



The U.S. team of (from left) Charlie Jacobs, Alison Robitaille, chef d'equipe Norman Dello Joio, Catherine Pasmore and Quentin Judge celebrated their FEI Nations Cup win at Haras El Capricho.

Jacobs Gets It Done At Buenos Aires Nations Cup

This time, he and his teammates weren't going home without a win for the United States.

STORY BY MEGAN BRINCKS
PHOTOS COURTESY HARAS EL CAPRICHO

When Charlie Jacobs flew to Argentina for the Buenos Aires CSIO, he was on a mission.

Despite winning two cars in grand prix classes at last year's edition, he was unhappy with the fifth-placed team result in the FEI Nations Cup.

"2012 was about some unfinished business," said Jacobs, 41. "Although I had a successful show last year, we did not win the Nations Cup. I really wanted to come down there with the purpose of winning the Nations Cup."

Jacobs, of Boston, realized his desire when the U.S. team of Quentin Judge on HH Carotino, Catherine Pasmore on Z Canta, Alison Robitaille on Cover Girl 27, and Jacobs on Leap Of Joy claimed the win on a total score of 4 faults on Nov. 10. Norman Dello Joio acted as chef d'equipe for the team that combined rookies and veterans.

Jacobs served as pathfinder on the grass field, and his clean jumping efforts aboard Deeridge Farm's 11-year-old Holsteiner (Lovari-F-Zarina, Silbersee) in both rounds provided momentum for the team.

He rode Leap Of Joy in Buenos Aires last year, and he said their relationship has really blossomed in the past 18 months. Jacobs bought the gelding in 2009, and they showed for about two years in the amateur division.

"He's an extraordinary jumper," said Jacobs. "He was owned by an eventer, so he came with a good package of sound flatwork but sometimes an erratic jump. We've gotten him to calm down and really grow into his skin."

Jacobs entered Leap Of Joy in the U.S. Equestrian Federation selection trials for the London Olympic Games, but a heel injury in the middle of the trials took him out of contention. "He spent most of the summer on R and R, and he's come back really great," said Jacobs. "He's really come out and showed himself to be the great jumper that he is, especially this last week."

Judge followed Jacobs with a clear first round and one rail in the second on Double H Farm's 10-year-old



In his first time riding internationally for the United States, Quentin Judge's rounds on HH Carotino helped the team win gold at the FEI Nations Cup.

on Friday. "The footing in the warm-up ring for [Friday morning] got really soaked, so it was hard for us to work our horses properly," he said.

It wasn't until after the teams had walked the course that the organizers made the decision to reschedule.

"Just from walking the course, we all looked like we'd jumped in a pool," said Robitaille. "They were lucky they had a lot of wind after the rain stopped. The footing was actually perfect [for the class the next day]."

For Robitaille, the extra day of preparation gave Cover Girl, an 8-year-old Baden-Württemberg (Contender-Zara, Zuenftiger xx) owned by Bertram and Diana Firestone, just enough time to acclimate to her new surroundings.

"I was a little worried because my horse had been so fresh the first few days down there. They shipped in on Saturday, and I didn't get there until Tuesday morning, so she had a few days off," said Robitaille, 36. "On Friday we rode, but we didn't really get to do much because it was like a monsoon. I just got her out and walked and trotted her, but that was the day she kind of took a deep breath and settled in."

Fringe Benefits

While the members of the U.S. team agreed that winning the Nations Cup was the highlight of their time in Argentina, they didn't spend the rest of their weekend on vacation.

On Sunday, the team members returned for the Eriesson/Copa Peugeot Grand Prix of Buenos Aires, but faults kept Pasmore and Judge out of the jump-off in the World Cup qualifier. Jacobs finished in fifth place with one down over the shortened course, and Robitaille concluded her time in Argentina as the top-placed American in third with the fastest 4-fault round.

"Going into Sunday, I knew it was going to be a bit bigger. I'd walked the course and felt like it was one of the bigger courses I'd jumped with my mare, but I felt really good about it because the footing was so good and she was so confident in that ring," said Robitaille.

She had the disadvantage of being the first rider in for the jump-off.

"I made a plan with Norman," said Robitaille. "He said, 'Look, this is a long jump-off, so there are probably not going to be a lot of clean rounds,' and he was absolutely right. I'm lucky because

my horse is naturally fast, so I just went her comfortable jump-off speed without feeling like I was rushing her anywhere."

A rail at the second-to-last jump relegated the pair to third behind Argentineans Martin Dopazo on Conrad D'Esquelles Z and Martin Mallo on Picadilly, but Robitaille knew exactly where her priorities were when she traveled to South America for the first time.

"The most important part of the show was going to win the Nations Cup and then the grand prix was a great bonus," she said. "It was nice for me to get back in the swing of things on an international level. I missed it, being away from it for all the time that I took off, and it's exciting to have a horse that I feel like I can really do some more shows like that."

Robitaille, née Firestone, was a frequent contributor to U.S. Nations Cup efforts in the late '90s. In 1997, she was named the leading rider in the Samsung Nations Cup Series, while her horse, Gustl P, took leading horse honors. She has a team silver medal from the 1999 Pan American Games on her resume, and was the top-placed U.S. rider in the 1998 World Equestrian Games (Italy).



In addition to helping the United States win the FEI Nations Cup, Alison Robitaille and Cover Girl 27 placed third in the Ericsson/Copa Peugeot Grand Prix of Buenos Aires.

Holsteiner gelding (Caretino—N-Corrada, Corrado I).

"I had a couple of slower jumps in a few places, so I ended up doing one more stride in two of the lines," said Judge, 26. Getting deep to the jumps added to the challenge of jumping in a slightly muddy field, leading to the gelding's rail.

"He jumped really well in the Nations Cup. It was completely my fault. He was trying to jump a double clear," he continued.

Although Pasmore, 20, of Wellington, Fla., had the drop score in Round 1 with three down, she jumped a clear second round on Z Canta, an 8-year-old Dutch Warmblood (Casantos—Abantrix, Abantos) owned by Pasmore Stables, to clinch the win. Robitaille, who'd jumped clean in the first round, didn't need to jump a second round as the anchor rider.

The teams from Canada and Argentina tied for second with 12 faults.

A Lucky Monsoon

The Nations Cup competition was originally scheduled for the previous day, but heavy rain prompted event organizers to push it back to Saturday. The delay proved fortunate for the U.S. team on several fronts.

"Having it moved to Saturday, I know for Catherine and myself it was actually kind of better because we had a lot of nerves the first day, and we got to brush it off," said Judge, of Wellington. This was his and Pasmore's first appearance on a senior U.S. team.

"It was not an unbelievable amount of pressure, and we had a really good team, which made me confident. Everyone really wants to ride for a team, and to ride on a Nations Cup and win your first one was really special," he said.

Judge rides with Dello Joio regularly, so the familiar face and coaching style kept him calm, even with less-than-ideal warm-up conditions.

FEI NATIONS CUP OF BUENOS AIRES Buenos Aires, Argentina— Nov. 10

TEAM	TOTAL	
1. USA		
Leap Of Joy/Charlie Jacobs	0	0
HH Carotino/Quentin Judge	0	4
Z Canta/Catherine Pasmore	(12)	0
Cover Girl 27/Alison Robitaille	0	(-)
		4
2T. ARGENTINA 2		
Conrad D'Esquelmes Z/Martin Dopazo	4	4
Milano De Flore/Alejandro Madorno	0	0
Cachou 11/Alvaro Albarrocin	(8)	(12)
Gama Zarelio Z/Leandro Maschini	4	0
		12
2T. CANADA		
Elconora/Jenn SereK	(8)	(4)
Lorche 37/Tamie Phillips	4	0
Rush/Ben Asselin	4	4
Underground Des Hauts Droits/Francois Lamontagne	0	0
		12

Also competed: 4. Argentina 1 (Picadilly/M. Mallo, LV P Question/L. Magnasco, Remonta Parforce Cooper/A. Trosch, Casparo/L. Biraben): 14.