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McLain Ward Leads the Way in \$70,000 Douglas Elliman CSI5* Grand Prix Qualifier presented by Longines at 2024 Hampton Classic Horse Show

Bridgehampton, NY – August 30, 2024 – Fresh off his sixth Olympic appearance at this summer's Paris Olympic Games where he added a team silver medal to his collection, seven-time Hampton Classic Grand Prix champion McLain Ward (USA) returned to the winner's circle in Friday's **\$70,000 Douglas Elliman CSI5* Grand Prix Qualifier presented by Longines**. He and *High Star Hero* were smooth and quick in the jump-off, claiming top honors in a double-clear time of 34.91 seconds.

The **Hampton Classic**, August 25-September 1, is one of the world's most prestigious horse shows, featuring competitors from young children in leadline to Olympic, World, and World Cup Champions. Rated USEF Premier-6 with designated FEI 5* and 2* show jumping classes, the Classic also has competitions for riders with disabilities.



McLain Ward (USA) and High Star Hero won the \$70,000 Douglas Elliman CSI5 Grand Prix Qualifier presented by Longines © KindMedia*

The \$70,000 Douglas Elliman CSI5* Grand Prix Qualifier was Ward's first international class with the 11-year-old Belgian Sport Horse gelding owned by Thaisa Erwin and Michael and Wendy Smith. That

didn't stop the new partnership from soaring over course designer Nick Granat's 16-effort, 1.60m track in the initial round, which narrowed a field of 47 entries from 11 nations to just 12 in the jump-off. In the tiebreaker round, Ward and *High Star Hero* proved uncatchable with a tidy, efficient ride in 34.91 seconds.

"His owners, Michael and Wendy Smith, are great supporters of mine, and their rider Thaisa Erwin has been producing him for the last several years," Ward said. "Thaisa's done a brilliant job. The Smiths felt he would suit my ride, and she has a new young horse, so this horse moved over to our stable last Wednesday. This is our first FEI showing.

"He's got a great amount of talent and a great brain," he added. "He's ready to compete at this level and has been competing with Thaisa throughout the summer months. He's definitely my type of ride, and I'm excited to see what the future has in store.



Ward and High Star Hero © KindMedia

"There were some fast riders to come including Jordan (Coyle) and Darragh (Kenny)," Ward said about his jump-off. "I knew there were challenges on course, but I thought it was a good route and had a plan. I adjusted it slightly to the combination; I did one less stride than I originally planned, but he was covering the ground well. Overall, I stuck to my plan and was lucky to be just fast enough to win."

Ireland's Jordan Coyle claimed second aboard *For Gold*, his and Falkirk Farm LLC's 13-year-old Holsteiner gelding, with a double-clear score of 35.31 seconds. Pathfinder Kristen Vanderveen (USA) tripped the timers in 36.21 seconds without fault for third place aboard *Bull Run's Jireh*, Bull Run Jumpers Inc.'s 10-year-old Holsteiner gelding.



Jordan Coyle and For Gold claimed second © KindMedia

Following her podium finish, Vanderveen took over the lead in the **Longines Rider Challenge** with 170 points. Sydney Shulman Desiderio (ISR) has moved into second with 132 points, and Christian Coyle (IRL) sits third with 130 points. The Challenge, which awards \$30,000 and a Longines watch to the rider accumulating the most points in the week's Open Jumper classes, will be awarded Sunday following the Longines Hampton Classic 5* Grand Prix.



Kristen Vanderveen (USA) and Bull Run's Jireh took third © KindMedia

For live show results, visit HamptonClassic.com. Photos from the event are [available via Dropbox](#) with credits to KindMedia (unless otherwise noted in the folder name).

Each year approximately 50,000 people – including many A-list celebrities – come to watch the nation's best equestrian athletes compete at the Hampton Classic. Rated **USEF 'Premier-6'** for hunters and

jumpers with designated **FEI 2* and 5*** classes, the Hampton Classic features more than 200 competitions in six spectacular show rings, the Agneta Currey Boutique Garden with more than 70 vendors, and a wide selection of dining options, all on its world-class 60-acre showgrounds.

FEI competition began Thursday, August 29, with the **\$10,000 Citarella Open Jumper CSI2*** and **\$32,000 CSI5* Two-Phase** and continues throughout the weekend with eight 2*/5* classes featuring courses designed by Nick Granat. FEI competition also includes Friday's **\$32,000 Wölffer Estate 2* Jumper Classic** and **\$70,000 Douglas Elliman 5* Grand Prix Qualifier**, Saturday's **\$32,000 Open Speed Class CSI2*** and **\$70,000 CSI5* Winning Round**. The Classic culminates with the **\$75,000 Hampton Classic 2* Grand Prix** and the **\$400,000 Longines Hampton Classic 5* Grand Prix** on Sunday, September 1.

Other competition highlights include the **\$30,000 Open Jumper Challenge**, **\$10,000 Stomp Capital 1.40m Open Jumper**, **\$10,000 Lugano Diamonds Junior/Amateur Welcome Stake**, **\$10,000 Hermès Equitation Championship**, **\$10,000 Junior/Amateur-Owner Hunter Classic**, **\$25,000 Agneta & Brownlee Currey High Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic**, and the new **\$50,000 Kristen Baran Hunt Team Stake**.

Outside the show rings, families can enjoy unique shopping; hands-on activities, pony rides and petting zoo animals at the Kids Exhibition Tent; and many more fun activities during News 12 Long Island Kids Day (Saturday, August 31).

Daily admission to the Classic is \$20 per carload. Admission is free on Monday. Seniors and military are admitted free on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, as are those who bring three or more non-perishable food items for the Sag Harbor Food Pantry. Grandstand tickets for the Longines Hampton Classic Grand Prix on Sunday, September 1, are \$60 per person (including fees) for reserved bucket seating. Grandstand tickets are electronic only.

For those who can't make it to the show grounds, [complimentary live webcasts](#) of all Grand Prix and Aspinall Ring competitions air on the Hampton Classic website. Produced by ClipMyHorse.TV, the Grand Prix Ring livestreams are sponsored by Longines and the Aspinall Ring livestreams are sponsored by [ClipMyHorse.TV](#). In addition, WVVH-TV, Hamptons Television, broadcasts up to five hours of competition and highlights each day during the Classic. These broadcasts can also be seen online at www.wvvh.tv.

For more information on the Hampton Classic Horse Show, please visit the Hampton Classic website at www.hamptonclassic.com or call 631-537-3177. Hampton Classic Horse Show, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation.