



RED HILLS OFFERS A “TICKET TO RIDE” IN TALLAHASSEE, FLA.

Red Hills International Horse trials will offer prospective Olympians their initial “ticket to ride” in the London Games this summer. The prestigious Tallahassee event, scheduled for March 9 - 11 at Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park, is the first hurdle for the competitors as they make their way toward the 2012 Olympic selection trials. Again, top riders and horses from at least 28 states and ten other countries are expected to compete in the fourteenth Red Hills international event.

“The numbers will be even greater because 2012 is an Olympic year,” commented Jane Barron, co-organizer of RHHT, “so we have much to do to get ready. We are so very grateful to the many supporters, both individuals and businesses, who have stepped up to the plate to be sponsors and patrons, and hope that more will join our ranks.”

A signature event for the North Florida area, more than 24,000 spectators attended last year’s three days of competition. Two 2011 Red Hills winners, Buck Davidson and Michael Pollard, rode on the United States Eventing Team which captured the Gold at the Pan American games held in Mexico last month. ***(See attached sidebar and photo re Pan Am Games)***

Eventing is one of the fastest growing equestrian pursuits in the world. Riders of all ages and abilities can compete. Developed from cavalry competitions during the early 1900’s, it is the ultimate challenge for horse and rider. It tests their partnership and athletic prowess over three days, in three disciplines: the grace and harmony of *dressage*; the rigors and thrills of *cross-country jumping* over natural obstacles; and the power and pageantry of *show jumping*.

The Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the international equestrian federation which governs the sport, has laid down exact rules that must be followed at all international events--and Red Hills is one of these. The FEI states that the object of the competition is to “show the rider’s spirit, boldness, and perfect knowledge of his horse’s paces and their use across country, and to show the condition, handiness, courage, jumping ability, stamina and speed of the well-trained horse.”

Besides the colorful and exciting three days of competition, RHHT offers an Avenue of Shops with vendors from around the country, plus many exhibits and tours, some of which reinforce Red Hills’ mission to “*promote the concepts of resource protection, green space preservation, and land management.*” Expanded resource conservation activities are being planned for this year.

Since their inception in 1998, Red Hills International Horse Trials, a non-profit organization, has provided more than \$325,000 to their beneficiaries, Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, and Klapp-Phipps Park, which is owned by the Northwest Florida Water Management District and managed by the Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Commission.

For Sponsor/Patron Level information, see www.rhht.org