



November 12, 2008

**Worth the Trip to Toronto for Olympic Champions Hickstead and Eric Lamaze,
Victorious in the
\$100,000 CN FEI World Cup Qualifier Grand Prix**

Toronto, ON – Olympic Champion Eric Lamaze brought his Gold-medal horse Hickstead across the ocean to compete in just one class at The Royal Horse Show this week, and it couldn't have gone any better than it did tonight. Hickstead once again demonstrated he is in a class all to himself, exploding over the jumps with power and stamina unmatched in the arena this evening, if at all.

Of the 23 competitors to begin the \$100,000 CN FEITM World Cup Qualifier, nearly half were able to complete the first round without adding penalty points to their score. And of the eleven who came back for the jump off, the only one close to catching Lamaze was U.S. Olympic Team Gold medalist, McLain Ward, who actually bested the time but pulled down the last rail in the process. Fellow American Lauren Hough was the closest clean round, stopping the clock at 37.53 seconds to finish up in second with her horse Quick Study.

“Whenever you really need him, he’s always there,” said Lamaze, always quick to praise the tremendous efforts of his partner Hickstead. “This maybe wasn’t the biggest competition he’s been in lately, but it was the most important, competing here in front of the home crowd like this. I really brought him for this class, to show him to people in Toronto who haven’t seen him for a while. This ring played such a large part of bringing him along as a young horse; to come back here after the Gold medal and Silver Team medal, it’s really exciting for me.”

Lamaze insists life hasn’t changed too much after his incredible Olympic achievement, that he keeps doing what he loves to do, and is honoured to be as well received at competitions in Europe as the other Europeans are. Not many Canadians are able to compete alongside, let alone in front of the best in the world. With his outstanding partner Hickstead, Eric Lamaze has shown he belongs just there.

Earlier in the evening, the Olympic medalists were celebrated with a special presentation in front of the crowd, honouring their accomplishments as well as thanking the owners of the horses for their support. Paralympic Champion Lauren Barwick was also celebrated, having contributed a Gold and Silver to Canada’s overall medal count.

Dressage becomes the focus tomorrow night at The Royal Horse Show, with the crowd-pleasing Freestyle to Music taking place during the evening performance. Following this afternoon's initial round of competition in the FEI World Cup Qualifier in dressage, Olympian Ashley Holzer sits in the lead with her partner Pop Art. Holzer was the highest placed Canadian dressage rider at this summer's Games, finishing in 13th position overall.

\$100,000 CN FEITM World Cup Qualifier

Rider / Hometown / Horse / Faults:Time

1. Eric Lamaze (CAN) / Schomberg, ON / Hickstead / 0.00:35.800
2. Lauren Hough (USA) / Wellington, FL / Quick Study / 0.00:37.530
3. Tim Stockdale (GBR) / Northampton / Fresh Direct Corlato / 0.00:37.620
4. Beth Underhill (CAN) / Schomberg, ON / Top Gun / 0.00:41.350
5. Christine McCrea (USA) / Windsor, CT / Vegas / 0.00:44.000

Attached Photo:

Olympic Champion Eric Lamaze with his Gold Medal horse, Hickstead, won the \$100,000 CN FEITM World Cup Grand Prix tonight at The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Horse Show. Photo credit © Michelle C. Dunn

