



Dear U.S. Eventing Community,

Having achieved our Olympic qualification in Lima, winning the team gold and individual gold and silver, our greatest success at the Pan American Games was in how the team – from grooms, support team and riders – worked together to reach our goals. I was very proud of this team, as there is a very different and greater pressure in having to step up and win compared to just doing your best. The Pan American Games were Joanie Morris' final tour with the team as Managing Director of Eventing. I think this was the best sendoff we could give her after six years of servicing and supporting the team. She will be truly missed by all.

The following week, we flew to Tokyo for the Olympic Test Event. Having been to the Equestrian Park before, which was built for 1964 Tokyo Olympics and lies in the middle of the city, it was amazing to see how the venue has been rebuilt to an absolute world-class permanent setup for dressage and show jumping. There are plenty of training arenas and air-conditioned stables, an indoor school, a vet clinic, a small area for cross country training and a gallop track. We did not get to see the Olympic Village, but we saw the newly laid cross country by the waterfront that Derek di Grazia has been planning and working on as course designer. Derek has done a super job laying out a 10-minute course on a fairly small area of land. It will for sure be hot and humid, and a lot of coordination will be required as we will be working out of three hubs. There will be travel in heavy traffic involved between the Equestrian Park, Olympic Village and the cross country course. It will be one of the most amazing Olympics, the food is fantastic, and the Japanese are incredibly organised and friendly. I truly hope we will have many supporters coming out next year to Tokyo.

After Tokyo, I flew to Ireland to have a four-day camp with our four riders going to compete at Millstreet. Holding training camps is something we do before championships, and I wanted to trial it for riders going to events abroad. It will not be possible to hold training camps every time we have riders overseas, but the feedback from the riders at Millstreet was very good, so we did the same in the lead-up for Boekelo and got the same feedback. This also gives me another opportunity to work with riders outside the Training List and arrive to the event with everyone on the same page. All our riders performed well at Millstreet, which is one of my favourite European venues.

Burghley Horse Trials was next in line for us, with a record number of eleven U.S. combinations competing there. Walking the cross country course, it felt bigger and more technical this year and proved to be so. Every five-star course in the world has its own unique challenges to ride, but Burghley is definitely the toughest. It was great to see four U.S. riders finish in the top 15, and I hope our riders will continue to go there and try to close the gap to the top three. I know we can do it if we take the learnings from this year and work on it. Ariel Grald and her lovely young horse, Leamore Master Plan, who was awarded a Jacqueline B. Mars International Competition Grant, won the prize for best first-timer at Burghley with her 10th placing. We are fortunate to have these grants, and it is good to see when they pay dividends.





A few weeks ago, we traveled to Boekelo with a team to compete at the Nations Cup Final, which also served as a trial for the new Olympic format. Our plan was to go there and be competitive but also to learn more from competing in the new format. Boekelo has become one of the most competitive competitions in the world with a lot of very high-quality combinations, and this year had a new course designer in Adrian Ditcham, who did a fantastic job. Boekelo's motto is to be the best event but also the most fun event in the world, so it was fantastic to have more than 50 U.S. owners and supporters there backing our team and also having fun. I hope we can continue to grow this interest in the future, as I believe it is a big part of what we should be doing as an organisation. We came off with a good start in the dressage, but after having one combination down in the cross country, our team chances were out, as there is no drop score under the new Olympic format. There is an ongoing conversation and debate around this new format with three riders on a team. However, this is how it will be at the 2020 Olympics, and it is up to us to have a game plan accordingly. This was also our new Managing Director of Eventing Jenni Autry's first team competition in her role, and she did her duties with flying colours.

This year we have continuously worked on improving the connection between High Performance and our athletes in the eventing community. We have had several Open Forums at events this year, and will have our last ones at Galway Downs in California this weekend and at the Ocala Jockey Club in Florida next month. It is an opportunity for riders to ask questions about High Performance, and for us to give relevant information to our community. We have also been more involved in regular meetings with the Eligible Athletes Working Group, which Lynn Symansky does a great job with as Chair. We have a clear picture of how to run the High Performance Program, but we get very valuable feedback and information from this group that will help us consistently improve our program.

It is with a bit of sadness to have seen the last Fair Hill International CCI4\*-L at the old venue. Derek di Grazia built once again one of the best CCI4\*-L cross country courses I have seen on the best land you can possibly find for our sport. However, everyone I have spoken to who has been to the new Fair Hill facilities on the other side of the road have been very impressed. I am myself very excited about having another CCI5\*-L in the U.S. in 2020 and can't wait to have the opportunity to see what Fair Hill's team has accomplished.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Duvander'.

Erik Duvander