

Woolpacks Sweetie Pie Supreme at Tampere

This year's Finnish Connemara Pony Breed Show was held in Tampere, at the Teivo race track on the 10th July, with Malachy Gorham having come all the way from Kingstown Connemara Ponies in Clifden to participate as judge.

The grass had turned yellow in the past day's heat when the day was opened with a gelding class. 5-year old Ohana Andromera (Rockfield McBurney – Aramara Eliza – Ardnasillagh O'Flaherty, breeder Hanna Koli, owner Maarit Lähteenmäki) continued his show success from last year, being chosen as the best gelding. The class was followed with the only entered stallion, so consequently 4-year-old Vanity Pdraigh (Janus – Tempelisa Lady Calista – Ard Ri Cunga, breeder Jenni Virtanen, owners Laura Ovaskainen & Suvi Virtala) was Champion Stallion. He later on earned also the day's Best Turn Out prize with his handler Annastiina Niemi.



The three mare classes' winners were Woolpacks Sweetie Pie (Janus – Bolle Cornett – Lukas, breeder Carina Jansson, Sweden, owner Hanna Koli) in the 4-9 years old class, Leirg Seordan (Frederiksminde Hazy Marvel – Wänga Sisela – Värnbergs Orion, breeder Carina Helander, owner Saija Laine) in the 10-15 year old class, and the 16 years and over class saw Irish Dream (Öxenhalm Marble Jr – Rollsinette – Rolls Royce, breeder Gun & Per Hall, Sweden, owner Susanna Rahikainen) victorious. Out of these, Woolpacks Sweetie Pie proved to be Mr Gorham's favourite and became the Champion Mare.

As most of the foals in Finland are born in May-June, only one foal was shown during the day. Five week old Zitherbay Daigh O'Hara (Atlantic Ace – Aramara Ona O'Hara – Rockfield Scarface, breeder & owner Sari Lahtinen) proved to be quite a young rascal and earned his Champion Foal status with his energetic attitude.



Youngstock followed, with the only colt class for yearlings. Symphatil O'Malley (Ashfield Cathal Crobdhearg – Symphatil Irish Mist – Symphatil Hazy Becks, breeder & owner Susanna Rahikainen) was the best colt. Out of yearling fillies, another foal by Ashfield Cathal Crobdhearg was chosen as the class winner. Yearling dun Caragh Grian (Ashfield Cathal Crobdhearg – Innellan Gem – Glencarrig Lexus, owner & breeder Tuula Pyöriä) went on to become the Junior Champion, ahead of the colt and ahead of the two year old

fillies' winner Cleos Erin Elspeth (Cleos Antonius – Symphatil Irish Mist – Symphatil Hazy Becks, breeder Laura Ovaskainen, owner Anna Vuorinen) and three year old fillies' winner Bellindene Latte (Garryhinch Prince – Rockmore Sable – Atlantic Swirl, breeder Mrs J. Somervail, Great Britain, owner Taija Paasilinna-Helminen).

In the final ring the Champion Stallion had to give way to the female ponies, as Caragh Grian became the Best Pony Bred in Finland and the Reserve Supreme Champion. Her half brother Caragh Gaoithe (by Innellan Kestrel) took the same titles in last year's show, before being exported to Canada earlier this year. The Supreme Champion therefore became the seven-year-old grey Woolpacks Sweetie Pie, to her owner's great delight.



Woolpacks Sweetie Pie was imported to Finland a couple of years ago. She has proven to be a true, kind all-round family pony. After having tried out in Show-jumping she is now concentrating in dressage with the owner and handler Hanna Koli, and in the meanwhile is also regularly ridden by Hanna's four-year-old daughter Peppilotta! For next year Woolpacks Sweetie Pie is in foal by Swedish stallion Hagens Ryan (Tulira Highball – Abbeyleix Flora – Sticky), who is currently on loan to Finland.



At the end of the day there were two ridden classes, one for ponies smaller than 138 cm, another for bigger ponies. As the race track was shared with shows for Shetland and Welsh ponies and Norwegian fjord horses the same day, the entries were open for all the breeds. The bigger ponies class was mainly Connemara entries, and 5-year-old Rockfield Honesty showed true improvement from the show class and won the Connemara Ridden Championship with Hanna Koli. The Supreme Champion, Woolpacks Sweetie Pie, was placed 2nd. The overall Ridden Championship went, however, to the winner of the small ponies' class, when Shetland pony mare Wilma V with a very skilled 6-year-old jockey Pinja Pohjosmäki was chosen as No.1.

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