

# USA SECURES SECOND PLACE

## in \$200,000 HITS Ocala Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup



Georgina Bloomberg and Juvina



Beezie Madden and Simon

**D**roves of spectators turned out at HITS Ocala Post Time Farm on Friday, February 13, as the venue hosted its first ever \$200,000 Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup. For the USA, points for the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup Finals in Barcelona, Spain were up for grabs. The team had high points and low points, but in the end they dug deep, and with a little luck on their side, they placed second behind Ireland. With Canada in third, the U.S. secured the valuable points they needed to guarantee a trip to Spain.

The first round resulted in 15 clear efforts out of 24 entries, two of which belonged to the United States thanks to Georgina Bloomberg with Gotham Enterprizes' Juvina and Beezie Madden with Abigail Wexner's Simon. Lauren Hough and Ohlala, owned by the Ohlala Group, had a miscommunication coming out of the triple combination resulting in four faults, and Cherry Knoll Farms' Cedric refused with Laura Kraut going into the triple combination to be the drop score with four jumping faults and two time faults.

With so many clear in the first round, the teams were tightly bunched, with Ireland, Columbia and Canada leading without any faults to their name. The Irish were the most impressive of the leaders, as none of their riders incurred a single fault during the first round. Meanwhile, the United States and Venezuela were tied for fourth with four faults.

The course designer returned to the ring after the first round and raised the heights of the fences, creating a more difficult test

for the riders, and only six riders went clear in the second round. Hough was the first to return for the U.S. Team and had the second fence down with Ohlala, but Bloomberg put in a second faultless round with Juvina to help them climb in the standings.

Cedric and Kraut had another uncharacteristic round, this time coming out of the triple combination to be the drop score again. The U.S. Team was not out of the running yet though. The always consistent Madden proved why she was in the anchor position, easily clearing all of the obstacles with Simon to finish with a second clear round, bringing the team's final total to eight faults.

At the end of the day, the pressure was on for Canada's Eric Lamaze and Zigali P.S. A clear round would mean a tie with the U.S. for second. It was not to be though. As the middle part of the triple combination hit the dirt, Canada lost the chance to top the U.S., finishing with a 12-fault total and tying with Columbia.

For Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland of the U.S., the day did not play out as planned, but the result was still what was needed to lead the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup standings over Canada and Mexico to qualify for the Finals. "Sometimes these Nations Cups early in the year when you're coming off of a break have some unforeseen things happening. For us, the number one priority was to try to do as well as we could for points toward the Furusiyya. We accomplished that objective. Yes, we would have liked to have won, but the better team won today." 🐾

— Rebecca Walton



Lauren Hough and Ohlala



Laura Kraut and Cedric

All photos by Rebecca Walton / Photo Media Group