

Colvin Cashes In On Derby Championship Trifecta

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The in-gate of the Rolex Stadium rippled with nervous tension. As the final few riders headed down the ramp to compete in the handy round for the Platinum Performance USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship, gradually more people filtered down to watch. Room along the fence disappeared, and everyone craned their necks to catch every second.

As Nick Hanes's scores with Verdict popped up with base scores of 90, 88.5 and 86.5, with handy points of 9, 9 and 7, he pumped his fist victoriously. But while he was temporarily on top, he had a worthy adversary in **Tori Colvin, who was sitting on a significant lead following yesterday's classic round.**

As she guided Bryan Baldwin and Meralex Farm Inc's 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood (Numero Uno—Zo-Special, Indorado), El Primero, around the Alan Lohman-designed course, that in-gate crowd bunched closer together, eyes glued on the pair. And as horse and rider landed off the final fence, the cheers erupted, and Colvin, who usually keeps a straight face in the ring, had a smile plastered on her face.

There was no question—she'd won.



Tori Colvin's smile after the final jump showed she knew just how good that round was.

Kimberly Loushin Photos

And the judges—Danny Robertshaw, Tom Brennan, Rick Fancher, Geoff Teall, Jimmy Toon and William Sparks—agreed, awarding her base scores of 95, 94 and 92 for a two-round total of 603 to take home the win.

"It feels amazing," Colvin said. "He went in there, and he was as best as can be. I couldn't have done it without the team that was behind him, and it's been a special night."



Tori Colvin and El Primero over the final jump on their way to victory.

Colvin has set herself apart in derby championship history. Only Liza Boyd has won the championship three times—and she did so consecutively with Brunello (2013-2015)—but Colvin's put her own twist on it, winning with three different horses. She first won on Cuba in 2017, and last year she took the victory with Private Practice, who finished eighth this year.



This year's win makes it Tori Colvin's third consecutive win at the USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship with three different horses.

Yesterday Colvin admitted that things haven't always gone her way when she's leading after the classic round, and the normally cool-under pressure wunderkind admitted she was feeling the pressure just a smidge tonight.

"After 'Peter' [Private Practice] went, and he was very good, still a little impressed, and then I was like, 'Uh oh 'Primo,'—which is El Primero's barn name—needed to be really good, and he really rose up to the occasion."