



As the XXX Olympic Games in London approach, I am reminded of my old teacher, mentor and friend, Major Hans Wikne. I recall a story that he related to me many years ago. The setting was also London yet this was the XIV Olympics. The tale as I remember it, went something like this: A reporter for one of the major British newspapers was interviewing Sweden's legendary dressage Master, Major Henri St. Cyr, who competed in five Olympics, going on to winning double gold Medals at the 1952 and 1956 Games. As the year was 1948, and shortly after the war, money was tight for the competing teams. That being the case The Major, who I believe may have been a reserve rider made the trip. However, due to the times, he was fulfilling several roles including caring for and exercising the horses. During the course of the interview the British journalist could not help from glancing over at the young Swede

who was riding in civilian gear. As he expertly and deftly put his horse through it's paces, including all the advanced movements such as piaffe, passage, half-passes and tempi changes, The Brit was awestruck. Finally, he could not help himself and asked St. Cyr about the young man riding: "Who is that young man? He rides so beautifully." To which St. Cyr answered dead panned and straight faced without missing a beat. "He's one of our grooms. We teach all of our grooms in Sweden to ride like that!" With that the two gentlemen parted ways with the journalist appearing quite perplexed.

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### About

Darren Finkelman is a USEF licensed judge and professional equestrian with over 30 years experience. His broad based background includes successfully competing at the highest levels of International Show Jumping and managing world class equestrian facilities. Darren, pictured here competing in the Queen Elizabeth II Cup at Spruce Meadows, Calgary, Canada. Darren is currently involved in international horse sales and training.

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