



The Virginia Festival of Champions

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A Wynning Advantage, LLC

Media Contact: [Lisa Davis Engel](#)

Phone: 908.310.6248

The Lexington Spring Premiere is Underway

The Lexington Spring Premiere kicked off yesterday with the first installment of the Virginia Festival of Champions at the Virginia Horse Center.

Laura Gaither Ulrich of Fox View Farm located in Bahama, North Carolina, won the \$1,500 [Schneiders Saddlery](#) 1.35 m Open Jumper Stake in the irons of Fox View Farm's *FVF Nebraska*.

"I thought the course was really nice and the design was perfect for the first day. There was nothing trappy or too tight and it flowed really well. He [*Nebraska*] really liked it," commented Gaither Ulrich.



With a first-round time allowed set at 90 seconds, only two horse and rider teams would advance to a second-round opportunity. As the first horse and rider team to advance to a second round, Gaither Ulrich and *Nebraska's* four fault second round in a time of 35.378 seconds left the door open for Anne De Michele and Cantatu, LLC's *Canmore2* who followed them in the jump order. De Michele and *Canmore2* also had a rail and with a second-round time of 36.358 seconds, Gaither Ulrich and *FVF Nebraska* would be crowned the victors.

Fox View Farm, owned by the Gaither family, imported *Nebraska* at the end of last summer, but according to Gaither Ulrich, have just started to get to know each other.

"He [*Nebraska*] had a fall on the plane when we had him imported. I showed him here at the Virginia Horse Center last fall in a Grand Prix, but his canter and his way of going just didn't feel right. After working with a chiropractor, we've made progress and things really started to click for us in Florida," she said. "He's also more of a 'man's ride'," she said. "I'm only 5'1 and I'm now getting him to figure out what I'm asking of him," she added. "He's a really brave and not a spooky horse and I'm excited to be riding him in the Welcome and the Grand Prix this week," she said.

"I've been showing at the Virginia Horse Center since I was a little kid," said Gaither Ulrich. "I used to event and this is where we'd come. These shows are always on our calendar, and we'd never miss it," she added. "I just love the stabling here. The stalls are big and the walls are high. The horses can see out, but you don't need to worry about the other horses. The fact that you can hang things on the outside of your stalls makes it so much easier to get set up and work out of these barns while showing here," she said.

[Fox View Farm](#) has a total of 13 horses showing this week and next week, they will have 11 horses.

"Today I was the only one who showed, and I rode one other horse. I brought one hunter and the rest are jumpers. Normally my sister [Christina Gaither Webb] is here but she's coming next week, and she also rides in the Grand Prix. Our farm is really a family affair and I miss having her here although I am really thankful that my Dad came down with me and helped set up for the week," she said. "Even though we bought *Nebraska*, most of the time we show our homebreds. We have 10 at home and three more that were born this year. We also have a bunch that we sold but still have at the farm. I've got another one here that will be ridden by one my students in the low junior jumpers," continued Gaither Ulrich.

"I'm so thankful to be able to work with my family and such great clients. I'm also thankful for the support of EHI and Arion Saddles. We really appreciate their support; we can't do any of this without them," she added.

Photo Credit: Theresa Ramsay

About Schneiders Saddlery

[Schneider's Saddlery](#) is the Official Awards sponsor of the Virginia Festival of Champions and the sponsor of the \$1,500 [Schneiders Saddlery](#) 1.35 m Open Jumper Classic.

At Schneider's, their family-owned company has maintained a dedication to value, product quality, innovation, customer service, and a love and commitment to the equestrian industry. Visit them online at sstack.com.



It's Showtime!

The Lexington Spring Premiere AA kicked off April 27 today at the Virginia Horse Center and is followed immediately by the Lexington Spring Encore AA on May 4th.

The Lexington Spring Premiere already has over 600 stalls sold. If you have not yet [entered online](#) or [reserved your stalls](#)-do so now!

The Lexington Spring Premiere wraps up on Sunday, May 1st and is immediately followed by The Lexington Spring Encore, the second installment of the Virginia Festival of Champions, May 4-8th. Entries are still being accepted and you can enter online.

"These shows all benefit the Virginia Horse Center. We hope that everyone enjoys their time with us here while simultaneously giving back to this iconic facility," said Show Manager Allen Rheinheimer.

Photo: Chris Wynn riding Superlative, Photo Credit: Theresa Ramsay



About the Virginia Festival of Champions

The 2022 Virginia Festival of Champions kicked off today for two consecutive weeks of top show jumping action. The Lexington Spring Premiere and the Lexington Spring Encore are events owned by the Virginia Horse Center Foundation and are benefit events for the Foundation. The Lexington National Horse Show concludes the 2022 Festival of Champions August 10th-14th.

If you would like to [donate](#) to the Virginia Horse Center, please [click here](#).

For those of you planning on competing at these world-class events:

The [prize list](#) is online. Enter [online](#), and [reserve your stalls](#)!

Show highlights include:

- [USEF](#) Premiere AA Hunter Competition
- [WCHR](#) Recognized Event
- \$5000 [USHJA](#) Hunter Derby presented by The Heisley Family Foundation Week 1 & 2
- \$10,000 [Nutrena](#) Open Welcome Class each week
- \$25,000 Grand Prix each week
- [USHJA](#) Green Incentives
- Jumper 4 Star

Weekly schedules can viewed here for [Week I](#) and [Week II](#).

The third installment of the Virginia Festival of Champions takes place August 10-14. If you would like to sign up for the emailed version of the August prize list, [let us know](#)!

For more information, please contact Keedie Leonard colebelle@msn.com

Photo Credit: Theresa Ramsay

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For those interested in the Banner Sponsorship Program, please email judy@dcbishops.com.

Interested in sponsoring the Virginia Festival of Champions series? Email Lisa at festivalofchamps@yahoo.com for more information.



About the Virginia Horse Center Foundation

The [Virginia Horse Center Foundation](#) provides a world-class facility hosting regional, national, and international equestrian events. The Virginia Horse Center Foundation envisions a unique, bucolic landmark to honor and celebrate the timeless, special bond between mankind and the horse through safe, fair and spirited equestrian competition.

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March 7, 2022

