



OEF EQUINEWS

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First Western Riding Coach Receives OEF's Coach of the Year Distinction

The Ontario Equestrian Federation Coach of the Year award has been bestowed annually starting in 2001.

The honour is awarded to an Equine Canada-certified coach who demonstrates appreciation for a positive influence toward the discipline's participants; shares knowledge and insight about the discipline with his/her students; believes in and practices ethical conduct in the barn, the arena and at a show; has positive enthusiasm and dedication for the discipline; demonstrates coaching ability through the success of his/her students in the discipline; and promotes all equine matters in which he/she believes.

Freelton-based Jennifer Mcllwraith wins 2006 OEF Honour

Jennifer Cook-Mcllwraith, head coach and co-owner of Double J Farms was selected from among a number of nominated coaches as the 2006 OEF Coach of the Year.

"Our selection committee was particularly impressed by Jennifer Mcllwraith's credentials. She exemplifies the attributes of the award criteria to a "T" said OEF Executive Director, Marcia Barrett. OEF Master Course Instructor, Barbara Newlands commented, "I was so pleased to hear that Jennifer, a Western Coach, won "Coach of the Year". Her hard work and dedication to her students and horses is an asset to the Western Coaching Program. I wish her continued success."

The indomitable Pat Carter, retired OEF master Course conductor and western coach, also weighed in: "I'm happy and very proud of Jennifer," she said. "Jennifer was a hard working student of mine years ago, and she has done very well building a credible reputation as a western coach. She is a great and faithful ambassador for the western riding discipline. We need people at her level," she added.

The award was announced in the OEF's **WHOA!** January issue.

An award a long time coming to the Western riding world

"We feel especially fortunate to have Mcllwraith on our western team and, on behalf of the Western Horse Association of Ontario membership, I would like to extend our congratulations to Jennifer.

This is an important milestone in the equestrian world. This is the first time a western riding discipline coach has been recognized as an outstanding mentor within the equestrian arena. This award reflects an increasing understanding of the high level of skill and teamwork required by western performance riding, commented," Lori Betts, President of the Western Horse Association of Ontario (WHAO).

"Jennifer Mcllwraith is particularly deserving of this award. She has trained many young and aspiring students and horses to high point levels within their respective events, one such student being the 2005 and 2006 High Point Youth Western Performance Champion for the Western Horse Association of Ontario," added the WHAO President.

“This is a great opportunity to profile the western discipline,” asserts McIlwraith

McIlwraith’s reaction to the award? Surprise. Delight. And more community-mindedness.

“I’m very honoured that my students nominated me and the OEF board selected me. But having engaged, hard-working and goal-oriented students really helps,” McIlwraith said.

She continued, “I really want to draw broader attention to performance western riding and help change the general perception that western riding is a no-skill activity. The precision, control and timing required of an excellent performance western riding team is akin to the questions we ask from a Dressage team. Western performance riders work with a larger saddle and a looser rein. And that actually makes communication more challenging,” she said. “Like Dressage, the great teams just make it look easy,” she added.

McIlwraith also wants to cheer on more riders of all ages, experience and skill to participate in their local, club shows.

“These shows connect you to the heart of your own horse community. They give you a relaxed way to learn, challenge yourself and have fun with your horse and other people who share your passion for riding!” McIlwraith enthused.

About Jennifer McIlwraith Jennifer McIlwraith owns and operates a relaxed training and boarding facility with award-winning cattleman, John McIlwraith, which supports riders of many disciplines – from dressage and hunter-jumping to western performance and reining.

She specializes in developing young horses and in coaching western performance and hunt-seat horse and rider teams. She teaches private, semi-private and group lessons and mentors students with a range of riding goals – from local and higher-level competitive standings to supporting coaches-in-training.

Jennifer has competed nationally and won Reserve Canadian National Champion and has coached students to local, provincial and national open and all-breed shows. Her personal sights are set on Worlds for 2009 and helping her students reach their personal goals.

She is an active supporter of the Equine Canada (formerly CEF) western coaching certification process – especially the Rider Levels 1 through 4. She supports this with her own students and acts as an Examiner.

“This is a phenomenal way to build your skills in a safe and systematic way. It also helps you develop knowledge and confidence to be a caring and responsible horse owner”, said McIlwraith.

Jennifer McIlwraith can be reached by phone at 905.659.2792 or through jmdoublej@aol.com or www.doublejfarm.ca.

Available:

- Profile for Jennifer McIlwraith
- Praise for Jennifer McIlwraith – collected testimonials
- Picture, Jennifer McIlwraith