

PAN AMERICAN GAMES

in MEXICO

By Corinne Gray

THE PLACE—Mexico City—7,350 feet above sea level, huge, bustling, handsome.

THE TIME—October 14-15-16, 1975.

THE SETTING—Campo Militaire Numero Uno. A large military complex on the outskirts of the city. Soldiers everywhere busy with calisthenics, drill, painting, cutting grass with machetes, razing or raising buildings, picking rocks. We saw a lot of it as our taxi tried to find the Three Day Stables. The Dressage and Jumping horses were in the attractively landscaped brick and cement stables near the Pan American Center with offices, dining hall, and press office. The Three Day horses were off by themselves in old military stables, not so good looking, but adequate.

Gold Medal winning team: Tad Coffin (Individual Gold) on Bally Cor; Beth Perkins on Furtive; Bruce Davidson on Golden Griffin (Individual Silver) and Mary Anne Tauskey on Marcus Aurelius with Coach Jack LeGoff.

(Castro Photo)





THE CAST—With only four teams, Canada, Mexico and the United States with four horses, and Guatemala with only three, they were able to get to know each other well. The Mexican military team, on its home ground, has a number of horses. The Canadians brought seven, the United States five and the unfortunate Guatemalans only had a total of three from which to nominate the horses to actually compete.

Everyone had fun. Rumor here was that there was a strike of grooms in the United States so our team was forced to bring girl grooms. The Mexican riders teased their soldier grooms that they were unhappy because the other grooms were prettier than theirs. So one morning the swarthy soldiers arrived wearing bewitching blonde wigs!

The Guatemalans had hard luck. One horse would not eat; there were lameness problems. While practice-galloping on the track, a child ran right in front of one of their horses and was badly injured. There was a large school nearby and children were everywhere. Later soldiers patrolled the area. The Guatemalan team was a family affair. Senor de Luna owned all three horses, was the Chef d' Equipe, his wife and daughter and a young man were the riders. They became great friends with our team.

Our U.S. horses were all in good shape and Coach Jack LeGoff had the very difficult decision to make of who was to make up our team. The Cross-Country course was very twisting and somewhat trappy, so Kevin Freeman and his bold **Egan Way** were not nominated since this very experienced rider had the least experienced horse. Despite his disappointment, he cheerfully helped the team in a hundred different ways. He is a great sportsman.

PROLOGUE—This was the fifth Pan American Games. There were approximately 4,000 athletes from 33 nations competing, 450 of whom were from the United States. They lived at the "olympic village", a new housing development. There were also about 3,000 military guards because the organizers were worried for fear there might be trouble, especially from Chilean expatriots. There was hot competition in 19 sports over a period of 15 days. Most of the handsome sports arenas and facilities scattered over the city were used in the 1968 Olympic Games.

Everywhere there were cheerful, efficient college students and others to help visitors. The girls wore beige dresses with brown sweaters and blending scarves while the men were in beige jackets and brown trousers, easy to spot when one needed an interpreter or other help. They were great.

ACT ONE DRESSAGE DAY

The sand arena decorated with large red and white pottery pots with green shrubs overlooked Mexico City and the mountains in

Above—In a relaxed moment, team mates Bruce Davidson, Beth Perkins, Kevin Freeman and Mary Anne Tauskey, ponder the cross-country.
(B.G. Gray Photo)

Below—Bruce Davidson and Golden Griffin, Silver Medal winners place 4th in dressage.
(Castro Photo)

Right—A Canadian competitor gallops on after surviving a long and almost vertical slide.
(B.G. Gray Photo)





the distance. Two military bands in black, maroon, and grey uniforms played the Mexican national anthem while the flags of competing countries were raised. The three judges, Ruben Uriza of Mexico, George Jacobsen of Canada, and Franco Ponte of Brazil were seated in white boxes at the end of the arena. The V.I.P. box with its red covered table was full of very V.I.P. looking Generals, etc. There was a very short speech of welcome, the bell rang and the first horse entered, 17 minutes late.

First to go was Senora de Luna of Guatemala on her nice, big **Samarkanda** whose test was marred by unevenness behind. The second Guatemalan horse was **Tahuaca**, a nice TB hunter-type, quite green, ridden by the daughter, Silvia to an agreeable test, but insufficient for this level with -66 and 13th place. Ricardo Gordon on a gleaming Hannoverian-type horse, but Argentine bred, **Juan Tango** had difficulties and a -75.67 for 14th.

Canada's Peter Howard on the Oklahoma-bred TB **Deep South** (formerly Sooner or Later) was rather overflexed and lacked in freedom and had a -55.67 and 12th place. Liz Ashton was the second Canadian on her big, almost white Argentine **Abacadabra**. A couple of breaks brought her down to -50.34 and 10th place. Jim Day on his handsome big English, **Mr. Super Plus** had a break or two but very good extensions and earned -47.67 and 6th place. The last Canadian horse to go, Jim Henry on the English-bred class-looking **Law and Order** did well especially considering their lay-off after injuries at Bromont and had -44.00 and 5th.

The Mexicans rode two black stallions. **Canaletto** with a flowing black mane ridden by Manuel Nendevil danced his first halt, but basically had an obedient test for 6th place with -44.67. Jesus Marquez's **Don Fecundo** was a different type, rather short in the neck and heavier set with beautifully matched hind stockings. He

lacked freedom and got a -49.00 for 9th. David Barceros rode **Abordaje**, a racy-looking horse who was unsteady and got -45.34 and 7th. Mariano Bucio on **Cocaleco**, the other black stallion was the last horse to go. He had an accurate and steady test with the good score of -38 and second place.

Mary Anne Tauskey was the first United States rider. She is the newest member of our team and rode the smallest horse, **Marcus Aurelius** 15.1, of unknown English breeding. He carried a full winter coat since he took a very dim view of being clipped. He delivered a derisive kick at "A" while entering, had a restive halt but finally settled down to a nice forward moving test. **Marcus Aurelius** has a great stride for such a small horse and placed 11th with -53.34.

Tad Coffin was the next United States rider on **Bally Cor**. It could have been disastrous for him because of a 33 minute delay for his posted time to ride but the extra time he used to advantage to settle the big brown mare and they turned in a beautiful steady test with lovely freedom and extensions with a -34.34, the wining ride of the day. Beth Perkins and the great **Furtive**, 16 years young, had brilliant extended trots and canters but a step back at the halt and a momentary wrong lead at the canter, etc. brought his score down to -39.34 and third. Bruce Davidson riding the Team's newest acquisition, **Golden Griffin**, had some very good and some not so good moments for a horse who greatly prefers cross-country. They ended up with a creditable 4th place, -41.67.

With first, second, fourth and eleventh it was a great day for the U.S.E.T. The United States Team was leading with -115.35, the Mexicans with -128.01, Canada was third with -142.01 and the Guatemalans with -218.34.



Before the break, there was an unusually wide difference of opinion in the scoring with spreads of 43, 35, 34 points etc. between low and high scores. Ponte of Brazil was consistently low, Uriza of Mexico was generally high and Jacobsen of Canada generally middle to high. After the break, they were nearer in agreement.

They all had a good rooting section. It was fun in the stands. Several languages were spoken but most could speak English of some kind or other. It was a cheerful group, each wishing the riders of the other teams good luck.

Afterwards Tad and Bruce were interviewed in the Press Room. They answered different type questions with honesty and diplomacy. Two young school boys asked them to "speak to the children of Mexico".

So ended Act One. The stage is now set for the real drama.

ACT TWO SPEED AND ENDURANCE DAY

When we first arrived we heard that the footing was full of broken glass and bricks, hard in places, deep-tiring sand in the Steeplechase course and a very twisting trappy cross-country with hair-raising slides.

As we walked the course we could have been at home. Unplanned, we, the Grays, found ourselves in a group with the parent Coffins, Davidsons and Perkins, also Mrs. June McKnight, the Pingrees with son Steve, the Mackay-Smiths, Marge Kittredge of Massachusetts and Victor Connor of Florida and Alix Coleman, the photo-

grapher. We ran into Col. Thackeray, the T.D. The only riders we met were ours. There were many enthusiasts from Hawaii, California, Texas and up and down the east coast. Old Home Week!

The first part of the course worked uphill, the latter part sloped downwards. There were many sharp turns, rather like Christmas ribbon candy in places. The fences were well built and varied and the biggest slide was scary indeed. It consisted of a jump over rails onto a narrow bank, then a drop down to a very steep and rough slide with a 3 to 4 foot drop halfway down then straight on down with a ditch at the bottom. It was long and steep and worried all of us. There were some other worrisome fences and some rather easy ones. It was a difficult course on which to make fast time and required an obedient horse.

The Steeplechase course was across the highway on the beautiful permanent racetrack but the deep sand tired the horses greatly.

Senora de Luna, first to go, was still plagued with bad luck. On Phase A her horse put a foot in a concrete drain pipe exposed after washing rains, cutting its leg. After finishing the steeplechase the horse was attacked by a pack of dogs which bit its hind legs, a frightening experience for horse and rider. The veterinarians did not allow it to start Phase D.

This meant Mary Anne and feisty little **Marcus Aurelius** were the first to take the Cross-Country course. Everyone was tense, wondering how it would ride. This bold and handy fellow had one refusal at the difficult 19th fence, a choice combination and went down the horrendous slide with great ease.

There were no faultless rounds, time being a large factor. The

Diminutive Marcus Aurelius and Mary Anne Tauskey sail off a bank with a six foot drop. The rail is also set out 6 ft.

(Castro Photo)

course rode well, much to Col. Thackeray's great relief. No one got lost on the looping course. There were not too many eliminations or penalties at any one fence and no real casualties. The United States horses had fast, controlled rounds and finished in good condition despite the altitude and the somewhat warmer than usual weather.

For a while it was a wild Rumor Factory. News drifted back to those watching about Senora de Luna's problems. Tad Coffin had sailed around but it was said he had been eliminated for a technicality. Bruce and **Golden Griffin** did not appear on schedule near the end of the course. Rumor said he had been hurt. Jim Day wasn't allowed to start the Cross-Country due to weighing in with his whip. Liz Ashton was in trouble.

But this was nothing compared to the electric atmosphere at the starting box. Small groups of riders and coaches and Chef d' Equipes were talking tensely.

Actually, Senora de Luna had not been allowed to get started because of her horse's condition. Tad was o.k., it was Jim Day who had weighed in at Phase A with his whip which is clearly stated to not be allowed. He was held in the starting box with heated discussion. Finally after about 20 minutes he was allowed to start, but had two falls. Later, after a lengthy Jury of Appeals meeting he was eliminated and did not ride Stadium.

Bruce and **Golden Griffin** had a near catastrophe. Through one of several timing errors, after he was on cross-country, a fence judge jumped out in front of Fence 9, a big spread, to stop him. Bruce checked his horse to avoid smashing into the officer and horse and rider fell into the jump, both receiving some injuries. The officer held the horse, preventing it from going on. Bruce's wife, Carol happened to be there and told the officer to stop the clock. The officer had been told to stop him because his horse had been eliminated for exceeding the time limit on Phase C. It took a few minutes to argue the point and get horse and rider on course again. Meantime, Mr. and Mrs. Davidson and well wishers were getting paler and paler wondering where the pair were and what had happened to them.

This incident and Lis Ashton's of Canada was protested and straightened out. She had a spectacular fall in the water. She caught her horse and remounted out of the water and returned to re-start the course at the point of the fall. The military fence judge held her horse and told her in Spanish she was eliminated for not mounting where the fall occurred. She argued in English that she only had to start again at that point.

Several of the riders on Phase A on a road between a stone wall and a large ditch met a drum and bugle band playing loudly and blocking the road. The calling out of the riders presumably could not be heard by the band. Fit horses, not yet tired, were hard to control. This caused tense moments to several riders.

Over 200 penalty points went up on the score board for **Bally Cor** on Phase C, the only horse to receive time penalties and she such a big ground-covering mare. That was straightened out.

Also on Roads and Tracks, at least two horses took a small short cut, not missing compulsory flags. One horse was again grabbed by the bridle by a Mexican soldier. They tried to eliminate them for being off course, but that was also corrected.

It was exciting there for awhile with conversation humming like a busy beehive. The officials, coaches and riders were busy indeed for hours.

Almost all of the problems were caused by the zealous military, not horseman, who were not thoroughly enough briefed in F.E.I. rules yet trying to do their job. As anyone knows who has put on an event, it is highly complicated. These Games certainly point up the importance of explicitly instructing fence judges and timers and having several Rule Books at hand.

When the smoke had cleared the United States Team was holding their lead with -215.75. Canada was in second place with -504.01 and Mexico third with -604.81 and Guatemala had only one horse left in the competition. There were no faultless rounds, time being a large factor. **Golden Griffin** had pulled ahead of **Bally Cor**. The racy-looking **Abordaje** was third, **Furtive** dropped down one place to fourth, **Law and Order** stayed in fifth, and **Cocaleco** dropped from second to sixth. **Samarkanda**, **Don Fecundo**, **Mr. Super Plus**, and **Juan Tango** unfortunately were eliminated.

ACT THREE STADIUM JUMPING

The weather was good again for the third and final day of competition. The big, open Stadium Jumping course was in the same arena as Dressage with a wide-spread distant view of city and mountains. The jumps were colorful with many red, orange, yellow and brown fences with red and white pots of greenery, and vases of large beautifully made paper flowers. The band played again, the flags were run up, the Generals etc. arrived and watched

Continued on page 26—

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PAN AMERICAN GAMES—Continued from page 7:

from the V.I.P. stand. The Mexican Minister of Defence was present and watched much of the Three Day.

There were 12 jumps with one double and one water obstacle. The course was 820 meters with a speed of 400 meters.

The crowd in the tightly-packed stands was very enthusiastic and breathlessly silent during each round except for a moan at a fault or a gasp of pleasure at a brilliant jump, and great applause for a clean round.

The United States Team was the only one with four horses left to compete. Silvia Luna on her pleasant **Tahuaca**, the only Guatemalan left, had a clean round but with several heart stopping rail bounces as did Canadian **Law and Order**. Their **Deep South** went clean but **Abacadabra** put a foot in the water. All three Mexican horses were clean. Interestingly, all three went very different. **Canaletto**, in four bandages was ridden rather tightly and firmly set and his rider often used verbal commands. **Arbordaje** was fast and clean while **Cocaleco's** round in a simple snaffle and cavesson could have won a hunter class.

The United States horses were less fortunate, **Bally Cor** and **Marcus Aurelius** each had a fence down while **Furtive** and **Golden Griffin** brought down two. However, their lead was sufficient to keep them in first place with -265.75. Canada was second with -516.76 and Mexico third with -604.81. Tad won the Individual Gold (-73.14), Bruce the Silver (-76.87), and Barcnas the Bronze (-98.14). Everyone was sorry Jim Day had the technical disqualification, but it made no difference in the final placings.

THE EPILOGUE

Ten to twelve soldiers carried out the table on which were the two impressive trophies. Both had golden four-horse chariots on the base with a winged victory on top. The team trophy was tremendous. Attractive girls in blue blazers and white skirts ceremoniously brought out the medals on pillows, the band played the Star Spangled Banner and the flags were run up. The riders rode in on their horses which were then held by the grooms who contributed so much to their success. Then, the riders stepped up on small platforms to receive their medals. We could see Tad ask Bruce whether he should remove his cap (the medal ribbon will go over the hunt cap, it did for the girls). The Mexican Barcnas was the first to reach across with a congratulatory handshake to the others. Beautiful fringed silk ribbons, striped in the Mexican National colors with a rosette of a copper Mexican hat and a backing of woven raffia were pinned onto the horses.

After the Individual awards (how proud Mr. and Mrs. Coffin must have been to see their 19-year-old Tad win the gold) Bruce quietly slipped out so as not to take **Golden Griffin** on the victory gallop because of his injury the previous day.

Then the Team awards. The Star Spangled Banner was played again with the Stars and Stripes again on the center pole. Jack LeGoff stood proudly in front of his team. Head groom Pat Lynch held the somewhat wild-eyed **Marcus Aurelius**. Obviously he was not used to all the pomp and circumstance. Flash bulbs flashed, movie and still and TV cameras all rolled as the photographers vied for interesting shots. It was a proud moment for all of us from the United States. All horses went on the victory gallop at a somewhat more dignified pace than usual. Another gold medal for the Team and an individual gold and silver. Now, for the Olympic Games at Montreal in '76!

COURSE BUILDERS—Continued from page 12:

and military engineers and soldiers from several NATO countries supplied the construction personnel. The course which was built by Wolfgang Feldt was a masterpiece. It was massive but inviting. The Splash (water) Jump cost in the neighborhood of \$30,000, and was built by digging out a U-shaped lake, lining the entire bottom with railroad ties, filling it in with gravel and then positioning obstacles that caused the horses to jump various combinations in and out of the water, or to bridges on and off of islands, banks, etc.—offering many options of up to six jumping efforts at this one numbered obstacle. Another stair-step bank had ditches at two levels and finished over an oxer. The Normandy Bank on the course was approached over a hedge and a log which were placed close to each other and on a turn at the bank. The course was generally flat with long galloping stretches—perhaps too much course for an Olympic Games but ideal for a European Championship.

In the afternoon, Colonel Brinkmann, the famed German Stadium Jumping Course designer and builder, explained at some length his philosophy for designing stadium jumping courses, and then shared with us his plan for this particular championship. Generally speaking, he prefers to start off easily with two straight-on obstacles, then an easy turn to a more demanding fence, followed by some shorter turns over the intermediate jumps, and then on to the maximum dimension obstacles near the latter part of the course. His course included two doubles; one requiring a precision approach and the other a more natural galloping approach. It also included a water jump, plus a square oxer of maximum dimensions over water. Mr. Brinkmann emphasized that the obstacles in a stadium jumping course should be in harmony with the obstacles used on the cross-country course and should reflect the culture and environment of the area. His course was profusely decorated with local flowers (particularly the heather which is so famous in this area of Germany) and included an old-style water-well structure which gave very much the same appearance as a similar obstacle on the cross-country course.

FLYING HORSE—Continued from page 21:

Sunday—Finally the sun broke through seemingly yellow, brighter, and cheerier than ever before. Show Jumping started immediately after the Vet Check, for the Training divisions at 9:00. The course was unanimously a huge success, beautifully designed by Clem Russell and Dennis O'Keefe with big flowing turns and long gallops and utilizing the handsome fences of Ledyard. A big, natural rail oxer with a chicken coup in the middle and a false ground line was responsible for fourteen horses having a rail done, and altering the placings of **Senquillo** and **Zawisza** who had placed first after Cross-Country.

Everyone was elated to see Essie Perkins make a great comeback by winning the Senior Training on June McKnight's **O'Brien**, and also finish fifth on Mrs. McKnight's **L'Eggs**.

It was easy to understand why so many competitors remarked that they loved to come to Flying Horse, for one reason because it is such a pretty event. The show jumping, as well as part of the cross-country was situated picturesquely in the middle of the turf racetrack. But the best part of all is that New England now has another finely-tuned, well executed and beautifully constructed three-day event that has helped to rediscover the once missing Intermediate division.