

IHAA REVIEW

ISSUE 8 • NOVEMBER 2025



Liz Tinnan & Banjo

The World Championships, reborn - in the USA....

It has been a busy competition season with club and national level events, aplenty, and several high profile competitions in Hungary, France, Switzerland, Russia and Indonesia, to name a few, some of which were livestreamed around the world. But this season, the cherry on the top was the World Championships in USA. Read more inside to learn what star-spangled excitement went down in Tennessee.

IHAA NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

News • P 2

Updates • P 3-11
Judging & online learning
Competitions - WC, eGP

Regional updates • P 12-15

Features • P 17-22
Interview with Liz Tinnan
Straight from the horse's mouth

• *Editorial team:*
Claire Sawyer, Alison Acosta,
Marleen van der Schalie •



NEWS

The summer of '25....

With apologies to those in the Southern hemisphere!

What a busy summer it was. Moving from two eGP stages in June (Italy and Turkey), July saw the Kids ST World Championships in Indonesia before, the Asian Nations Cup stage in Russia in August and the World Championships in USA in September.

Mixed in with these were some great livestreamed events, allowing those of us at home to follow the action from the Kids ST World Champs and international competitions in Pomaz, Hungary in July and Gauchox, France in August. Engaging commentary allowed us to know the competitors and really become invested in their successes.

And successes there were... many of them. World records were extended by those athletes who we already know and respect greatly (including Raphael Malet's T90 overall WR in June, and Siem Budding's T110 overall WR in September). There were new names too: 15y old Malaysian athlete Muhammad Bin Muhamad Akmal set a new overall WR for the R234 at the Kids ST WC in June, and 13y old Kaiser Akhtar from Indonesia set a new overall WR for the R235 at the World Champs in September.

As the season draws to a close in Europe, it continues with a packed calendar of events in USA and Asia. Good luck to the athletes from the nine teams who will imminently gather in Indonesia to compete in the Asian Nations Cup. We look forward to sharing your stories and photos of the competition in the next edition.

Pure grit and determination

At the World Championships an impromptu award was given to Laura Dettling, from Canada : **Badass...** We would like to applaud Laura's focus and resilience, whilst suggesting "don't try this at home, folks!"



Laura trained with top coach and athlete Anni Jauhainen, in the run up to the WC, lengthening her draw in the process. There was insufficient time to replace all her arrows before the WC. Laura got through Raid and Tower without incident but in the excitement of Hunt track she drew a little further on the long shot and the arrow tip came beyond the grip of her bow and she shot through the flesh of the back of her hand. The arrow went straight through, fletchings and all...! Yet she carried on... scoring on 11 of the remaining 15 targets, including this jump shot, and even hitting the inner kill zone of the offside shot! During the walk section she called to officials to "please radio ahead to the medics" as she would be needing attention at the finish. Laura - you are hard as nails! We're pleased to report she is OK and now owns longer arrows....



© Suvi Männikkö



JUDGING UPDATE

& ONLINE LEARNING

Judging Update - Insights from Head Judge Gabriela Osiecka

At the World Championship in the U.S., Gabriela Osiecka served as Head Judge – a role that demands not only precision and authority, but also empathy and leadership. Reflecting on the event, Gabi shared her thoughts and experiences with us.

When asked about the most memorable moment from the championship, she found it hard to choose just one:

"It's hard to point out just one moment that stuck with me the most. However, if I were to highlight a particularly positive one, I think it would be witnessing Siem Budding from the Netherlands achieving an amazing result – the IHAA Overall World Record in Tower 110. We were all cheering for him through each round, and we could see he was shooting incredibly well. His genuine joy, along with the reactions of the people around him, were truly uplifting. Other competitors – in fact his rivals – came up to congratulate him."

She also mentioned that, although she didn't witness it live, Wojtek Osiecki's record-breaking run in Raid 2-3-5 must have carried the same spirit of excitement and respect. *"Luckily, in horseback archery, competitors truly support one another, show mutual respect, and know how to appreciate outstanding achievements."*

When talking about her role as a judge, Gabi explained her guiding philosophy:



"My philosophy of being a judge is based on the idea that I'm at a competition to both support and uphold standards. I do everything I can to create the right conditions for competitors to perform effectively, while also ensuring that the rules are followed."

For Gabi, good judging is about balance – between fairness and encouragement, structure and empathy. *"In my opinion, a good main judge is a leader – someone who demands the most from himself, cares for the horses, communicates well, knows the rules, and enforces them fairly."*

Her words reflect the values that keep our sport growing stronger: integrity, respect, and the shared goal of excellence – both on the field and behind the judging line.

L4 JUDGES

Anders Wredendal (Sweden) *
Elizabeth Tinnan (USA) *
Gabi Osiecka (Poland) *
Alan le Gall (France)

L3 JUDGES

Appointed since 10th July

Emmanuel de Peretti (France)

L2 (FULL) JUDGES

Appointed since 10th July

Deirdre Janse van Rensburg (SA)
Paweł Mika (Poland)

L2 (ST) JUDGES

Appointed since 10th July

Jenni Tommila (Finland)
Samsudin Mohd Baharun
(Malaysia)

* L4 judges on the Judging panel
List correct as of 28th October '25

- **Rulebook PDF** - is free to download, on the [IHAA website](#)



- Quick and easy to check on the [PDF viewer](#)
- There is a link to buy a paper copy of the rulebook on the [Rules page](#) of our website



COMPETITONS

Worlds

IHAA World Championships - Tennessee, USA

19-21 September 2025 | Rising Glory Farm, Lewisburg, TN

Report by Marleen van der Schalie (NED)

Under the warm September skies of Tennessee, the 2025 IHAA World Championships brought together nearly sixty horseback archers from twenty nations – a historic first since the IHAA's memorandum of understanding with the FEI. Hosted at Rising Glory Farm by Elizabeth Gonzalez Tinnan and Chris Carlough of Tennessee Valley Archery LLC, the event set new benchmarks for organization, horse welfare, and sporting spirit.

Competitors, volunteers, and horse owners alike travelled from all across the United States and beyond, turning the farm into a vibrant hub of international camaraderie. Dozens of well-trained American horses were paired with riders from all over the world – a collaboration that made so many personal bests and even world records possible. The sense of community was palpable; volunteers came from every corner of the country, eager to help with everything from cooling down horses to ensuring each run went smoothly. It was heartwarming to see so many people come together for a shared passion.



For me, this championship was the end of a much longer journey – quite literally. I had begun my trip in the wide-open landscapes of the American West, flying into Salt Lake City and driving a Jeep Wrangler across several states. I recall getting lost and found again, riding horses in the mountains of Big Horn National Park, where I tried horseback archery on local horses who took to it like naturals. The friends I made there even drove all the way to Tennessee to watch the competition – a full-circle moment that made the week even more special.



Of course, I wasn't the only one who turned the World Championships into an American adventure. Many competitors used the opportunity to visit friends from the horseback archery community, travel through neighboring states, or explore the country in their own unique ways. It added a spirit of discovery and friendship that extended far beyond the competition itself.



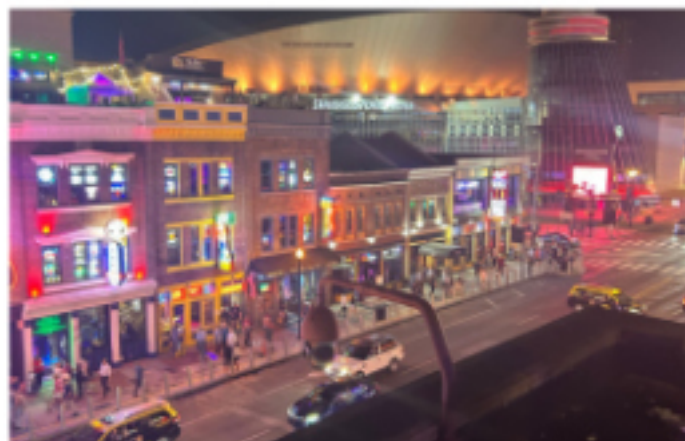
COMPETITONS

Worlds

America felt vast beyond imagination – a land of mountains, forests, and open skies. From there, arriving in Nashville felt like stepping into a different world: the country music capital, full of rhythm, neon lights, and cowboy boots. Many competitors spent evenings together on Broadway before the competition began, listening to live bands and soaking in the Western spirit. I recall laughing with friends, old and new, as we explored the city – and I'm certain more than a few archers went home with new boots and hats as souvenirs.

Once the competition began, Rising Glory Farm came alive. Beneath the heat of the southern sun, the arena buzzed with energy – a festival atmosphere of cheering teams, vendors, and horses being carefully cooled and hydrated after each run. Volunteers stood ready with buckets of water and sponges to keep both riders and horses refreshed.

In the evenings, the community gathered again for social events that perfectly captured the friendly, open spirit of horseback archery. We visited Pickers Creek Winery for live music and dancing, and later celebrated at Kaiser Brewery, where laughter, games, and stories carried late into the night. You could always spot the horseback archers – we were the ones keeping the dance floor alive.



One of the most touching aspects of the event was the generosity of American horse owners, who entrusted their horses to riders from across the world. It's something that never stops feeling special – that bond of trust between people and horses who may have only just met, yet share the same language of movement, focus, and respect.

I always find it incredible to meet so many familiar faces from around the world again – friends, judges, volunteers, board members, and top athletes alike. What makes this sport so unique is that it doesn't matter if you're a world champion, an organizer, or, like me, simply 'trying my best' – everyone shares the same passion, side by side.

The level of competition this year was truly inspiring. The precision, speed, and connection between rider and horse were exceptional, showing how much the sport continues to grow worldwide. Watching these performances up close was a privilege – and motivation to keep improving.

After a week of heat, dust, laughter, and unforgettable moments, it was clear this championship was about far more than results. It was a celebration of community, dedication, and shared love for the horses that make it all possible.

Now that the atmosphere has been set, it's time to look at the results. The podium places and highlights of the 2025 IHAA World Championships can be found on the following pages.



COMPETITONS

Worlds

Siem Budding crowned World Champion

Spotlight on the World Champion

When we ask Siem Budding about the moment he realised he had become World Champion, his face lights up immediately.

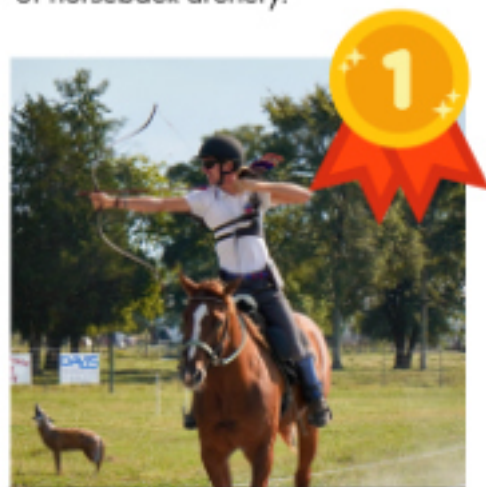
"It was such an incredible moment," he recalls. "It's something I've been working towards since the very beginning of my career. Just before the prize-giving ceremony I refreshed the IHAA.eu page – and there it was. I was the world champion. That feeling is something I'll never forget."

At just 21 years old, Siem's victory in Tennessee marked the culmination of years of focus, training, and perseverance. Competing on CHA Chilled Gold, he showed precision, calmness, and partnership at the highest level – proof that dedication and teamwork between rider and horse remain the foundation of this sport.

Alongside his world title, Siem also set a new world record on the Tower110 track – achieving the first official HA10 score ever recorded on that course. "That was really the icing on the cake," he says proudly.

Honouring Silver & Bronze

Omar El Farooq Putra Alleut delivered a strong performance on Blue Horse and claimed the reserve-champion status for Indonesia. Meanwhile, Raphael Malet guided DHMA Lady GA Lynx to a consistent and commendable third place for France. Together these three form a genuinely international podium, showcasing the fierce competition and global nature of horseback archery.



Siem Budding (Netherlands)
on CHA Chilled Gold



Omar El Farooq Putra Alleut
(Indonesia) on Blue Horse



Raphael Malet (France) on
DHMA Lady GA Lynx



COMPETITIONS

Worlds

Team France: back-to-back World Champions

For the second consecutive championship, **Team France** stood on top of the podium, confirming their status as one of the most consistent and skilled nations in horseback archery. Their precision, teamwork, and composure under pressure once again proved unbeatable.

The trio – Chloé Simons, Gaëtan Blot, and Raphael Malet – showed the perfect mix of individual excellence and unity, delivering confident, high-level performances across all tracks. Their calm focus and seamless transitions between runs reflected both experience and trust.

Team Indonesia delivered a powerful challenge throughout the week, showing speed, accuracy, and remarkable consistency on demanding courses. Their collective energy and team spirit made them one of the most exciting teams to watch.

Team Poland completed the podium with a focused and determined performance, earning a well-deserved bronze medal after a week of steady, well-executed runs.

This year's team event once again highlighted what makes horseback archery so special: nations with their own styles and strengths, united through respect for the horse, precision, and teamwork – a true celebration of international sportsmanship and shared passion.



France – World Champion Team

Chloé Simons (DHMA Prince)
Gaëtan Blot (Lightning)
Raphael Malet (DHMA Lady GA Lynx)



Indonesia – Reserve World Champion Team

Azral Mardin (Rory)
Kaisar Akhtar (Blue Horse)
Omar El Farooq Putra Alleut (Blue Horse)



Poland – 3rd Placed Team

Natalia Koprowska (Badgers Lil Baron GG)
Sebastian Prokop (DHMA Jack)
Wojtek Osiecki (Cowboy)



Pictures by © Joke Boerma



COMPETITONS

Worlds

Rising stars and seasoned legends

From juniors to masters, riders of all generations delivered outstanding performances throughout the week in Tennessee. Each category reflected the depth of talent and dedication within the horseback archery community – from young athletes making their debut on the world stage to experienced archers proving that passion and precision know no age limit.



Junior Champions (-17 years)

- 🇫🇷 Chloé Simons (France) - DHMA Prince
- 🇫🇷 Cesar Vassallucci (France) - DHMA Nacci
- 🇮🇩 Kaisar Akhtar (Indonesia) - Blue Horse



Young Rider Champions (18-21 years)

- 🇳🇱 Siem Budding (Netherlands) - CHA Chilled Gold
- 🇮🇩 Omar El Farooq Putra Alleut (Indonesia) - Blue Horse
- 🇫🇷 Raphael Malet (France) - DHMA Lady GA Lynx



Senior Champions (22-49 years)

- 🇵🇱 Natalia Koprowska (Poland) - Badgers Lil Baron GG
- 🇰🇿 Abzal Tulybekov (Kazakhstan) - DHMA Bar Freckle Chick
- 🇬🇧 Richard Addison (United Kingdom) - DHMA Cletus



Masters Champions (50 years +)

- 🇺🇸 Lukas Novotny (USA) - Cowboy
- 🇵🇱 Wojtek Osiecki (Poland) - Cowboy
- 🇧🇷 Kether Van Prehn (Brazil) - Lightning

© Pictures on this page from Jouke Boerma & Grug Chung



COMPETITIONS

EuroGP

European Grand Prix Series 2025

Group A kicks off in Kayseri, Turkey

The 2025 European Grand Prix Series (Group A) opened in the heart of Anatolia, with Stage 1 in Kayseri, Turkey, beautifully organized by Emrah Koç. Riders from France, Turkey, Finland, Switzerland, and Poland gathered in an unforgettable setting – a meadow bursting with spring flowers beneath snow-capped mountains. The event blended warm hospitality, vibrant energy, and top-level competition, with France claiming victory ahead of Turkey, Finland, Switzerland, and Poland.

The venue impressed everyone with its modern design, spacious facilities, and breathtaking surroundings. Between runs, riders relaxed under the thatched pergola, enjoying local treats and Turkish ice cream – a small but memorable detail that made the event feel special.

One of the riders, Jenni Tommila from Finland, shared her experience:

"Participating in the GP competition in Kayseri, organized by Emrah Koç, was an unforgettable experience. The venue was top-notch—modern, spacious, and athlete-friendly—with stunning landscapes all around. The local food was delicious, and enjoying ice cream under the thatch-roof pergola was the perfect way to cool off.

What impressed me most were the horses—not just fast, but well-trained with adjustable speeds, making the competition even more dynamic. I competed with sweet little Ulduz, a sensitive partner who taught me so much. We were a perfect match, and I'm grateful to the organizers for that. All the tracks were fun, but the hunt track—one of the first in Turkey—stood out. With its twists and turns, it was both challenging and exciting.

It was an experience that truly captured the spirit of HBA—overcoming challenges, sharing adrenaline-filled moments, embracing adventure, and feeling the strength of a supportive community, where tradition meets modern sport."

Her words capture the spirit of the Grand Prix perfectly – a blend of challenge, adventure, and community.



Eelis Lummaa (FI) & Ateş



Raphael Malet (FR) & Karamel

© Mustafa Aksebzeci

STAGE 1
TÜRKİYE





COMPETITIONS

EuroGYP

European Grand Prix Series 2025

Group A continues in Visp, Switzerland

After the vibrant start in Turkey, the second stage of the European Grand Prix Series 2025 (Group A) brought riders to Visp, Switzerland, at the beginning of October. Teams from Finland, France, Turkey, and Switzerland gathered once again – surrounded by Alpine peaks, golden autumn light, and three days of perfect weather. Unfortunately, Poland was unable to attend this stage, but the spirit of competition remained high.

The event offered a mix of precision and excitement, with results shifting until the final day. Andri Marugg opened strongly in Tower 90 with 134.155 points, while young Enzo Coli Jun Ong impressed in Raid 234, narrowly ahead of Eelis Lummaa from Finland. The tension built until the closing hunt track, where Samuel Gugolz delivered a powerful final run – finishing nearly 50 points ahead of the runner-up and securing the overall victory for Switzerland.

"With good weather, great energy, and talented archers and horses, the rankings stayed exciting until the very end. Samuel's incredible hunt confirmed Switzerland's win and brought the Grand Prix standings to life for 2025." – Céline Casutt

The Visp stage captured the best of the European Grand Prix spirit – strong performances, mutual support, and the thrill of world-class horseback archery in a stunning mountain setting.

A warm thank-you goes to Gebirgsreiter for hosting and judging this memorable event.



Roger Ittig (Switzerland) & Rino



İsmail Asiler (Türkiye) & Valseuse

**STAGE 2
SWITZERLAND**

Samuel Gugolz (Switzerland) & Colo

all © Valentina Ittig
reflectedhorses.ch





COMPETITIONS

EuroGP

Place	Country	1 - T%	1 - R%	1 - HT%	2 - T%	2 - R%	2 - HT%	Total %
1	Switzerland	93.01	93.65	62.26	100.00	100.00	100.00	548.91
2	Turkey	95.40	79.22	100.00	95.19	93.92	76.85	540.58
3	Finland	80.70	92.95	83.76	65.86	84.10	44.51	451.87
4	France	100.00	100.00	82.95	67.59	80.56	4.81	435.90
5	Poland	58.88	81.38	50.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	190.42

Above:
Overall results of eGP
2025 for Group A
nations

Right: The podium for
final eGP placings at
the conclusion of stage
2 in Switzerland

Below: Breakdown of
team scores from
Stages 1 & 2, with top
team scores highlighted



STAGE 1

Place	Country	Tower 90	Tower %	Raid 234	Raid %	Hunt track	HT %	Total %
1	France	331.77	100.00	281.9	100.00	178.80	83	282.95
2	Turkey	316.52	95	223.32	79	215.55	100.00	274.62
3	Finland	267.73	80.70	262.02	92.95	180.55	83.76	257.41
4	Switzerland	308.57	93.01	263.99	93.65	134.20	62.26	248.91
5	Poland	195.34	58.88	229.41	81.38	108.13	50.16	190.42

STAGE 2

Place	Country	Tower 90	Tower %	Raid 234	Raid %	Hunt track	HT %	Total %
1	Switzerland	368.59	100.00	303.30	100.00	314.99	100.00	300
2	Turkey	350.85	95	284.87	93.92	242.05	76.85	265.95
3	Finland	242.76	65.86	255.07	84.10	140.19	45	194.47
4	France	249.13	67.59	244.33	81	15.14	4.81	152.96
5	Poland	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

TEAM LISTS

Switzerland: Andri Marugg, Roger Ittig, Samuel Gugolz, Céline Casutt

Turkey: Veysel Batuhan Bay, Yiğit Kerem Kekeç, İsmail Asiler

Finland: Anna Minkinen, Eelis Lummaa, Jenni Tommila, Roope Malinen, Eevi Saarelainen

France: Cesar Vassallucci, Chloé Simons, Raphael Malet, Enzo Coli Jun Ong, Eva Coli Jun Ong, Laurie Picaronny

Poland: Adrian Nowicki, Aleksandra Pałasz,
Mateusz Szymański

*Congratulations
to the Swiss team*



REGIONAL UPDATE - THE AMERICAS



Brazil

At COBExpo 2025, Latin America's largest sports fair, held in September and organized by the Brazilian Olympic Committee in Sao Paulo, the Brazilian Mounted Archery Association (AMB) introduced the practice of horseback archery to over 400 participants across five days. With pretty much every national sport federation present and an audience of 90,000 visitors, the event was a great opportunity to showcase our sport and strengthen ties with the Olympic Committee, fostering future collaboration and recognition for horseback archery.

Mexico

Nearly 90% of all riders in Mexico are Junior Riders, making HBA truly a youth sport, and with so many live-streamed events in 2025 encouraging us all, we are closing the year with our more advanced riders making progress in their canter attempts.

Fall has brought not only a change in weather but Student 1 grades for both Manuel Aguillon and Dayle Gonzalez.

As our sport captures hearts, we have seen HBA participants in Mexico increasingly showcasing it in both public and private events, from the XV Century exhibition hosted by Academia Ecuestre Izathi to exchanging a Quinceañera waltz for a Quinceañera horseback archery exhibition (probably a first?), Mexican horseback archers are just getting started and we couldn't be happier.





REGIONAL UPDATE - EUROPE

The focus here is often on big competitions but the stories at home are just as important. We hear that 2 little girls in **Belgium** have been enjoying the WalkTrot postal matches, and what a lot of progress in one year! They both entered the Turret Postal November 2024 and again in October 2025. Eléa Devrise (6 years old) went from 2 points to 18 points, Nell Brasseur (7 years old) from 5 points to 43 points!

Wow, well done, girls - great work and such a lovely partnership with Catherine Saublens' ponies Merlin and Caramel.

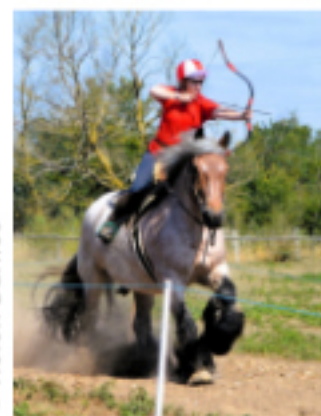


Another great competition was held in Pomaz, **Hungary** in July. Christoph Nemethy has become known for the quality of the livestream coverage from his competitions and this was no exception. Multiple camera angles, drone footage, plus engaging commentary, live scoring and pre-prepared footage of athletes that featured in the finals plus live interviews as those riders finished the HT!

[R] Overall winner - Siem Budding & Ömür



© Nemethy Academy



Lizzie Bennett & Clump
(IHBA trophy)

This summer saw the second edition of the **UK 4 Nations** competition, with live stages in Wales, Scotland and England running alongside a postal competition to enable everyone to access the competition. Individual trophies were awarded for the winner of each event as well as everyone collecting points towards national placings. After the live stages Team England was just ahead of Ireland. The postal match results then extended England's lead.



The 10th anniversary edition of Alan le Gall's Gauchoux Open welcomed 77 riders to central **France** in late August.

As normal the 2* and 3* competitions were HBAE events with Raid, Tower and Hunt tracks suitable for the expertise of the competitors. The 4* event was something new, and quite memorable. Billed the *Hunt Track World Cup* it included three different hunt tracks: technical, classical and freestyle, over 3 days, before concluding with a Skirmish track final.



Raphael Malet & Ritano,
4* winners



REGIONAL UPDATE - AFRICA



South Africa

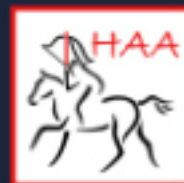
The competitive season came to an end with the MAASA National Championships 2025 at the start of October.

Archers travelled from as far as the Eastern Cape and KZN to participate in this prestigious event, held at the top Mounted Archery Track in South Africa, Botha Wil Stalle close to Onderstepoort.

For the first time in 4 years a new Senior National Champion was crowned. Congratulations to Marna Wium - SNR National Champion and Talitha Schoeman - Junior National Champion, both members of Phoenix Horseback Archery Club.



Egypt's first three IHAA Level 1 judges recently became qualified. Congratulations to Ms. Marwa Hegazi, Ms. Doaa Zaki and Ms. Nourhan Abdel Baki.



REGIONAL UPDATE - AUSTRALIA & NZ



At the end of October **Australia** held the Australian Open, hosted by the riding school Riding With Sticks. This competition was a joint venture between Riding With Sticks and the Australian Horse Archery Association to run a competition Open to anyone. It had a particular focus on Novice classes in walk and trot, but was still run as an R&R Competition for the Canter Riders.

Competitors enjoyed the Turret or Tower and Raid Triple or Raid 234 depending on their pace, before finishing with a fantastic Hunt Track. Rodney Deaman took out the Champion Canter Title with a margin of less than three points in a very tight competition.



You can find out more about the IHAA on our [website](http://www.ihaa.info) www.ihaa.info

How to contact us... horsebackarchery.info@gmail.com (general)
newsletter.ihaa@gmail.com (newsletter / advertising)



REGIONAL UPDATE - ASIA



The Indonesia Equestrian Archery (IEA) held the Indonesian Santri Day (Student Day) competition, competing for the Minister of the Republic of Indonesia Cup. The competition was opened by the Minister, Prof. Dr. K.H. Nasarudin Umar, M.A., and the Chairman of KONI (Indonesian National Sports Committee), Lieutenant General (Ret.) Marciano Norman.

The competition featured the Tower 90 and Tabla Skirmish Mix events, involving 36 riders, 18 schools, and 11 provinces. Rayyan Abdulkarim achieved a score of 160.211 in the Tower 90 event.



In October a 3-day clinic was organised by Chand Bagh Equestrian Centre and Mariners Saddle Club in Pakistan. 22 riders studied with Christoph Nemethy.



In Daegu, South Korea the 2025 Korea Masangmuye Championship, 9th Daegaya International Horseback Archery Champs and 7th Daegaya Sports Driving Champs were held in late October.

130 athletes from eight countries joined together in competition, cheered on by over 500 spectators.

This year LMBM (Liga Memanah Berkuda Malaysia) has reignited its commitment to nurturing talent through the continuation of the Interclub Challenge program. 60 riders took part, both juniors and seniors, from clubs across Malaysia. In October LMBM hosted an IHAA Judge Course in Borneo. Participants underwent rigorous theoretical lessons, practical training and examinations, culminating in the certification of 20 new IHAA Level 1 Judges.



Have you ever considered being more involved in horseback archery behind the scenes?



The IHAA, and the provisions you enjoy, only exist because of the work of a team of volunteers. We are looking for assistance with keeping the website updated (you would need to understand basic HTML code) and will have a vacancy for a 3y term as Secretary from January. If you have any questions about these specific jobs or wish to volunteer your services please get in touch by email (horsebackarchery.info@gmail.com).

If there is another area that you are passionate about, where you feel your enthusiasm and skills could assist the IHAA, please reach out to us and share your proposal for how you would like to be involved.

The IHAA is built on the enthusiasm and contributions of people like you!



Feature INTERVIEW

SIEM BUDDING INTERVIEWS ELIZABETH GONZALEZ TINNAN

We've been keen to interview Liz Tinnan for some time... Consistently in the world top-20 and top ranked athlete from the Americas, since the launch of the IHAA's World Ranking. A tireless educator who travels all over USA to deliver clinics, and to judge competitions. Constantly working hard behind the scenes, both nationally and for the IHAA.

What drives Liz and where does she get all of her energy from!?

Siem: To the people that don't know you, which I assume are very few after the World Championships, how would you introduce yourself?

Well, I would tell them that I am here for the love of horses and the sport, just like everyone else.

I wear many hats in the mounted archery community - competitor, instructor, President of Mounted Archery Association of the Americas, IHAA BOD member and USA Rep, Judges Panel.... but the most important job I have is sharing the love of mounted archery with others. In this, I find purpose and fulfilment. I enjoy competing, but mostly so I can continue improving myself, and I have a great excuse to travel and see all of my friends.

How did you get into horseback archery?

Around 2014, a few women at a barn I worked at took a mounted archery clinic and then told me about it. A club was formed at that barn and I quickly became hooked. In 2016, I started my club Chattahoochee Horse Archers while laid up with a broken leg. A perfect time to start mounted archery club, right? I began teaching simple beginner classes in order to grow my club. One thing lead to another, and teaching mounted archery went from a new found hobby to a full blown career.

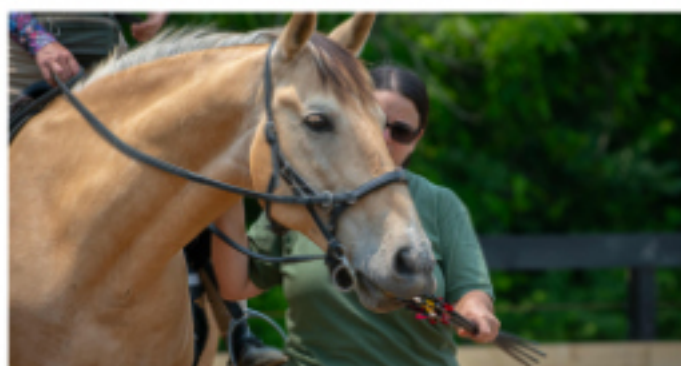
In what ways has this sport changed your life?

I've contemplated how to answer this and have decided to be a little vulnerable.

Not many know this, but I had quite a rough childhood and did not grow up with horses or begin riding until I had a drivers license. As a child, I moved from home to home. My father left when I was very young and my mother gave my sister and I up when I was around 8 years old. Life after that was unstable and at times quite traumatic. Horses comforted me in my thoughts and dreams. Little did I know, one day they would become my reality.

I began working at a boarding stable after I got my license at 16 years old. I worked to be able to ride the horses. This eventually became a paid position. During my time at this stable, I was introduced to and fell in love with mounted archery. I began practicing in 2014, then started teaching in 2016 when I created my club, Chattahoochee Horse Archers. Over the last 10+ years, I have built a successful business teaching mounted archery lessons and clinics, travelled the United States where I have introduced hundreds of new mounted archers to the sport every year. I have helped others start their own clubs and training facilities, and trained many judges and organizers to run successful competitions.

Mounted archery altered the course of my life in more than one way. The people and opportunities it has brought my way have shaped who I am as a horseman and as a human being.



© Alexandra Taylor



Feature INTERVIEW

You are a very influential person in the growth of the sport in the US, what do you think was the biggest uplift in the growth you have experienced?

I think we are just beginning. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Hosting the World Championships has opened more doors and increased visibility for the sport within the United States. Advertising through social media, radio and television allowed us to reach over 60,000 people, bringing in spectators from around the country. I have received multiple calls and emails from prospective students since. I look forward to the continued growth in the United States.



© Alexandra Taylor

To others wanting to grow the sport in their own country do you have any advice?

1. Focus on the beginners.

Without bringing in and nurturing the beginners, we have no foundation for the future. Though the IHAA mission is competition focused, I believe in emphasizing and supporting those who participate as a leisure sport or hobby as well. These people help fund the sport, share their experiences with other potential mounted archers, and could be future world champions. Who knows?

2. Focus on horsemanship.

To me, horses are the single most important part of the puzzle. A well trained and happy archery horse can make the difference in, not only your scores, but your safety and the safety of others as well. Forget the idea that a horse is just a vehicle. If you treat your horse as the partner they can be, it is amazing what can be accomplished.

3. Horse owners who are willing to share their mounts are paramount to the success of this sport. We need to treat their horses well and show gratitude for the the risk they are taking by trusting you with their partners. Ask questions on how you can better partner with their horse, help take care of the horse, make sure to help offer food and water when available. People who treat my horses with respect and kindness are always welcome back to ride them again.



Liz & Banjo



Feature INTERVIEW

I look back at memories of the World Championships with an immense amount of joy. I am very curious how the whole experience was for you?

There were and are so many emotions that came with organizing, hosting and competing in the WC. It was exciting, empowering, overwhelming at times, and incredibly exhausting, but so very worth it.

After almost a year of preparation and months of very little sleep, virtually no time for personal training, I couldn't have been happier with how it turned out. Of course, there are always improvements to be made, and so many lessons were learned. It will only get better from here.

What was the most surprising thing about this whole experience? I can imagine there must have been quite a few surprising things no one saw coming, For good and bad.

The most incredible surprise was seeing how many horse owners stepped forward offering to share such wonderful horses, and how an army of volunteers showed up from all over the country. We had such an incredible team of people who truly wished to see the event be a success. Without the dedication and determination of each and every person who stepped up to the plate, we couldn't have pulled it off.

Tragedy struck the mounted archery community in an unrelated accident, leaving a dear friend without her husband and many mourning the loss of our dear friend. This is a surprise no one is prepared to face, but our community rallied together showing resilience and determination. It was incredible to witness the courage and compassion it took to move forward.

I myself have ridden a few of the wonderful horses you trained, and loved them. Could you please explain to us what you consider essential in the training of a horseback archery horse?

I want my horses to want to do the things I ask them to do. I try to keep my requests very clear so that it is easy for them to understand what I want and keep my training sessions quite short, never drilling the same thing over and over.

When training a horse for speed range on the track, it is important to keep things very black and white. I only ask my horses for speed with a very specific cue. Once they pass the start timer, I will not ask for a change in speed. When I want them to run slower, I bring them in to the track in a very different way. This helps them to know what is coming next and reduces track anxiety.

If I train using fast speeds on the track, I always finish by asking for slow speeds. I want a horse that is responsive to my cues, not reactive.

There is so much that goes in to training and partnering with a great horse, but I hope these little tips help.



Liz & Banjo
© Dawn Martinez



Feature INTERVIEW

If you could give any advice to a horseback archer, ranging from just starting out to a competitor. What would you say?

Don't lose sight of why you started in the first place. Be competitive and chase those scores, but allow yourself to have fun in the process. We are often too focused on the destination that we forget to enjoy the journey.



Liz & Banjo © Dawn Martinez

What has been your most life changing event in horseback archery?

The answer is all of it.... Every day, every experience is an opportunity to shape a better future for yourself.

The day I decided this is what I wanted to do is the day I took life by the reins, never looking back. It sounds like a corny line from a meme, but its true. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined I would be doing what I am doing right now.

"This sport has helped me realize so many dreams I wouldn't have otherwise and I am eternally grateful for the friendship and sense of family it has brought in to my life."

Thank you Liz, for chatting to us, and for all you do for the sport

www.horsearchery.info

Find out more:
Competitions
Training opportunities
and Clinics
with Elizabeth



Subscribe to IHAA Review



Sign up [here](#), to receive
the Newsletter by email.
Free of charge.



Feature

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH ...

by Katy Barrett-Alley

RORY THE MULE: THE MAGICAL PARTNER BEHIND INDONESIA'S SILVER RIDE

When nearly sixty competitors and thirty-five horses gathered at Rising Glory Farm in Lewisburg, Tennessee, for the 2025 IHAA World Horseback Archery Championships, one equine athlete stood out – not for her size or speed, but for her long ears and steady heart.

Her name was Rory, a 21-year-old mule owned by Heather Lomax of Hidden Creek Ranch, and she carried Indonesia's Azral Mardin to a podium finish on the Hunt track.

The Only Mule in the Field

Rory's presence at the World Championships drew immediate attention. As the only mule in the competition, she became both a curiosity and a crowd favorite.

"The Indonesian team had never met – or possibly even heard of – a mule," Heather recalls. "They told me that in their country, donkeys just live wild and aren't used for anything. When Azral trialled Rory, the whole team fell in love with her. He tried a few other horses, but came right back to Rory. The spectators and riders all seemed enamored with her."

Her calm composure, quick mind, and signature "floppy happy ears" made her impossible not to notice.

Mule Magic and Mindfulness

To those who know Rory, her success came as no surprise. "She's a magical creature," Heather says. "Her intelligence means her rider has to appreciate and respect her for that magic. If you don't, she'll just quietly leave you in the woods and head home."

That steadfast independence is part of what makes Rory so special – and what makes earning her trust such a triumph. "If Rory likes you, she'll do absolutely anything for you. And she did."

For Azral Mardin, whose team had never before ridden a Hunt track, that bond formed almost instantly. "Azral had such a beautiful, kind partnership with her," Heather said. "So loose on the reins, gently guiding her through the course. She gave him her all because of his kindness."

Their connection helped secure Indonesia a silver medal, an achievement Heather still speaks about with pride. "I now refer to her in my barn as a World Championship silver medallist," she said. "She worked so hard and stayed so consistent – but most of all, she did it joyfully. She's world-famous now."

A Legacy in the Arena

Rory's story didn't begin in Lewisburg. Long before Heather became her guardian, Rory had already made her mark in mounted archery.

"She's been doing this sport much longer than me – maybe ten years or more," Heather explained. "I took her in when her former home wasn't riding her much, and they wanted her to stay in the sport. I've been her guardian for three years now, and she's become an irreplaceable part of my program."

With that role comes a bit of ritual. "Everyone who rides her must thank her for what she's about to do for them," Heather said. "She's bold, beautiful, and magical. If you acknowledge that, she'll guide you on your journey. If you don't –



© Catherine Campbell



Feature

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH ...

well, you won't be catching her. Those are her rules, and we oblige."

Rory, in Heather's eyes, is a living reminder of what every horse - or mule - deserves: respect, partnership, and gratitude.

Preparation and Poise

Preparing for a world championship is no small feat, especially for an equine athlete who dislikes travel. "The hardest part for her was the journey," Heather admitted. "She stresses the most out of my herd. I've learned to feed her soaked feed on the trailer and always stable her between two friends."

Otherwise, Rory's conditioning routine was business as usual - steady work, lessons, and keeping her fit without pushing too hard. Her consistency, after all, is her greatest asset. "She's safe, sane, and solid," Heather said. "Novice canter riders can easily learn to shoot from her, and advanced riders can ask for even more. She's the most uncomplicated mule I've ever met."

That steady nature carried her through the excitement of Lewisburg's bustling championship atmosphere. "She handled it like any other day," Heather said proudly.

A Global Partnership

For Heather, watching her mule compete under an international rider brought a flood of emotions. "Proud, nervous, protective," she said. "It's an honour to provide a horse or mule for another rider, but at the end of the day these souls are my partners and co-workers. One event is never more important than their emotional well-being."

When Rory trotted off the track, ears forward and calm as ever, Heather knew she had done more than just compete - she had built a bridge between cultures, disciplines, and species.

Healing Through the Journey

Beyond medals and ribbons, Rory's greatest gift may be the healing she brings to those around



her. "She's helped so many," Heather reflected. "Last year, I lost my young heart horse during a trip to a tournament. Rory was with me, and she was so disappointed in me. In my grief, I wasn't sure I wanted her in my life anymore. But this event healed that. Her strength helped me find my way back. My love for her is greater than ever."

It's this emotional depth - the quiet wisdom of a mule who knows more than she lets on - that makes Rory beloved throughout the mounted archery world.

Advice and the Road Ahead

Heather encourages other riders to explore the sport with mules of their own. "Do it!" she said. "Have fun with your chosen equid partner. This sport is so approachable for every breed or discipline."

As for Rory's future, Heather's hopes are simple. "That she remains happy," she said. "That's all she owes anyone."

Rory's story embodies the spirit of the IHAA World Championships: partnership across borders, respect for the horse - or mule - beneath us, and the magic that happens when kindness meets courage.

This year, one mule reminded the world that greatness isn't measured by pedigree or size but by heart, patience, and a pair of floppy ears that carried a team to glory.