

Liliana Green

Clinic with Jordan LaPlaca, October 21-22

I recently had the wonderful opportunity to ride in a clinic with Jordan LaPlaca, which is very timely considering I am headed to US Dressage Finals at the World Equestrian Center in one week. My horse, Devon, and I are working on solidifying our Second Level work before we leave for finals, and thanks to the generosity of D4K, I was able to work towards this goal with the help of Jordan. With only a week out from finals, my goal going into this clinic was not to fix every little thing, but rather to finesse our overall impression and improve the consistency and suppleness of our transitions.

In our first ride, Jordan addressed a few different aspects of our Second Level work while keeping our goal of improved suppleness and consistency in mind. We primarily focused on keeping the suppleness in the preparation for our simple changes, as well as keeping the balance and geometry throughout our counter-canter loops. I can be quite inconsistent with my preparation for simple changes, and oftentimes our canter-walk transitions can either be too abrupt or there will be trot steps. Jordan explained the trot



steps that we sometimes get should not be addressed by applying a stronger aid, but rather by taking a deep breath in, half halting, sitting tall, and then exhaling to ask Devon to smoothly transition into the walk. This helped me take the time to prepare for the transition without rushing it or asking abruptly, which I am sure Devon is very grateful

for! For our Second Level counter-canter loop, we practiced riding the loops in a slight shoulder-in positioning in the direction of the lead we were on. This helped with keeping the balance and suppleness, as well as preventing Devon from falling on his inside shoulder, which would be the outside shoulder in true lead.

In our second ride, we worked on finessing my half halts, specifically in our collections back from mediums. Jordan emphasized how important it is to soften after a half halt, especially after a medium gait. We also focused on improving the activity of the gaits, making sure to maintain energy and freedom even while



collecting. This was definitely a highlight of our ride, though that might have been helped by the chilly fall air and Devon feeling especially forward! At the end of our ride, we discussed the importance of riding the movements of a dressage test as a sequence, almost like a dance, rather than getting stuck only thinking about the pattern. We

also touched on how important it is to go for hacks and add diversity into our training before a big event.

Thank you so much again to D4K for this opportunity, I feel much more confident and prepared heading into US Dressage Finals!