

## **Canada wins the GOLD! Duane Latimer claims the Gold Medal in Reining at 2006 FEI World Equestrian Games!**

Aachen, DE – September 3, 2006 – “I can’t describe how proud I am of him. He was flawless,” said Canada’s Duane Latimer of his Quarter Horse stallion, Hang Ten Surprise, after running his Reining pattern for the World Championship and scoring a phenomenal 230 points! “I can’t describe it; it’s awesome.”

Just prior to Latimer’s run, American Tim McQuay on Mister Nicadual had received the identical score of 230 points and fellow American, Aaron Ralston on Smart Paul Olena, had scored 227.5. Latimer had his work cut out for him to beat that score, and he carried all of Canada’s hopes and dreams for a gold medal.

Last to go in the class, Latimer was cheered by the thousands of fans as he executed one perfect move after another. He said, “I’ve never marked a 230 before and had to go again. That’s the loudest crowd I’ve ever run in front of.”

Both Latimer and McQuay had to run the pattern a second time to break the tie for the Gold medal and World Championship. When McQuay entered to the sound of screaming fans and did his sliding stop, the crowd went wild. As he prepared to do his two spins, he motioned to the crowd to quiet down. He performed an excellent series of moves and the judges awarded him 226 points.

Latimer was next in the run-off. He executed another amazing run and the fans instinctively knew he was winning, if the cheers, stamps and standing ovation were anything to go by. The judges agreed and awarded him 228 points – and the World Championship.

“Incredible!” was how Latimer described his second run. “He (Hang Ten Surprise) deserves it (the Championship). I’m happy for the horse. It has a lot to do with the confidence you have in the horse and I always knew it was there with this horse. We ‘hit a lick’ this week!” Latimer posted the highest score in every round he was in.

Canadian Reining Chef d’Équipe, Terry Griffin, said of Latimer, “He knew what he had to do.” Latimer has the experience to deal with this kind of pressure. He has won five World AQHA championships and 3 reserve championships, among other accomplishments. Griffin said that the horses at this level are used to going twice and teammate Francois Gauthier said it was an advantage for Latimer to go last.

Canadian Team member Lance Griffin said, “They (the Americans) lost to one of the best in the world,” when referring to Latimer.

Tim McQuay said, “I’ve battled with him (Latimer) all my life. Those were some great runs – I know that.”

Both Latimer and McQuay said that their horses will have the rest of the year off – they’ve earned it.

Canadian Francois Gauthier, on the Paint mare Snow Gun, came in sixth out of a class of 19 competitors. He scored 220.5 points, tying with Belgium’s Anne Poels on Little Royal BH. “That was a 3-point penalty (referring to a missed flying change). The mare was great. I’m still weak in my legs (from an injury) and I didn’t have enough leg to keep her going. She was happy to be in there.” Gauthier is heading to Majorca, Spain, from here to run in the \$200,000-added Open Competition.

Canada’s Luke Gagnon, on the Quarter Horse gelding, Lil Santana, claimed 13<sup>th</sup> place with a 217 point score, tying with Switzerland’s Selina Schultheiss and Dun It Sugar Quixote. “He swapped leads on me. He was ready before me,” Gagnon said of one movement that cost him critical points.

It was an amazing competition – a nail biter to the very end. Canadian Chef de Mission, Michael Gallagher, described the experience as “FANTASTIC!”