



LAUREN BARWICK EQUESTRIAN OF THE YEAR



Photo Credit: FEI

Keeping the sport Strong for all riders.

Lauren Barwick named Equestrian of the Year

With content by JoAnn Guidry from OcalaStyle.com

One of Canada's most decorated Para-Dressage athletes with two Paralympic Games and two World Equestrian Games medals to her credit, Lauren Barwick has been named the 2021 Equestrian of the Year – The Dr. George Jacobsen Trophy winner. Created in 1995, this award honours the founder of the Canadian Equestrian Federation and is given to an equestrian athlete who has excelled in equestrian competition in the current award year while demonstrating exceptional talent, horsemanship, sportsmanship and dedication to equestrian sport, as well as the vision and mission of EC.



Riding horses since the age of seven, Barwick climbed through the ranks of the Pony Club in both eventing and show jumping in her early years. “I loved all things horses and especially enjoyed working with challenging horses,” said Barwick.

“But I also loved cooking and acting. I graduated high school with a level one chef’s apprentice and then spent several years working in kitchens while still riding. Then I finally decided on a career with horses and acting.” She was also a professional stuntwoman in the film industry, specializing in horsemanship. Then in June 2000, her world would change forever after a life-altering ranch accident.

“I was feeding horses in the barn when a 100-pound hay bale fell 10 feet from the hay loft and landed on me,” recounted Barwick. “It broke my back and severed my spinal cord. At 22, I was left paralyzed from the belly button down.”

In 2003, only three years after the accident, and having re-learned to ride as a paraplegic, Barwick found herself flying with Team Canada to Portugal for the World Equestrian Games and competing in dressage. In 2004, she competed with Team Canada at her first Paralympic Games in Athens, Greece.

Fast forward close to two decades, the incredible Barwick became a five-time Paralympian in 2021. Aboard Sandrino (sired by Spirit of Westfalia), a nine-year-old Westphalian gelding owned by Lee Garrod, she competed on her fifth Paralympic Games team in Tokyo, one year delayed due to the pandemic. Barwick captured sixth place in the Grade III individual freestyle and was a part of the Canadian team that finished in 10th place overall.

The native of Aldergrove, BC, teamed up with EC in the fall of 2021 to offer an annual ‘Bridging the Gap’ bursary to aspiring Para-Dressage athletes aged 18 and older to train and develop with Barwick on the heart of horse land in Ocala, FL. “It’s important to me to help keep our sport strong and progressing forward with competitive riders,” said Barwick.

An extremely versatile athlete, she also competes in Para reining and excels as a horse trainer and is a four-star professional instructor in the Parelli Natural Horsemanship Program.