

## Nayel Nassar And Lordan Do It Again In Thermal

By: Edited Press Release  
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The scene was set for the \$100,000 Longines FEI Thermal World Cup qualifier in the Grand Prix Stadium at the AON HITS Desert Horse Park in California. A field of 38, stacked with some of the most elite riders in equestrian sport challenged the first-round course, designed by Marina Azevedo of Brazil.

"I always keep in mind the class that I am building for, especially as a qualifier for the World Cup," Azevedo said. "Even if it is a big ring, I try to put some fences close to the corners and the turns a little bit short to help them prepare for the indoor rings."

Just five would return for the jump-off, all in the chase for the winner's purse and valuable World Cup qualifying points.

First to return for the jump-off was John Pearce, of Canada, aboard Firestone S. Pearce would finish in fifth place with a four-fault performance in a time of 45.29.

Following Pearce in the jump-off was another rider representing Canada, Lisa Carlsen aboard Parette. Carlsen would have the time to take the lead at 41.50, but a rail at the final fence placed her third in the standings. "I am usually very slow, so I really had nothing to lose," Carlsen laughed. "I knew Eve [Jobs] and Nayel [Nassar] were after me, and they would be fast. I thought that I need to be as fast as I can, and I was the fastest and can't believe it! I'm still in shock. I'm really proud of my horse, and I believe that now I can actually win classes."

Eve Jobs would produce the first double clean ride in a time of 43.97 aboard her 13-year-old Belgian Warmblood mare Venue D'fees Des Hazalles, representing the United States. "I'm very happy to be back here. It's nice to be close to home again. I grew up doing these shows," Jobs said.

Jobs has been partnered with her mount for just over a year now. "She's really a phenomenal horse, and I just started going faster with her this year. Going into the jump-off, I knew nobody had gone clear yet but Lisa [Carlsen] had a really fast time, and I knew I had [Nayel Nassar] coming right behind me, so I tried to go as quickly as I could and make tight turns. I took a bit of a risk to the last fence, and it paid off!"



*Nayel Nassar topped the \$100,000 Longines FEI Thermal World Cup qualifier with his longtime partner Lordan. ESI Photo*

Nayel Nassar, representing Egypt, would be the next to return aboard Lordan and with a clean efficient round. This longtime partnership would take home the top honors in a time of 43.89. "I tried not to focus too much on what the other riders were doing. I know that Lordan is a very different kind of horse, with a different kind of stride, but I just wanted to know whether my jump-off pace would be fast enough, or if I need to take any extra risks," said Nassar. "I obviously ended up being a bit closer than I expected, but luckily we were on the right side of that today."

This is the third World Cup Qualifier title for Nassar and Lordan at the AON HITS Desert Horse Park, with one being just this past February at the HITS Coachella Desert Circuit.

"I have to say it was just a lovely setting, right around sunset, it was a beautiful time of day," said Nassar. "We had a very difficult and technical course to jump today. It was the World Cup qualifying standard, so that is always a nice challenge. I just rode my horse, and I am thrilled to be sitting here again."

After a bobble in last weeks \$100,000 Coachella Grand Prix FEI CSI\*\*\*, Nassar explained that he was a bit nervous for today's class. "I don't know what's left to say. He's such a trier inside and out," Nassar stated. "It is as if nothing happened [last week]. He has full trust in me and in himself. I just wanted to make up for that and redeem myself. Luckily, we got it done this week."

Last to go in the jump-off was Richard Spooner with his partner Quirado S. Known for his speed in jump-offs, Spooner would not disappoint today with a quick time of 41.99, but a rail and four faults would result in a fourth-place finish.

Tom Struzzi, president and CEO of HITS, was pleased with the strong field of riders from near and far who contested for the champion title.

"I think it is a combination of the fact that we had a November World Cup class and what Longines and the group that works so hard with the World Cup have done to make this class really popular," he commented. "Tonight demonstrated that they are doing good things, and it's powerful. To see 38 entered is as strong a number as I have seen in a World Cup in quite a while, so good for that group, and great thanks to Longines, top horse show sponsor in the world. We are thrilled to have them in the desert, and we are looking forward to next year and how we can keep this fine field of riders."

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