



During August 15-18th, 2002 I had the honor of being Chef d'Equipe (team leader) for the top 12 Juniors who qualified for the National Championship at Devonwood in Portland, Oregon. The week before I met with the Juniors I thought about what advice I could give them, that would help set the tone for this competition and hopefully future competitions. This is the letter I gave them:

First of all, I want to congratulate you all for making it to the National Championship. It is a great accomplishment and you should be very proud.

I have a few words of wisdom I would like to share with you. Since I was a little girl I had a dream of going to the Olympics. When I made the Team in 1992 and arrived into Barcelona I felt like I had reached my goal. I was so ecstatic to have made the Team that I enjoyed every single moment during the 3 week stay in Barcelona. It was the most fantastic time in my life and gave me life long friendships and memories which I will always treasure. The fact that our Team won a bronze medal, was an added bonus. What I am trying to say is to enjoy every moment here and no matter how you do in the competition, you have already won just by being here. Goal setting is very important, but as long as you enjoy the journey, the disappointments are not so bad.

The thing that makes you a winner is not how you ride, but how you conduct yourself. Let's all show the greatest sportsmanship and camaraderie. Help and support each other. Sportsmanship is to win without gloating, to lose without making excuses, and to show respect for your fellow competitor.

Another thing to remember is all the people involved in this event. Say "Thank You" to the show manager, facility owner, office staff, volunteers, etc. A lot of work has gone into this event and a "Thank You" goes a long way. Most likely your parents also deserve a big "Thank You" as well. Always remember the people who helped you along the way.

If you get interviewed try to stay with the positive. Present your sport in a very good light. A good rule I try to live by, even though it can be hard is, "If you don't have anything good to say don't say anything at all."

Last but not least, remember your horse is your partner, and the more time and effort you put into his well being, the harder he will try for you when it really matters.

Your Chef d'Equipe,
Charlotte Bredahl-Baker

The Championship was a great success and the girls were absolutely super. They conducted themselves in a very professional manner. They demonstrated great sportsmanship, horsemanship and great team spirit. It was truly a pleasure to get to know them and I think they all have a bright future.

*Pictures were provided courtesy of Scarlett Pflugrad