

Canada's Reiners repeat Team Silver Medal at 2006 FEI World Equestrian Games

Aachen, DE – September 1, 2006 – Canada's medal hopes fell squarely on the shoulders of the Reiners and they responded with a repeat of the 2002 World Equestrian Games Silver Medal performance.

Consistency was the keynote for the first three runs. Lance Griffin of DeWinton, Alberta aboard Whiz N Tag Chex scored 219.0; Luke Gagnon, a Quebec born North Carolina resident, aboard Lil Santana scored 219.0; and Francois Gauthier, a Quebec born Texas resident, aboard Snow Gun scored 219.5. Captain and anchor of the Team, Duane Latimer, a Saskatchewan born Montana resident, aboard Hang Ten Surprise cinched the Silver Medal for the Team with a round leading score of 225.5.

Although all four were thrilled to accept a Silver Medal, each one felt that, had he scored just a little higher, they could have eclipsed their nemesis, the star studded American team for the Gold Medal.

After his run, Griffin said, "It was kind of like marriage; it could always be better. He (Tag) showed good for me – it felt good." Latimer, who trained Griffin's horse, said "He did his job; we're right up there tied for the lead."

Gagnon said, "He's a pretty consistent little horse," pointing out a couple of minor things he'd like to improve. "It felt pretty good."

Gauthier, who three weeks ago had a horse fall on him and suffered a severe groin injury, felt frustrated that he could not do more for the Team. Considering that he was unable to ride a horse until yesterday, the entire Team felt that he did an admirable job while in considerable pain. "It affected my performance, but it is getting better," he said.

Prior to his run, Latimer, who is highly respected by competitors from all countries, said, "I've got to score a personal best," which he did. After his run and referring to his horse, he said, "I thought he was excellent. This is my first World Equestrian Games. It's an incredible feeling to be on a Team."

Terry Griffin, Acting Chef d'Équipe, said, "That was awesome. We were close."

8,000 enthusiastic, and loud, fans packed the stands for the opening day of reining. Sunday's Individual Final is expected to draw an even bigger crowd. At the 2002 Games a Canadian Reiner earned an Individual Bronze, but, based on Latimer's high score of the round and the fact that all four Canadian Reiners will progress to the Individual Final, Canada's hopes for further medals are justifiably high.