

Anne Gribbions Clinic

Maribeth Hebert

May 8th & 9th I had the opportunity to ride in the GDCTA's Anne Gribbions clinic thanks to Dressage4kids. This was Flori and I's second clinic as a pair and such an amazing learning experience for both of us to get to ride with a clinician such as Anne. She gave me so many tips that make me even more excited for our future.

On Saturday, Anne wanted to get to know Flori and me as a pair and get to know us a bit. Flori is very picky about how he likes to be ridden and expects nothing less than his standards. One of the first things Anne told me is that he has a "big ego" and "calls me out when I don't ride to his standards". We tested the waters a lot on Saturday to see what we could do as a pair. We worked mainly on pirouettes, piaffe, and passage and got to feel my first ever steps of piaffe on him. He tends to rush in the left canter pirouette and avoid my aid. Anne told me when he does this think about slowing the canter making a larger pirouette because the large pirouette is going to be harder for him as he has to stay in the balance longer. By the end of the 45 minutes, we had already improved greatly on the left pirouette. After we played some with the piaffe and passage to see what he could do and see how it improved his gaits. In the passage you are slowing the shoulder and increasing the activity behind. This can be tricky as I often can block

upfront causing him to feel boxed in or make him unable to raise his shoulders. She told me in those moments to remember to keep a low, steady, following hand. That the reins should be firm but not tight. The piaffe and passage require two different seats which is often my biggest problem. In the piaffe you require a steady seat as your seat should not be asking for the horse to continue forward while you gently half halt with the hand and your legs continue to keep the activity behind. She told when I ask for the piaffe to think about doing less in the and not to overthink the aid.

On Sunday, we decided to run through 4-1 for the first time as a pair in preparation for our show the following weekend. Before running through the test we worked on keeping the uphill tendency in the trot half passes. He tends to rush in the left half pass and I get left behind which upsets him, so Anne worked on helping me keep myself center in the saddle to follow with him. She told in the moments when I get left behind to put him into a slight shoulder fore before continuing. That getting farther behind but continuing to ride the half pass only makes it worse. We also worked on keeping him uphill and reaching our extensions. Anne is a huge fan of transitions and loves to play with them. We worked on keeping him uphill by doing shoulder in into an extension making sure to keep it short and immediately bringing him back into a collected trot to shoulder in. We also played around a bit with tempi's and practiced

lines of 2's, 3's, and 4's. She said the key in the tempi's is the quality of the canter because the quality of the change will follow. She said tempi's can be a great way to earn extra points if you can ride a straight, accurate line. After, we ran the test and got lots of great feedback and pointers from Anne including where you can pick up points. She told me easy places to pick up points or short sides, transitions, and center lines. She said we often as rider focus too much on the movements and forget about everything in between. The centerlines for example such an easy score that we often overlook and ride poorly, it is the first impression the judge gets of you.

Anne continually told me how lucky I am to have a horse like Flori and I truly cannot believe I have him. I am forever grateful to Dressage4kids and Lendon Gray. Without them, I would not have the opportunity to have such an incredible partner or half the opportunities I have, such as attending this clinic.