



*Nadia Vogt and Castle Larchfield Purdy win the inaugural Modified level held at Woodside in 2023.  
Tina Fitch Photography*

## **Modified Match To Be Introduced at 2024 Woodside Spring Horse Trials**

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By Jonathan Horowitz

*Woodside, CA* — After the first competition at Modified was held at The Horse Park at Woodside in California in 2023, the level will be under an even bigger spotlight with the Modified Match that will be offered at the 2024 Woodside Spring Horse Trials that will take place from May 24-26.

The Modified Match will bring additional prestige, as well as prize money, to the level that is making a positive difference on the development of event horses and riders.

“The Modified is a really important level because it allows horse-and-rider combinations to make a more gradual transition from the lower to the upper levels of the sport in a much more predictable and safer way,” said Steve Roon, Executive Director of The Horse Park at Woodside.

The Modified Match will offer Horse and Rider divisions. Dressage will take place on Friday, May 24, in a large dressage ring with two judges—something that would typically be seen at championships or FEI levels. Cross-country will be on Saturday morning, May 25, and then show jumping will conclude the level later that night in conjunction with the Modified Match Dinner next to the Laughing Monk Arena. In addition to FEI-style ribbons and prizes, there will be prize money that starts at \$1,000 per division with an additional \$100 per rider added to make up the total amount. (There will also be “regular” Modified competition offered at the Woodside Spring Horse Trials.)

“For The Horse Park, we feel that the level is important enough that it should be highlighted in a special way during our May horse trials and doing it late in the afternoon as our signature show jumping class as we’re also having an arena-side reception to really enhance the spectator experience for both spectators and riders as well,” Roon said.

After approval of what would become eventing's seventh recognized level by the USEA Board of Governors in 2016, the first Modified competitions with jumps at the height of 3 feet 5 inches were held in 2017, attracting a total of 28 starters. According to a [study](#) by the publication Eventing Nation, the number of Modified starters increased tenfold to 321 in 2018 and was 1,555 in 2022 when the level celebrated its five-year anniversary.

"Historically, the gap between Training (3 feet 3 inches) and Prelim (3 feet 7 inches) was significant and caused issues for horse-and-rider combinations as they tried to leap that gap," Roon said. "The other great thing about Modified is that it's a level that's approachable for a lot more members of the sport."

Four eventing venues in California now offer Modified, with The Horse Park at Woodside introducing the level at the 2023 Woodside Summer Horse Trials. Nadia Vogt and Castle Larchfield Purdy (Karistos x Hallo Purdy) won, a stepping stone for a new partnership at the time made up of a 17-year-old rider that had previously competed up to Training and a 21-year-old horse that had represented Puerto Rico at two Olympics with Lauren Billys Shady.

"The cross-country was great," Vogt said after the victory on her dressage score of 29.5. "I've never done Prelim, but I thought it was a very good step-up for Prelim. I like that it followed the Preliminary track, and the course rode really nicely. There were a lot of open spots to gallop. The jumps were really nice, big, and bold."

Vogt's observations were what the team at The Horse Park at Woodside had in mind when tasking Bert Wood to design and build a Modified cross-country course.

"It rode beautifully; people said it looked ominous, but then afterward they came off satisfied and had a great sense of accomplishment because it rode well and was so aligned with the Preliminary course that it was a good test to get them ready for that," said Victoria Klein, who serves on the Board of Governors of The Horse Park at Woodside.

After winning Woodside's inaugural Modified in what was their second event together, Vogt and "Purdy" did their first FEI competitions at the one-star level that complements Modified to conclude their first season together. They have moved up to Preliminary in 2024, a testament to the role the Modified level plays in the progression through eventing's levels. With the eventing community's support, the Modified and one-star levels have become a significant part of the vision for the sport at The Horse Park at Woodside.

"Building the Modified course was only possible through the donations of many of our riders," Klein said. "I enjoy seeing the many jump plaques that acknowledge their commitment to our sport."

Entries for the Woodside Spring Horse Trials close on May 7. In addition, The Horse Park will also host the Woodside Summer Horse Trials from August 9-11 and the Woodside Fall International with FEI levels offered from October 4-6.

### **Connect with Woodside:**

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