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MEDIA CONTACT: Jennifer M. Keeler, Yellow Horse Marketing, jennifer@yellowhorsemarketing.com

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Celebrations Continue on Final Day of 2019 Great American/USDF Region 3 Championships

By Yellow Horse Marketing for the GDCTA

Katherine Lewis' weekend at the **Great American Insurance Group/United States Dressage Federation (USDF) Region 3 Championships** (hosted by the Georgia Dressage and Combined Training Association), held October 11-13, 2019 in Conyers, Ga. may not have started out the way she'd hoped, but she didn't let momentary disappointment get in the way of victory on the final day of competition at the Georgia International Horse Park.

"I didn't have a great ride in our Prix St. Georges test on Friday – there weren't any mistakes, it was just a little too quiet. My horse is brilliant, I simply didn't ask for it," said Lewis of her Oldenburg gelding Donneur. "So after that I decided to ride for more brilliance, and it paid off."

Indeed, her decision paid off in spades as the talented pair from Aiken, S.C. rebounded from their eighth-place performance on Friday to trot straight to the top of the leaderboard in the **Intermediate I Adult Amateur Championship**, becoming the only combination to earn more than 70% on their way to a unanimous win under both judges with a winning score of 70.662%. Lewis and Donneur also finished as the top-scoring adult amateur entry in the Intermediate Freestyle Championship, earning fourth place overall with a 70.088% ([watch their freestyle ride HERE](#), courtesy of Richard's Equine Video).

Lewis found Donneur, who she describes as her "once in a lifetime horse," as a three year old in Germany and with the help of her trainer Shawna Harding the pair have progressed through the levels together. In 2015 and 2016, they traveled to Lexington, Ky. where they found success at the US Dressage Finals, winning national titles at both Third and Fourth Levels. Now it looks like a return trip to the Kentucky Horse Park may be in order. "There are so many things I love about the Finals – the atmosphere, the stabling, the volunteers – so I do think I'm going to have to go back," Lewis grinned.



Katherine Lewis and Donneur celebrate their victory in the Intermediate I Adult Amateur Championship at the 2019 Great American/USDF Region 3 Championships in Georgia. Photo: Jennifer M. Keeler/Yellow Horse Marketing.

The final group of Great American/USDF Region 3 championships were awarded on Sunday, including:

- After winning Saturday's Grand Prix Freestyle title, Nora Batchelder of Williston, Fla. was back for more with Sally Seaver's colorful Dutch Warmblood mare WGangster Girl, this time topping a 12-horse field in the **Grand Prix Open Championship** with a winning score of 67.989%.
- Following up on a top finish in the Intermediate II Adult Amateur division earlier in the weekend, Jennifer Huber of Wellington, Fla. and her Danish Warmblood mare Madam Noir returned to the arena to claim one more victory, this time in the **Grand Prix Adult Amateur Championship** with top scores from both judges for 63.533%.
- Another repeat winner was Anna Marek of Williston, Fla. and her Oldenburg gelding Snoopy Sunday, who not only topped a huge field in the Prix St. Georges division on Friday, but also easily won today's **Intermediate I Open Championship** with a score of 72.500%.
- In the **Young Rider Team Test Championship**, hometown girl Marline Syribey of Atlanta, Ga. rode her Hanoverian gelding Hollywood to victory with 69.412%, while in the **Junior Rider Team Test Championship**, Sophia Holloway of Saint Simons Island, Ga. also found the winner's circle aboard her Andalusian gelding Neptune NF, earning a score of 64.621%.
- Also for juniors and young riders, Caitlyn Massey of Arlington, Tenn. and Cheryl Becker's Bashkir Curly gelding Mikato impressed the judges to earn 72.083% and win the **First Level JR/YR Championship**.
- Anna Marek of Williston, Fla. had yet another reason to celebrate on the final day of Region 3 Championship competition as she also claimed top honors over more than 30 entries in the **First Level Open Championship**, this time leading the victory lap aboard Maryanna Haymon's five-year-old Hanoverian mare Danae MF after earning a winning score of 73.472%.
- With a whopping 38 entries, the **First Level Adult Amateur Championship** turned out to not only be a marathon but an absolute battle for the win. Yet ultimately emerging victorious once again was Tina Cook of Denton, N.C. and her PRE stallion Carbonero XCVI, earning their third Region 3 title of the weekend with a score of 72.708%.
- Wrapping up a fantastic weekend of competition were the USDF equitation classes, where Christine Malpartida of St. Petersburg, Fla. claimed the blue ribbon in the **Adult Amateur Equitation Regional Final**, riding her Hanoverian gelding Freudentanz to the win with 87.000%. In the **Dressage Seat Medal Semi-Final 13 & Under** division, Maren Elise Fouche-Hanson of Colbert, Ga. rode her gelding In My Feelings to top 10 rivals with a score of 78.00%, while in the **14-18 division Semi-Final**, Caroline McQueen of Milton, Ga. proved to be the best in a large field of 15 riders by earning a top score of 84.000% with her Hanoverian mare Mandolin RH.

Reflecting on the weekend, competitor and USDF Region 3 Director Susan Bender was delighted. "It's been such a super weekend! Of course it's a major competition for all of us, but at the same time it's been such a competitor-friendly show where everyone seems to be having fun and enjoying not only great sport but also wonderful camaraderie," Bender observed. "The venue has been terrific and I'm hearing from exhibitors about how much they love the stabling and the grounds. For many of our riders, this is the biggest competition they've ever been to, and it's a big deal for them to be here and they love

it – it's an accomplishment just to be here. I'd like to sincerely thank everyone at the GDCTA who I know have worked incredibly hard to make this show so successful."

For more information about the Great American Insurance Group/USDF Region 3 Championships, including news, schedules, ride times, and results, visit the [GDCTA website](#) and follow along with behind-the-scenes updates, photos and videos on the [GDCTA Facebook page](#).

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