



## The Sky is the Limit

Robert Dover Horsemastership Clinic Kicks Off in Wellington

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*Robert Dover addresses participants and auditors at the 2015 Robert Dover Horsemanship Clinic*

**Wellington, FL – January 3, 2015** - Robert Dover emphasized the importance of visualizing your riding and taking ownership of your own resulting "movie" as he addressed an eager group of young dressage riders this morning.

"If it's not your movie, whose is it?" Dover asked. "This isn't just about horses, it's about life."

This lecture, and the hour of fitness beforehand, kicked off the Fourth Annual Robert Dover Horsemastership Clinic that is being held in the Van Kampen Indoor Arena at The Stadium at PBIEC through Wednesday, Jan. 7.

The clinic, which is presented by Dressage4kids' Emerging Dressage Athlete Program, brings together talented young dressage riders with experienced clinicians for a week of valuable learning opportunities. The week does not consist of riding alone; lectures from a variety of horse professionals are combined with personal training and Pilates sessions to encourage well-rounded horsemastership.



*George Williams*

After a full day of six lessons, clinician George Williams spoke positively of the riders he taught.

"It's exciting to see the level and the quality of riding we have," he said.

Williams, President of the United States Dressage Federation and the recently-appointed U.S. Dressage Youth Coach, pointed to impressive results by under-30 rising stars like Laura Graves in 2014, commenting, "I don't think we've ever had a time where we've had so many promising younger people."

Williams said that with the opportunities that are now available to younger generations, like the North American Junior and Young Rider Championships, young people "have the motivation and the inspiration" to compete in events like the WEG and the Olympics.

With these opportunities, though, comes the knowledge for the young people that they must "have a much better sense of the quality of horse that's required, the quality of riding that's required, and the seriousness and intensity of the training that's required to achieve it," according to Williams.



*Ashleigh Conroy-Zugel and Ungaro with George Williams*

Charlotte Bredahl-Baker, the new Assistant US Dressage Youth Coach, has the same upward mentality as Williams. She and Dover also worked with riders today.

"The sky is the limit as far as I'm concerned," she said of the group of riders she coached. "They were all fantastic to work with and very teachable, with great attitudes."

Bredahl-Baker is "super, super excited" about her new position.

"It's what I've always loved to do," she said. "I've been mentoring youths for years and years and my passion is riding and teaching, so to actually combine the two and get to work with some of these really talented riders who are very serious is just total dream come true for me."



*Kerrigan Gluch with Charlotte Bredahl-Baker*

The biggest challenge that she perceives in her new role is the size of the United States. Working with Williams will increase their ability to reach more people, she believes, since Williams is based on the East Coast and she on the West.

Both Williams and Bredahl-Baker emphasized the importance of the basics in their work with each rider.

"Without the basics," Williams said, "without that foundation, riders have a lot of opportunities that they won't be able to really take advantage of."

Bredahl-Baker, who has the added advantage of a judge's point of view, said, "For me, it's very important that they are able to get the horses up in the frame that they need to show in."



*Rosie Simoes rode with Charlotte Bredahl-Baker*

One rider who has taken advantage of these opportunities is Molly Paris, who won team gold as well as individual silver and bronze medals at the 2014 NAJYRC. Paris, 18, of Charlotte, North Carolina, rode with Williams today on Diamant Sky, an 8-year-old Westphalian gelding. Williams had her complete several series of 10 meter canter circles down the long side of the arena, aimed at encouraging Diamant Sky to engage his outside hind leg.

"He has to believe you," Williams told her. "When you ask him to come up under himself, he has to believe you."

"We just had to work on getting him over his back and to loosen up and not brace the entire time," Paris said. "I think George was really helpful. He didn't push us too far, but he pushed us to the point where we could get over it."



*Molly Paris and Diamant Sky*

Cassie Schmidt, like Paris, will be moving up from the Juniors to the Young Riders this year after success at the 2014 NAJYRC, where Schmidt took home an individual silver. The 19-year-old from Aledo, Texas, also rode with Williams today.

"My horse can kind of get overpowered and tense, so we are really trying to work through keeping him soft and supple throughout his back the entire time," Schmidt said.

As well as focusing on keeping her horse supple, Williams also had Schmidt work on keeping a consistent canter with six strides on each side of the circle. Both riders view this clinic as a great starting point for their seasons and hope to learn a lot throughout the next four days.



*Ashleigh Conroy-Zugel and Ungaro with George Williams*

Ashleigh Conroy-Zugel of Holmdel, New Jersey, also rode with Williams today and appreciated his approach of focusing on the basics. The 17-year-old Junior rider felt Williams' coaching made a noticeable difference with her mount, Ungaro.

"He helped us with movements in the test we had trouble with, so for us he helped us with the half-passes and the shoulder-ins," Conroy-Zugel said. "Ungaro got a lot looser and produced a bigger trot by the end of the lesson, which was a really cool feeling."

Conroy-Zugel also said she is looking forward to the things she can learn through the remainder of the clinic. As well as getting to know her fellow riders, she is eager to get to know the clinicians and all those who will be lecturing the riders.

Conroy-Zugel perceives there will be "a lot of learning opportunities, not only from teachers but from each other."



*George Williams with Ayden Uhler's Sjapoer*