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Friday September 28, 2007



[2007 Dressage at Devon Presented by WTDirect](#)

Robbie DeBruin Runs for a Living at Dressage at Devon and Elsewhere

By Lynndee Kemmet for Dressagedaily.com

The breed competition has wrapped up at Dressage at Devon and that means Robbie DeBruin is off and running to his next show. Running is a fact of life for DeBruin and by that I don't mean the kind of stressed out, overloaded running so many of us do in life. I really mean running. DeBruin is a professional "runner" and he's spent most of his time at Devon running up and down the show ring beside horses.



By the end of Wednesday's championship competitions, DeBruin was dripping in sweat having run horse after horse all night long. There doesn't appear to be an ounce of fat on him. When asked if he was tired, DeBruin said, "Nah, I'm just warming up for tomorrow. This gives me energy." He's been at this for 20 years, so he does know what he's doing, at least that's what Mary Alice Malone's Iron Spring Farm believes, because they're the ones who hired him to run out their horses, including Bien Sir, the Grand Champion of Show.

"It's all about the runner," said Iron Spring Farm's Melissa Gallagher. "I had no

idea how much of a difference it makes until I started running some horses and realized just how difficult it is. Robbie is a legend and a wonderful person to work with."

Bill Wertman, who, with his wife Belinda Nairn-Wertman, runs INSPO, a horse sales business that often works with Iron Spring Farm, said DeBruin is "one of the best runners around. He's extraordinary. He has a wonderful feel. He has a tremendous feel for the pace of a horse. There are a few people who can run fast but the feel that he has is outstanding. He learned from some great people in Holland."



Apparently, DeBruin is also a great vaulter as he was just asked to be the Belgian national vaulting coach. If one is good enough, there's money to be made in being a professional runner. The better ones can get \$500 for each horse they run out. DeBruin, who is heading to a show in Wisconsin when he wraps up his Devon runs, said it's not always about the money. Speaking of his charges at Devon, including Bien Sir and Reserve Grand Champion Rabiola, DeBruin said that "if you can run horses like this, it's an honor."

So what's the key to being a good runner? Speed is part of it, but not all of it. "There are a lot of people who don't run fast enough so the horse doesn't stay straight," DeBruin said. "The trick is just to run the horse without being in its

way. There are a lot of people who hold them too tight or try to do something and they should just let the horse be himself ."



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