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Amy McIlwham



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Biography

Amy McIlwham began riding at the young age of seven, taking group lessons at a stable close to home. As she progressed in ability, Amy leased her first horse, Zelly, an Arabian mare, then the lovely white mare, Tara Leibchen, with whom she first began competing.

As she grew older, and a love and talent for the discipline of dressage became more and more evident, Amy purchased the Hannoverian mare, Fantasia, as a six-year-old. As Amy was only 12 at the time, the pair grew up together, and became exposed to serious dressage competition.

In 2000, Amy began training with Ruth Koch at Oxford Ridge Stables, south of Ottawa. Despite the long commute, the training paid off and Amy found herself representing Canada for the first time in international competition at the 2001 North American Junior Dressage Championship held at Paxton Farms in Ohio. Despite being the youngest competitor, Amy led her team to the bronze medal and placed seventh individually. What was so impressive was that Amy had only been riding her mount, Favorit, generously loaned by her coach, Ruth Koch, for a few months prior to the competition.

Inspired by her results, Amy purchased Favorit, a Westphalian gelding and went on to again represent Canada the following year, this time at the inaugural FEI Championship of the Americas in Blainville, Quebec. Amy and Favorit were simply unbeatable, winning every test offered to claim both the Individual and Team Gold Medals.

Since selling Favorit in 2003, Amy has been concentrating on the development of her young prospect, Marzipan, a Hannoverian gelding owned by Mike and Susan Nash. Together, the pair has been successful at the FEI Junior and FEI Young Rider levels. In 2005, Amy and Marzipan were members of the Canadian dressage team that traveled to the North American Young Riders' Championship in Lexington, Virginia. With strong showings, they qualified for the freestyle finals where they placed 15th individually. In addition to having regular instruction from Ruth, Amy has also been working for several years with the FEI Junior/Young Riders' trainer, Albrecht Heidemann of Germany, whom she also credits with her accomplishments.

Success in the dressage ring runs in the family. Amy's older sister, Sarah, was a member of the Ontario Team at the 2002 North American Young Riders' Championship in Wadsworth, Illinois. A full-time student, Amy hopes to pursue a career in the public relations sector.



Amy and Marzipan rode away with top honours in the FEI Junior Division at CDI-W Blainville in 2004.

Teamwork Spells Success

Success would never have been possible without the support of many people. My coaches, Ruth Koch and Albrecht Heidemann, have been beside me every step of the way, pushing me and guiding me to be the best rider that I could. If it hadn't been for both of them, I would never have had the opportunity to ride Favorit and experience representing my country in international competition.

With Ruth coaching me on a daily basis, there is never a time where I feel alone or lost in my training. She is always there, offering her support and teaching me the valuable skills that every dressage rider should have. She is always positive with her teaching techniques, quick to correct but even quicker to praise. At the 2005 North American Young Riders' Championship, Ruth said something to me that I will never forget.

Just as I was about to enter the ring for my first test, she said, "It doesn't matter what happens from here kiddo, I am so proud of you!" That is something that will stay with me forever.

Albrecht, with whom I train over a three or four-day period every two months, is a first-class coach. From the day that I started riding Favorit,

he was behind me and is a key figure in my success to date. He was the Team Coach at the 2001 North American Junior Dressage Championships, and along with Ruth, also coached me, at the 2002 FEI Championship of the Americas. Having him with me in those new and exciting experiences was very special.



Albrecht Heidemann provides feedback.

Roz Farber is someone that I owe a tremendous amount of thanks to. As the founder of the National FEI Junior and Young Riders' Training Program, Roz has played a vital role in making all of my experiences extremely positive ones. It was Roz who first invited Albrecht to Canada, and made it possible for him to become part of building the FEI Junior and Young Riders' training program, and contributing to the success of the Canadian Junior and Young Rider Teams. Roz also travelled with us to the 2001 North American Junior Dressage Championships and supported each team rider by being ringside for every warm-up and every test.



Roz Farber (centre) has played a vital role in the success of Canada's Junior and Young Riders' competitors.

I am lucky to have the perfect horse show family! My sister is also an equestrian athlete, and competed at the 2002 North American Young Riders' Championship. Having her at the horse shows to lend a hand and give advice is invaluable. My mother is the greatest 'horse show mom' on earth, always standing ringside with a bucket filled with all the important stuff like fly spray, water bottles, towels and the crucial sugar cubes! She is there to support me and be encouraging no matter what happens. My father is also very supportive and makes it to as many horse shows as he can, staying close to my side and cheering me on.



Amy's sister, Sarah (left) is also a dressage competitor.

Horse

Marzipan 1997 dark bay Hanoverian gelding, 16.1hh by Mattgold
Owner: Mike and Susan Nash of Kemptville, Ontario

Fast Facts

Education:

Arthur Kroeger College,
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

Coaches:

Ruth Koch
Albrecht Heidemann

Stable:

Oxford Ridge Stables
Oxford Mills, Ontario

Horse:

Marzipan



Coach Ruth Koch has been instrumental to Amy's success



Competition Highlights

2005

2nd	FEI Young Rider-Team	CDI3* Toronto Classic, Newmarket, ON	Marzipan
2nd	FEI Young Rider-Individual	CDI3* Toronto Classic, Newmarket, ON	Marzipan
3rd	FEI Young Rider-Freestyle	CDI3* Toronto Classic, Newmarket, ON	Marzipan
2nd	FEI Young Rider-Team	CDI3*-W Blainville Dressage International, Blainville, QC	Marzipan
2nd	FEI Young Rider-Individual	CDI3*-W Blainville Dressage International, Blainville, QC	Marzipan
15th	FEI Young Rider	2005 North American Young Riders' Championships, VA	Marzipan
4th	FEI Young Rider-Team	Dressage Canada National Championships, Ottawa, ON	Marzipan
2nd	FEI Young Rider-Individual	Dressage Canada National Championships, Ottawa, ON	Marzipan
2nd	FEI Young Rider-Freestyle	Dressage Canada National Championships, Ottawa, ON	Marzipan
	Reserve Champion, Young Rider	Dressage Canada National Championships, Ottawa, ON	Marzipan

2004

2nd	FEI Junior - Team	CDI3* Dressage at Devon, PA	Marzipan
1st	FEI Junior - Individual	CDI3* Dressage at Devon, PA	Marzipan
2nd	Junior Team	CDI3* York Equestrian Centre, Newmarket, ON	Marzipan
1st	Junior Individual	CDI3* York Equestrian Centre, Newmarket, ON	Marzipan
	Junior Freestyle	CDI3* York Equestrian Centre, Newmarket, ON	Marzipan

2002

Gold	Team	FEI Championship of the Americas, Blainville, QC	Favorit
Gold	Individual	FEI Championship of the Americas, Blainville, QC	Favorit

2001

Bronze Team		North American Junior Dressage Championship, OH	Favorit
7th	Individual	North American Junior Dressage Championship, OH	Favorit

Volunteer Experience

Volunteer work at Therapeutic Riding Ottawa working with disabled riders

Awards and Accolades

Won numerous Ottawa Area Dressage Group (OADG) Awards, including the Junior and Young Riders' Championships

Top Canadian and Team Bronze medallist at the 2001 North American Junior Dressage Championships in Ohio

Individual and Team Gold Medallist at the 2002 FEI Championship of the Americas in Blainville, Quebec

Education

Graduated from Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School in Orleans, Ontario, as the Class Valedictorian

Currently studying Public Affairs and Policy Management at Arthur Kroeger College (speciality college within Carleton University) in Ottawa, Ontario

Amy won both the Individual and Team Gold Medals at the

2002

FEI Championship of the Americas

Left to right,
Stephanie Chalaturnyk, Amy McIlwham
and Rebecca Elming



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For additional information or to provide your support, please contact:

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