

Melting Point

A Canadian Bred and Born Champion



For the first time a Canadian bred and born horse won a Youth Superior Versatility Championship and I could not be happier that it was my boy! I still cannot believe that all the hours of work and training finally paid off for Mel and me. When I first met Melting Point four years ago, I was not thinking about being a Youth Superior Champion, I was just looking for a new show horse. My previous show mares were both having foals the next year and I needed something to ride. I had not been looking very long and he was one of the first horses that I tried out. It must have been fate. From the first time I rode him I fell in love. Even though he was green and did not have any time on him he was still calm and willing to do anything. Not to mention the natural talent that he had! I had never ridden a horse like him before. I knew from that moment we were meant to be together.



Throughout our first winter together we took a few lessons, went to some clinics, and just worked on becoming a better team. When summer finally came we went to the few local walking horse shows and did pretty well. There were some rocky times when I was not really sure if we were ever going to get it right, but then there were times when Mel just shined. We also did many parades and demos that summer and everyone who met him fell in love with him just like I did. At the end of the year, we ended up getting points in several different divisions and received our Youth Champion status. We were well on our way towards a Superior Championship but I guess fate decided to step in again.

At the last show of the season, Mel slipped and fell in the barn aisle. We thought he was fine and he went on to have another successful weekend. But over the next few weeks something just was not right, he felt a bit off. After a trip to the vet we found out he had strained his stifle. Mel had to be put on six months stall rest. He was not impressed. He had never been in a stall for longer than a weekend. He was not very happy about not being able to run out in the pasture. It drove him and me crazy not being able to go riding. The six months did not improve things so

we gave him a few more months of rest, outside this time. Finally, a year after he got hurt I could ride him!

That show season we were back in the ring! We were back on track toward finishing our points. By the end of the year, we only needed points in three different divisions. The only problem was there was no one to compete against. In my home province of Alberta, we have a small number of people who show and not many three gait or equitation classes, two of the classes I needed. So, in 2006, Mel and I hit the open show circuit. That in itself was



a challenge. Competing with trotting horses and with judges who did not know or appreciate walkers was hard. There were times of frustration and a few tears were cried but there were times when it all paid off. Some judges did like him and were willing to place us over trotters. Thanks to those few judges, I was able to get my last showmanship, equitation and all but one English pleasure point.

It was down to the last show of the year where there was a possibility of getting our last point. The day did not seem to be going my way and we were consistently placing one lower than we needed. In the last class of the day we were still sitting in the line up and I could barley breathe I was so nervous. I had my fingers crossed and everything! Then they called my number...I got second place! For the first time that day, I beat three horses in an English pleasure class! I got my last point! I was so happy! We went up and picked up our ribbon and as I walked out of the arena, I just threw up my arms and screamed, "We're done!" Mel could not figure out what was happening as he was showered with a ton of hugs and kisses. He had never seen me so happy after a class before.

I could not have asked for a better horse with which to achieve my first versatility championship. Over the four years that I have been working with Mel, we have developed an awesome bond. He always gives 110% and does anything that is asked of him. He is a true ambassador of a wonderful breed. From the show ring to the trail to giving people their first "glide ride," and everything in between, Mel is one Superior horse and I love him!

I could not have done it alone though. So thanks have to go out to my parents and my grandma for supporting my habit. They now understand that once you are bit by the horse show bug you can never quit. I have to thank my mom especially. Without her, I would have never made it to any of the shows and, while she is not the best groom, she sure tries and I love her for it! My vets, Sean Archibald and Charles Briggs, for getting Mel better after his injury. My farrier, Jason Wrubleski, even though he gets mad because I wear out shoes too fast! Also, I have to thank all the people I show with, I learn so much and have so much fun with everyone. And last, but definitely not least, my Melvin! I really could not have done it without my boy!

—NICOLE HIRSEKORN

