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Aachen, DE – August 23, 2006 – Canada’s Dressage riders were on center stage today, competing in the Dressage Grand Prix (FEI Grand Prix Test 2003). Ashley Holzer, now living in New York, was the first Canadian to go. Entering the ring on Gambol amid enthusiastic cheers from fellow Canadian Equestrian Teammates, supporters and fans, she gestured for silence. Holzer rode a very careful test, but the stallion performed without his characteristic brilliance, earning a final score of 64.292% and finishing in 45th place overall out of 89 competitors from 33 nations.

Evi Strasser, from Ste-Adele, Quebec, confidently rode Quantum Tyme a short while later. The pair performed well and Quantum Tyme was oblivious to the noise of more than 32,000 spectators in the stands. Although they seemed to hesitate slightly when performing piaffe, passage and some transitions, the five presiding judges liked the performance overall and Strasser’s final score was 66.375%, finishing in 35th place overall.

Strasser said, “I’m very, very thrilled with him. He coped with the crowd and was on the ball; I couldn’t ask for more for where we are in our training. It is a big arena for them, but I think, because Quantum Tyme was in Las Vegas at the World Cup, he learned about crowds. It was a stepping stone and Gambol was not in Las Vegas. This is Quantum’s first time in Europe since he was a 5-year-old. He is so positive and always so happy, never a bad horse. I ride him with small spurs.”

Chef d’Équipe Kim Goodyear said, “Both riders rode beautifully; exceptionally well.”

Dressage coach Norbert van Laak added, “I’m pleased with both my riders. Evi had a really good performance. She lost marks in the piaffe/passage, but the basics are arranged. There are just things to polish.”

As Ground Jury member Stephan Clarke, GBR, said, “Unfortunately we did not award any 10s today. There were elements of tension here, but maybe as the week progresses...” Even the reigning World Cup and Olympic Champions, Anky van Grunsven and Keltec Salinero, had a less than stellar performance, finishing in a tie for third with 75%. The awards ceremony for the team medals unnerved Salinero and he ran off with his famed rider, but fortunately came to a halt when he caught up to the Honour Guard after exiting the arena.

According to the rules, only the top 30 horses and riders qualified to return tomorrow to ride in the Grand Prix Special (2003 Test), effectively eliminating Canada’s Dressage riders from further competition. Strasser missed the cut by a mere 0.292 marks.

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