

## **ARTHUR RETIRES FROM THREE-DAY EVENTING**

*Upperville, Virginia April 21, 2017-* Allison Springer of Upperville, VA sadly announced today that her longtime partner Arthur has been diagnosed with a heart condition and subsequently will retire from Three-Day Eventing.

Arthur, a longtime fan favorite across the country and the globe, began his career with Allison in the irons in 2005. Together during that time, the pair completed 38 of 44 FEI events they entered, with highlights including a USEF National Championship and an overall second place finish at the Rolex Kentucky CCI4\* in 2012. Later that year, the duo was named to the United States Olympic Team Short list before going on to finish sixth at the Burghley CCI4\*.

This week, while conducting final preparations for the Rolex Kentucky CCI4\*, it was noticed that Arthur had developed a new heart arrhythmia which needed to be further addressed. Initial testing was very positive, and it seemed as if Arthur would be set to compete, however thanks to technology which continues to be enhanced for equine heart wellness, it was later concluded that in fact Arthur had developed an aortic regurgitation. Allison, along with advising from Dr. Susan Johns, Dr. Kent Allen, and cardiovascular specialist Dr. Virginia Reef, concluded that it is in the best interest of Arthur's health and well-being to no longer exert himself by going cross country.

"Arthur recently developed leakage from the aortic valve, a common degenerative problem in older horses," said Dr. Reef, Chief of Diagnostic Imaging at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine's New Bolton Center. Dr. Reef performed an ultrasound examination of the heart, which revealed the severity of Arthur's aortic regurgitation (leakage). "Premature beats originating from the ventricle (bottom chamber of the heart) can occur during exercise in horses with aortic valve leaks that are not detectable during a resting examination," she said. Along with Dr. Jessica Morgan, Resident in Sports Medicine, Dr. Reef also performed an exercising electrocardiogram (tracing of the heart's electrical activity), which revealed that Arthur had ventricular premature beats during exercise, several of which occurred early and in short bursts, increasing Arthur's risk for collapse or sudden cardiac death during exercise. Although occasional premature beats are seen in horses during competition, the severity of Arthur's premature beats during more intense work prompted his retirement from eventing to ensure the safety of this dynamic competitive pair.

According to Dr. Reef, the USEA cardiopulmonary research group is currently studying heart rhythms in event horses during competition. "This research is very important in furthering our understanding of heart rhythms during rigorous exercise," she said. "Additional research is needed to understand the significance of heart disease and abnormal heart rhythms during exercise in sport horses."

Dr. Johns, Arthur's longtime veterinarian, remarked, "It has been a privilege to be part of Arthur's support team for the past twelve years. It is a rarity for an upper level three-day event horse to have such longevity in the sport, and I am so grateful to have cared for this amazing partnership. Although we are heartbroken that we will not be able to cheer this pair on at future events, we are thankful for our many adventures together."

Allison would like to especially thank the members of The Arthur Syndicate LLC for their years of unwavering support, along with his many grooms, vets, farriers, and each and every person who made it possible for Arthur to have such a long and successful career. Lastly, Allison and Arthur would like to thank everyone who has always cheered them on. From the gallop lanes in Kentucky to the constant kind messages over the years, none of it ever went unnoticed!

"Arthur is my one of my oldest friends. He and I have travelled the world together, and we have had many moments of triumph and some moments of heartbreak, but in every moment, he has been my partner and I have always been incredibly proud to get to ride him. Arthur is so much more than just a horse to me, and risking his well-being is something I would never be willing to do. While I am of course sad to see his retirement from Eventing come a bit prematurely, I will forever cherish our memories together and the incredible partnership we share," stated Allison.

Arthur is in remarkable overall health and was fit to compete next week in Kentucky. He will now enjoy doing dressage and light jumping with Allison. Arthur's fans may get to see him next week in the Blue Grass State one final time if the Ground Jury elects to allow him to complete his dressage test before he would officially withdraw from competition. This information, as well as a date and location for Arthur's official retirement ceremony, will be announced on the official Allison Springer Eventing Facebook page and on [www.allisonspringer.com](http://www.allisonspringer.com).

For more information about Allison Springer Eventing, please visit <http://allisonspringer.com>. To learn more about how you can contribute to the USEA Cardiopulmonary Research Study as a participant or donor, please visit [www.useafoundation.org/projects](http://www.useafoundation.org/projects).