New Equestrian Club increases its gait

By Brian Comer
Lantern staff writer

They may be small in number, but they are big in ideas and motivation.

The new Equestrian Club at Ohio State, which only has 12 members, is moving into full gallop this quarter.

Club president Heidi Halder, a senior from Xenia, said, "The objective of our club is to compete in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association and have people join the club to learn to ride and if they want, to compete."

The club was originally formed by two transfer students from Otterbein College, Amy and Donna Estey, who competed on the equestrian team there.

"They wanted to get a team started here. They got an interest group going and then, in the fall, we got together and started looking for a coach," said club member, Chris Stacoffe.

Halder said they finally found a coaching team that owned a farm and were willing to become involved in their club. "We were looking for a coach and Debbie and Ollie Griffith agreed."

The Griffiths own the Autumn Rose Farm in Plain City and have enough horses to accommodate the team for practice sessions.

However, the Griffiths don't have enough horses to host a meet.

"The home team doesn't have an advantage even though they have ridden most of the horses in the competition. The horse you draw for any particular event is by chance," Halder said.

"The competitors are divided by ability and the host school provides the horses for competition," Stacoffe said.

The club practices on Mondays and Wednesdays at the farm for two two-hour sessions, but missed the first two meets of the season because they weren't quite organized.

However, four OSU students were able to compete at the Lake Erie College show.

"We've got all the organizational things done and right now we are preparing to go to a horse show at Purdue University on Feb. 28, March 1 and 2," Halder said.

"We compete in events like English Riding, jumping, and Western Riding," Stacoffe said. English Riding uses a smaller style saddle and emphasizes more finesse. It is more elegant and not as rough as the western style, Stacoffe said.

Western style is easy flowing riding with emphasis on the way the horse moves, said Stacoffe, a junior from St. Louis.

The club is looking for sponsors. Currently members pay for all their travel expenses.

"We collected dues in order to get into the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association. We had to pay $50 to compete for one year," Halder said.

"Until we got the coach we were just trying to organize the club, now we are stressing membership and sponsors for the remainder of this quarter," Halder said.

Membership is open to anyone interested in horses. The club's next meeting will be Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the Ohio Union's Buckeye Suite A.
Equestrian team finishes season with region win

By Gall Bushman
Lantern staff writer

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Ohio State's newly-formed equestrian team competed with 15 colleges in a Region Eight horse show at Michigan State last weekend, placing first in one division and second in the other.

Ohio State triumphed in the Western Division by winning the high point Saturday.

"It (the high finish) was a bit of a surprise. The other teams did so well," said Carly Tooey, a junior from Cincinnati. The team placed second overall in the English division.

The competition began Friday night and ended Sunday, with Ohio State competing against Purdue, Ohio University, Indiana and Michigan State.

Although the team concluded its regular season Sunday, one member, Beth Hamilton, qualified for regional competition Saturday at Miami University. Hamilton won the reserve hunt seat, named for the type of saddle used and riders' posture, high point Saturday.

The competition involved beginning, intermediate and advanced English and Western divisions. The events in the show included jumping and flat classes with Ohio State placing in a range of first through sixth places during the competition.

"Overall, I think our team had a good year, considering this is our first," said Chris Stacoff, a senior from St. Louis. "We had a lot of paperwork to do to get the team together," she added.

The team began its twice-a-week practices winter quarter with coaching assistance from Ollie and Debbie Griffith, owners of Autumn Rose Farm. The Griffiths will continue to coach the team next season.

One team member, Donna Estey, a sophomore from Troy, hopes the team has another strong season next year. "Our team has a lot of potential," she said.
It's a cinch

OSU equestrian team member John Magee helps teammate Lauren Zimmerman get her horse ready for practice. Although this is the team's first year, the members won a first and second place in regional events last weekend and qualified Beth Hamilton for Saturday's regional competition at Miami University.
Coach building successful team

By Maryellen O'Shaughnessy
Lantern staff writer

"All right now. Leg, leg, leg...release! Nice job."

At indoor arena in Delaware County, OSU equestrian coach Ollie Griffith smooth-talks one of his six jump riders into finessing an unwilling horse over a series of fences.

Finesse. Savvy. A little bit of guts. Take these qualities and add a healthy dose of riding skill and you'll have the difference between coming home with a first place finish or placing nowhere in intercollegiate competition.

The OSU team has succeeded in pulling some of these qualities together in its first full year of competition, Griffith said.

"Last year, we were lucky to place. Now, probably two-thirds of the team is capable of winning their events," he said.

Ollie Griffith, who has worked with horses for 25 years, coaches the team in conjunction with his wife, Debbie. They find the job of coaching the team "interesting" because of the brand new challenges faced at every meet.

In an intercollegiate equestrian competition, visiting riders do battle with virtually no knowledge of the horses they ride, Griffith said. Since the host team provides all mounts, visiting teams ride horses whose habits and abilities are uncharted territory...somewhat like showing up for a football game, only to find that half your team has been replaced by new recruits who speak no English.

"It's not only equitation," Griffith said, "but it's being able to figure out a new horse, to get into that horse's head. You must be able to go in cold and work with whatever you get."

Griffith is pleased with the team's overall performance. In four of its five meets this year, they have brought home 40 first place finishes.

Sara Junkin, a senior from Beaver Creek and president of the OSU Equestrian Club, said this figures to be roughly one-fifth of the total amount of first place finishes awarded.

The team consists of about 30 of the 45 members of the club who have the time and the money to attend practices and shows, Griffith said.

Riders can compete on various skill levels. These levels give inexperienced riders the opportunity to show, and also provide stiff competition for accomplished riders, Junkin said.

"We have a new member who has been riding only two quarters," Griffith said. "She will be in her first show at Michigan State this month. I hope to see her place."

Griffith insists his riders expand their abilities by trying different styles of riding. Connie Sue Manos, a senior from Seville, has years of experience riding hunt seat style, both on the "flat" and over fences. But she never considered trying her hand at western riding until Griffith insisted she should.

Hunt seat is a style that prepares riders to go over fences.

"In my first show riding western, I placed first," Manos said. "It's been a good experience." She recently qualified for regional competition in western equitation.

Griffith predicts Ohio State will send up to 15 riders to regional competition in April. The team hopes to send some of these on to the national competition in Indianapolis in May.

Since Ohio State is one of the youngest teams in the region, Griffith said he doesn't have the depth of talent other established teams have.

At meets, the coach chooses the strongest rider in each of 12 divisions to ride for team points. Griffith's stable of riders, at 30, is much smaller than most teams, he said. However, he hopes to recruit more riders at all levels of ability.

"We're open to everyone," he said.

Since riders don't have to own their own horses to ride with the team, becoming a member isn't as expensive as some people would think, Junkin said.

Club dues are $5 a quarter, she said. Lesson fees for practice sessions with the Griffiths range from $100 to $180 a quarter.

The club has raised enough money, through fund raising and sponsorships, to cover the cost of gas and lodging for competing members in out-of-town meets, Junkin said. Riders also pay an $8 entry fee for each class they choose to compete in.

Everything else -- saddles, bridles and other equipment, is provided, Griffith said.

"The only thing they need to worry about is showing up in the proper attire," he said.

For more information about joining the club, call Sara Junkin at 294-6790 or Ollie and Debbie Griffith at 764-1681.
Cathy Hutchison, a senior from Columbus majoring in education, uses a horse called Roy to jump over a three-foot fence during a training session of the OSU equestrian team at a Delaware County horse farm.
Equestrians look to regionals

By Gail Bushman
Lantern staff writer

East Lansing, MICH. — The Ohio State equestrian team showed their talent last weekend at Michigan State when they competed against nine other schools in a Region Eight horse show, winning first place in the Western division and second place in the English hunt seat division.

"Overall I thought we did well. We competed against more established teams like Miami (Ohio)," said Megi Schiff, a sophomore from Cincinnati majoring in photography. Schiff was one of seven team members to qualify for regionals to be held April 11 at Miami University of Ohio. "It's something I worked for all year," she said. Any team member placing in regionals will qualify for nationals in May in Indianapolis.

The competition was the last of the season, except for regionals. The team was formed a little over a year ago, under the coaching staff of Debbie and Ollie Griffith, owners of Autumn Rose Farm where the team practices twice weekly.

"The kids were at a (practice) disadvantage because of spring break but still did well," said Debbie Griffith. "We were a lot better than last year and came close to taking the high point for the whole show in the English division," she added. The Griffiths will continue to coach the team next year.

The competition began Friday and ended Sunday against such schools as Purdue, Indiana, Ohio University and Miami University of Ohio. It consisted of beginning, intermediate and advanced English and Western classes. The competition in the English division included jumping and flat events. The Western division involved only flat events.

One team member who only began riding seriously a year ago, proved that work and determination go a long way. Megan Day, a sophomore from Warren, majoring in landscape architecture, won first place twice in the Western division and first place once in the English division.

"It was a long hard road. I practiced two or three times a week," Day said. "I felt lucky and excited to qualify for regionals. I needed two first places and I got both." When asked how she felt about competing in regionals, Day replied, "very nervous."

Debbie Griffith said she hopes the team continues to do well in future competitions, especially those players going to regionals,
Equestrian Club growing in size, competitiveness

By GIA KOURLAS
Lantern staff writer

The OSU Equestrian Club has quadrupled its membership in the past three years. If this rapid growth continues, national competitions will not be out of reach for the relatively young team of about 70 members.

The husband and wife team of Debbie and Ollie Griffith coach the riders at their Autumn Rose Farm in Plain City. Usually, riders practice once or twice a week, taking group lessons with other OSU students for about $10 an hour.

"Intercollegiate riding competition has been around for about 10 years, and three years ago, four or five girls decided to start a team at OSU. Since then, the team membership has risen and grown considerably from around 15 members to what it is now," Debbie Griffith said.

Though most of the members refer to the Equestrian Club as a team, technically, it's not one, said Kathy Hutchison-Navarro, club president.

"The difference between a club and a team is in funding and how it's related to OSU," she said. "Financially, we get some money through the intramural department. At OSU, students don't get credits for being on the team as they would at a bigger riding team like at Miami University (in Oxford), where there are about 160 members."

The team competed and placed in two shows Autumn Quarter and in one this quarter. They have competed in the Miami Show in Oxford, Ohio, and at the Mid-Ohio Classic Riding Show Nov. 7-8, followed by an intercollegiate meet between Otterbein, Ohio State and Ohio Wesleyan.

The latter was a two-day, English riding competition between the same three schools in February.

Navarro said the club competes once or twice a month from fall to spring in a region that includes Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia.

"We also take part in the regional and national riding shows," she said. "To qualify for this, points from all the shows are accumulated from each individual and if they have reached a certain number of points, they are eligible to compete. The points depend on the ribbons they've received throughout the year."

Part of the challenge in a show is not knowing what kind of horse the rider will perform and be judged on.

Navarro said, "When we go to a show, we never bring our own horses. You pick the horse you're going to ride from that school out of a hat. That's what the challenge is for me — the horse that you ride in competition is one that you've never seen or ridden before. The idea is that the judges are supposed to judge you, not the horse."

The club accepts any full-time undergraduate student with a 2.0 grade point average, and is open to alumni and beginning riders.

"The categories always go from Beginning to Open Riding, so any rider at any level can be a part of the club," Navarro said. "We ride both Eastern and Western and students aren't restricted on which way they ride, they can switch from one to the other. Right now, we have about half-and-half."

"OSU alumni are also included in the categories in shows. A lot of people stick around after graduation because they still want to ride and compete," she said.

Debbie Griffith explained why she and her husband chose to coach the team.

"We do it because we enjoy the challenge of coaching students. One of the neat challenges is teaching both riders who have never shown before, as well as riders who have had extensive training how to handle anything," she said.

Wendy Weiss, treasurer, said students pay for their entry fee and food for the shows, but the team covers traveling expenses.

"It's usually a $40 flat rate, but it depends on how many classes the student is entered in. The team usually spends about $600 per show," Weiss said.
Teammates ride away with honors

By Tamera L. Kaufman
Lantern staff writer

While the Ohio State Equestrian Club's dream of going to nationals was trampled in midseason because of illnesses, two of the team's members took the reins in the individual competitions and rode away with several honors.

Laurie (Lauren) Zimmerman, a junior from Mentor, and a founding member of the three-year-old team, placed second in the nation in the western intermediate division and fifth in the English walk-trot-canter division.

Kathy Kanehl, a junior from Wooster majoring in recreation education, placed eighth in the advanced western division.

THE TWO women went to the national competition in Laurinburg, N.C., at St. Andrews Presbyterian College, under the direction of the husband and wife coaching team of Ollie and Debbie Griffith.

"I had a very good ride and felt that I should have placed higher, but that was the judges opinion. I was a little disappointed," Kanehl said. "I have to remember that I am eighth in the nation. I am very happy about that."

Zimmerman, who had never been in a competition before joining the club three years ago, said a group of girls wanted to ride, so they got together, found two coaches and began the equestrian club.

ZIMMERMAN WAS recently elected vice president of the club.

"I probably would not have gotten involved in riding if it hadn't been for the other people interested in getting something started," Zimmerman said. "I rode when I was really young, but I didn't start riding again until I went out to the Griffith's farm."

As far as the nationals, Zimmerman said she felt good going into the competition, but made some mistakes.

"I did everything the opposite of what I was supposed to do," Zimmerman said. "I had a really spastic horse, so the judge asked me to trade with another competitor. I knew they were having trouble deciding on first and second place and they wanted to see how I handled a different horse. I was really nervous. The judge was watching me and my hands were shaking while I was shortening the stirrups on the new horse.

"WHEN I heard them call my region (section of the U.S.), I knew I had won reserve national champ," she said. "I was really pleased considering that I was competing against people who have much more experience than I have."

The team of 45 members usually attends 10 shows a year, plus regionals and hopefully nationals.

The equestrian team is a division of the equestrian club and has members competing at various stages from advanced to beginner in English and western riding.

The team members practice about twice a week at their coaches' farm outside of Dublin. At the competition, horses and tack (equipment) are provided for the team members.

"YOU DRAW a horse at the show and they brief you on it before you go in to compete. Everyone is at the same disadvantage," Debbie Griffith said. "It makes it more rewarding to show a strange horse and still do well."

"Our team is small but strong," said Kathy. "Many people don't even know we exist."

For information about the equestrian club call 764-1881.
Lone Rider

Debbie Ross, a senior from Galena majoring in Insurance, rides her quarterhorse, Otoe, at the Autumn Rose Farm which operates as the home for the Ohio State Equestrian team.
Equestrian team wins national finals

By Matt Bettinger
Lantern staff writer

The national championship. Thousands of college teams in all sports start their seasons with that as their goal. Far fewer actually get a chance at it.

The Ohio State equestrian team made the most of one of those rare chances by winning the Western Riding Division in the team's first appearance at the Intercollegiate Horse Show National Finals at the University of Virginia, held May 3-5.

The four riders who rode off with the national title for Ohio State were freshman Rich Beidelschies, of Bucyrus; freshman Carrie Baumann, of Elyria; sophomore Chris Gorman, of Cincinnati; and junior Tracey Schindley, of Edison.

Coaches Ollie and Debbie Griffith said the team's confidence going into the nationals was a major factor.

"Once we won our regional, we knew we were good enough to win nationals," Griffith said.

Gorman, who is in his first year of competition, agreed with his coaches.

"We were really confident coming out of regionals," he said. "Once we got to Virginia and we saw all the other teams, we decided we could really win it.

"We had to believe that no one was better than us without getting over confident. We just had to prove it."

The Western Riding Division involves using a Western saddle and riding one-handed in a walk, a trot and a canter.

Horses were provided by the University of Virginia.

Numbers were drawn out of a hat to match horse and rider to keep the event fair.

The OSU riders said the scale of the national event was an incredible experience.

"It was unlike anything I've ever seen," Gorman said. "It was phenom- enal. The local meets usually just have relatives of team members in the stands.

"But at the nationals, the stands were full of people from all across the nation. It was first-class all the way. It was a real eye-opener.

"There was a lot of fanfare and tradition and tons of people from all over the horse industry," Baumann said.

The champion riders gave much of the credit for winning to their coaches.

"The coaches are great," Baumann said. "There is a lot of raw talent on this team, and the coaches put the polish on us and guided us to win.

"The coaches were really patient," Gorman said. "All you had to do was listen and pay attention to what they said, and you improved," Gorman said.

The team is in its sixth season at Ohio State and is excited about next year.

"We're a young team and we hope to be there again," Gorman said.

"After going through all the fanfare, we're psyched to go again," Baumann said. "Since we've been there once, now we want it even more."

The coaches said they want to get more students involved with the team on all levels next year. The team currently has 55 members.

"We certainly welcome anyone to come out to practice with us," Griffith said. "We are always looking for new riders for the beginning of the season in the fall."

Prospective riders need not worry about their experience before trying out for the team, Gorman said.

"I've ridden for 6 or 7 years, but I've never showed or competed officially," Gorman said. "That's why I joined the team; to compete.

"Coach Griffith can make a competitive rider out of anyone who can sit on a horse."

Students interested in joining the equestrian team should contact either coach at 764-1881.
OSU team wins national title

Ollie Griffith had high hopes for the Ohio State University Equestrian team's trip to the national championships, even though it was the Buckeye's first attempt at the title.

"I thought we would be in the top three," the coach and owner of Autumn Rose Farms said. "The region we compete in is traditionally the toughest region in the country."

The OSU horsemen not only justified Griffith's confidence in them, they put the icing on the cake, by riding off with the championship May 4.

The Buckeye squad accumulated a total of 19 points to edge Colorado State by two points.

"We are very happy and extremely proud of our team," said Debbie Griffith. "My husband and I have been coaching this team for six years, and this was our first trip to the nationals. To win it on our first attempt was an exciting and rewarding experience."

Unfortunately, Debbie had to experience the thrill vicariously. She had just given birth to a son April 29 and therefore couldn't make the trip.

Carrie Bauman, a freshman from Lima, finished first in the Walk and Trot Division for a total of seven points. Freshman Rich Beidelcheis of Bucyrus came in second in the Open Division and was awarded five points. Marengo's Tracey Shindley, a junior, competed in the Advanced Division and earned four points for finishing third. Sophomore Chris Gorman, from Cincinnati, picked up three points for a fourth place finish in the Intermediate Division.

There were a total of 12 teams from 12 regions competing in this Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Nationals event. Each team had four equestriennes competing in four divisions. Ohio State was awarded the rotating IHSA Nationals trophy. Each member of the team received a belt buckle commemorating the event.

"The kids were really excited and they would like to return next year and win it again," said Debbie. "They will be off from now until fall quarter in September, when the equestrian training begins again."

"We will begin to show in October and run thru March. Regionals will be held in April, with Nationals taking place again in May. They will ride during the summer, but they officially begin training at the start of fall quarter in September."

The Ohio State team won the Nationals in the Western Style Division, while Miami University finished second in the English Style Division.

"This is quite an accomplishment for this part of the country, which is predominately Western Style," Debbie commented.

The team won their regional title by accumulating the most points in 10 meets. +

Larry Hansgen is a regular ThisWeek sports columnist.
Equestrians win the big show

By Barb Peck
Lantern sports writer

The OSU equestrian team won its 10th show this year to repeat as national champions on May 2 and 3 in Morehead, Ky.

"We were pretty optimistic going in because we knew we had a really strong team," OSU Coach Debbie Griffith said. "We won all the classes on Saturday, so we were up by five points and very happy."

The stock-seat (western) division of the team won the national championship. The hunt division of the team took only individuals to the show.

Points are awarded by how each member places in their class. First place receives seven points, second receives six, and so on.

"It was really exciting and a sense of real relief that the year is over," Kerry Stove, a member of the team, said. "Everything built up to this, and this was the high point of the year."

For Ohio State, Janet Hack and Cindy Noble placed first in the stock-seat division and Stacy Giere and Rich Biedelshieses placed second.

Individually, Kim Shoemaker took first in the intermediate level, Jocelyn Elwood was reserve (second) in the advanced rider level and Stove was seventh jumping over the fences.

"We hoped to take the national championship again and we all went in with a really positive attitude," Elwood said.

To make it the national championships the team had to qualify by having the highest points in its region, Ohio/Kentucky.

In a show, the horses are supplied by the host school and the riders must pick out of a hat which horse they will ride. They are not allowed to practice on the horse before the competition.

"It makes it difficult because some horses aren't as high of quality as others," Elwood said. "You can't practice so you just have to get on and ride. You're supposed to be good enough to ride any horse at any time."

"They were very nice horses at this show and we were very pleased with the stock," Griffith said.

The team won nine out of ten shows during the year and placed reserve (second) once.

There are 208 colleges that compete intercollegiately and about 4,000 riders. About 20 schools make it to the national show.

The equestrian team is a club team at Ohio State and supports itself through fundraisers, such as car washes and candy sales.

The team is coached by Ollie and Debbie Griffith and practices on their farm.
Equestrian team hopes for first

By Chris Berhalter
Lantern sports writer

The OSU equestrian team wants to be the first.

The first team, that is, to win three consecutive national championships.

Aiding its cause, the team has qualified 28 riders for the regionals on April 17 at Finley.

In the two categories of competition, the team has 18 riders in the English (Hunt Seat) category and 10 riders in the Western (Stock Seat) category.

The team has been the national champion in the Western category for the past two years and hopes are high for a "three-peat."

"We've been kicking butt," said Janet Hack, president of the equestrian club. "The attitude on the team all year was that we will be the first to win three consecutive national championships," she said.

Hack said although the western riders won the title again last year, only one English rider made it to nationals. However, this year that will change, she said.

"With the added incentive of nationals being held in our region, I look for us to qualify a lot more riders," she said.

The national championships will be at Lake Erie College in Cleveland on May 1-2.

Ollie Griffith, coach of the equestrian team, said he is optimistic about the team's chances at a third national championship.

"We have a real good chance at getting our goal," he said. "And with a lot of riders returning next year, I think we'll be just as good or even better next year."

The equestrian team is a sports club that doesn't have OSU sponsorship; but Hack said work is underway to change from a club status to an official OSU-sponsored sport.

"We've started the first stage of filling out forms, but even if we do get varsity status, it takes two years to complete," Hack said.

"Even though I won't get to enjoy the official recognition, hopefully others behind me will," she said.

Contrary to popular belief, Griffith and Hack said intercollegiate horseback riding isn't expensive or just open to advanced riders.

"You don't have to own your own equipment and the sport is always open to beginners," Griffith said.

Hack said she only had three months experience before she came to college and was part of a national championship team.

"There are a lot of different levels of competition in each category, from beginner to expert," she said.

Western and English are the two categories of competition. Western has a bigger saddle and involves more reining and horsemanship than English competition. The English competition also involves a lot of jumping.

In intercollegiate equestrian competition, each rider randomly draws a horse that he or she has no prior experience with and that is the horse they use.
OSU equestrians trotting into nationals

By Beth Ann Wolford
Lantern sports writer

"We are pretty confident that we have a shot at being third year National Stock Seat Champions. The team is hoping to be the first to have ever won the title for three consecutive years," said Coach Debbie Griffith, who, along with husband Ollis, has been with the team since its founding in 1986.

"We will be competing against the best ten collegiate teams in the country. For the past two years, we have beaten Colorado State by only a couple of points. They, along with Texas A&M, will provide some stiff competition," said Janet Hack, the team's president and a senior majoring in animal science.

During Autumn and Winter quarters, team members take semi-private lessons one to two times a week for an hour at the coaches' farm located on Hyland-Croy Road just past Dublin. Practice is held more often during Spring Quarter to prepare for regional and national competition. There are approximately 10 shows during the regular season.

Riders might train in any of the four classes: English or Hunt Seat; Western or Stock Seat; reining, which is a new Western class or jumping. Levels range from beginner to very advanced.

"We actually have more Hunt Seat riders than Stock Seat riders, but we continue to place better in Stock Seat competition," Griffith said. "This is due to the fact that we don't have as many upper-level Hunt Seat riders."

At an intercollegiate show, a rider is randomly assigned to a horse at his or her level, which is provided by the host school. Riders are not permitted to use their own horses or saddles.

A rider observes the horse during a few runs and then must enter the arena to walk, trot and possibly canter depending on the rider's level of experience. A ride lasts approximately 20 minutes depending on the judge.

"Judges look to see if the rider knows how to confidently adjust to their horse in the ring. They also watch for technical skills such as hand, leg and heel position, alignment and the ability to complete patterns," said Stacey Giere, a junior majoring in physical education.

"Since the Ohio and Michigan region is hosting nationals this year, our team has an advantage. We are more familiar with the horses, and we will also have more team members able to go and support our riders," said Katie Berner, a sophomore majoring in animal science.
Students in the saddle

By Mary Bridgman

Jill Schaefer saddles her horse before practice at Autumn Rose Farm in Dublin.

OSU Equestrian Club to vie for unprecedented third-straight national crown

"We're gonna win," Hack said.

In the past two national competitions, he has developed a personal rivalry with his horse, Butterscotch, who was named one of the best horses in the world champion quarter-horse rider.

"She's a great horse," said Butterscotch, who was named one of the best horses in the world champion quarter-horse rider.

"On my good days, I have a chance to win." Intercollegiate competition differs from others because riders "draw" their mounts from a pool of horses they have not ridden. The students draw only from the top 100 riders in the country.

The trophy case at Autumn Rose Farm

OSU Equestrian Club is the top stock-seat rider. Butterscotch, 20, started riding eight years ago, giving up football, basketball and baseball. He has since owned more than 100 horses and shown almost every weekend from March to November on the quarter-horse circuit.

"I think I will be nervous," Hack said, "but I won't let it get to me."

Hack and her teammates in the OSU Equestrian Club will compete during the weekend for their third-consecutive national championship in the stock-seat (Western saddle) division. The school has won the crown three years in a row.

The horse show, hosted by Lake Erie College in Erie, Ohio, will draw the top student riders nationwide, who qualified through 17 regional competitions.

OSU riders have been "cramming" for the show several times a week, practicing at Autumn Rose Farm in Dublin, where they are coach by Ollie and Debbie Griffith.

Hack, 23, is a veteran of national competition. She won the beginner division for the team last year. This year she will compete for the team in the intermediate division and on her own in the walk/trot class.

Equestrian Club to vie for unprecedented National crown

"Everybody wants it; that's why we compete," said Ollie, a senior from Kansas, California. "We ride for the love of riding, not for the money."

The horse show, hosted by Lake Erie College in Ohio, will draw the top student riders nationwide, who qualified through 17 regional competitions.

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The trophy case at Autumn Rose Farm

OSU Equestrian Club is the top stock-seat rider. Butterscotch, 20, started riding eight years ago, giving up football, basketball and baseball. He has since owned more than 100 horses and shown almost every weekend from March to November on the quarter-horse circuit.

"I think I will be nervous," Hack said, "but I won't let it get to me."

Hack and her teammates in the OSU Equestrian Club will compete during the weekend for their third-consecutive national championship in the stock-seat (Western saddle) division. The school has won the crown three years in a row.

The horse show, hosted by Lake Erie College in Erie, Ohio, will draw the top student riders nationwide, who qualified through 17 regional competitions.

OSU riders have been "cramming" for the show several times a week, practicing at Autumn Rose Farm in Dublin, where they are coach by Ollie and Debbie Griffith.

Hack, 23, is a veteran of national competition. She won the beginner division for the team last year. This year she will compete for the team in the intermediate division and on her own in the walk/trot class.

Everybody wants it; that's why we compete," said Ollie, a senior from Kansas, California. "We ride for the love of riding, not for the money."
a bad draw," said Jill Schaude, a freshman from New Middletown, Ohio, where she has ridden since age 8.

"I won the class. It really inspired me. You realize no matter how bad the draw, you can still win."

OSU's intercollegiate team, which narrowly won the regional competition several weeks ago, includes Hack, Beidelschies, Hershey and Sophie Powell of Yellow Springs, Ohio. Hack, Beidelschies and Hershey also qualified to compete this weekend in individual classes.

So did six other OSU Equestrian Club riders: Schaude, Stacey Giere, Brecksville, Ohio; Stacey Baker, Shreve, Ohio; Shari Klamfath, Urbana, Ohio; and alumnae Jocelyn Elwood and Kim Shoemaker, both of Dublin.

Typically, the stock-seat judges require competitors to walk, trot and canter (walk and trot in the beginner classes) along a rail, then show their skills individually in the ring by guiding their horse in a pattern dictated by the judges.

Riders are graded on how well they ride and manage their mount.

Intercollegiate hunt-seat (English saddle) riders also will compete this weekend, but no OSU student qualified for that competition. OSU's hunt-seat team placed sixth among 16 schools in the regional contest.

Giere, a senior, knows the stress — and success — of competition. She grew up on an 80-acre breeding and training farm and has competed as the top rider on OSU's English hunt-seat team. Before attending college, she never rode Western.

This weekend, she will ride in the intermediate stock-seat class. If she rides as well as she did in the regional competition, she may be tough to beat.

Riding has enhanced her college life, she said.

"You get on a horse, and you have no problems," she said. "When the are performing flawlessly, you get goose bumps."

Competing is the best part of riding, Beidelschies said, even though judging often is subjective.

"You can't win too much," he said. "The feeling will always be there. You're going to lose as many as you will win. You are going to feel cheated one time, and the next time you're going to wonder how you did it. The best is when you know you did well and you win."
OSU Equestrian Club wins its way into history

Ohio State University's Equestrian Club made history last weekend when it won the intercollegiate national championship in stock-seat (western saddle) competition for the third consecutive year.

Four riders — one more than last year — also won national titles.

The competition, at Lake Erie College's riding facility in Mentor, Ohio, was stiff.

OSU was tied with Colorado State University after Saturday's events and one point behind going into the final class last Sunday.

Rich Beidelschies, of Bucyrus, Ohio, clinched the win for OSU by defeating Colorado State's Megan Dante, who had beaten him the past two years in the same competition.

Sophie Powell of Yellow Springs, Ohio, won a blue ribbon for the OSU team in the walk-trot division. Michelle Hershey of Greenville, Ohio, placed second in the advanced division, and Janet Hack of Kailua, Hawaii, placed third.

Competing individually, Beidelschies won the open-rider class; Jill Schaad, of New Middletown, Ohio, took reserve national champion in the advanced class, and Shari Klamfeth, of Urbana, Ohio, placed fourth and Hack seventh in the walk-trot.

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Accent Update

Kim Shoemaker, of Dublin, won OSU's fourth national title, in the alumni competition, Jocelyn Elwood, of Dublin, placed third in that event.

— Mary Bridgman
OSU Equestrian Club gallops to success

By Jill Kritzler
Lantern staff writer

The OSU Equestrian Club hopes to ride its way to a fourth consecutive national championship in its seventh season this year.

Twenty-one members of the team competed against 12 other schools Sunday to begin another year of competition for the national title.

Approximately 150 students from Ohio University, Miami University, Otterbein, University of Findlay, Michigan, Michigan State, Lake Erie, Columbus State, Ohio Wesleyan, Western Michigan and Salem-Teikyo University joined the OSU club at the Autumn Rose horse farm, located near Plain City, Ohio.

The farm is owned by the club coaches, Debbie and Ollie Griffith. To join the club you need to be a full-time student, pay dues of $40 a year and pay for riding lessons at $14 per hour, Debbie Griffith said. Members usually practice one to three hours a week, she said.

The club's membership has increased roughly 25 percent since they won the first championship three years ago, and exposure of the program played a major part, Debbie Griffith said. The team is now composed of 40 equestrians.

Ollie Griffith said any student who wants to learn to ride should— even if he or she has no prior experience— "Everyone can learn to ride," he said. "That's what we're here to do, teach people how to ride."

One of their programs involves teaching the disabled to ride horses, he added.

Carrie Baumann, a first-year Veterinary Medicine student, has been with the club for the past four years and was a member of the first championship team. Since Baumann is a four-year member, she no longer has eligibility as a team member but can ride as an alumni rider.

"NCAA rules apply, even though we are considered a club sport," she said.

The shows are part of the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association, founded in 1967 by Bob Cacchione.

According to Cacchione, he was a 17-year-old freshman at a college where there wasn't a riding program. He taught friends to ride, and the following year the college asked him to teach riding as a course. Cacchione became the youngest faculty member of the college at age 18, he said.

Since that time, he has built the IHSA from a college course into an 18-region program with approximately 5,000 riders in 35 states and Canada.

There are two styles of horse riding in the competition: stock seat equitation and hunt seat equitation. The stock seat equitation is commonly known as "western saddle," and the hunt seat is "English saddle." Some members of the OSU club can do both seats, but the adjustment from one to another can be difficult.

Beth Horvath knows how difficult it can be. She was a member of an equestrian club in New Hampshire, where she rode hunt seat. After graduating from college with a nursing degree, she came to Ohio State to get a degree in Veterinary Medicine. Horvath joined the club as an alumni member, and learned the stock seat.

Ohio State's region is in a typically tough region for stock seat. Cacchione said, "The competition is keen. This region is one of the dominant regions for stock seat. Colorado and Texas are also tough," he said.

Sally Goclan, a sophomore in Animal Science and treasurer of the club, said "Last year, the university gave approximately $750 to the club. That may be about 10 percent of the funds."
Autumn Rose Farm home to equestrians

The sound of horses fidgeting in their stalls becomes familiar when you walk into the stables of Autumn Rose Farm, located three miles northwest of Dublin.

The farm is the home of the OSU equestrian team, established in 1966. It is also the home and workplace of equestrian coaches Ollie and Debbie Griffith.

In just three seasons the Griffiths have coached the team to three national championships and are presently working towards a fourth.

They met while showing horses when they were both thirteen years old. They married 15 years ago and purchased the farm five years later.

Nine years ago, ten girls came together and formed the equestrian team, Debbie Griffith said. "They interviewed four different coaches and we were chosen," she said.

Along with offering a schedule of riding lessons for interested individuals, the couple coaches the equestrian team members who range anywhere from never having ridden a horse to students who have been competing for several years.

"Anyone can come and learn to ride and go to nationals," Debbie said.

"We really enjoy all the students and watching them compete," Debbie said. "It's really a unique challenge for the students because they aren't familiar with the horses."

When competing, the equestrians use the horses of the school which is hosting the competition, not their own.

"They tend to make riding look easy, not like it's hard work," she added. When they're being judged, they want to be one with the horse. That means watching the horse during events with other riders, being well prepared, and understanding the horse's style.

"The biggest challenge for a rider is a horse that's going to make things difficult," Debbie said. Judges look for how a rider handles a horse and how that rider is positioned on it.

Autumn Rose Farm houses 52 horses, 34 of which are owned by the Griffiths. The rest are owned by the boarders who take lessons with the couple.

Kim Sorrentino, a freshman from New York, is one of three riders leading the region, which includes Ohio, Michigan, and West Virginia.

Kim, who has competed nationally, was aware Ohio State had a team and wanted to join. She now competes and rides with the equestrian team.

"I really missed riding," Kim said.
L.C. Weber, a freshman from Bellefontaine, is silhouetted with his horse while riding in the indoor facility at Autumn Rose Farm. Weber is a member of the OSU Equestrian Team.

Photos & Story by Sophia C. Antjas

One of the 52 horses at Autumn Rose Farm exhales the cold air while waiting for its morning ride.
Equestrian coaches Ollie and Debbie Griffith stand with two-year-old "Almost Austin," their youngest horse.

"I like Sadie because she's the fastest," said seven-year-old Andy Long. He is preparing Sadie for their afternoon lesson. He has been taking lessons for about a year.
Equestrian club keeps up the pace from last year’s Championship

The OSU Equestrian Club is riding high after a winning performance at the University of Findlay last weekend.

The club competed in two Western and two English shows against 13 other colleges from Ohio and Michigan. The Buckeyes finished first in both Western shows and took third in the English program on Saturday, then came back for a first-place finish on Sunday.

“We expect to do well coming off of this weekend,” OSU Equestrian Club president Stephanie Swenton said. “Everyone’s confidence is really up.”

In Western riding, the rider holds the reins in both hands. The riders have a deep saddle with a saddle horn. Riders hold their legs at a more relaxed position and the movements of the horse are at a slower pace than in English riding, Swenton said.

In English style, a rein is held in each hand and riders use a smaller saddle without a saddle horn. The pace is quicker than Western style, and the courses include fence jumping, Swenton said.

It comes as no surprise that the club finished strongly at the Findlay show.

“We are three-time national champions in Western style, and our English-style riders are getting better and better,” Swenton said. “Both parts are doing well now.”

The club’s next show will be Feb. 19-20 at Lake Erie College, and it will be a while before the show returns home. The next home meet is April 10 at Autumn Rose Farm.

—Dave Monnot
OSU equestrians to defend national title

The OSU equestrian club's stock seat team has once again qualified for the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association's national competition. The stock seat riders defeated 14 other teams in their region, including Michigan State and Michigan, to qualify for the nationals, which will be held April 30 and May 1 at Texas A&M University.

Stock seat riding involves Western-style riding, where the rider holds the reins in one hand and the saddle stirrups are long.

The team will be defending its national title for the third-straight year, and coach Debbie Griffith thinks it should do so successfully.

"I think they have an excellent chance to win," Griffith said.

Riding for Ohio State in the stock seat division at the nationals will be Kristin Clady, Karina Braun, Michelle Hershey, Jill Schaade and Vanessa Sterle.

Several members of the club also qualified for individual competition in the nationals. Roxanne Turner qualified for the hunt seat division, and individual stock seat qualifiers were Sally Goclan, Amy Wilson and Sophie Powell.

Hunt seat riding involves the fence-jumping style of riding, where the rider holds the reins in both hands and the stirrups are short.

The eleven riders that will represent Ohio State in the competition constitute the largest group the university has sent to the nationals.

— C. Calvin Jefferson
Equestrians ride high

The OSU Equestrian Club turned in another outstanding effort over the weekend in this year’s Intercollegiate Horse Show Association national competition at Texas A&M University.

Four different club members claimed national championships in the competition, a feat which made coach Debbie Griffith proud.

“Our team brought home more saddles than anyone else,” Griffith said. “Our team did great. I’m very proud of them.”

Saddles are given to riders for outstanding performances.

More than 325 riders took part in the championships, according to Griffith, and each individual rider had to beat out more than 20 other participants to win their divisions.

Ohio State’s national champions were Jill Schaefer in the Individual Stock Pattern (western) riding division. In stock seat, the rider holds the reins in one hand and the saddle stirrups are long.

Jocelyn Elwood won the individual alumni riding division. Sally Goclan was first in the intermediate individual stock seat riding level, and Karen Brown won the American Quarterhorse Association’s beginner level.

The weekend was not a total successful for the club. OSU’s stock seat team, consisting of Schaefer, Braun, Kristin Brady, Michelle Hershey, and Vanessa Sterle finished fourth out of 10. The riding Buckeyes had captured the title the past three seasons.

The eleven riders Ohio State sent to the competition was the largest group the university has ever sent to the nationals.

—Chris Emswiler
Buckeye equestrian club rides to victory at national tourney

By Rebecca Gray
Lantern Sports Writer

The Ohio State equestrian club saddled up and took first place in the National Equestrian Tournament last weekend in Los Angeles. This is the fourth time the club has won the National Tournament in six years.

The tournament, held at the L.A. Equestrian Center, consisted of eleven teams and 495 riders from across the country. There were team and individual competitions.

First place in the team competition hung in the balance on the last day. The Buckeyes were ahead by only one point when freshman Lauran Boyd secured the win by placing first in beginning western horsemanship. She had a long layoff between competitions and knew the importance of winning her class, she said.

"I was so nervous going in. But afterward I was so relieved. It was the neatest feeling in the world, all the team was singing," Boyd said.

The team won the competition with an overall score of 21 points. The University of Findlay and West Texas A&M tied for second with 16 points. Colorado State had 15 points to take third place.

"It (team competition) boosted our confidence. To know we had a chance...we had been beating teams all year and to beat the tougher teams in the nation was a big confidence booster," Boyd said.

Ohio State placed high in all individual categories. Junior Jill Soronen placed fourth in open horsemanship and fifth in the reigning class. Sophomore Steve Mileteea took third place in the advanced horsemanship division. Freshman Kim Chatfield won the intermediate horsemanship division.

Ohio State also had a solid performance in the individual competition.

Soronen won the high point and her reining class. Freshman Matt Claypod won the his reining class, as did junior Holly Hunter. Junior Lynn Darnell placed second in the intermediate class.

"We had a lot of experience under our belts, so I felt pretty good going in," Claypod said.

Ohio State advanced to the finals by winning the Regional Tournament at the Ohio State Barns. The victory advanced the team to the Zone competition at Purdue, in which they took first place.

The scoring for equestrian events is based on the merits of the rider. The rider is judged on technique and ability, and is unfamiliar with the horse they will be riding prior to the tournament. The rider draws the horse's name from a random group and is afforded no practice time on the horse before competition.
Equestrian team has reigns on fifth title

By Cheri Roehl
Lantern staff writer

The OSU equestrian team has won four of the last six Intercollegiate National Western Championships, and the team is well on its way to winning a fifth national title this year.

The team has taken first place in five of the six western competitions so far this season, already putting it 30 points in the lead, said coach Debbie Griffith.

Individual riders are judged on their poise, body position and how well they handle the horse. The team earns points by winning first through sixth place in the season's eight horse shows.

"At the end of the eight shows, the high-point team of each region gets to take a team to nationals," Griffith said.

"We all have to work together and help each other to get to nationals," said Kim Chatfield, a sophomore member of the team.

Griffith and her husband, Ollie, who have been coaching the equestrian team for the past 12 years, are hopeful for another national title.

"We lost very few riders last year," Griffith said. "Almost all of our team, and all of the people who won nationals last year, are back again, which is definitely an advantage."

The difference in intercollegiate horse shows is the host college provides the horses. The riders do not bring their own horses with them to competitions. Also, the riders are not permitted to have a warm-up.

"That makes it very challenging, but everyone is equal. It is much more fun because you go into the gate with a chance," Chatfield said.

Chatfield won first place in intermediate horsemanship at nationals last year.

The team is in season fall through spring quarter and is open to all students.

"Anyone can join," Griffith said. "That's the nicest thing. You can have no experience at all, or you could have ridden your whole life and there is a place on the team for you."

"The team is open to all levels in hunt seat and western riding, so it's not that a beginner can't be a part of it," she said.

The top 20 teams in the nation will gather in March at an invitational horse show in New Mexico.

Ohio State can take two teams to the show because they have proven to be winners in the past national championships, Griffith said.

Ohio State is the winningest team in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association, which consists of more than 300 colleges.