



For Immediate Release

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**Oliver Townend Tops the Leaderboard Following Thursday's
Dressage at the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill**

Kurt Martin Sits in First for the CCI3*-L Division

Elkton, Cecil County, Maryland – Oct. 14, 2021 – The Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill opened Thursday with the first half of the dressage phase taking place in the Main Arena, where World #1 ranked rider Oliver Townend (GBR) and Cooley Master Class topped the leaderboard in the CCI5*-L.

The Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill, one of only two 5 Star level events in the United States and just the seventh worldwide, runs October 14-17 at the newly constructed Fair Hill Special Event Zone in Elkton, Maryland (Cecil County). The event's prestigious 5 Star (CCI5*-L) designation is the pinnacle of the Olympic sport of Eventing, often described as an equestrian triathlon.

In addition to the 5 Star competition (CCI5*-L), the event also features a 3 Star competition (CCI3*-L), which is serving as the USEF CCI3*-L Eventing National Championship, and The Dutta Corp. USEA Young Event Horse East Coast Championships Presented by Dubarry of Ireland. The four days of Eventing competition feature Dressage (Thu-Fri), Cross-Country (Sat) showcasing the new Ian Stark designed courses, and Show Jumping (Sun).



Oliver Townend and Cooley Master Class are in the lead for the CCI5-L after Thursday's dressage. © Shannon Brinkman*

Townend piloted Angela Hislop's 16-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding to a comfortable lead over the other competitors, earning a score of 21.1 for their magnificent ride. American riders Hannah Sue Burnett and Lynn Symansky are currently tied for second with scores of 28.0.

"We've regrouped since Kentucky this spring," said Townend, 2021 Olympic Team Gold medalist. "We don't really run him that often, as he's an old pro. He's a big character and the horse that we love to have at these occasions. He seems to love the trip over to America for some reason; he seems to thrive in America. We've just quietly prepared him for this all summer. I know he's older, but he's never felt as good or as happy. We couldn't be happier with him."

While Townend was one of the last to go, Symansky rode early in the order with RF Cool Play, The Donner Syndicate LLC's 13-year-old German gelding. It was the gelding's first time competing at this level, and she felt that he rose to the occasion.

"I'm really proud of him," Symansky said. "Riding into that arena, you just can't wait for Sunday, and you can't wait to come back over and over. The arena has a more intimate feel, and it's a little more like Burghley where the crowd is up there with you."



Lynn Symansky and RF Cool Play © Shannon Brinkman

Burnett felt some added pressure going into the arena because her mount, Harbour Pilot, was very relaxed in the warm-up and seemed ready to put in a good test. “My horse has been around for a long time and been to a lot of places,” she said of the 18-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding owned by Jacqueline Mars. “Coming here, he was like, ‘Oh, you’ve brought me somewhere worthy of me!’ He was so relaxed, impressed, and excited.”

These Top 3 riders believe Fair Hill’s terrain will play the biggest part in determining the results of Saturday’s cross-country phase.

“When you look at the fences individually, it’s a bit like the other 5 Star courses,” Townend said. “The fences are fair; the fences are big; the fences are obviously what we expect from a 5 Star. But then you add the terrain, you add the 5 Star, you add the pressure, and it’s going to be a very, very tough day on Saturday.”



Hannah Sue Burnett and Harbour Pilot © Shannon Brinkman

After Thursday morning's **USEF CCI3*-L Eventing National Championship** dressage phase, Kurt Martin (USA) leads with D.A. Lifetime, a 9-year-old mare owned by Debbie Adams. The pair earned a score of 23.5 for their beautiful test in the Main Arena.

“Clarence was brilliant this morning,” Martin said. “We were a little bit unsure coming into this event because we’ve never competed here on this side. We didn’t know how the horses would act with a larger atmosphere, but she was brilliant at the start when we got here. She was no different when we went into the arena, which was also quite unique for her. She’s hot and usually a lot of horse, but today she was right underneath me the whole test. I couldn’t be happier.”



Kurt Martin and D.A. Lifetime are on top of the CCI3-L leaderboard after Thursday morning's dressage phase. © Shannon Brinkman*

When asked about his first impression of the Maryland 5 Star, Martin said, "It looks like an unbelievable undertaking to put this event on. From the rings to the cross-country course, to the stands to shopping and everything else, I know a lot of people have put in a lot of time here. As a rider, I appreciate that. Fair Hill has always been beautiful and a great venue, and it's been upgraded now."

Sitting in second place for the CCI3*-L is Kate Brown (USA) and Carnaby, her 8-year-old Oldenburg gelding, with a score of 24.8. Caroline Martin (USA) and HSH Vamonos, her and Sherrie Martin's 8-year-old Zangersheide gelding, are in third with a score of 25.5.



Kate Brown and Carnaby © Shannon Brinkman

“Cabbie is usually quite obedient, and he felt quite responsive in the warm-up ring,” Brown said. “His eyes got a little bit big when I came up into the arena itself. He took a few peeks around throughout the test, but he kept responding to me and kept showing up to do what I was asking. I’m very pleased with him.”

“Riding into the ring this morning was great,” Brown added. “We don’t get to practice with a large atmosphere very much, so it was a really, really big change. It looks awesome – the venue, the stands, the footing, all the decorations. There’s just a lot there, and it’s great.”



Caroline Martin and HSH Vamonos © Shannon Brinkman

The Dutta Corp. USEA Young Event Horse (YEH) East Coast Championships Presented by Dubarry of Ireland opened Arena C in the morning with dressage and conformation for the 4- and 5-year-old divisions.

After their jumping and galloping test in the Sawmill Field, Caroline Martin and HSH Best Kept Secret took home the victory for the Dutta Corp. USEA YEH East Coast Championship 4-year-olds with a score of 90.20. Martin also tops the 5-year-old leaderboard aboard HSH Crypto with a dressage and conformation score of 25.84 going into Friday's jumping and galloping test.

For full results, visit results.hippodata.de.

Photos from the event are available [via Dropbox](#). Credit to Shannon Brinkman.

The entire CCI5* is available via livestream **presented by MARS Equestrian**. It can be accessed through **USEF Network** in North America and through **Horse & Country** outside North America. USEF Network is also providing exclusive coverage of the CCI3*. A link to the livestream is available on the [event's website](#) via the USEF Network player. Additionally, press conferences are being livestreamed through the [event's Facebook page](#).

About the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill:

One of only two 5 Star events in the United States, and just the seventh worldwide, the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill continues the storied legacy of Eventing at the new Fair Hill Special Event Zone in Elkton, Maryland, located in Cecil County. The prestigious 5 Star (CCI5*-L) designation is the pinnacle of the Olympic sport of Eventing, best described as an equestrian triathlon. The Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill is produced by The Fair Hill Organizing Committee, an affiliate of

the Sport and Entertainment Corporation of Maryland, and in partnership with Fair Hill International. The Maryland Food Bank serves as an event beneficiary.

Discover Cecil County, Maryland!:

Located between Philadelphia and Baltimore on I-95, Cecil County, Maryland boasts vibrant small towns, 200 miles of waterfront, foodie destinations, and scenic countryside providing the perfect backdrop for the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill. Experience fabulous local food with a Chesapeake Bay flair, local beer and wine, outdoor recreation, family-friendly attractions, and specialty shops, plus discover 80 miles of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Destination Cecil County... Just a Daydream Away!