

First I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be able to partake in the Boot Camp held at Riding Right Farm. This camp helps me get more prepared, and help my horse and I perform to the best of our ability at the Lendon Grey Youth Dressage Festival. This camp was Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before the festival on Friday. On Monday we had did balimo as a group before getting on the horse. I personally love balimo because I always find that I am able more aware of how my body moves on the horse. I am also more aware of my weaknesses when getting on the horse and I am then able to work on my problems to help improve my horse. After balimo, we were split into groups based on age and what level everyone was riding. The intro riders rode with Gail Kapiloff, while the training level and 1st level riders rode with Hollie McNeil.

The riders that rode with Gail rode their dressage tests, while the rest worked on equitation with Hollie. When anyone had free time we were having study session on the books that we needed to read for our written tests. On Monday I rode with Hollie to work on my equitation. My weakness in my positions is my leg and toes. I tend to ride with my toes out and it pushes my leg out in front of me. Knowing my leg is my weakness, Hollie did a hip release on me to help my leg hang longer. Then she helped me roll my knee and thigh in. She also showed me how to do it myself. This was great because I was really able to feel the difference in me, and in the way my horse was moving. I really felt that I was able to sit the trot more, and be able to be more effective with my leg.

On Tuesday, we all started out with balimo again. Because half of us rode with Hollie on Monday she was able to see some weaknesses that we had as riders. She was able to pick out some exercises that would help everyone. She was really able to help me find some exercises to help strengthen my legs. One exercise was to take an exercise ball and place it in between my feet. While laying on my back, I try to lift my legs up while I bring my arms up to try to get the ball. Then I bring the ball above my head, then lift my legs up to put the ball back. This really worked my quad muscles and my lower ab muscles.

Today was the day I rode in front of Gail Kapiloff. Every year that Gail is there I get very excited. The original plan was to ride my test in front of her and then she was going to help me work on something to help me improve for the weekend. Before I rode I talked to Gail about the horse I was riding and what I have been working on. One thing that I had told Gail was that I never schooled a

free walk to medium walk to trot to canter. The reason why I never schooled this was because Rev, the horse I was riding, started anticipating and was picking up the canter when I would ask for the trot. Gail told me that she completely understood and I had good reasons not to school them. She also said that I shouldn't ride my test in front of her because Rev likes to anticipate what I want. She told me that even though the plan was to ride the test. Instead, I rode parts of the test and yes, I showed her my free walk to medium walk to trot, but I just never asked for a canter right after I picked up a trot.

After showing Gail some movements, she wanted to work on some transitions. She had me working on trot-walk transitions. The goal was to make my walk uphill after the trot and to be soft and allowing when asking for the trot. Then I started working on trot-canter transitions. This was a great exercise because I really had to work on keeping my leg underneath me and work on keeping my toes facing inward. Because I had to really be following with my seat and when asking for the downward for my trot I had to really allow my seat to still follow and follow with my elbows. After a few of these I could really feel Rev starting to soften and coming more through in his back. This was a great feeling and was feeling very excited for the show.

On Wednesday, we worked on some balimo stretches. We did some shoulder stretches to help open our shoulders. One of the exercises was to lay on your stomach, and to take your arm and lay it out flat. Then raise it to the sky as far as you can. You have your head facing the arm your raising to start out. Then after raising your arm up and down a few times, you then do the same with the other arm. This really helps your shoulders loosen so when you are sitting on the horse you are able to stay open in your chest.

For our riding session we split up into two groups. My group had 10 riders and we all tacked up and went into our indoor and all rode together. The point of this ride was to help prepare us for the warm up rings at the YDF. We all had 20 minutes to warm up ourselves. This was a great opportunity to see how my horse reacts when being in a crowded space, and to see how much I had to do as a rider to keep my horse focused. This was a great ride because I was able to keep Rev relaxed during this ride and I was able to school different movements to help him get soft and supple.

Because today was the last day to be able to get our studying in as a group, one of the Mom's had read all of the books and came up with practice tests for us

to take based on the books, online readings, and the prize list. This was a great opportunity for me because I was able to see what I knew, and what I had to study a little more.

By the end of Boot Camp I was very excited to be able to take all of the things that I learned and be able to use them at the YDF. At the YDF I got a 70% on my 1st level dressage test, an 82 in Equitation, and a 96% to end up with 4th overall in my division. I was very happy with how the weekend went and couldn't have done it without the help of this scholarship.