

Media Relations

UNH Equestrians Win Regional Championship; Head To Nationals May 5 – 8

April 20, 2011

Members of the University of New Hampshire's Intercollegiate Hunt Seat Association (IHSA) Equestrian team won the Zone I Team Reserve Championship. Left to right: Valerie Goeman, Sarah Truchon, Carolyn Kelsey, Kate Frazier, Victoria McTague, Sara Barone, Anna Stoebel, coach Christina Keim. Photo Credit: Katie Bartow

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire Equine Program's Intercollegiate Hunt Seat Association (IHSA) Equestrian team won the Zone I (northeast) Team Reserve Championship and will advance to the IHSA National Championships for the first time in program

history. In addition, Carolyn Kelsey '11 (Deerfield) and Kate Frazier '12 (Bristol, Conn.) have qualified to compete at the national show as individuals.

Clinching a team berth at Nationals means that UNH will be one of just four state universities represented out of sixteen teams. The IHSA National Horse Show will be held at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY, from May 5-8, 2011.

At the Zone I championships in South Hadley, Mass. on April 9, 2011, the UNH team finished the jumping classes in the lead, bolstered by first place ribbons for rookie Sara Barone '14 (Hopkinton, Mass.) and Sarah Truchon '13 (Amherst). During the afternoon's five remaining team contests, UNH held the lead through three classes before slipping just behind ultimate winners Mt. Holyoke College. Consistently strong performances delivered by Frazier, Valerie Goeman '13 (Exeter), and rookies Victoria McTague '14 (Temple) and Anna Stoebel '13 (Wellesley, Mass.) meant that the team's trip to nationals was already clinched before Kelsey finished second in the final team class of the day.

"It was an extraordinary day for our team," says Wildcats coach Christina Keim '98, '09G, who has been with the team since 2006. "To see each one of our riders go into the arena and deliver one solid performance after another is so gratifying, and I think that the excitement feeds on itself. I couldn't have asked for more from this team."

IHSA is a unique form of team equestrian competition in which each competitor draws a horse provided by the host school prior to their ride; no schooling or warm-up of that horse by the rider is allowed. IHSA tests each rider's ability to quickly and accurately assess their mount and ride it to the best of their ability.

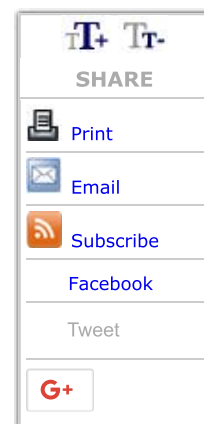
"The IHSA competition format really levels the playing field," says Keim. "No rider has an advantage because they own a fancier horse or have nicer equipment, like they might in regular horse shows. Students love the challenge of having to think on their feet and rely on their previous practice to ride the horse well."

The UNH IHSA Team finished the day just one point behind Mt. Holyoke College, which has yet to be beaten at Zones since they began hosting the competition five years ago. During the 2010-2011 season, the UNH team won six out of eight regular season contests, a feat nearly unheard of in the competitive northern New England region. Still, as first-timers to the Zone finals as a team, UNH entered the competition as underdogs. The fact that the competition between the top two teams was so close came as a shock to some.

"I knew we had a legitimate chance at making it to the National Championships," says Keim. "But I also knew that our rides had to be consistently strong to make that chance a reality. That is exactly what we did."

Although UNH has a degree in equine studies, its riding team is not a varsity sport and its members come from a variety of degree programs and equestrian backgrounds. "Riding is usually such an individual sport," says Keim. "Students who ride on this team really identify with being able to represent their school and to be supportive of each other."

For more information on the UNH IHSA team, visit its website at www.equine.unh.edu/ihsa.



The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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Photograph available to download: http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/apr/bp19equestrian_01.jpg

Caption: Members of the University of New Hampshire's Intercollegiate Hunt Seat Association (IHSA) Equestrian team won the Zone I Team Reserve Championship. Left to right: Valerie Goeman, Sarah Truchon, Carolyn Kelsey, Kate Frazier, Victoria McTague, Sara Barone, Anna Stoebel, coach Christina Keim.
Photo Credit: Katie Bartow

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