

My name is Logan Williams and I've been riding for 5 years. I am an eventer and I ride a 13 year old thoroughbred gelding named Four Star General. I train with Lillian Becker at Sky Farm Equestrian in Copake, New York.

During the past two years I have participated in two Youth Dressage Festivals, and two TEAM training clinics. I can easily say the TEAM program is a great experience for riders at all levels.

The first morning, I along with eight other riders, assembled in the indoor arena at the beautiful Blue Ribbon Academy. Lendon welcomed us with opening remarks and after that no time was wasted as the first rider was quickly in the arena and ready to ride. I noticed how efficiently time was used throughout the weekend and in our 45 minute lessons. The lessons felt much longer because not a moment was wasted and the lesson time used to its fullest.

In addition to riding we listened a great talk given by Molly Maloney. The next day we were led in a zoom yoga session by Kelly Mahoney. We learned breathing techniques, ways to make us stronger and help our posture.

During my two 45-minute lessons with Lendon, I learned many things about my riding and many new techniques that I look forward to trying at my home barn. In my first lesson Lendon focused on the steadiness of my hands and my hand position. One of the tools she used was wrist bands. The immediate impact of this was seen during my lesson the next day and in subsequent rides at my home barn as I am still using them. There are a variety of different strengths so as my hands get steadier I can use stronger bands. During my second lesson, as my hands improved, we were able to focus on the rhythm of the trot and the steadiness in the bridle.

One of the important aspects of the TEAM program is watching all of the other riders during their lesson. Observing to this degree, different riders at all different levels, was very informative. I never realized I could learn so much from watching others but I was wrong!

There are many volunteers, team members and sponsors that make these TEAM clinics happen and I am very grateful to all of them for all that they do. Opportunities like this would not be possible without the hard work and generosity of many behind the scenes. I especially want to thank Lisa Herman at Blue Ribbon for hosting the clinic and my trainer Lillian Becker for allowing me to take one of her other horses, Fools Gold (Rue) to the clinic. We had opted not to take Four Star this time, as he was competing in the Larkin Hills Horse Trials the following weekend and we didn't want to tire him out.

One of the main things I noticed during my lesson was that I was pushed to be my best and was thoroughly encouraged throughout which make me very enthusiastic to work on my riding even more. I greatly admire that Lendon didn't care if you were the best rider or had the most talent, she cared that you had the drive to be your best self. She wanted you to want it, and I truly believe that makes all the difference in a rider and it certainly made the difference in my ride.

Lastly I think it is very important that I mention how respectful everyone was of the rules regarding COVID-19. I felt that it was taken seriously and I felt very safe. I think it is so amazing that they were able to put these amazing days together and I am so grateful that I had the chance to participate.