

# EquiBase™ Arena Systems are Underfoot in Hong Kong

by Joy Koch, President and Partner

As this article goes to press, our American horses and riders are preparing to compete in the most expensive, most highly publicized Olympic Games in history. From the horses, to the riders, to the owners, grooms, vets, farriers, and more, there are more resources at work than ever before.

## Planning for Success

For one very special horse and rider, Brentina and Debbie McDonald, every step of the way has been carefully planned to give them the best possible opportunity to succeed again, as they did in 2004 as members of the United States' bronze-medal-winning dressage team.

Recently, before leaving Southern California for the Team's quarantine in Aachen and then the competition venue in Hong Kong, Debbie said, "To medal twice would be icing on the cake. To do it twice with the same horse would be even more icing!"

If anyone can do it, it will be Debbie McDonald and Brentina. The focus of their entire team has been on preparation at home, maintaining their training and fitness through their travels to qualifying competitions, and then the culmination of all their efforts at the competition venue in Hong Kong.

## Confidence in Every Step

Unlike many of the horse-and-rider teams competing in Hong Kong, Debbie and Brentina will be riding on footing that is almost identical to what they have at home. A number of years ago, Bob McDonald installed an earlier-generation mat-based arena system at the Thomas family's River Grove Farm in Idaho, where the McDonalds and Brentina live and train.

Describing the difference her mat-based arena makes to everyday training, Debbie told me, "I never have a spot of worry, because I know what's under me, and I can be very confident in every step we take."

Every step in Hong Kong will be equally worry-free. That's where EquiBase™ delivered 22,000 arena foundation mats, 340 tons of geotextile, and 70 tons of fiber to the Hong Kong Jockey Club for all 13 of the arenas of the 2008 Olympics. The Jockey Club hired renowned footing expert Oliver Hoberg to supervise the building of 200,000 square feet of riding space.

One reason that Oliver chose the EquiBase™ mats was because they are designed to handle huge amounts of rain ... and according to the experts there is a 50 percent chance of a typhoon during the Olympics.

EquiBase™ rings have been proven to drain at an incredible rate of 130 ml/hour. At the FEI test event held in August 2007, monsoon rains provided the perfect test, and EquiBase™ delivered. Afterward, Wolfgang Bacher, EquiBase™ Arena Systems CEO and Partner, even received a phone call from the Head Coach of the German Team congratulating both him and Oliver on a job well done.

Arenas closer to home have put the EquiBase™ system to the test. Robert Jolicoeur of IED,



Bob and Debbie McDonald with Joy Koch at the 2007 World Cup Finals, where Debbie signed copies of her book, *Riding Through* with Debbie McDonald, at the EquiBase™ Arena Systems Int'l. booth.



An inside look at the EquiBase™ Arena Systems Int'l. installation in the jumper ring at Old Salem Farm.



Robert Jolicoeur, International Equestrian Design, with Joy Koch, President and Partner, EquiBase™ Arena Systems Int'l., and Wolfgang Bacher, CEO and Partner, EquiBase™ Arena Systems Int'l., at Old Salem Farm.

International Equestrian Design, renowned Olympic course designer and landscape architect in charge of the top to bottom renovation still under way at Old Salem Farm in New York state, attests to the rain-worthiness of the EquiBase™ Arena System: It enabled the recent A circuit hunter/jumper shows to continue through rains that had neighboring arenas under standing water. In its heyday, the venerable Old Salem Farm was an Olympic Selection Trial venue, and was formerly owned by Paul Newman.

At the other end of the weather vane, Will Simpson, renowned jumper trainer at Thousand Oaks, California's El Campeon Farms, is a long-time fan: He has found that even in sunny, dry Southern California, there are appreciable advantages to EquiBase™. He called on Wolfgang's expertise to sample El Campeon's existing footing and determine the exact geotextile and fiber amendments to add to their arenas for optimum performance.

And according to Rich Fellers, the EquiBase™ Mat & Footing System installed by Wolfgang in the FEI covered ring in Thermal "is the best footing that I have ever seen."

## The Competitive Edge

Whatever the discipline, maintaining a competitive edge takes constant focus. For example, Debbie has been known to jokingly refer to her "old lady's workouts at Curves" but anyone who's ridden competitive upper level dressage horses knows that the fitness required goes beyond that of most ladies, old or young.

Describing Brentina's current conditioning program, Debbie said, "My job is to keep her as healthy, happy, and fit as possible. We just finished the Selection Trials, and now we're doing interval training—trot, walk, trot, walk, gallop—keeping the heart rate going, and the lung capacity. Then we'll be in Aachen for three weeks and continuing that program for a week and a half, then kick into trying to peak at just the right time for Hong Kong."

Maintaining their competitive edge is equally important to EquiBase™ Arena Systems. That's why all of the components have been technologically upgraded and re-engineered in this second-generation system, from a design that integrates the traction nubs with the mat base to eliminate break-off, to the manufacturing molds that ensure product quality and consistency, to the utilization of approved, ecologically-safe recycled PVC. An added benefit is that these improvements come with a 20 percent cost savings compared to the original mats.

As Wolfgang emphasizes, the mats are an important part of the equation, but not the only part. Equally important is the type, shape, and size of the sand, and the quality of the geotextiles and fibers that increase the life of the footing. For over a decade, Wolfgang's footing amendments have been in high demand by the best arena builders the world over. These first quality footing amendments

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The Secret  
is Under the Sand™



**EQUIBASE™**

ARENA SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL



Photos Courtesy of The Hong Kong Jockey Club

**GOOD LUCK  
TO ALL THE ATHLETES COMPETING  
AT THE 2008 OLYMPICS ON  
EQUIBASE ARENA SYSTEMS!**

**2008 OLYMPICS - Official Arena Materials Supplier**

All 13 competition and warm-up arenas with EquiBase System  
22,000 mats and 500 tons of geotextiles & fibers

**2008 DevonWood Equestrian Centre** - Portland, Oregon  
2 FEI rings EquiBase System for 30,000 sq. ft.

**2008 Old Salem Farm** - North Salem, New York  
EquiBase System - Mats & Footing for 120,000 sq. ft.

**2008 HITS Show Venues**

Thermal - FEI ring: EquiBase System - Mats & Flooring  
Ocala - Grand Prix ring: 9,200 EquiBase Mats only

**2007 CSIO Rome** - EquiBase Mats chosen to replace  
grass field for Samsung Super League Nations Cup

**EQUIBASE FOOTING MIXTURE**

World class footing is attainable - it is the marriage of appropriate sand and first-quality geotextiles & fibers. No matter your climate or use, we have the footing for your equine athlete.

**EQUIBASE ARENA FOUNDATION MATS**

Years of scientific research and development have produced a product with outstanding shock absorption, traction and drainage. These mats keep footing consistent, safe, and healthy for your horses.

**GRAVEL SUB-SURFACE**

Outdoor sub-base preparation uses gravel layers for optimum drainage. This layer is not necessary for indoor applications.



*"The footing in that indoor arena was nothing less than 'spectacular.' The entire arena had a honeycombed rubber base below the special sand mixture, and it not only allowed the horses to jump solidly with no 'cupping,' but encouraged sharp turns with no slipping."*

Larry Langer  
Zone 10 Jumper  
Committee Chairman



*EquiBase™ Arena Systems International brings to all horsemen the trusted technical knowledge of over twenty years of continuous research & development. Known & used world-wide, the system is appreciated and endorsed by top riders like Debbie McDonald. Readily available in North America, call us for a free consultation.*

Deal for any discipline, EquiBase™ Arena Systems give dressage horses confidence, spring and lightness with minimum effort; and they give jumping horses solid, consistent footing that allows them to execute quick turns at high speed and land with minimal concussion. Used extensively throughout Europe for years, EquiBase Arena Foundation Mats are made from 100% recycled PVC and are environmentally friendly. The mats have a moisture-retention system on the topside while the underside ensures highly-efficient drainage of excess water. The combination of the mats and the custom-mixed footing creates stability, shock absorption, and above all consistency for your equine athlete.

**For Pricing and Details Call Toll Free 1-888-307-0855**

[www.EquiBaseArenas.com](http://www.EquiBaseArenas.com)

can be recycled into fresh sand, providing a 20-plus year lifespan, unlike cheap carpet fibers that decompose in a few years.

### World-Wide Competition

As horses and riders converge on Hong Kong, they bring a variety of experiences to the competition, not least of which is related to the footing at their home and competition venues.

As Debbie told us, "The Thomases, Bob, and I are so encouraged to see EquiBase™ being used in more venues; it's so important to the soundness of our horses. We are proud to endorse EquiBase™ – the product is amazing!"

What competitive rider wouldn't want the optimal water retention, impact resistance, durability, and stability provided by the perfect blend of the right sand, geotextiles, and fibers manufactured from a variety of high-grade materials in different sizes and shapes?

Who wouldn't want their beloved competition horse to benefit from the sensation of traveling across an old forest floor, elastic and forgiving, with their hooves treading comfortably on the surface of the 3.5" structured footing?

Thanks to world-class riders like Debbie McDonald and Will Simpson who appreciate riding on it at home, and many others who enjoy it at venues like Hong Kong and many European locations, awareness is spreading.

At EquiBase™ Arena Systems, we are looking forward to educating riders here at home about the technology and benefits of our mat-based arena systems and the state-of-the-art footing afforded by the use of our amendments, which provide the ultimate in safe and consistent footing conditions.

Through our sponsorship of online Olympic coverage on *EquiSearch.com* by renowned equestrian journalist Nancy Jaffer, we are also looking forward to helping riders here at home follow the Olympics as they happen.

Join us in the EquiBase™ Arena for Olympic coverage through Sept. 15, 2008, at *EquiSearch.com!*



*For more information about EquiBase™ mat-based arena systems and first quality amendments, visit [www.EquiBaseArenas.com](http://www.EquiBaseArenas.com).*

*Article provided by EquiBase™.*

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