

# Pekny and Chester Ride High as World Champs

*Reese Pekny*

Reese Pekny puts his boots into the stirrups as he swings himself onto Chester. They start with a walk, and then they pick up speed, Chester's hooves clicking against the dusty ground. Clouds of dirt form as Reese and Chester make their rounds.

"I've been riding since I was months old," said Pekny. "I don't plan on stopping anytime soon."

After more than a decade of riding, the St. Albert junior is still all-in and has never wanted to quit.

"I know it makes me a better person in a way," he said. "It gives you character."

Pekny is a world champion equestrian. He has won a Sportsmanship award, two World All-Around Championships, five World Championships, and much more. He has so many trophies, he has run out of shelf space multiple times.

"My most memorable award would be my first world champion," he said.

Pekny has three horses, Chester, Hidee and Nugget. During the competitions, the horses can't be called by their stable names, they have to be called by their "stage names."

"Max's Dusty Bush was my favorite," Pekny said, about a stage name he's heard.

Chester's stage name is "Plenty of Good Scotch." The 17-year-old Palomino has a gold coat with a white mane and tail.

"He's actually really smart," Pekny said. "He's playful, and he has an attitude."

When he and Chester practice something repetitively, Chester will become annoyed and purposefully mess up while they are training.

"He'll get frustrated and do something stupid," Pekny said.

Though Chester has his stubborn moments, Pekny still has great faith in him.

"The good times make the hard times better," he said. "He'll probably go into the hall of fame for horses."

Pekny and Chester travel all over the country for equestrian. They have gone to Nebraska, Illinois, Kansas, Mississippi, Texas, and more.

"Anywhere really," Pekny said.

In all his years of equestrian, and all the places he's gone, Pekny has made friends with lots of other riders.

"No one is mad when you beat them," he said.

Pekny and his equestrian friends have a group chat to keep in touch with each other.

"We live all over, but we all still talk," he said.

When they are together in person for a competition, they hang out together. They get together late at night and go for a "midnight trip."

"We all just get in one car and drive to McDonald's or Dairy Queen," he said. "It's fun."

Like other sports, equestrian takes an abundance of training. Pekny used to do typical school sports - basketball and baseball. He had to quit because he could not attend all of the practices.

"I've got a better chance for a scholarship with riding," he said.

"I'm really passionate about it."

Pekny trains for equestrian pretty much all year round. He and Chester practice three to four times a week in the winter, and five or six times a week in the summer. They also train after school during the school year.

"It's hard work," Pekny said, "but it's really rewarding."







Below, Reese and Chester train in the off season at his grandma's stable.



Above, World Champion equestrian Reese Pekny poses with his most recent awards.

At left, Reese rides Chester to victory at an equestrian competition.



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