



Madeline Gibson rode Nantucket to the children's hunter, 15-17, tricolor at the Spring Gathering Horse Show.

## ► Diligence Pays Off

Madeline Gibson might find herself riding in hunter derbies one of these days. The 16-year-old from Austin, Texas, was champion on Nantucket in the children's hunters, 15-17. Gibson has owned "Tucker," an 8-year-old Thoroughbred-warmblood cross, only since January of this year but accomplished the tricolor honors at their fourth horse show together.

Gibson, who trains with Susan McMorris at Rio Vista Farm in Del Valle, Texas, generously credited many people for helping her achieve her weekend goals. "The elements I felt were in my favor were my family who supported me throughout the show," said Gibson. "Also, my Rio Vista friends who are always there for me, who encourage me to do the best that I can and always are uplifting.

"My horse was a big part," Gibson continued. "Without him I couldn't do anything! He is my teammate and my partner, and he really shined throughout the show. Most importantly, I credit the excellent training I received from Susan, which prepared me for the show and what we would encounter."

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—Madeline Gibson

The 17-hand Tucker seems a natural fit for the 5'6" Gibson, who hopes to step up to the junior hunters on him next season. "He's very lovable," Gibson said of Tucker. "On course he's quiet and willing to do every jump. His confidence level is immense. He tries his hardest at everything, and I just love riding him. He'll listen to me, but he teaches me so much."

McMorris described Gibson as someone "who takes this sport very seriously. Madeline is very sensitive to the animal's feelings and a very compassionate rider. She's also a very 'thinking' rider. Once she gets past her nerves, she has a natural eye—she doesn't struggle to find the distances. I think that comes out of her feeling for the animal."

With her sights set on becoming a pediatrician some day, Gibson also said she hopes to always keep horses in her life. "I can't imagine ever giving up riding," she declared.



(Shawn McMillen Photo)