

Hutchins-Kristen Tops Midsouth CCI* Aboard A Special Stallion

The 6-year-old homebred leads from start to finish to earn the national championship.

BY LINDSAY BERRETH
PHOTOS BY XPRESS FOTO



All year Bethany Hutchins-Kristen has been taking it easy on cross-country to keep 6-year-old Geluk HVF confident. But as her season drew to a close at the Hagyard Midsouth CCI*, Oct. 19-22 in Lexington, Ky., she decided to let him go.

Leading the division from the start, Hutchins-Kristen and “Geluk” added just a rail in show jumping to their score to take the win and earn the U.S. Equestrian Federation CCI* National Eventing Championship.

“He’s had a really solid season so far,” said Hutchins-Kristen. “He’s been super competitive with his dressage, and he’s a good show jumper and great on cross-country, but we’ve been taking it slow because he’s only 6. I thought it was a possibility he could be in the top placings. After producing him carefully all season we kind of went big knowing that he could win. It was really exciting. It’s still a little bit surreal.”

Geluk, whose name means good luck and good fortune in Dutch, is special to Hutchins-Kristen not only because he’s proven to be one of the best horses she’s ever ridden, but also because she and her mother Marian Hutchins bred the Dutch Warmblood stallion (Jazz—Bronte, Contango) at their Haven Valley Farm in Dryden, Mich.

Hutchins-Kristen also competes Geluk’s homebred dam Bronte (Contango—Katrina, Roemer) at the two-star level.

Although the horses look exactly like, their personalities are very different. “People constantly confuse them. I’ve even had my coaches say, ‘Now which one is that?’ Geluk is taller and more elegant,” she said. “But temperament-wise they couldn’t be more different. She’s a really spooky mare. She’s scared of everything and a Nervous Nellie. She’s a horse I really have to ride aggres-

Bethany Hutchins-Kristen rode her homebred stallion Geluk HVF to the CCI* win at Hagyard Midsouth.

sively around the course. He's so straightforward and easy. He wants to do the job. He never looks for a way out of anything, so that's fun. As a rider you learn more that way."

Hutchins-Kristen, 34, has worked with Robin Walker from the beginning of Geluk's career, and more recently she's traveled to The Plains, Va., to train with David O'Connor, although Walker did give her some hints at Midsouth since they were competing in the same division.

"The first couple of years were a little bit tricky because he was very full of it," she said. "The Jazz horses are supposedly very hot and very sensitive. That's where I have to give a lot of credit to Robin because those first couple of years were a bit touch and go. He always had a good temperament, but he was a young, hot stallion. It was a bit of a challenge, but this last year he's really come into himself, and he understands his job."

Hutchins-Kristen, who's married to medical resident Nico Kristen, traveled 12 hours from Michigan to Virginia four times over the summer with Geluk and Bronte to work with O'Connor, whom she met in Ocala, Fla., last winter through Anita Nemtin-Gilmour.

"I was really wanting to push my riding up to the next level. I took a few lessons with him, and I was just hooked—his methodology, his approach all felt so close in line with what my mom had always taught on the dressage end of things," she said.

O'Connor uses natural horsemanship techniques, and Hutchins-Kristen brought home lots of ideas for her young homebreds both on the ground and in the saddle.

"He rides so much with his seat and his leg. It gives the horses so much confidence. He's such a soft rider," she said. "You never see him using much hand or biting up a horse. He doesn't even ride with whips. Everything is just about explaining to the horse, and he gets them going correctly, moving off the leg correctly."

At Midsouth the pair scored a 42.2 in dressage. "He felt really solid. In the dressage, he's a stallion, so he goes in and just lights up. He's so well-

HAGYARD MIDSOUTH THREE-DAY EVENT & TEAM CHALLENGE HORSE TRIALS
Lexington, Ky.—Oct. 19-22

▶ CCI*

HORSE/RIDER	DRESSAGE	CROSS-COUNTRY JUMP/TIME	SHOW JUMPING JUMP/TIME	TOTAL
1. Geluk HVF/Bethany Hutchins-Kristen	42.2	0/0	4/0	46.2
2. Cassinova/Hannah Leahey	47.9	0/0	0/0	47.9
3. SBT Barolo/Andrew Walker	48.8	0/0	0/0	48.8
4. Watch Out/Arden Wildasin	51.0	0/0	0/0	51.0
5. Trendy Fernhill/Jennifer Caras	52.0	0/0	0/0	52.0
6. Fedarman B/Ann Goodwin	54.0	0/0	0/0	54.0

Also competed: 7. Nutello/H. Irwin, 55.4; 8. Wakeup/W. Roberts, 57.1; 9. Handsome Harry/B. Perkins, 58.8; 10. Heck/R. Jurgens, 58.9; 11. Bacyrage/L. Traisnel, 59.7; 12. Rochambeau/S. Jellum, 61.6; 13. Thurston B. Howell/D. Sussman, 65.2; 14. Crossfire/L. Sumner, 66.0; 15. Indigenous Gent/T. Smith, 66.6; 16. Ally Kgo/C. Silliman, 70.8; 17. Drastic Measures/L. Bernardoni, 74.6; 18. Ormolu/L. Snowden, 74.9; 19. Good Measure/C. Newton, 80.6; 20. Have At It Playboy/M. Lynn, 83.9; 21. Garden Valley Gold/E. Nielsen, 89.0; 22. Red Mare/B. Ball, 91.0; 23. Rock Ambassador/R. Walker, 94.0; 24. Satin Mystique/S. Moessner, 95.1; 25. Platinum Rhapsody/S. Remensnyder, 108.4; 26. Cedric Diggory/A. O'Neal, 145.1

Withdrawn before show jumping: Crazy Choice/K. Surasky. Eliminated on cross-country: Joint Venture/H. Strawbridge; Fernhill Famous/A. Green; Beahereincourt/E. Farren; Passing Go/K. Marth. Retired on cross-country: Playtime/L. Mahon; Paris Can Wait/L. Clark. Rider fall on cross-country: Aces Baby/A. Walker; Skye Skippa VIP/L. Eckardt; Untouchable Rock/A. Taylor.

▶ CCI* YOUNG RIDER

HORSE/RIDER	DRESSAGE	CROSS-COUNTRY JUMP/TIME	SHOW JUMPING JUMP/TIME	TOTAL
1. Bill Owen/Elizabeth Scheltema	45.3	0/0	0/0	45.3
2. Timaru/Colin Gaffney	45.6	0/0	0/0	45.6
3. Borasco/Ashlyn Hayworth	45.3	0/.8	4/1	51.1
4. P.S. On Top Of The World/Madeline Backus	50.1	0/0	4/1	55.1
5. FE Grand Torino/Natasha Erschen	50.2	0/4.8	4/2	61.0
6. Runaway Fantasy/Molly McBride	53.1	0/.4	8/0	61.5

Also competed: 7. Stonewall Jackson/A. Whisman, 62.7; 8. Ashton's Harper/K. Labarge, 65.2; 9. Rumblefish/T. Lesesne, 65.6; 10. River King/A. Pierce, 66.2; 11. Etoile/E. Juckett, 66.5; 12. Free And Easy/S. Ayres, 67.9; 13. Split Decision/B. Iddiols, 85.8; 14. WHF Kitaro/J. Schwartz, 87.1; 15. The Dark Mark/M. Clark, 116.2

Withdrawn before show jumping: S.V.R. Ron/R. Hall. Eliminated on cross-country: Factor Five/B. Park. Rider fall on cross-country: Denver/J. Lemastus.

“We kind of went big knowing that he could win.”

— BETHANY HUTCHINS-KRISTEN

behaved that way. I think it almost gives him an extra edge. He has so much presence," she said. "The cross-country is for sure his favorite phase. He's always just ears forward out of the start box, looking for the jumps. As young as he is, he's just so keen to everything, even the technical stuff. We went a little bit faster than he was used to, but he made the time."

Hutchins-Kristen was born into riding and started eventing in Pony Club when she was 7. She now has several horses in training, eventing students, and a few young homebreds

she's bringing along. She's produced a number of horses up to intermediate, but she has yet to find one that could go all the way.

"I think he'll be a four-star horse," she said. "He's got a massive gallop and loves all three phases. I think there aren't a lot of quality eventing stallions out there to breed to, which has always been our trouble as breeders ourselves, to find a stallion that's going to be good for the sport—to have the movement for the dressage and the brain and enough blood and the carefulness

for the jumping. I'm just really excited because I think he's going to be a great asset to U.S. eventing."

Geluk hasn't been bred yet, but Hutchins-Kristen hopes he can produce quality event horses someday. For now, her goal is the FEI World Breeding Eventing Championships for Young Horses CCI** (France) next year.

A First Time Win

Elizabeth Scheltema wasn't sure what to expect at her first CCI*, so she went into the weekend at Midsouth with the hope of just completing.

But when she found herself leading the victory gallop in the CCI* Junior/Young Rider Eventing National Championship on Bill Owen, she could hardly believe it.

"I was just looking for the experi-

ence. I wasn't going there to win by any chance," she said. "We were going there to do our best and get through the weekend."

Scheltema, Caledonia, Mich., bought "Billy" from Waylon Roberts about a year ago. The 13-year-old Canadian Sport Horse gelding by Money Talks had campaigned to the CCI*** level with Waylon Roberts, and they represented Canada at the 2015 Pan American Games (Toronto).

"He's a bit of a handful," said Scheltema, who had previously ridden to the preliminary level, of Billy. "He knows his job, and he's very powerful. He has a big jump. Learning to handle him has taken me a little bit, but now I know how to ride him, and I know how to send him forward instead of holding him back, which was the

problem I had for a little while. But he loves cross-country, so sitting on him going out on course is one of the coolest things ever. I know he'll take care of me as long as I ride him correctly. It's a blast to take him out on cross-country."

Roberts helped Scheltema at the event, but she works with several trainers at home including Bruce Mandeville and her mother Kate Scheltema.

At Midsouth Billy put in a more relaxed dressage test than normal to sit in a tie for third place. A double-clear cross-country ride moved them into second.

"Billy has a lot of experience, so as long as I can ride him correctly I was confident we would get through the course," she said. "It was our



Elizabeth Scheltema and Bill Owen clicked at the right time to take the win in the Hagyard Midsouth Junior/Young Rider CCI*.

first time making time at prelim speed, so that was exciting!”

When leaders Anna Pierce and River King incurred 20 penalties in show jumping, Elizabeth took the win.

“Stadium has been my trouble phase,” Elizabeth said. “I’m not great under pressure, especially sitting in second at my first one-star—it was a little bit scary. But we managed to get through it and managed to get a double-clear round. I didn’t think that was going to happen.”

Elizabeth, 21, works at her family’s Green Gables Farm, and she’s still deciding whether she’ll branch out on her own or stay in the family business.

She’s looking at a move up to intermediate next year. “I’m not in any particular hurry,” she said. “I just want to make sure I’m doing things correctly, and we’re working as a team.

I would love to get up to the two-star level and get that experience.”

An Educational Win

Before she bought Fluorescent Adolescent this spring, Makayla Rydzik hadn’t competed beyond training level on her former Clydesdale-Paint, but she’s been gaining valuable experience on the flashy pinto mare this summer.

Rydzik and “Lacey,” a 9-year-old Canadian Sport Horse (Gaudi—Amelia II, Ali Baba), topped the preliminary three-day division, finishing on a score of 35.5.

Rydzik, 14, wanted the experience of the long-format competition. “I’ve always liked going fast jumping jumps! My coach [Ian Roberts] and I talked about it, and he decided it would be a good learning experience,” she said.

Ian and his wife Kelly Plitz bred Lacey. She’s out of Plitz’s two-star mare Amelia, who was sired by Canadian Olympic show jumper Jay Hayes’ stallion Ali Baba. Lacey’s colorful coat comes from her sire Gaudi, whom Plitz and Ian imported from the Netherlands.

Hannah Rankin competed Lacey to the one-star level before Rydzik bought her. Rydzik’s been a student of Plitz and Ian for nine years at their Dreamcrest Farm in Port Perry, Ontario.

Plitz encourages students to enter long-format events as an educational experience. “We like them to do it just to get an idea of where the sport came from and get a better understanding of the fitness,” she said. “We feel that jumping the steeple-chase helps to develop more of a galloping eye at the jumps.”



Makayla Rydzik was looking for an educational opportunity at the Hagyard Midsouth preliminary three-day, and she got that plus the win with Fluorescent Adolescent.

The pair remained fault-free throughout all four phases of the cross-country to move into first place and posted the only clear show jumping round in the division to take the win.

“I thought she was going to be very tired, but I conditioned her a lot,” said Rydzik, Little Britain, Ontario. “I felt like she had so much more horsepower within her, and she ate it all up. It was really cool how I could see how much I had in her for cross-country after the roads and tracks and steeplechase and how well her temperature came down—how well she recovered. She was not tired at all! In the morning when I got to the barn she looked tired, but when I started tacking her up she was really antsy and wanted to go. It was a challenge to keep her settled down! I was really surprised [to win], and I couldn’t stop smiling. It was the best show of the year and one of my favorite moments of my riding career.” 🐾

► Hagyard Midsouth Three-Day Event & Team Challenge Horse Trials

Lexington, KY—Oct. 19-22.

▲ **Open Prel., Div. 1** - 1. Fury H, A. O’Neal, 27.2; 2. Vagabon De Champdoux, C. Silliman, 28.6; 3. Cooley Cut Copy, D. Schramm, 28.7. ▲ **Open Prel., Div. 2** - 1. Summer Bay, C. Montgomery, 28.3; 2. Zick Zack, A. O’Neal, 28.7; 3. Ballylanders Finn McCool, G. Elliott, 36.1. ▲ **Prel. 3-Day** - 1. Fluorescent Adolescent, M. Rydzik, 35.5; 2. Sunday Times, A. Wildasin, 43.7; 3. High Powered, C. Dimon, 47.7. ▲ **Open Trg., Div. 1** - 1. SRS Picasso, R. Walker, 25.5; 2. Duke Of Diamond, J. Musselman, 29.6; 3. El Caballero, L. Beer, 30.0. ▲ **Open Trg., Div. 2** - 1. Category 5, C. Rowlands, 31.1; 2. Mountain Light, J. Beshear, 32.5; 3. Killealy Star, H. Boyd, 34.1. ▲ **Open Trg., Div. 3** - 1. SBT Clover Road, K. Andrew, 26.6; 2. Midway Train, D. Rich, 29.8; 3. Millridge Z Two, Z. Archer, 31.4. ▲ **Open Trg., Div. 4** - 1. Run Marvin Run, A. Kjellstrom, 32.1; 2. Tiz Rocknroll, E. Scheltema, 32.4; 3. Imperial’s Catch, M. Majchszak, 32.7. ▲ **Trg. 3-Day** - 1. Bad Moon Rising, M. Nolan, 32.1; 2. Casanova, K. Church, 32.8; 3. By A Hundredth, H. Irvin, 32.8. ▲ **Open Nov., Div. 1** - 1. Carmango, D. Kreittl, 28.0; 2. Spanning The Globe, E. Amouts, 30.5; 3. Distortedhumorsson, L. Samuels, 31.8. ▲ **Open Nov., Div. 2** - 1. Sir Earl Grey, A. Kerr, 25.8; 2. Jax, B. Kettel, 30.3; 3. Zues, M. Clark, 31.0. ▲ **Open Nov., Div. 3** - 1. Karanos, R. Munson, 31.5; 2. Runabout Riley, B. Mackey, 32.8; 3. Shakespeare In Love, K. Thompson, 34.3. ▲ **Open Nov., Div. 4** - 1. Brechin, J. Foley, 26.3; 2. Zangetsu, A. Viscardi, 26.8; 3. Landtino S, M. Bletzacker, 27.0. ▲ **Open Beg. Nov., Div. 1** - 1. Title Contender, C. Wieschhoff, 23.8; 2. Saul Good, N.

Adams, 25.5; 3. Zane, R. Miles, 28.3. ▲ **Open Beg. Nov., Div. 2** - 1. Handful Of Gold, A. Morris, 31.8; 2. Not Your Average Joe, T. Parsons, 34.8; 3. Top Of The Pops, B. Chase, 36.3. ▲ **Open Beg. Nov., Div. 3** - 1. Chapter Two, A. Wilaby, 27.0; 2. Beam Me Up, K. Taylor, 29.8; 3. Residuary Trust, A. Kerr, 30.3. ▲ **Open Beg. Nov., Div. 4** - 1. Fort Monroe, N. Taylor, 31.0; 2. Monty’s Tune, A. Ptacek, 31.8; 3. Prairie Rose, C. Evans, 32.3. ▲ **Prel. Team** - 1. Two Or More (Fury H, DHI Zatopek B, H. Walden, Hurrikhana, M. Doan, That Wascalie Wabbit, L. Mahon), 108.2; 2. We Just Met (Fernhill Choco Royale, K. Hewson-Slezak, Fernhill Finesse, J. Caras, Dusky Shadow, A. Wildasin, Griegermeister, A. Conti), 112.4; 3. Team CEO Unicorns (Mooney Maguire, M. Moore, Ballylanders Finn McCool, Ballinagore Knight, N. Burgio, Carlie McClearin, G. Kephart), 115.8. ▲ **Trg. Team** - 1. Generation Gap (SRS Picasso, SBT Clover Road, Mountain Light, SBT Amaron, V. Bodnar), 84.6; 2. The Lands End Ladies (Duke Of Diamond, Cruisin’ Around, L. Kolegraff, Denira, K. Alexander, Aberlour, B. French), 98.3; 3. Shake It Off (Ima Little Waki, S. Andres, Jos Ufo De Quidam, H. Morris, Killealy Star, Dynamo, A. Rosen), 99.6. ▲ **Nov. Team** - 1. IEA 3 Plus 1 (Zangetsu, Carmango, Blaze, A. Neumeyer, Heatherwood’s Legolas, K. Clements), 90.1; 2. MSED A Novice Team (Brechin, Karanos, Clear Sailing, R. Leneweaver, Henery VIII, C. Greathouse), 94.1; 3. Area 8 Divas (Sir Earl Grey, Drummer Boy, M. Bletzacker, Renos Nevada, K. Lawrence, Big River, J. March), 100.3. ▲ **Beg. Nov. Team** - 1. Stuff Me An Olive (Saul Good, Probable Cause, G. Van Scoy, Benjamin James, C. Wunderlich, Cruella Da VII, B. Pickl), 92.0; 2. Holy Grail (Zane, Handful Of Gold, Prairie Rose, Patent Pending, T. Scott), 92.4; 3. Carriage Station Farm Bien BN’s (Title Contender, Residuary Trust, Speed Rail, J. Bollinger), 92.4.

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