



## Nather And Furst Rubin Rise To The Challenge At CBLM Championships

*This amateur rider and the horse she trained herself put in a clutch performance when it counts.*

BY MOLLIE BAILEY  
PHOTOS BY PICSOFOYOU.COM

**S**arah Nather didn't go to the Col. Bengt Ljungquist Memorial Championships thinking she'd be a shoo-in for any big awards.

A busy adult amateur, she wasn't sure how she and the horse she'd trained up from a 4-year-old would compare to the other pairs in her senior second level, A, division. But she and Furst Rubin put in one of their best tests to date, winning on a mark of 69.67 percent at the 34th annual CBLM Championships, held in conjunction with the Virginia Dressage Association Fall Competition, Oct. 13-16, in Lexington.

"I'm super proud of him," said Nather, 29. "We gave it all we had, and when I came out of the ring I was thinking, 'There's nothing I would change. That's the best test I could have asked him for.' My parents said I was grinning from ear to ear."

Nather and Furst Rubin paired up 3 1/2 years ago, when he had just mastered the basics of walk, trot and canter. The Oldenburg, originally named simply "Rubin," is by Rubin Royal and out of Countess Catherine. Nather added the "Furst"—German for prince—to reflect his parents' regal names, and it didn't

Amateur Sarah Nather trained Furst Rubin from a green-broke 4-year-old to a second level senior title at the Col. Bengt Ljungquist Memorial Championships.

hurt that her own first name is Hebrew for princess.

Furst Rubin fit Nather's modest budget, and compared with her last horse, whom she bought at 2 1/2, the 4-year-old seemed relatively experienced.

"My thinking was that with a full-time job I didn't have time for a real baby, so it was good to have one who had the basics," she said. "I knew I could do the rest."

Not that it's been easy. Nather's neighbors joke that she's moved out, as they never see her lights on. Most days she rises at 5:30 a.m. to commute from Upper Marlboro, Md., to Arlington, Va., so she can squeeze in a quick workout before starting her job as a civilian IT specialist for the U.S. Army at the Pentagon. After work she battles beltway traffic for almost two hours to get to Horsepen Hill Farm in Bowie, Md., to train with Aviva Nebesky. Nather usually returns home around 9:30 p.m.

Come January she'll be adding even more to her schedule, as she's been accepted at the National Defense University (D.C.), where she will be studying government information systems in their chief information officer program. But she wouldn't have it any other way.

"Dressage can be really intimidating as a working amateur," she said. "Sometimes I wish I could have that extra lesson, but I can't afford it. But it's so nice to have done the work myself. We have a great bond."

"My trainer says, 'The sun rises and sets on you for him,'" she continued. "He tries 110 percent every time. Every judge comments on my test that we have great harmony, which I feel too, and I love to hear."

The CBLM Championships represented Nather and Furst Rubin's final show of the year. They've been schooling third level at home, and Nather hopes to graduate to that level when the season picks up again in the spring and achieve her final scores for her U.S. Dressage Federation bronze medal.

## Everyone's Heart Horse

Barbara Strawson and Ivan may have won both the Grand Prix and Intermediaire II CBLM championship classes, but the ribbons weren't what made Strawson feel proud. After several years working together and a handful of classes at Grand Prix, Strawson felt something click at the competition.

"I came out of the test, and even though there were some things to brush up on, he felt really good," said Strawson about the Grand Prix. "He felt like he deserved to be there. We need some development at that level, yes, and horses need to get seasoned at that level, but he did everything I wanted and more. He went way beyond my expectations."

Though they first paired up about two years ago, Strawson's known the Friesian stallion (Laes 278—Vanity D, Wicher 334), bred in the United States by Dark Horse Farms, much longer than that. He first caught her eye when she taught Dutch rider Wendy Klazenga on him back when he was learning lead changes. His next rider, Julio Mendoza, competed him at the 2011 Pan American Games (Mexico) for Ecuador, making him the first Friesian to compete at the Games. Strawson paired up with Ivan when he was recovering from a tendon sheath injury, and they spent the 2015 season improving their small tour performance.

This year Strawson decided to try Ivan in the Intermediaire II, and when he proved up to the task, earning qualifying scores right off the bat, they started doing Grand Prix classes this summer. They only competed at the level four times before heading to the CBLM championships, where they put in one of their best performances yet, scoring 64.00 percent in the Grand Prix and 63.61 percent in the Intermediaire II.

"This was our big goal for the end of this year," said Strawson. "He did everything I wanted and even more.

"When I ride him I can't help but have fun," she continued. "He's a really nice mover, and even when everything isn't perfect he's such a blast to ride."

Ivan's not Strawson's first Friesian, but he's the first one she's campaigned through Grand Prix. She said his movement sets him apart, and the last piece is



Barbara Strawson and Ivan wrapped up their first year in the big tour with wins in the Intermediaire II and Grand Prix at the Col. Bengt Ljungquist Memorial Championships classes.

the tempi changes, which are a bit more difficult for him.

"People follow him around the showgrounds," said Strawson. "He's so beautiful he's like a fairy-tale horse. He's everybody's heart horse."

Ivan, owned by The Stables of Rolling Ridge, lives at Rolling Ridge in Laytonsville, Md., about 20 minutes from Strawson's facility, Misty Glenn,

in Clarksburg, Md.

Ivan will get a bit of downtime at the end of his show season, and when it's time to start up work again Strawson has their next goal ready: putting together a freestyle. She's already selected the music, which she describes as powerful and "war horse-like," and she hopes to debut the routine next season. 🐾

### ► Colonel Bengt Ljungquist Memorial Championships

Lexington, VA—Oct. 13-16.

**JUDGES:** Kem Barbosa, Carter Bass, Joan Darnell, Margaret Freeman, Susan Mandas, Janine Malone, Sue Maloney-Casey, Marlene Schneider.

▲ **Int. II - 1.** Ivan, B. Strawson, 63.61%; 2. Police, S. Hastings, 63.28; 3. Kynymont Blue, E. Freedman, 62.30. ▲ **Trg. Freestyle - 1.** Rosalee, M. McGrath, 73.00; 2. Delicatus, P. Kerstetter, 67.06; 3. Moby Dixon, S. Paul, 65.88. ▲ **3rd Level Freestyle - 1.** Valsar, L. Jendrowski, 72.66; 2. Guateque IV, S. Hastings, 71.83; 3. Festival HW, D. Gatchell, 71.36. ▲ **4th Level Freestyle - 1.** Flacon, M. Delduco, 68.13; 2. Captain Morgan, A. Delduco, 65.95; 3. Zodiaco Dos Pinhais, K. Abrams, 64.71. ▲ **Int. I Freestyle - 1.** Simia De Lana, A. Velas, 73.75; 2. Balance, S. Spenard, 73.50; 3. Lhincolin, C. Armstrong, 71.87. ▲ **Sr./Y.R. Trg. B - 1.** Ramora CF, K. Kobryn-Callaway, 74.42; 2. Saltira, A. Dahlgren, 73.94; 3. Florenza LJS, L. Osborne, 72.21. ▲ **Sr. 2nd Level B - 1.** Wanda Of Black Pearl, J. Mendoza Loor, 73.71; 2. Wiemer V., B. Greber, 72.05; 3. Apollo, J. Mendoza Loor, 71.66. ▲ **Jr./Y.R. 2nd Level - 1.** Ultima O.A., C. Horrigan, 69.93; 2. Phila, L. Rhine, 67.56; 3. Amistad RL, A. Berberich, 66.85. ▲ **Sr. 2nd Level A - 1.** Furst Rubin, S. Nather, 69.67; 2. Divine Comedy, J. Keating, 67.17; 3. Blackhawk GCF, A. Griner, 65.76. ▲ **PSG A - 1.** De Beers, H. Wilmoth, 65.72; 2. Crusedor, G. Bloemers, 64.93; 3. Tango Royale, L. Helstowski, 64.67. ▲ **PSG B - 1.** Luke Skywalker, F. von Neumann Cosel, 73.61; 2. Roelof Van Wolfshol, J. Mendoza Loor, 69.73; 3. Balance, 69.40. ▲ **1st Level**

**Freestyle - 1.** Don Tiago, D. Gatchell, 77.75; 2. Aurora Borealis, M. Brisbois, 73.08; 3. Divine Comedy, 71.03. ▲ **2nd Level Freestyle - 1.** Diesel VT, L. Jendrowski, 78.16; 2. Fabulous, D. Gatchell, 75.33; 3. Sirius, S. Munroe, 71.33. ▲ **Jr. Trg. - 1.** Sangria, M. Delduco, 68.94; 2. Dreamin Me On, L. Shaw, 67.11; 3. SkyThe Limit, M. Hummel, 66.92. ▲ **Sr. 3rd Level A - 1.** Kalandar Boy, S. Hess, 66.34; 2. Sirius, 63.71; 3. Prior VA, A. Miller, 61.47. ▲ **Jr./Y.R. 3rd Level - 1.** HannahLore, H. Walker, 67.94; 2. Zorro Do Retiro, A. Silvaggio, 65.38; 3. Manzini, S. Burke, 61.85. ▲ **Sr./Y.R. 1st Level A - 1.** Queen Of Spades, A. Parsons, 72.42; 2. Ferrante CF, J. Schaaf, 69.68; 3. Dreams Afire, P. Nuckols, 68.59. ▲ **Sr. 3rd Level B - 1.** Rolando, B. Doss, 70.32; 2. Danseur, B. Doss, 69.80; 3. Guateque IV, 69.03. ▲ **Pas De Deux - 1.** Big BearRoyal Finnegan, M. Ryan & Zodiaco Dos Pinhais, 77.00; 2. Mazur, L. Kramer & Sangria, 75.47; 3. SA Pentacle, B. Dellar & Solsticio Del Verano, A. Krohn, 68.22. ▲ **Sr. 4th Level B - 1.** Trijntje V.D. Bokkefarm, S. Hastings, 68.47; 2. Valsar, 68.33; 3. Quono, B. Greber, 67.84. ▲ **Int. I - 1.** Luke Skywalker, 71.31; 2. Lhincolin, 70.85; 3. Balance, 68.81. ▲ **Grand Prix - 1.** Ivan, 64.00; 2. Luminence W. Bebie, 56.75. ▲ **Sr./Y.R. Trg. A - 1.** Duvaldez, K. Clark, 73.84; 2. Dakotah Wind, D. Westhoff, 70.67; 3. Dreams Afire, 70.67. ▲ **Sr. 4th Level A - 1.** Donatella CF, K. Kobryn-Callaway, 63.95; 2. BR Dannys Secret+, A. Bean, 63.81; 3. Chios KK, G. Bloemers, 63.40. ▲ **Jr./Y.R. 4th Level - 1.** Freewill, K. Kadlubek, 70.76; 2. Versace N., A. Derr, 66.59; 3. Flacon, 65.76. ▲ **Sr./Y.R. 1st Level B - 1.** Beaucoup D'Amis, J. Mendoza Loor, 74.76; 2. Rosalee, 72.65; 3. Barcelona SG, C. Jackson, 72.26. ▲ **Jr. 1st Level - 1.** Phila, 73.20; 2. Wallstreets Will, L. Rapp, 72.73; 3. SkyThe Limit, 69.84.