

2011 NAJYRC REGION 7 YOUNG RIDER TEAM

Rider: Mackinzie Pooley

Age: 18

Hometown: Coto de Caza, CA

Horse: Jonkara

20-year-old black Oldenburg mare

(Rubenstein x Jonkalla by Weltmeister)

Bred in Germany by O. Johan Branes

Owner: same as rider



At only eighteen years old, Mackinzie Pooley of Coto de Caza, CA is already a decorated veteran of national junior/young rider championship programs. In 2006, Mackinzie won the USEF Dressage Seat Medal Finals in the 13 & Under division. Then in 2007, she started competing her current mount, Jonkara, with which she won the Individual and Freestyle Bronze medals at the NAJYRC in the Junior division. Continuing their success in 2008, Mackinzie and Jonkara were the USEF National Junior Reserve Champions, and later went on to win the Team and Freestyle Bronze Medals at the NAJYRC.

Competing in the Young Rider division in 2010, this special pair had a banner year. After several CDI wins on the West Coast, Mackinzie and Jonkara traveled to Lexington, KY for the NAJYRC, where they competed as members of the Region 7 team. Journeying from Lexington to Gladstone, NJ, they won the title of National Reserve Young Rider Champion at the Festival of Champions, after which they returned home to California to claim ribbons at last fall's Great American/USDF Region 7 & CDS Championships.

At the end of last season, Mackinzie made the difficult decision to retire her beloved but now 20-year-old mount. But the spirited mare proved she wasn't ready for a life of leisure. "After the Regional Championships, I brought her home and gave her several months off. We just hung out and went trail riding," explained Mackinzie. "In the middle of January I began riding her in dressage work again for fun and it was going really great, so I was like 'hmm'. She loves to work and was so enthusiastic to be working again." Jonkara displayed her affinity for competition by earning an overall NAJYRC qualifying average of 67.515%. "If she didn't want to do it, she wouldn't. So when she says stop, we'll stop," Mackinzie said. "She knows her job, so at this point I'm just focusing on keeping her fit, healthy, and happy. But she's going great and only getting better."

However, Mackinzie recognizes that this will in fact be their final year together in the show ring. "This has totally been a surprise for me to be able to have another year with Jonkara, but she really will be done after this year. I'm going to college, and I have my young horse coming up. But this was my dream to make the NAJYRC Region 7 team with her one more time."