

National Western Hunter/Jumper Show 2024 Recap

The United States Equestrian Federation and United States Hunter Jumper Association sanctioned Hunter/Jumper Show at the National Western Stock Show drew high-level jumpers from across North America to take center stage in a five-day long show with two feature events. The \$15,000 Monarch Casino Gambler's Choice Jumper Stake on Friday, January 12 was set to a rock 'n roll atmosphere while the epitome of show jumping culminated in the wine and roses event, the \$40,000 NWSS Grand Prix, on Monday, January 15.

In the Gambler's Choice, riders blazed through a dynamic course, deciding their own path, and jumping fences with varied point values. Grace Thames of Texas aboard Diamaria were tenth in a field of 29 to attempt to earn the most points in just 60 seconds. They quickly topped Kristin's Hardin's 870 points with their own unique strategy to earn 1270 and hold a strong lead until the 25th draw. Veteran rider at NWSS, Carly Richardson aboard a mount new to her since August, Nacera, earned 1290 points to push her just past Grace. The closest of the next four riders earned 770 points to leave Richardson with the victory.



Translating from French as the "big prize," the Grand Prix lived up to its name where the best horses and riders from the week competed over the highest, most difficult course. The initial round featured a course of 10 to 14 jumps starting at 4 feet 6 inches. Out of a starting field of 26, five talented horse and rider pairs jumped clean in the first round to force an exciting jump off round. With fences raised and the course altered, riders attempted to beat the clock in their original order. Local trainer Nicki Wilcox with last year's champion Halifax VDM made a valiant effort and couldn't beat the speed of the athletic Texas pair Origi Van't Roosakker and Scott Lenkart who earned the coveted rose blanket.

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