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**Ryan Wood Captures Win in the \$20,000 Preliminary Essex
at the MARS Essex Horse Trials**

Far Hills, New Jersey - June 23, 2018 - Australia's Ryan Wood captured the win in the \$20,000 Preliminary Essex at the Mars Essex Horse Trials in Far Hills, NJ on Saturday. Riding Ruby, owned by Summit Sporthorses Ltd. of Ringoes, NJ, the pair led from start to finish going clear in both cross country and show jumping to finish on their dressage score of 27.70.

"This event is phenomenal. This was my first time here and I can't wait to come back. I will be promoting it to everyone in Pennsylvania," said Wood. "It means a lot to win here and to win for Ilona (English) on her homebred horse. To come to Essex and take out the top division and win the silver cup is very special."



*Ryan Wood and Ruby
Photo credit: i{mpack}t studio*

Wood, who is based out of West Grove, PA, entered three mounts in the Preliminary Essex and he needed every one of them to secure his victory.

"I was lucky to have two practices on the course before piloting Ruby around. I was a victim of a rail on each of my other horses," said Wood. "It was interesting to see the rails coming down. The first jump looked like the softest one on the course, but it came down more than any other jump and the treble looked tough and it jumped better than any other combination on the track. It was all very well thought out. Chris Barnard is a master at designing show jumping tracks."



Ryan Wood accepts Essex Silver Cup from Rod and Diann Ryan

Photo credit: i{mpack}t studio

Michael Walton and Brave New World moved up from sixth place following cross country to the runner-up spot scoring 32.90. Hallie Coon finished in third place on Cooley SOS with a score of 36.20, moving way up from spot 21 in dressage and top 12 in cross country.

In the Open Preliminary division, Kaitlin Clasing of Unionville, PA, took top honors riding Warren LVS with a final score of 29.80. They were second going into show jumping and clinched the win going clear after final rider Elizabeth Bortuzzo and Belongs To Teufer knocked down three rails to finish second with a score of 35.10.

"We were double clear in cross country. My horse is so talented and really special. He really handled it like a pro," said Clasing of the Morgan Rowsell-designed cross country course. "They put so much care into the courses and the footing. Everything is so well done here for the lower level horses, which is important for a horse like 'Beans' because this could be a stepping stone for things to come in the future. It was a great day."

Juliana Hutchings-Sebring of Fair Hill, MD, won the Preliminary Rider division on Welbourne winning on their dressage score of 37.50.

"I heard the announcer say that we were in the lead in show jumping and then I heard my horse nick a rail and I was saying to myself, 'please don't fall, please don't fall,' because I knew I couldn't afford to have a rail. He's turned into a really great horse," said Hutchings-Sebring. "This is such a fantastic event, it was really exciting. It felt like a much bigger event than for the level that I competed in. It felt like the atmosphere of a two-star or even bigger because of the spectators, so it was exciting for us. It's nice to take a win home to my students."

Three novice divisions were also held on Saturday. Jennifer Eddy and Fernhill Cascum Marco took top honors in the Open Novice division. Lauren Chumley and Santa Barbara DASH won the Novice Rider "A" division and Tara Brienza won the Novice Rider "B" division on Highlander.



*Children having fun at The Willow School Activity Tent
Photo credit: i{mpack}t studio*

The Mars Essex Horse Trials, located at the historic Moorland Farm, also offered a host of family friendly activities including a Mars Candy Hunt and a Children's Activity Center, sponsored by The Willow School. The Essex Fox Hounds paraded their pack of hounds in the arena on Saturday and on Sunday the Tewksbury Foot Bassets will have their turn. In addition to exciting competition, Sunday will also feature a classic car show and plenty of shopping in the Essex Market.

The Mars Essex Horse Trials culminates on Sunday with competition beginning at 8:00 a.m. General Admission is \$20 at the gate. Parking is free.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Greater Newark LifeCamp in nearby Pottersville, which provides an enriching day camp experience for approximately 300 Newark-area youths per day for six weeks during July and August.

For complete results click [here](#)

About Essex Horse Trials

For three decades, the Essex Horse Trials was one of the highlights of the equestrian calendar, attracting top American and international competitors as well as thousands of fans who enjoyed its social aspects as well. The event was originally conceived in 1968 as a competition for young riders. Proceeds from the event benefit the Greater Newark LifeCamp in nearby Pottersville, which provides an enriching day camp experience for approximately 300 Newark-area youths per day for six weeks during July and August.

Mars, Inc., the original sponsor of the Essex Horse Trials, returned in 2017 and continues as the event's title sponsor. Presenting sponsors include Open Road Auto Group, Peapack-Gladstone Bank, RWJ Barnabas Health, and Running 'S' Equine Veterinary Services.

For additional information and tickets, please visit www.essexhorsetrials.org

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