

Media Relations

UNH Dressage Team Closes Season; Two Riders Compete In National Championship

May 6, 2011

L-R: University of New Hampshire dressage team members Hannah Shoer '13, coach Sarah Hamilton, Erin Murray '13.
Credit: Ann-Marie Murray

DURHAM, N.H. – After four consecutive regional championships and a national championship in 2009, the University of New Hampshire's dressage team concluded its season in April as regional

reserve champion, making it the second-best team in the Northeast region.

Two riders – Hannah Shoer '13 of Portsmouth, a dual business administration and marketing major, and biology major Erin Murray '13 of Bow -- won the regional championships in their divisions and competed in the Intercollegiate Dressage Association (IDA) national championships in Newberry, Fla. April 29 – May 1, 2011. Both students placed seventh in their respective divisions (Shoer in the lower training division; Murray in the intro division).

"Team highlights this year included winning the team championship at both of our home competitions and at the University of Maine Show," says coach Sarah Hamilton, director of the UNH equine program. "In the individual standings, UNH riders took home half of all the regional year-end awards, which is quite an accomplishment in such strong competition and clearly shows the depth of our team."

In addition to Shoer and Murray, individual highlights included Lisa Moskal '11, an equine science major from New Haven, Conn., who won the regional reserve championship in the upper training division. Moskal and Patty Muench '11, also an equine science major and also from New Haven, were honored as highpoint seniors in the region, meaning they had earned more points than any other graduating seniors during their intercollegiate careers.

Dressage is a sport that can be likened to ballet for horse and rider; the famous Lippizan stallions of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna are an example of dressage at its highest level. Riders strive to systematically develop and improve the horse's strength, flexibility, balance, gait, and movement to create a harmonious partnership between horse and rider, with invisible communication.

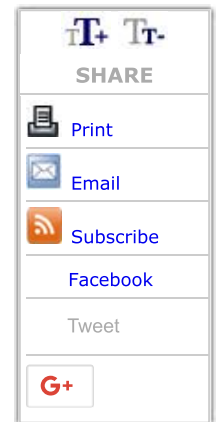
Intercollegiate dressage competition has the added challenge that the rider must perform on an unfamiliar horse. Each college takes a turn hosting a show and provides all the horses for the riders of every team. In a true test of skill, tact and sensitivity, riders draw horses at random and have just 10 minutes to get to know the horse and try to establish a harmonious relationship with the animal.

The UNH equine program offers a bachelor's degree in equine studies that allows students to concentrate in equine industry and management, therapeutic riding or equine science. Classes include stable management, horse care, teaching, training, horsemanship, conformation, equine diseases, equine sports medicine, reproduction, nutrition, and horse trials management. The equine program also has an active riding program, which concentrates in dressage and eventing and two equestrian teams, the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association team (hunt seat) and the Intercollegiate Dressage Association Team (dressage). UNH hosts three nationally recognized horse trials and two nationally recognized dressage shows each year. UNH's therapeutic riding program is recognized as a North American Riding for the Handicapped Association Premier Operating Center. UNH has an active Horsemen's Club, as well as study abroad programs that include a week-long trip to Portugal for the concentrated study of classical dressage.

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/may/bp05dressage.jpg



Caption: L-R: University of New Hampshire dressage team members Hannah Shoer `13, coach Sarah Hamilton, Erin Murray `13
Credit: Ann-Marie Murray

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