

My name is Violet Tatum and I just won the CPHA foundation 14 and under equitation finals on a horse named Ironman van de kalevallei who I was riding for Jordan Kilkenny. I like to call him "Tony" as his nickname/ barn name. I started riding Tony mid April and he has been incredible since day 1. He was recently imported and I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity from Archie Cox and Jordan Kilkenny to be able to show him at some of his first shows in the states. He is a dream to ride and is very smooth and gentle. I was honored to have won this very prestigious final on him.

On the first day of the final I was very nervous because I wanted to make up for last year. Last year I was leading and had a beautiful workoff and then realized I did the test wrong, dropping me to 2nd. This was very frustrating and I knew I had to do well this year to stop being mad about the year before. Since I am 14 I knew this was my last chance, which made me more nervous. When I first saw the course I saw the trot jump which was a weakness of mine. I was very excited to take Tony around though. All of the lines except one walked pretty nice, especially with his big stride. I knew when I walked a 4 ½ in the one bending line to the 1 stride I had to go wide and make it 5 smooth easy strides. There were many inside turns that were possible, which I did to hopefully improve my score. I had a nice round day 1 with an error at the trot jump and an unfortunate rail putting me into 6th place going into day 2. Going into day 2 I knew that if I had a nice round I could sneak into the test and hopefully move up. Day 2 started off with a hand gallop right as you walked into the ring, I liked this test because it helps you start off with a nice pace for the rest of your round, I was thankful there was no trot fence this time. I had a nice round and as soon as I saw my distance once I turned the corner to the last fence I was so happy and I finished nicely. I ended up coming into the workoff in the 4th, I came in with nothing to lose and suddenly all of my nerves went away. I confidently walked into the ring and was very happy with my test. 3rd and 4th got their ribbons before presentations so when I didn't get a ribbon handed to me I knew I was either reserve or champion. They made it a surprise in the ring which was very suspenseful. Since I came in 4th I was happy either way, I was very proud of Tony in his first medal final. I knew once I heard the number announced that I won. I was so happy and so was my trainer, Archie Cox.