

RACHEL LONG SPEEDS TO THE WIN IN THE \$25,000 LEG GRAND PRIX ON ROC ZERO LF, TAKES THIRD ON HH DIAMANT BLUE

Rachel Long hasn't been to the Colorado Horse Park for several years but she is happy she and her barn made the trip out. And how could she not be? She came away with the win in the \$25,000 LEG Grand Prix with Long Farms' ROC Zero LF and ended up third in the class with her own HH Diamant Blue.

"My stallion, HH Diamant Blue, was first to come back to the jump-off so my plan was to be quick enough but most importantly clear," she said, noting Bjorn Ikast was on deck between this and her other horse in the class. "Then, I knew I would come back on Zero, so I wanted to find the balance between quick and careful. I wasn't so sure how quick I could go with Zero since he's just turned eight, but he handled it like a pro!"

ROC Zero LF is the oldest of Long Farms homebred horses. That makes him very special to Rachel and her family. She noted that she was able to do all the work with him from the beginning. That includes halter-breaking him as a foal, breaking him under saddle, taking him to his first show and now riding him to his first Grand Prix win.

"Of course there have been ups and downs, but at the end of the day it's a wonderful feeling to look back on where we've started and where we are now," she added. "He has a huge heart and tries so hard every time he comes out. It has been an incredible journey and I can't wait to see what's next for him!"

Rachel loved that the courses asked really good questions of the horses while still providing them with a good, positive experience. The course walk revealed a few places where the lines seemed like they would ride a little short. That gave Rachel some pause because her horses aren't always the best with the shorter distances. However, she felt both really handled everything well and most importantly, weren't outside of the time allowed since that happened with a couple of the early horses in the class.

Rachel will be giving her horses a bit of a break before heading to Del Mar for the FEI 2* and then it's off to Thunderbird for the 3*. But she is trying to figure out how to make a trip back to the Horse Park for the Summer in the Rockies series work.

"We really enjoyed our two weeks here!" she said. "I'm working on logistics to come back for a week in July!"

Bjorn Ikast was second in the Prix with Skylark Equestrian, LLC's Chicarito LS.