

DRESSAGE RIDING IS A PASSION FOR THIS TEEN!

Horses are beautiful creatures, loved by so many. Emily Jackowski, of Millbrook, NY, competes in dressage riding, and considers these majestic animals to be companions... and teammates! Dressage is a form of horse riding that is often performed in competition. Sometimes, people



pursue it just for fun or to become a dressage master. Jackowski does it for both reasons. She's a successful horse rider who also loves the sport. This year, she and her horse, Havanna 133, even had a chance to participate in a international and national dressage event for junior riders. "It's a really interesting sport. It's not something that's easy to understand just by watching it," Jackowski, who's been active in dressage since age 9, said. "But once you know how it works, it's super interesting." It can be quite relaxing to see dressage in action. The horse seems to gracefully dance and delicately trot, often in time to background music. The goal is to make the moves look as effortless and seamless as possible. "It really is beautiful. It's like a partnership you create with the horse. It's essentially dancing," the young equestrian explained. "It's dancing with your horse instead of a human."

NATIONAL DRESSAGE RIDING COMPETITIONS

There's so much more to dressage than what meets

the eye. It requires great skill by both rider and horse, and training for competitions can be very intense. Jackowski trains five to six days a week, usually two to three hours at a time. Right now, she's training for Young Riders, which is a next up from her current Junior Class position. To rise up in the ranks, there are specific moves she has to practice, including tempi changes, an exercise in which flying changes of canter lead are put together. (THINK: Horse choreography!) And of course, doing a lot of lateral work and stretching is important, too. In addition to her equine associate, Havanna 133, Jackowski has two other horses that are part of



her dressage team. "I try to keep my training varied, so I don't drill movements all the time. It's important to keep it interesting for the horse and make sure they're not overworking," she explained. Jackowski's trainer is Wes Dunham, from Woodstock Stables who has trained many horses and riders from training level to the Olympics. Emily is currently training at Grand Prix, which is the highest level of dressage. ICYDK: It's also an Olympic and World Cup sport amongst many other international competitions. As a junior Dressage rider, Jackowski participates in the international FEI divisions. This past August, she participat-

ed in the FEI North American Youth Championships as one of only four riders selected to represent her region, which consisted of New York and several New England states. She and Havanna 133 competed as in the individual, team and musical freestyle classes. During her individual competition, she ranked 7 out of the top 30 riders from



the U.S. and international riders. During the same month, she competed in the prestigious U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions, held in Wayne, IL. Only the top 12 junior Dressage riders in the country are invited to compete in the Junior Division for the national title. She and Havanna 133 finished 6th place in the country! "It was great. It was my first time being there. Just taking in the whole environment was great. All of the top riders for the U.S. are there. You get to watch, not even just compete. It's quite amazing," she said.

ABOUT JACKOWSKI'S DRESSAGE HORSES

Jackowski's horses live and train @ Woodstock Stables in Millbrook, NY and during the winter months of January, February and March, both she and her horses are in Wellington, Florida training and competing in preparation for the upcoming

2023 season. When they're not competing, they relax, play, and just enjoy their down time. Jackowski, who loves animals, stresses that it's important to treat the horses with love, care and respect. "We're on equal terms. We're teammates," she said. "I treat them with respect, and some of the horses I ride have much more experience than I do.

she said. "It's taught me a lot about sticking with something. It's all about the time and energy you put in to make something happen. It's taught me a lot about animals, people and feelings." Jackowski has a deep connection with all of her horses. She recalled how sad she was about two years ago when one of her horses passed away. "It's always very sad when something happens to them. Horses have a long lifespan, about 20-25 years. So, you expect to be with them for a long time. When they're young and something happens to them, it's especially sad," she said.

FUTURE PLANS

Jackowski plans on attending college and is leaning towards aviation (pilot) and a business degree. She'd also like to further her dressage career after high school and compete as a U25 rider. "I would also want to go to a world championship, but the Olympics are awesome too," she enthusiastically said. Her new special project is training her recently acquired 3 year old mare from the Netherlands. Her plan is to develop her mare to compete in the 4 year old division this coming August at the U.S Dressage Festival of Champions class!

Website: emilyjackowskidressage.com

