

Bredahl-Baker Makes Winning Look Easy At CDS And USDF Region 7 Championships

Sheri Scott

Winning four titles at the combined California Dressage Society and Great American Insurance Group/U.S. Dressage Federation Region 7 championships would be an impressive accomplishment by itself for Charlotte Bredahl-Baker. But the fact that her mount, Eskada, completed his first show less than six months ago makes it downright unbelievable.

Bredahl-Baker, of Solvang, Calif., swept the third and fourth level open championship classes, Oct. 7-10, at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center in Burbank, Calif. Scores of 70.00 percent at third level and 69.77 percent at fourth level gave her the CDS Championships, and she won the USDF open championships at third (69.88%) and fourth level (70.21%) as well.

"I never expected him to win four championships," said Bredahl-Baker. "His owner couldn't believe it. She had last seen him at his very first show in May."

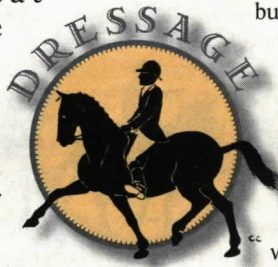
The 17.2-hand, Dutch Warmblood gelding came to Bredahl-Baker in the summer of 2002 from owner Sayoko Nakatani's farm in British Columbia. The green 4-year-old had no brakes or steering, and Bredahl-Baker spent the first two weeks riding him on a longe line. Nakatani insisted that she treat Eskada as if he were her own and take her time, so it was May of 2004 before Bredahl-Baker took him to his first show.

"I figured the more training he had before I started taking him anywhere the better," said Bredahl-Baker.

Eskada was terrified of everything, and Bredahl-Baker spent countless hours hand walking him and taking him places, such as polo matches, to increase his exposure to the world. She spent Wednesday hand walking Eskada at the championships to show him the grounds.

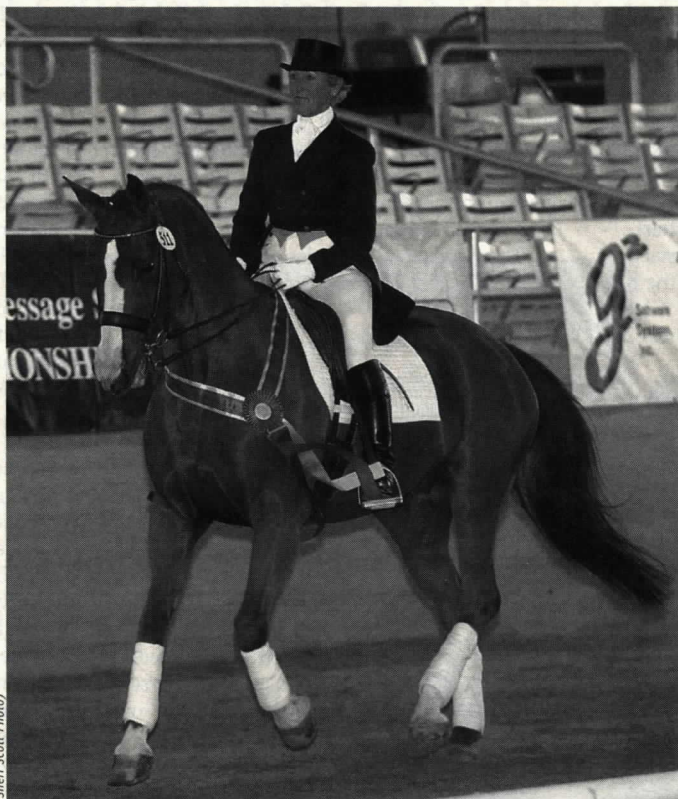
"Eskada was basically very, very good," said Bredahl-Baker. "He was

very looky, but even though he was worried about things, I could ride him through it. Three months ago I probably wouldn't have been able to get him by any of that stuff, but he's really getting a lot more confident."



His new confidence allowed Eskada to show off his athletic ability. His canter work has always come easily, and his natural, uphill balance made changes easy for him. His lateral work is also good, although when Bredahl-Baker first started riding him he was extremely stiff to the left. Now he consistently receives 8s on his trot and canter half passes.

"He has a good talent for the hard stuff too," said Bredahl-Baker. "I've played with him on the long lines in piaffe. The hardest thing for him next year will be doing full canter pirouettes."



Sharon Marshall rode Aniara to the CDS and Region 7 Intermediaire I amateur titles at the GAIG/USDF Region 7 Championships.

Amateur Excellence

Sharon Marshall of Santa Rosa, Calif., returned to the show ring with a splash after taking a break to participate in the "r-rated" judges program. She and her 15-year-old, Swedish Warmblood mare Aniara won the CDS and USDF Intermediaire I amateur championships with scores of 66.12 percent and 66.50 percent.

"My CDS ride felt the best," said Marshall. "I had one small mistake. I did an extension across the diagonal at the canter, and I couldn't get her back. So I got an 8 on the extension and a 5 on my collection and flying change. Normally I can do that transition, but I just got carried away thinking I would really do a good extension."

Marshall has been riding dressage for 20 years and training with Sue Curry for nine years. Two years ago Curry contacted Jan Brinks in Sweden about finding a new horse for Marshall, and Aniara was one of the four he had them try.

"I knew I was going to buy her the minute I laid eyes on her," said Marshall. "I had to be very cool the whole week I was there, but Jan knew I was going to buy her too."

Aniara (by Hertigan) tried out for the Swedish Olympic team in 2000. But after having her second child, her rider decided to sell the mare.

Marshall started training with Dirk Glitz this spring because Glitz travels to the larger shows in California.

"I just really wanted to clinch it here because next year I'll be doing Intermediaire II and Grand Prix, and there's no amateur division," said Marshall. "So the chances of me getting another championship..." she smiled. "This was my time."

Time, and aging out of the young riders, was also a concern for Dani Judy. She started this season at fourth level with her Oldenburg gelding Antaeus but then jumped up to the young rider classes. With only two years of eligibility left, she wanted to get her feet wet at that level and make a serious try for the team next year. But she qualified this year, and she and her Region 7 teammates came home with the team gold medal at the Maui Jim North American Young Riders Championships (Ill.). Judy was fifth individually.

The Region 7 championships gave her the opportunity to prove moving up was the right decision. The 20-year-old from El Cajon, Calif., brought home four championship sashes at fourth level, winning the CDS amateur/junior/young rider championship (67.64%), the USDF young rider championships (64.45%), and the