Thunderbolts And Lightning

Mette Rosencrantz of Topanga, Calif., won the Grand Prix (66.33%) and Grand Prix Special (64.72%) on her 15-year-old, Danish Warmblood gelding, Basquewille (Woermitz—Mette Smed).

In Friday's Grand Prix class, about 20 minutes before her ride time, while she was still in the outside warm-up ring, the heavens opened up. Rosencrantz entered the covered competition ring to the accompaniment of thunder, lightening and pouring rain. By the time she entered the ring her clothes were soaked and the reins were limp and slimy.

"Basquewille is pretty sound sensitive," said Rosencrantz. "So when all of that rain was pounding on the roof I was going 'oh-oh.' Obviously it didn't make my ride worse, but I just felt a little out of it during my test. It was pouring so hard that I thought it was going to go straight through the roof. It was just like being inside a tin can. It was pretty dramatic. But he was good, and I had a good ride, and I was pleased with that."

After being a bit overexcited on Friday with all the commotion during his test and with all the rain and hail pounding on the roof of the stalls Friday night, Basquewille didn't rest well and paced all night.

"I felt then on Saturday in the Special that he almost felt a little tired," said Rosencrantz. "The test could have been a little more powerful with a little more pizzazz. I think he had worn himself out because of all the stress for him with the rain."

Rosencrantz' goal for this season is to make it to the Collecting Gaits Farm/USEF National Grand Prix Championships (N.J.). They're in the top 15 and hope to move up to make the cut for the top 12.

"If I make it, it's wonderful and if not, I'm really enjoying the journey," said Rosencrantz. "I'm glad that I have a healthy, competitive horse to ride, and I don't take that for granted."

Rosencrantz also considers herself lucky to be able to work with Debbie McDonald. "I'm so thankful that she takes her valuable time to come up here [to Malibu] and help me," said Rosencrantz. "That has been a lot of fun and Debbie's very inspiring. I'm very appreciative."