

Finding the “Fun Side” of Dressage

By Kalie Beckers

Thank you SEDA Scholarship Committee members for choosing me to be the recipient of the May 2010 SEDA Jr/YR Scholarship. I chose to participate in the Musical Freestyle clinic by Cynthia Collins of Luna Tunes Freestyles held at Stirling Farm April 23-25, 2010. I rode my horse Rascale.

The clinic began on Friday night with a lecture presenting the rules and the ins and outs of freestyles. The lecture provided me with the background knowledge I needed to understand all that is involved with developing a musical freestyle.

On Saturday, Ms. Cynthia worked to fit music to Rascale’s tempo using a metronome. We started with his trot first, and it was more challenging than I expected. It took most of the hour to find the right beat, but we still couldn’t find a song. So we moved on to find music for the canter. This was easier than the trot. We quickly found the correct canter beat, but still couldn’t find the right song. Rascale’s tempo was very close to Celtic music, but I wanted something a lot more my style. The time ran out before we could get to the walk. The first day was fun but stressful at same time.

The second day was much better than the first. I brought some rock music from home for Ms. Cynthia to listen to. It gave us an awesome idea for a song. So we came up with *Innuendo* by Queen. It is a rock song that I like and also goes with Rascale’s tempo and rhythm at all three gaits.

The next thing we did was to choreograph the actual freestyle. We



Clinician Cynthia Collins helps Kalie Beckers and Rascale create a musical freestyle.

made a Third Level freestyle that also meets the Third Level FEI Junior/Young Rider freestyle requirements.

By the end of the second day it was all put together. I had to practice at home and then send a video of the entire freestyle to Ms. Cynthia for a written choreographed test. It took about two weeks to receive the final copy in the mail.

Ms. Cynthia is an outstanding clinician. I had a lot of fun and learned about all that is involved in process of developing a musical freestyle.

In May, I was able to share the knowledge I gained by participating in the Freestyle Clinic with three Canterng Cajuns Pony Club members: Claudia, Isabelle, and Eva Hemb. Mr. Bob Coleman worked on their horses’ tempo and music. The girls and I worked together

to choreograph training freestyles. It was really exciting to actually watch the freestyles when the girls competed in the 2010 Deep South Region Pony Club Rally in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Finally, Dr. Paula Gregory asked me to do a demonstration of my freestyle at the SEDA Juniors only show in June, and I was thrilled. I am happy to promote my sport to people, especially other young riders.

When the day of the demonstration came, I was so nervous. I had only practiced a couple times with the music and just started riding with the double bridle. In the end, it was all wonderful and a great learning experience for me – and hopefully some of the junior riders can see that, although dressage can be challenging, it can be fun, too! ♣