



## INTERCOLLEGIATE CORNER - JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



**Elise Bell is the President of the James Madison University Eventing Team. She is currently a Junior majoring in Organizational Communication with a Business Minor. Elise came from Minnesota before coming to Virginia for college. She currently competes at Training with her horse FAE Salty Dog, otherwise known as Tazz.**

**In addition to the eventing team James Madison also has an IHSA team. While they have no equestrian-specific major, they do offer a pre-vet major.**

**The team currently has a roster of nine girls ranging in competing levels from Beginner Novice to Intermediate. The team started in 2017 with just a handful of team members. One of the women responsible for starting the team is one of the team's trainers, Ariana Freeman. Elise says, "We have always been small, but it keeps the team close. We are all each other's best friends."**

**The team currently boards at two barns in the area. One is Haven Stables with Ariana Freeman and the other is Hat Trick Equestrian with Melanie Vest. Elise shared, "The nice part is that they are two minutes down the road from each other so we have the ability to walk over and use each facility and their amenities they offer. For example, Haven has the cross country and a big outdoor ring and Hat Trick has a beautiful indoor to get out of severe weather/practice your dressage test."**

**Elise said, "My favorite part of the team is how close we all are. Having a team with only nine girls allows you to get to know each other individually. We have relaxed movie nights and even team dinners." Elise was also asked what she thinks makes James Madison's team unique. She responded, "I think what makes our team unique is the backgrounds of each individual girl. For example, I've been riding since I was six years old. I've had the experience of being a part of the young rider development program in Area 4, a working student in Ocala, Florida for Liz Lund, etc." She said that some of the girls on the team are newer to eventing. She loves being able to share about the sport she loves to people new**

to it.

**The eventing team has shaped her college experience by allowing her a place to go where she felt comfortable. Elise said, "Having the team by my side, gave me an outlet to be myself and share my love for horses with people who understood." Her favorite part of team challenges is, "Being able to meet other people from different colleges. It's fun to compare our experiences!" We hope to see Elise and her teammates at Champs in May!**