

Erynn Ballard Named 2006 'Equestrian of the Year'

February 11, 2007

Ottawa, Ontario --- Equine Canada (EC) has named Erynn Ballard of Hillsburgh, ON, the 2006 'Equestrian of the Year'.

Ballard, 27, is recognized as one of Canada's hardest working athletes on the Canadian show jumping circuit. A sought-after catch rider, Ballard excels in both the hunter and jumper rings, and is also extremely admired for her talent with young horses.

The 2006 season proved to be one of the most successful of Ballard's young career. With two Grand Prix mounts, Rio's Rhapsody and Robin Van Roosendael, Ballard earned top results in both Canada and the United States and, in August, was named the first alternate to the 2006 World Equestrian Games Team. In September, just days before her 26th birthday, Ballard made her Canadian Show Jumping Team debut riding as a member of the Canadian Nations' Cup Team in Calgary, AB. Partnered with Robin van Roosendael, her performance in the \$350,000 BMO Financial Group Nations' Cup, highlighted by a clear second round, helped Canada to secure its first ever Nations' Cup victory since Spruce Meadows began hosting the competition in 1977.

Ballard is no stranger to success, and has helped to put Canada on the map on several occasions in international competition. At the 1998 Maclay Medal Finals held in Madison Square Garden in New York City, she became only the second Canadian in the event's long history to claim the title. One year later, she again brought international glory to Canada by winning the Individual Gold Medal at the 1999 North American Young Riders' Championship riding her own Leacock.

Aside from riding, Ballard is also a respected coach, teaching many of the sport's most talented up and comers, despite her own young age. Two of her students were members of the Ontario Team at the 2006 North American Young Riders' Championship, while another, Asta Torokvei, won the Eastern Division of the Jump Canada National Talent Squad Series.

"I think it's incredible that I'm receiving this award," said Ballard. "It is a perfect ending to 2006, which was such a great year for me. It's amazing to receive this award, and it is a great honour for me."

At the annual Equine Canada National Awards Banquet on Saturday, February 10, 2007, in Ottawa, ON, Ballard was awarded the Doctor George Jacobsen Trophy created in honour of the man who founded the Canadian Equestrian Federation in 1977. Dr. Jacobsen was a strong supporter of equestrian sport in Canada and internationally, with a particular interest in the young equestrians as he felt they were our future team members. To be eligible for this award, the rider must be between 19 and 30 years of age and demonstrate superior sportsmanship, dedication and the pursuit of excellence in equestrian competition.

A true example of each of these qualities, Equine Canada is proud to name Erynn Ballard the 2006 'Equestrian of the Year.'

About Equine Canada

Equine Canada is a member-based association that represents, promotes and services Canada's equine community and industry. Its core areas of activity involve sport, equine health and welfare, education and safety, governance and marketing, representation and communication. Equine Canada is recognized by Sport Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the International Equestrian Federation (FEI), the Canadian Olympic Committee and Canadian Coaching Association of Canada as the national organization representing equestrian sport and equine interests in Canada. For more information about Equine Canada, please visit www.equinecanada.ca