



## INTERCOLLEGIATE CORNER - AUBURN UNIVERSITY



Photo by USEA/Annan Hepner

Auburn University's War Eagle team brought home Auburn's fourth USEA Intercollegiate Eventing Championship win. The team consisting of Lara Roberts, Hayden Wathen, Sophia Hand, and Alayna Backel all finished on their dressage scores to finish on a team score of 75.029.

Lara competed with Fernhill Show Biz in the Novice. Lara just missed out on winning last year as her team got second. Lara said, "Unfortunately last spring, he had an injury right after the

championship and this weekend is actually his first event back from that. He was just absolutely phenomenal this weekend. Also, I love coming to this event, because we're really lucky to have this opportunity to compete as a team.”

Alayna is also no stranger to the podium as the last time she competed at champs in 2022 she also took home the win. This weekend she catch rode Lakota in the Beginner Novice. Alayna shared, ““It feels surreal to win the championship. It is so awesome to have a group of people that love the same sport and want each other to succeed. Teamwork is the most important thing and without it we couldn’t have been successful this weekend. Coming to college and finding a group of friends that help every step of the way makes everything so much better. It means so much to hear them cheer from the sidelines.”

Hayden Wathen competed in the Intermediate division on her horse Contestor. She shared, “I’m very emotional and my horse was incredible! This is actually the first time I’ve ever finished on my dressage score at this level, so it was already a pretty amazing day before we even won the team championship. We were so close last year and came second so to get the win this year with these awesome people is very special. We knew we had really awesome teams that were capable of coming here to win, but everyone performed their best.”

Sophia Hand and Fernhill The Wild Card competed in the Beginner Novice. She said, “Winning is definitely surreal and honestly, I'm really thankful my teammates didn’t tell me that it all came down to my round. I’m just so happy I could do that as a freshman for the

**team. I couldn't be happier and this weekend has been so fun cheering everyone on. It's the reason why I chose to go to Auburn and be a part of one of the best eventing teams in the country. We only just received a bit of club funding this year and everyone on the team has worked so hard to make it to this championship."**