



Photo: Michelle C. Dunn

Above, Left: Tom Dvorak and Beaumarchais finished on top at the selection trials in Ontario.

Above, Right: Sandra Donnelly and Buenos Aires are part of the relatively young eventing team going to Rio.

Right: Waylon Roberts, son of Ian Roberts and Kelly Plitz, and Paleface are on the Canadian eventing team going to the Pan Ams.



Photo: Karen Briggs



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members, with Courtney King taking US coach Klaus Balkenhol's advice to head to Europe with her horses, and Leslie Reid bowing out of the selection trials due to a lack of organization, communication, and regard for the horses' welfare on the part of Dressage Canada. Canada is sending a "take no prisoners" show jumping team, but as of mid-June the Americans hadn't even announced selections for theirs.

These Games are far more important for Canada than for the US. The Americans' results in all three disciplines at the 2006 World Equestrian Games (WEG) have assured them team berths for the Hong Kong (Beijing) 2008 Olympics. Canada will have just one opportunity to get to Hong Kong: if its PAG dressage and eventing teams finish in the top two of teams other than the US. In show jumping, Canada has to stay in the top three excluding the US. It's an attainable goal for all three disciplines, but by no means a given.

CANADA'S PAN AM TEAMS

Show Jumping

A total of five trials were held in Palgrave, Ontario, and at the Spruce Meadows National in Calgary, Alberta. Three of the five team members were named directly from the results of the trials, with an additional discretionary pick of two members. Ian Millar looked like a shoo-in after winning the first leg at CornerStone Farms; but at Spruce

Meadows he dropped out of the top three. Instead it was Jill Henselwood who came out on top with Special Ed. This will be Henselwood's third time on the PAG team. Close behind her was Mac Cone of King City, Ontario on Melinda. Karen Cudmore, a native of Victoria, BC who now lives in Omaha, Nebraska, was third with her husband's Holsteiner stallion, Southern Pride. The selection committee had a difficult choice to make with the two remaining spots: Ian Millar was fourth in the trials, so his name was added to a list that included veteran team riders Mario Deslauriers, Eric Lamaze, and John Pearce. Millar on In Style and Lamaze on Hickstead were ultimately named to the team, with the other two becoming alternates. Terrance (Torchy) Millar will travel with the team as Chef d'Equipe.

Dressage

The dressage team was named following a grueling set of back-to-back trials that took place over five consecutive days at two locations in Ontario. The circumstances surrounding the last-minute organization of the trials and the conditions of the trials themselves were widely criticized by the riders and owners of the horses.

Both the US and Canadian dressage teams will be missing their strongest members.

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