

Breed of the Month: Friesian Sporthorse

Carefully honed crossbred excels in dressage

As the crossbreeding of Friesians increased in the 1990s, some breeders began striving to create a horse that maintained the characteristics of the Friesian yet was more suitable for sport, particularly dressage and driving. From this selective breeding, the Friesian Sporthorse was born.

The Friesian Sporthorse combines the beauty, temperament, and expressive gaits of the Friesian with the athleticism, elasticity, endurance, and versatility of the Thoroughbred and warmblood breeds, along with hybrid vigor. It is built like a sport horse, albeit sometimes a bit heavier and more baroque in appearance, with a higher-set and more arched neck. It often has the Friesian's characteristic thick mane, tail, and feathers. A Friesian Sporthorse may be any color, with any markings.

The Friesian Sporthorse usually possesses the Friesian's kind, gentle temperament, making it a popular choice for amateurs and youth as well as professionals.

Friesian Sporthorses you might know: The four-year-old **Lexington**, who has been successful in the dressage arena, is also one of the only FSA-approved breeding stallions. The gelding **Ducati CH**, owned and ridden by Brooke Cramton, was sixth in the 2007 Adequan/USDF Intermediate II Horse of the Year standings and carried Cramton to her USDF gold medal in 2008. The stallion **Nico**, a black-and-white pinto owned by Hidden Promise Sport Horses, is known for his striking appearance.

The organization: The goal of the Friesian Sporthorse Association is to encourage and recognize quality Friesian crossbreeds bred for sport,

with a strong emphasis on established sport-horse breeding practices and registration guidelines. Although there are other registries that record various Friesian crossbreeds, the FSA is the only one devoted exclusively to the Friesian Sporthorse, with specific guidelines for registration and breeding.

FSA registration is divided into three books: Main Book, Auxiliary Book, and Foundation Book. The Foundation Book recognizes purebred Friesian stallions and mares that are being used for Friesian Sporthorse breeding. Horses ineligible for registration but with at least one registered parent are eligible for certificates of pedigree.

All-Breeds awards offered: Open, junior/young rider, Vintage Cup, adult amateur, musical freestyle, FEI Five-Year-Old, FEI Six-Year-Old, Materiale, and dressage sport-horse breeding.

For the Breeds, by the Breeds

Each month, "All-Breeds Connection" spotlights a USDF All-Breeds awards program participating organization and the breed it represents. Information and photos that appear in this column are furnished by the breed registries.

The All-Breeds program is designed to recognize the accomplishments of specific breeds in dressage. All participating organizations offer "open" year-end awards from Training Level through Grand Prix, and some offer awards in additional categories, such as adult amateur, junior/young rider, and dressage sport-horse breeding. Registry representatives are usually on hand to help bestow awards at the banquet held during each year's USDF convention.

All-Breeds award eligibility requirements include memberships and horse registrations with both USDF and the participating organization. For details and a list of current participating organizations, visit usdf.org. For more information about All-Breeds awards program participation, send e-mail to allbreeds@usdf.org.

How to participate: Horses must be registered with the FSA, and owners must be FSA members. All horses registered with the FSA are eligible for USDF All-Breeds awards.

Organization contact info:
Friesian Sporthorse Association:
friesiansporthorseassociation.com. ▲



SUCCESSFUL STALLION: *The Friesian Sporthorse Lexington*, owned by River Oaks Farm (FL) and ridden by Gigha Steinman (FL)

COURTESY OF THE FRIESIAN SPORTHORSE ASSOCIATION