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Sarah Hamilton
UNH Equine Program

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UNH Dressage Team Wins National Championship

Media Contact: [Sarah Hamilton](#)

603-862-1356

UNH Equine Program

April 22, 2009

DURHAM, N.H. - The University of New Hampshire's Intercollegiate Dressage Association (IDA) team defeated more than 20 teams to win its first-ever national championship Saturday, April 18, 2009 at the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio. This was the UNH dressage team's sixth time contesting the national championships and the team's first victory there, which was the culmination of a very successful season that earned UNH's third consecutive regional championship.

Riders representing the team were team captain, Kim Guyer, a senior pre-vet major from Northborough, Mass; Kaetryn Williams-Barnard, a senior outdoor education major from Lee; Casey Hoatson, a junior occupational therapy major from York, Maine; and Bridget Shea, a senior pre-vet major from Wilimington, Vt. Sarah Hamilton, director of the UNH Equine Program, coaches the team.

Guyer was the lead-off rider, competing in the first level division. Her strong score gave her a fourth place finish, starting the team off in a competitive position. Williams-Barnard's third place score in the upper training division then catapulted the team into the second place spot, just two points behind 2006 and 2007 champions Virginia Intermont College. Hoatson's impressive ride at the lower training division was the winning test at her level and enough to earn her the reserve champion highpoint rider award for the competition and to pull UNH into the lead. Anchor rider Shea then turned in a solid performance in the introductory division, earning third place and securing the national championship for UNH.

"This victory was particularly special after last year's exceptionally close competition in which UNH finished in fourth place by less than one percent," says Hamilton. "To have every rider in the top four is an amazing accomplishment in such fierce and high-caliber competition. More than anything, the students were all determined not to let their teammates down."

Dressage is a sport that can be likened to ballet for horse and rider; the famous Lippizan stallions of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna are an example of dressage at its highest level. Riders strive to systematically develop and improve the horse's strength, flexibility, balance, gait and movement to create a harmonious partnership between horse and rider, with invisible communication.

Intercollegiate dressage competition has the added challenge that the rider must perform on an unfamiliar horse. Each college takes a turn hosting a show and provides all the horses for the riders of every team. In a true test of skill, tact and sensitivity, riders draw horses at random and have just 10 minutes to get to know the horse and try to establish a harmonious relationship with the animal.

For more information on the Intercollegiate Dressage Association national championships, go to www.teamdressage.com. For complete results of the 2009 national championships, go to <http://www.findlay.edu/ida2009championship/RESULTS.aspx>

The UNH Equine Program offers a bachelor's degree in animal science that allows students to concentrate in equine industry and management, therapeutic riding or equine science. Classes include stable management, horse care, teaching, training, horsemanship, conformation, equine diseases, equine sports medicine, reproduction, nutrition and horse trials management. The Equine Program also has an active riding program which concentrates in dressage and eventing and two equestrian teams, the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association team (hunt seat) and the Intercollegiate Dressage Association Team (dressage). UNH hosts two nationally recognized horse trials and two nationally recognized dressage shows each year. UNH's therapeutic riding program is recognized as a North American Riding for the Handicapped Association Premier Operating Center. UNH has an active Horsemen's Club, as well as study abroad programs that include a week-long trip to Portugal for the concentrated study of classical dressage.

For more information on the UNH IDA team, go to <http://www.equine.unh.edu/ida/>. For information on the Equine Program, go to www.equine.unh.edu.


The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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Photo available for download: http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2009/apr/idanationals.JPG

Caption: The UNH Intercollegiate Dressage Association team won the national championship in Ohio Saturday, April 18, 2009. Left to right: Casey Hoatson, Kaetryn Williams-Barnard, Sarah Hamilton (coach), Bridget Shea, Kim Guyer.

Credit: Courtesy of the UNH Intercollegiate Dressage Association team.

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