

Shepherd And Triumpf Come From Behind At Pin Oak II

*The pair jumps from eighth to first in
a large and talented derby field.*

BY ANNE LANG
PHOTOS BY SHAWN MCMILLEN

A stellar handy round gave Holly Shepherd and Triumpf the win in the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby at the Pin Oak Charity Hunter/Jumper II.

When it comes to horses, you always need a little luck on your side, and Holly Shepherd owed Lady Luck a thank you after her first round aboard Triumpf in the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby at the Pin Oak Charity Hunter/Jumper II on March 28 in Katy, Texas. "T" knocked a rail loose, but it bounced back into the cups instead of hitting the ground.

The bump occurred at the third obstacle during an otherwise solid trip in the classic round, resulting in a score that allowed Shepherd and T to return for the handy round in eighth place.

"Jump 3 was a hard option out of the turn," Shepherd explained, "and I jumped the high side. Most people jumped the low side because it gave you a nice bend. T jumped the front part really well but just sort of squashed it behind."



Shepherd and T started the handy 9 points behind the leader, Julie Thompson's Cellino, ridden by Martien van der Hoeven of Spring, Texas. The judges rewarded Shepherd's smooth, bold trip on T with high scores, including a 94, to make them the winners by just 1 point over Cellino in the 33-horse field.

The handy round was "one of the top five rides of my life," Shepherd declared. "My horse was amazing. I felt T was worth every point of his score. We did have to come from behind, but we've moved up from farther behind than that. Eighth sounds terrible but not so much when you factor in the handy points and bonus points you can gain in Round 2."

Shepherd, 43, campaigns the 9-year-old Dutch Warmblood (Tangelo van de Zuuthoeve—Etriomph, Le Mexico), for mother-daughter owners Loretta and Sarah Patterson of Omaha, Neb. The gelding has been under Shepherd's care since being imported from the Netherlands in the fall of 2010.

Dani Grice, assistant trainer at Shepherd's 60-acre Accolade Farms in Grand Bay, Ala., rode T to an international derby win at the Pensacola Mid-Winter II (Fla.) show in mid-January. She was filling in for Shepherd, who was recovering from a broken ankle.

Last season, Shepherd and T racked up three derby wins in addition to 14 top five finishes in grand prix classes, winning two of them. This season, he won the Adequan Grand Prix at the Gulf Coast National II (Miss.) and has consistently brought home ribbons. However, at Pin Oak, T didn't place in the first grand prix (on March 27) and was ninth in the second one (on March 29).

"He was coming off four weeks at Gulfport, where he'd been showing outdoors," Shepherd said. "He kind of greens up when we first go indoors, and at the first [Pin Oak II] grand prix, he had the first jump down. At night, that indoor arena is ultra-bright, and a lot of jumps are right on the wall, so there's some distraction there. If I've learned one thing, it's that I need to get him into the indoor ring before I fling him into a grand prix."

At home between shows, T has a fairly easy schedule. "He loves to be turned out," Shepherd said, "and he doesn't play; he just wants to eat. He's not finicky about his food, although he prefers organic carrots. He gets a little spookier if you ride him in the afternoon, so I like to ride him then because it keeps him bright. But there's no big trick to riding him, that's for sure. He just loves his job and is super solid. He's a once-in-a-lifetime horse."

**\$25,000
USHJA INTERNATIONAL HUNTER DERBY
Katy, Texas—Mar. 28**

Judges: Panel 1: Linda Andrisani, Skip Thornbury; Panel 2: Alan Lohman, Scott Hofstetter

HORSE/RIDER	1ST ROUND		2ND ROUND		TOTAL
	PANEL 1 SCORE/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 2 SCORE/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 1 SCORE/BONUS/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 2 SCORE/BONUS/ HEIGHT OPTION	
1. Triomph/Holly Shepherd	82/4	79/4	86/7/4	94/8/4	372
2. Cellino/Martien Van Der Hoeven	88/4	82/4	87/7/4	86/5/4	371
3. Sigfried/Tamara Provost	84/4	84/4	84/5/4	85/7/4	365
4. Amadeo/Bob Brawley	82.5/2	82.25/2	80/9/4	85/10/4	360.75
5. To The Nines/Tracy Fenney	87/3	83.25/3	76/9/4	77/8/4	354.25
6. Charlie Brown/Peter Pletcher	81.5/4	85/4	75/5/4	84/6/4	352.5
7. Delorean/Liza Richardson	83/4	83/4	80/1/4	79/5/4	347
8. Blue Moon/Courtney Calcagnini	81/0	82.5/0	85/6/1	82/7/1	345.5
9. Safari/Alliy Moyer	80.5/4	75/4	83/4/4	78/4/4	340.5
10. Argentum/Kelsie Brittan	85/0	83.25/0	64/4/1	61/0/1	299.25
11. NLF Shakespeare's Rhythm/ Peter Pletcher	82.5/4	87/4	45/7/4	45/6/4	288.5
12. Santerno/Tamara Provost	86/0	83.5/0	40/3/0	40/2/0	254

33 horses competed.



Luck Comes in Twos and Qs

Luck was, quite literally, the name of the game when it came to winning the \$10,000 USHJA National Hunter Derby two weeks in a row. Peter Pletcher claimed two blues aboard a horse called Luck.

The 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood (Lupicore—Gersinaa) captured the national derby at Pin Oak I in a field of 36 entries. At Pin Oak II, Luck edged out 48 challengers to repeat the feat. The gelding also was champion in the adult amateur hunter, 50 and over, division with his owner, Johnnie Martin-Carey of Argyle, Texas, and helped her win the Leading Adult Hunter Rider award. Martin-Carey bought Luck in the fall of 2010.

"He's just a good, solid citizen," said Pletcher. "He's super brave and straight-forward. You can always count on him

because you know he's seen everything." Besides Pletcher and Martin-Carey, Dallas trainer Stacie Goodson shows Luck.

Pletcher, Magnolia, Texas, also scored back-to-back wins (at Pin Oak I and II) in the Texas Pre-Green Super Stakes on Q, owned by Susie Baker of Argyle. The 7-year-old Italian Warmblood also was champion in the low pre-greens and nabbed good ribbons with Baker in the adult amateur, 36-49, division.

Q (Quite Easy—My Lady) had only been in the country for a couple of weeks when Baker bought him from Richard Cheska in Florida at the end of February. Pin Oak I marked the horse's show debut.

"He's really, really green," Pletcher admitted, "so he was a little frisky when we first got him, but he's adapted to the

Peter Pletcher claimed back-to-back wins aboard Luck in the \$10,000 USHJA National Hunter Derby during the two weeks of the Pin Oak Charity Horse Show.

hunter thing so well. No one was more shocked than we were that he's come along this quickly, but he's really smart. He's also a beautiful horse, and his topline is amazing."

Pletcher won five championships and two reserves to earn the title of Leading Professional Hunter Rider.

Veterans Still Fleet Of Foot

Two jumpers owned by the DeLeyer family of Tomball, Texas, are competing into their 20s with soundness and spirit.

Skylark, 21, triumphed over 26 other entries to win the \$20,000 High Children's/Adult Invitational Classic. Andre DeLeyer, 18, rode the Dutch Warmblood-Thoroughbred (Salut II—Lorelei) in the class that sent 12 to the jump-off, but Skylark was the fastest of the double-clears. The pair also won champion in the high division of the children's jumpers.

Andre's sister Michaela, 19, won the same class on Figaro (a full brother to Skylark) back in 2011. Figaro is now 20, and at this year's show, he took Alison Brennen to a runner-up finish in the \$10,000 Low Children's/Adult Invitational Classic.

“You can always count on him because you know he's seen everything.”

—PETER PLETCHER

"They're the two most intelligent horses I've ever owned," said father John DeLeyer, who, with wife Marcia, trains at their North Fork



Skylark may be 21 years old, but he still had the necessary speed to carry Andre DeLeyer to the win over 26 other entries in the \$20,000 High Children's/Adult Invitational Classic at the Pin Oak Charity Hunter/Jumper II.

► Tidbits

► **LYNN WALSH** of Magnolia, Texas, has been president of the Pin Oak Charity Horse Shows for 23 years, heading up more than 100 volunteers who work year-round to organize the shows that have raised nearly \$5 million for various children's medical charities in Texas. Walsh, who trains with Peter Pletcher, won the low amateur-owner championship aboard MacArthur Park and was named Leading Amateur-Owner Rider.

► **BETHANY BOLEN**, 17, and **KATIE MCDONNELL**, 16, both of The Woodlands, Texas, shared the title of Leading Equitation Rider. Bolen won the ASPCA Maclay class and finished second in the WIHS Equitation. McDonnell won the WIHS Equitation hunter phase and was second in the ASPCA Maclay. Joan Waterman of Pine Hollow Farm in New Caney, Texas, trains both riders.

► **MICHAEL BINDER**, 11, of Southlake, Texas, was Leading Pony Hunter Rider on his own 12-year-old Bianca, with whom he won the small pony hunter championship. "Michael has really progressed a lot in the past year," said Colleen Acosta, who trains Binder at Showtime Farms in Southlake. "He also has a pony jumper who's helped him develop as

a rider. Michael loves Bianca. She has a great heart."

► **PATTY ROBERTS**, owner of Memorial Park Hunters in Houston, was one of the show's leading trainers, with MPH riders taking home four championships and one reserve. The USEF Show Jumping Talent Search class was won by Roberts' daughter **EMMA ROBERTS**, 19, a sophomore at Southern Methodist University (Texas), where she is a National Collegiate Equestrian Association All-American rider on the school's varsity team.

► **SHINE**, 20, a Rhinelander stallion (Akzent II—Larissa) owned by Vicki Hunton's Olde Oaks Farm, was formally retired in a ceremony at the show. Shine ranked seventh in the USHJA National Hunter Derby standings for 2011-12, and Olde Oaks Farm Inc. was ranked fourth in the 2012 USEF Leading Hunter Breeding Owners standings. During his career, Shine accumulated numerous top-12 finishes in USHJA international and national hunter derbies and won many year-end awards at the national, regional and state levels. Several of Shine's offspring have gone on to success in the hunter realm, and Shine will continue stud duty at Olde Oaks Farm in Thompsons, Texas.

► NKH Selena Sweeps Both Grand Prix



NKH Selena and rider Christian Heineking won both grand prix classes at the Pin Oak Charity Hunter/Jumper II. On March 27, Selena, owned by Neil Knox of Dallas, bested 26 rivals to win the \$25,000 Pin Oak Grand Prix III. The 8-year-old Oldenburg (Stakkato Gold—California Dream, Quattro B) clocked the fastest time in a jump-off field of 12 horses.

Two days later, in the \$30,000 Pin Oak Grand Prix IV, Selena was the sole horse from 27 to go clean. Francisco Galli designed both courses. "I think he built a much bigger track on the Friday grand prix after 12 went clear on the Wednesday grand prix," Heineking noted.

Christian Heineking had a lucrative week at the Pin Oak Charity Hunter/Jumper II where he won both grand prix classes aboard NKH Selena.

The 33-year-old operates Heineking Show Stables on the grounds of October Hill Farm in Hudson Oaks, Texas. October Hill is owned by the family of trainer Erin Davis, whom Heineking is set to wed on May 4. Previously, Heineking (who moved from his native Germany in 2008) trained at North Texas Equestrian Center in Wylie, where he acquired Selena as a 5-year-old.

Last season, the mare had six top-five finishes out of 15 grand prix classes.

Longacre Hunt, where John is a joint MFH, Marcia leads the second field, and Andre is a whipper-in (as was Michaela until she left for college).

A Shared Honor

Kelsie Brittan, 16, of Keller, Texas, and Abby Funk, 12, of St. George, Kan., were jointly awarded the title of Leading Junior Hunter Rider. In the large junior, 16-17, division, Brittan was champion on Infinity and reserve champion on Argentum. She also was champion in the small junior, 16-17,

division on Bravado. Brittan keeps the trio of horses at her family's Silver Oak Farms in Keller.

"Kelsie is a good rider," said her trainer, Pletcher, "and she's just starting to come into her own. She doesn't have the easiest horses, so she's had to learn how to do a lot of different riding on all three of them."

Funk was champion in the small junior, 15 and under, division on Forecast Sunny, owned by Christiana Looke, and champion in the large junior, 15 and under, division on Regatta, owned by Emily Woodall. Both were catch rides acquired while Funk was at the show with her mother, Mary Ann, owner-trainer at Ashwood Farm in St. George. Abby, who also competes in the jumpers, has been showing since she was 4. She does her schoolwork online, which allows her to travel with the Ashwood group.

"Abby has a great eye and a great way of putting horses at ease and letting them go their own way," said Katie Lambert-Boone, who trains Forecast Sunny. "They just love her." Along with her husband, dressage trainer Hans Jurgen Boone, Lambert-Boone owns the Houston-based Irish Day Farm, title sponsor for both Pin Oak shows this year. ●

\$30,000 PIN OAK GRAND PRIX IV

Katy, Texas—Mar. 29

HORSE/RIDER	FAULTS	TIME	PURSE
1. NKH Selena/ Christian Heineking	0	76.71	\$9,000
2. Twilight/Katie Cox	4	71.92	6,600
3. River Of Dreams/ Christian Heineking	4	73.05	3,900
4. Quick Tempo/ Richard Cheska	4	73.61	2,400
5. MTM Timon/ Tracy Fenney	4	74.46	1,800
6. H.J. El Magnifico/ Eduardo Braun	4	75.43	1,500
7. Capricello 2/ Frankie Owens	4	78.03	1,200
8. Casco/Carli Kirsch	4	78.11	900
9. Triomp/ Holly Shepherd	4	79.62	900
10. Columbus/ Jenni McAllister	4	80.24	600

27 horses competed.

Farm. John bought the sons of Saluut II (1989 Open Jumper Horse of the Year and lifetime earner of more than \$400,000) from their Texas breeder when they were 13 and 14 respectively, after each had campaigned at the higher jumper levels.

"I knew they'd make good children's/adult jumpers," said John. "Both horses are very fast and very good at going at high speeds at these [lower] heights. Andre has a lot of confidence in Skylark, and the best thing is that he leaves him alone."

The DeLeyers are members of the