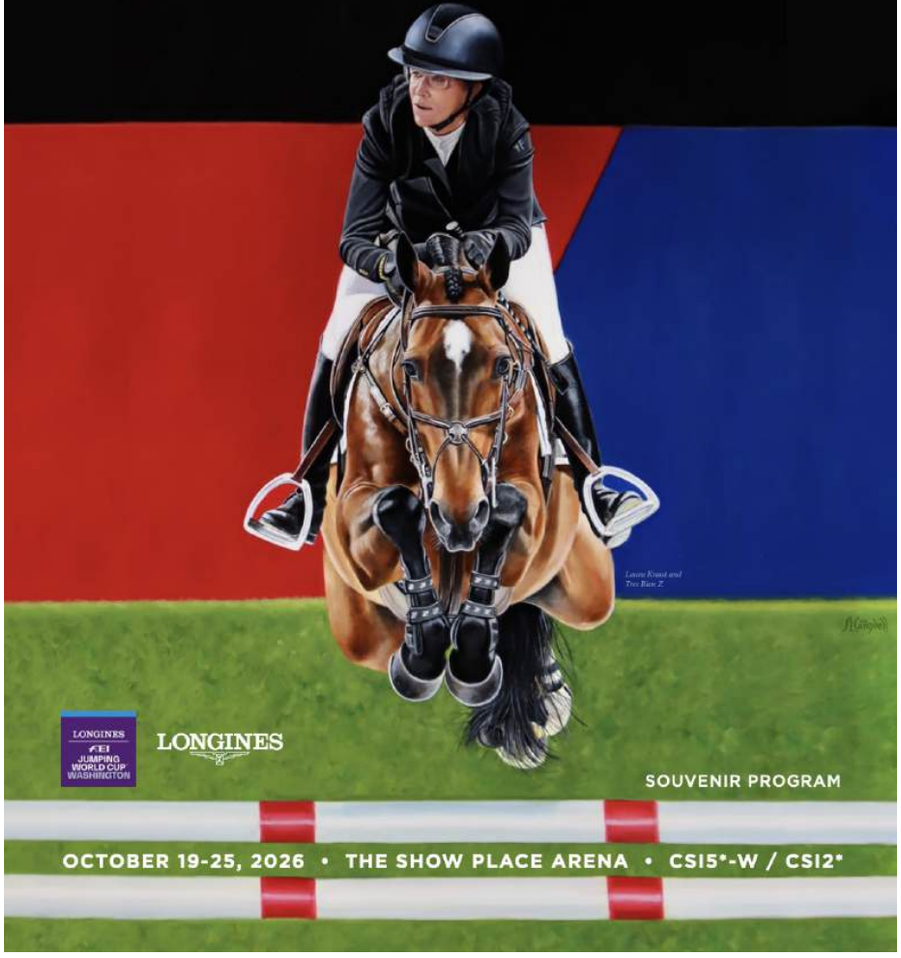
Daytime admission is free throughout the week. Parking is free at all times.

Click to Read the EquiRatings Guide to the Grand Prix



WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW

PRESENTED BY MARS Equestrian™



Read the 2026 WIHS Souvenir Program

For more information, visit www.wihs.org.

About Washington International Horse Show, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization

Established in 1958, the Washington International Horse Show is one of North America's most prestigious, competitive, and entertaining equestrian events with competition for international, professional, amateur, junior and child riders. Highlights include the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Washington CSI5-W for the President's Cup, the WIHS Equitation Finals and Children's and Adult Hunter and Jumper Championships, top national hunters and jumpers, plus popular community and charity events. WIHS is an official USEF Heritage Competition. For more information, visit wihs.org.*

LONGINES

FEI

JUMPING
WORLD CUP™
WASHINGTON

LONGINES

MARS Equestrian

DELTA

Parks & Recreation
M-N C P P C
live more, play more

MARYLAND SPORTS COMMISSION

World Wide Technology