



2023 \$40,000 NWSS Grand Prix presented by Monarch Casino Recap



Hunter/Jumper events date back to nearly the beginning of the 117-year-old tradition of the National Western Stock Show. Official records prove the Grand Prix has been a staple for over 42 years. The 2023 \$40,000 Grand Prix presented by Monarch Casino was an evening of elegance. Deemed formal night, officials dressed in their best tuxes and evening wear, complete with red rose boutonnieres. Twelve competitors battled it out over two rounds of a challenging course designed by Tommy Brawley of Wellington, Fla.

All riders ride the same course during the initial round of the Grand Prix with the goal of clearing every jump. Those finishing clear with no faults return for a second round called a jump off which includes fewer of the initial fences with some raised in height. Three riders qualified for the jump off on five horses: Amanda McConnell on Nicolie, Kelley Buringa on Ladybird and Ferrari Sunhup and Nicki Wilcox on Hannibal V and Halifax VDM. In this round, the fastest time with no faults wins. Fortunately for the crowd, there were many lead changes as each came in following their original jumping order to try to top the last ride. Buringa riding Ladybird had a clean and fast ride, topping Wilcox's first ride on Hannibal V to take the lead. Wilcox riding Halifax VDM were the final pair to follow Buringa. The tension was palpable since she had one more chance to take the lead back from Buringa. Proving her competitiveness, Wilcox guided Halifax in front of a tense crowd to become the fastest clear round and take the championship and coveted rose blanket. The night prior to the Grand Prix, Wilcox rode both of Marjorie Martin's horses in the \$5,000 Top of the Rockies Jumper Stake where she finished with Hannibal V in the winner's circle.



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