

Blue And White Raven Makes His Comeback With Drescher At U.S. Dressage Finals

By: Lindsay Berreth

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The sky was the limit for Jennifer Drescher and Blue And White Raven after they finished as reserve champions at the 2017 U.S. Dressage Finals in the adult amateur Grand Prix freestyle division, but upon returning home to Urbana, Maryland, Drescher noticed something was off.

The now-18-year-old Morgan gelding (Night Hawk Of Rocking M—Four-L Black Magic) was intermittently lame, and after extensive diagnostics at Virginia Equine Imaging with Dr. Kent Allen, DVM, it was determined that “Raven” had suspensory issues in three of four legs.

“The only leg that was fine was his right front, and it was just amazing to me that this could all be going on, and he could still be competing at the level he was,” said Drescher.



Jennifer Drescher and Blue And White Raven. Lindsay Berreth Photo

She had Cooper Williams, VMD, DACVSMR, continue Raven's treatment, but with the gelding's age and then a six-month checkup that showed stalled progress, Drescher was beginning to lose hope that he would ever return to dressage.

“That was just devastating because going into this with those kind of injuries, I don't have experience with it,” Drescher said through tears. “He's my fourth horse—never had an issue with any suspensories, but I've heard about it, and I've heard these horses are just never the same again. So, to hear that he wasn't progressing, was like, [wow]. But at the same time, he's a Morgan, so I'm like, ‘OK, if all else fails, he'll be a fantastic trail horse; he'll have a great life; it'll be fine,’ because he was still pasture sound. But then the next time Cooper came out, which I think was probably six or 12 weeks later, he was back on the trajectory of improving. So I got to start adding everything back on, and it was fantastic. And then by December, we finally had our first lesson again.”

Drescher and Raven have returned to the Finals again this year in the adult amateur Grand Prix division, and they finished sixth with a 61.05 percent.



Lindsay Berreth Photo

Raven came to Drescher in 2010 as a third level horse. Her warmblood at the time was resting from a minor injury, and a trainer at her barn had Raven for sale. She felt he had the beginnings of piaffe and passage, and despite feeling a bit tall for his 15.3-hand frame, she bought him.

With help from Lauren Sprieser and Meghan Truppner, Drescher has been plugging away at the Grand Prix again this year, all while working full time as a pharmaceutical bio technician and raising three boys with husband Chris Drescher.



Jennifer Drescher's best friend Krista Martinko (left) was there for her through all of her ups and downs with Blue And White Raven. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Drescher.

Riding a Morgan has been a bit of a change from her former warmblood, but Jennifer enjoys the challenge.

"What I love about him is he's got such a self-starting engine, like the gas pedal is always ready to touch, he is ready to fire up and go, and yet at the same time, he's super level-headed and sane," she said. "Occasionally he might spook at something, but it's a mild spook. He's so reliable, and it's really cool to have all of that in the same package. So I would definitely consider [another Morgan]."



Jennifer Drescher and Blue And White Raven won their regional championship to book a ticket to U.S. Dressage Finals. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Drescher.

Coming back to Finals is a dream come true for Jennifer. "When we came in 2015, I felt a bit like a deer in headlights, particularly coming into the Alltech [Arena] and seeing my name up on the board, that was like a little bit to get over, and I was like, 'OK, just forget about it; go in and do your job.' And then in 2017, when I came back, I felt like, 'OK, I'm more comfortable riding the test; I don't feel like the test is riding me.' I was excited for that," she said. "This year, I feel like I can finally breathe, and I feel like we can do it. And the fact that it's just the icing on the cake that he was able to come back the way he has and been so strong and all of it. So, I'm extremely excited, and however things come out in the end on Friday and Saturday, I'm just so thrilled to be back and to be able to do this again with him. It's fantastic."

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