

sports

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Riding to Rio

Richmond's Karen Pavicic selected to Canadian dressage team for Pan-American Games

by Don Fennell

Sports Editor

Karen Pavicic was agonizingly close to making the Canadian Dressage Team for the 1999 Pan-American Games held in Winnipeg. But tragically, her horse Vincente had to be euthanized just before the selection trials were to begin.

The experience was devastating for Pavicic and it took a long time for her to get to the point again. But she never gave up.

scores came from internationally-recognized shows in California.

The Pan-American Games are a qualifier for Canada to send a team to the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and Pavicic expects the competition will be tough "since dressage is quite a competitive sport in Latin America." But the biggest hurdle Pavicic and Lionheart will have to overcome, prior to arriving in Brazil, is a mandatory 10-day quarantine in Miami. The horses will



It has always been a dream of mine to represent Canada at a major international event," said Pavicic, who has been selected to the 2007 team that will compete at the Pan-American Games July 13 to 29 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (The actual dressage competition is July 14 to 18).

The selection (along with three others) last week followed five days of intense competition at the final trials held in Bethany, Ont. Eight horse-and-rider combinations were invited to compete, with conditions similar to those expected in Brazil, with temperatures reaching more than 30 degrees Celsius.

The qualifying campaign started during the 2006 show season. Each horse-and-rider combination had to submit qualifying scores from Dressage Canada-sanctioned events or international competitions. Most of Pavicic's qualifying

leave Toronto, where the team is currently training, by truck on June 19. The horses and riders will train in Florida until flying to Rio de Janeiro July 5.

Pavicic and Lionheart, a Hanoverian gelding that she imported from Germany in January 2003, have had much success together. The duo have

earned a career average score of over 70 per cent at each level of competition, and achieved champion status at every competition they attended from 2003 to 2005.

In 2005, they received scores

of nine for extended trot, canter pirouettes, half-pass, halt-reinback, and rider position and seat. During their debut at the Prix St. Georges level that same year, they achieved first place each time they entered

the ring. Also in 2005, in addition to winning the Pacific Regional Dressage FEI Level Championship, they achieved the necessary results to become long-listed for the Canadian Equestrian Team for 2006. Last season, they competed internationally for Canada at several Concours De Dressage International events in the U.S. where they had a top-10 finish in every class and were short-listed for the Canadian team this year after winning their second straight Pacific Regional Dressage Championship.

"Lionheart is now schooling all of the grand prix movements easily, including piaffe, passage and one tempis, and it appears that he shows talent for these difficult movements," Pavicic said.

Richmond's Karen Pavicic and her Hanoverian gelding Lionheart will be part of Canada's dressage team at the Pan-American Games next month in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Understanding dressage

Dressage is often described as "horse ballet," as the horse and rider perform a pre-determined pattern, or "test," and perform gaits and movements such as a walk, trot, canter, half pass, passage (slow-motion trot), piaffe (trot in place) and one and two tempi changes (where the horse appears to skip as it canters). The dressage tests performed at the World Equestrian Games and Olympics are those of the highest level—grand prix.

Dressage is derived from the French term

"dressur" meaning "to train" and is one of the Olympic equestrian disciplines. It involves subtle control from the rider and has compulsory movements where horse and rider perform a series of paces, halts, changes of direction, movements and figures.

Dressage tests the horse's physique and ability, and the horse and the rider's understanding of each other. Generally, it takes a minimum of five years to train a horse from the basic levels through to grand prix.

Brewster wins Kubota Cup Grand Prix in Edmonton



Gary Brewster

Gary Brewster further confirmed his place among Canada's top young equestrians by winning the Kubota Cup's Edmonton grand prix last week.

It was his second title on the national show jumping circuit in three years, having also won the Twin Oaks Derby crown in

Richmond in 2005.

A mainstay in the grand prix ring, Brewster, 36, operates out of Twin Oaks Farm in Richmond, working alongside renowned horse trainers Trevor and Wendy Graham. His deliberate, consistent discipline defines his success.

Brewster not only

earned \$40,000 for his efforts last week in Edmonton, but also took the western conference lead from Calgary's Albert Kley in the Kubota Cup standings. Twenty-eight Western Canadians fended off a challenge from four American entries. Foreign competitors can compete

for prize money in the individual series events, but are not eligible to qualify for the Kubota Cup national final.

"Fun and fast, a great sport," Brewster said of his victory. "I asked Hurricane to step up and he obviously did."

The Edmonton stop was the second leg of

the western portion in the Kubota Cup series which winds up in Richmond on Aug. 12, just after the eastern conference begins. The Kubota Cup is part of the annual Twin Oaks Derby which is scheduled for Aug. 8 to 12 and will feature show jumpers of various ages and levels.