

# Cosequin presents OTTB Showcase: When the Show Ring Calls

by [Jen Roytz](#)  
PaulickReport.com



Indy Knight's potential as a show horse was difficult to ignore

When one door closes, another one opens. That's exactly what happened when Sue Kinney's horse, an off-track Thoroughbred who raced as Mister H and was nicknamed "Hero," contracted Lyme disease from a tick bite.

"The disease attacked his muscles and joints," said Sue. "Once I sadly admitted to myself that Hero could no longer carry me comfortably, I decided I would go looking for another OTTB."

Sue and Hero had done dressage together, competing regionally and working their way up the levels. While Sue loved the discipline and dedication dressage required, she also felt a sense of burnout and decided that with her next horse she was looking for a more laid back relationship. Trail riding, a bit of flat work, and hacks through the fields were all she planned to do once she found her new partner.

Sue began hunting around on the Internet and came across After the Races, a racehorse retraining and adoption facility in Pennsylvania that takes in horses retiring from Parx Racing.

Sue looked through their listings and came across a young gelding by the name of Indy Knight. He was a plain bay with not an ounce of white, and because of his perceived "plain-ness," he had been at the adoption organization for quite a few months.

"The evening I went to see Indy, we trail rode for an hour and a half, and he was so quiet," said Sue. "I could hardly believe I was riding a 5-year-old OTTB!"

That sealed the deal for Sue. She had Indy vetted, paid the adoption fee, and took him home. Even though he had been so good the day she first rode him, he was still a young, green ex-racehorse and she wanted to give him the proper foundation, so she scheduled riding lessons at a local stable for the both of them.

“I wanted to ensure safety for both of us and help him to learn to walk, trot, and canter with more balance,” explained Sue. “It was also a good way for us to ease into this new partnership of horse and rider.”

Indy was progressing quickly ó quicker than Sue or her trainer had expected ó and after just three weeks her trainer commented, “Sue, you have a fancy horse here.”



Indy’s natural ability and Sue’s patience with him have proven a good combination

“I was somewhat surprised to hear her say that, but then I watched her ride him and I could see what she meant,” said Sue. “He was putting on weight and muscle and transforming into a gorgeous boy with beautiful, fluid gaits.”

It wasn’t long before Sue moved Indy to her own farm, and with that came a change in trainers. After just a few lessons with her new trainer, she heard the same thing.

“My new trainer told me that I should strongly consider showing him in dressage classes because he was just too special to be a trail horse,” said Sue. “I remember thinking ‘I really don’t want to go down this road again.’”

It took some prodding, poking, and constant mentions, but eventually Sue decided to give showing Indy a shot, and she’s glad she did.

Their first several shows together were what one would expect of a young Thoroughbred embarking on a new career in unfamiliar surroundings.

“Indy was so nervous, and I was too. It felt like I was riding a coiled spring, and yes, a few times that spring popped and we were dismissed from the ring,” joked Sue. “Looking back, it was miraculous that I stayed on, and even more so that I kept coming back for more!”

Sue and Indy persevered and that fourth show was when everything clicked for them.



Sue and Indy took first in an all-Thoroughbred show last weekend

“He was relaxed and perfect and I could not have asked for more from him,” said Sue. “We got third place at training two and to me, it was like winning that blue ribbon! I was so proud of him.”

It’s been two years since they began showing together and today they are competing at First Level. A few weeks ago, the pair earned their first blue ribbon, winning their class for First Level test two, and got second place for test three.

“It was a milestone for us, but it also marked the first time when I experienced the thrill of being in complete sync. We truly rode that test together.”

It’s hard to move on from one equine love to the next. Sue still thinks of Hero as her true heart horse, but that doesn’t diminish how special the bond is that she’s building with Indy.

It is never easy replacing a horse, and it’s never easy to refrain from comparing, but I do believe each horse enters our lives at the right time and for a specific reason,” explained Sue. “Indy renewed my love for a discipline I had turned my back on, and he’s not only good, he’s magnificent. I could not ask for a more perfect horse. Even if money was no obstacle, I would still choose Indy.”

#### **THE DEETS:**

**Name:** Indy Knight (a.k.a. “Indy”)

**Born:** March 26, 2006

**Color:** Bay

**Sire:** Kafwain

**Dam:** Al Ribh

**Sale History:** Sold in 2006 as a weanling at KEENOV for \$30,000

**Race Record:** 25-2-5-0

**Race Earnings:** \$53,510

*If you have or know of a retired Thoroughbred with an interesting story to tell, we’d love to hear about it! Just email Jen Roytz ([Jenlroytz@gmail.com](mailto:Jenlroytz@gmail.com)) with the horse’s Jockey Club name, background story, and a few photos.*

*Jen Roytz was the marketing and communications director at Three Chimneys Farm in Midway, Kentucky. She is a freelance writer and marketing and public relations consultant for various*

*Thoroughbred, sport horse, and non-equine entities. She can also still be found on the back of an OTTB most days.*

*Contact Jen on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.*