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Top Dog at the Horse Stables

Kent Allen has been the top horse official at two Olympic games.



Kent Allen, DVM '79, left, served as the foreign veterinary delegate at the London Olympics. He was the final arbiter of whether a horse was well enough to compete. Photo courtesy of Kent Allen.

Story by Erik Potter

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Kent Allen, DVM '79, has been a horse person all his life. He took his love and expertise with him to London, serving as the top veterinary official of the London Olympics.

Western Europe, particularly the Netherlands and Germany, dominates international equestrian events. That's one reason why no living American has been

the top veterinary official for horse events at an Olympic Games.

Except for Kent Allen.

He's done it *twice*.

At the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and London in 2012, Allen was the top dog at the horse stables as the foreign veterinary delegate.



Kent Allen, DVM '79. Photo courtesy of Kent Allen.

The final arbiter of competition, he oversees the rules and decides if a horse is well enough to compete. If you ever see a horse trainer in a dust-up argument with an Olympic official, Allen says, it's with the foreign veterinary delegate.

Allen's job is to keep the horses safe, and he takes it seriously.

Allen grew up with horses. His late father, Arthur Allen, BS Ag '62, taught animal physiology at MU and kept his own stable. In high school, Kent rode his horse before eating dinner or doing homework. "I was going to be an equine veterinarian," he says. "No doubt about that."

Allen now owns Virginia Equine Imaging in Middleburg, Va. The firm specializes in high-end diagnostic imaging and sports therapy for horses. The objective is to return to competition horses that otherwise would be put out to pasture.

In 1996, Allen served as the veterinary services manager at the Atlanta Olympics. He organized and coordinated all of the equestrian events for the Games, a feat that earned him his first crack as foreign veterinary delegate in Sydney.

Allen says his Olympic experience will forever be spoiled after the all-access treatment he enjoyed as foreign veterinary delegate. Sporting an "infinity" pass, he had access to the family seating in every venue for free, access to press and staff areas, and to the opening and closing ceremonies. His wife, Rae Stone, BS Ag '76,

received similar accommodations. He put his pass to good use this past summer, taking in Team USA basketball games and track and field events.

The third time, however, likely won't be the charm, Allen says. "It was unlikely I'd get to [be a foreign veterinary delegate] a second time; it would be nearly impossible to do it a third time."

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