



## **Royal Horse Show Welcomes Top Riders From Three Continents and Seven Countries as International Week Begins Today**

*Two Royal families of equestrian sport will go head-to-head in the International Ring this week:*

*“Team Millar” Ian Millar, his son Jonathon and daughter Amy; against Britain’s legendary Michael, John and Robert Whitaker.*

November 9th, 2010

Toronto, Ontario – World-class show jumping takes centre stage in Toronto this week, as top riders from three continents and seven countries descend on the Ricoh Coliseum to compete for \$368,000 in prize money and the prestigious Leading Rider and Leading Horse titles.

Uniquely, of the 25 riders competing this year, six are from two families: Great Britain’s powerhouse Whitaker family (Olympian Michael; his brother and fellow Olympian John; and John’s son Robert) and Canada’s first family of show jumping, the Millars (nine-time Olympian Ian; his son Jonathon, who just represented Canada at the World Show Jumping Championships; and daughter Amy.)

The rest of the field reads like a who’s-who of the sport, including American **McLain Ward**, perhaps one of the most decorated riders in the sport today and winner of the \$1,000,000 Pfizer Grand Prix this September; and former World Champion **Dermott Lennon** of Ireland.

In a sport where success is defined by neither age or gender – but rather by horse-power and rider ability – an exciting young Canadian competitor will take her place in the International ring for the first time, having qualified by holding her own over three-rounds in the Canadian Show Jumping Championship presented by Greenhawk opening weekend.

**Sarah Johnstone**, 19, of Orangeville, Ontario, has been coached by two-time Canadian Olympian **Jay Hayes** and daughter **Lauren Hayes** for the past six years, rising through the ranks from riding small ponies at The Royal to now being among the youngest International competitors in the history of the Horse Show.

“I’m so excited to have qualified to compete alongside some of the best in the world,” exclaimed Johnstone. “My horse is ready and has been jumping really well, and I’m looking forward to learning so much from competing with these amazing riders.”

Her coach, however, is far less modest in singing her praises.

“She’s a naturally gifted, hard working and meticulous rider,” exudes her coach Jay Hayes. “Of the hundreds of riders I’ve worked with and trained, rarely do you find all three in combination. I coached (2008 Olympic Champion) **Eric Lamaze** when he was her age, and I can truly say she is on par, if not ahead, of where Eric was at 19.”

International riders will compete nine times between this afternoon and Saturday evening, November 13th, in matinee and evening competitions including the **\$31,000 Jolera International Power & Speed**, the **\$100,000 FEI World Cup Grand Prix**, the **\$50,000 Weston Canadian Open** and the always sold-out **\$75,000 Ricoh Big Ben Challenge**. Many of the matinee performances are free with general admission to the Fair. Thursday’s evening performance offers an exciting double-bill featuring International show jumping as well as the **\$20,000 CDI 3\*\*\* FEI Grand Prix Dressage Freestyle to Music** competition, where **Ashley Holzer** will appear to defend her 2009 title. Holzer returns to The Royal following an eighth-place finish at the recent World Dressage Championships. The complete timetable is available at [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org).

***About the Royal Horse Show and Royal Agricultural Winter Fair** ~ A tradition since 1922, the Royal Horse Show brings top horses and riders from Canada the U.S. and abroad, including Olympic and World champions, to Toronto each November to compete for more than \$750,000 in prize money and Championships. Over 1,000 horses of all shapes and sizes participate in show jumping, dressage, indoor eventing, driving, coaching and so much more, over the ten-days of hotly-contested competition. Special features such as the Spirit of the Horse Ring, EquiMania!, the Farmer’s Market, Trade-Fair Shopping, educational and agricultural events & competition round out this family tradition. Since its debut,*

*the Royal has been a highlight of the Toronto fall social calendar, visited by Royalty, politicians, farmers and horse-enthusiasts for generations. For more information, The Royal Online's live webcasting, complete schedule, results and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org).*

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Great Britain's Michael Whitaker is one of the First Families of The Royal who will be competing in the International Division opening today and running through November 13th at the Ricoh Coliseum.