

= Michael Plumb =

John Michael Plumb ( born March 28 , 1940 ) is an American equestrian and Olympic champion who competes in the sport of three @-@ day eventing . He holds the title of the US Olympic competitor who has competed in the greatest number of Olympics , winning two team gold medals , three team silvers and one individual silver .

He has also competed at the World Equestrian Games and Pan @-@ American Games , winning medals at both , as well as competing in the Rolex Kentucky Three Day and steeplechase events . He has been named to the Hall of Fame of the United States Eventing Association ( USEA ) , as well as winning annual USEA awards , and is the only equestrian rider to have been inducted to the United States Olympic Hall of Fame . He was previously married to fellow Olympian Donnan Plumb , and the couple has three sons .

= = Personal life = =

Plumb was born in Islip , New York , and grew up in Syosset , New York . His father , Charles , was a steeplechase rider and huntsman , and his mother , Meem , was also an equestrian . Plumb began riding at the Meadow Brooks Hounds Pony Club , where he participated in Pony Club . In 1972 , he graduated from the University of Delaware . He married Donnan Sharp Plumb , a dressage rider who competed in the 1968 Summer Olympics ; they later divorced . The couple had three sons ? Hugh , Matt and Charlie ; Charlie became a successful event rider . Matt and Hugh had a career in auto racing .

= = Career = =

= = = Competition = = =

Plumb began his international competitive three @-@ day event career at the 1959 Pan American Games in Chicago , Illinois . Throughout his career he competed for the United States in several other Pan @-@ American Games , and won three gold medals , including an individual gold in 1963 and team golds in 1963 and 1967 . Plumb also competed at several Eventing World Championships , accruing four medals . In 1974 he assisted the US team to a silver , while also taking silver in the individual competition , and helped the US team to bronze medals in both 1978 and 1982 .

As of 2008 , Plumb was the US Olympic athlete with the greatest number of appearances in any sport at the Games . He was named to the US team in every Olympic games between 1960 ( his first ) and 1984 , as well as appearing for the last time at the 1992 Summer Olympics , and competed at all of the Games except for 1980 , when the US did not compete . During his seven Olympic appearances , he gathered multiple medals . At the 1960 Summer Olympics , Plumb took an individual 15th , while the US team did not finish the competition . At the 1964 Games , he repeated his individual performance , while the US team improved to take the silver medal . At these Games , he became the first rider ever to win a medal on a horse that he had never previously ridden in competition . Plumb had planned to ride his main event horse , Markham , but on the flight to the Games in Tokyo , the horse panicked , possibly due to a bad experience previously suffered in a horse trailer . In order to keep him from destroying his stall and potentially the aircraft , the horse was euthanized . Plumb instead rode Bold Minstrel , a horse loaned to him by another top @-@ level eventer .

In 1968 , at Ciudad de Mexico , Plumb took an individual 14th , while the US team again finished with a silver . In 1970 , when Jack le Goff became coach of the United States eventing team , Plumb was one of only three active US riders with international experience in the sport . Between then and 1984 , when le Goff retired , the US eventing team , with Plumb as part , amassed three team and three individual medals , as well as additional triumphs at the World Equestrian Games and Pan @-@ American Games . At the 1972 Summer Olympics , the US team took the silver medal for the

third Games in a row , while Plumb finished 20th individually . At the 1976 Games , Plumb achieved his only individual medal , taking silver , while the US team took gold . Despite the US boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics , Plumb competed at the alternate games in Fontainebleau , France . The team repeated this performance at the 1984 Olympics , while Plumb took an individual 10th place . In 1988 , he was slated to make the US Equestrian Team , but was not able to compete due to a fall that resulted in a broken collarbone . In 1992 , Plumb competed in his last Olympics , placing 48th individually while the team took 10th .

Plumb has ridden in steeplechase competitions , and in 1976 placed second at the Maryland Hunt Cup , an event which his father had won in 1929 . He has also competed multiple times at the Rolex Kentucky Three Day .

= = = Influence = = =

In 2002 , Plumb was named as one of the 50 most influential horsemen of the 20th century by the equine magazine Chronicle of the Horse . In 2003 , Plumb was inducted to the United States Eventing Association Hall of Fame , along with one of his horses , Plain Sailing . Good Mixture , another of Plumb 's horses , was inducted in 2009 . In 2008 , Plumb became the first ( and to date , only ) equestrian to be inducted into the United States Olympic Hall of Fame . The United States Eventing Association awarded Plumb their Leading Rider of the Year Award on ten occasions . Plumb is known for his training abilities with both horses and other riders , and as of 2008 he continued to ride and train at his stables in Southern Pines , North Carolina .

Plumb is reticent about discussing his accomplishments , but colleagues have referred to him as the " ultimate team member " who could be counted on to be at the top of his game and a consistent performer . As team captain at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics , he was noted for helping his teammates understand everything that was going on around them . His athleticism and personal courage have been praised by those who know him , such as Michael Page , chef d ' equipe for the 1986 US World Championship team , who recounted how Plumb medaled at the competition despite three broken ribs . Plumb admits to being completely focused on riding and " not a social person " , with former coach Jack le Goff saying that " horses are his only reason for being on earth " .