

2014 FURUSIYYA NATIONS CUP FINAL

DUTCHMEN TAKE THE TITLE BY STORM

By Louise Parkes

ON OCTOBER 12TH, THE NEWLY-CROWNED WORLD CHAMPIONS FROM THE NETHERLANDS STORMED TO VICTORY AT THE FURUSIYYA FEI NATIONS CUP™ JUMPING 2014 FINAL AT REAL CLUB DE POLO IN BARCELONA, SPAIN. ON THE CREST OF A WAVE FOLLOWING THEIR GOLD-MEDAL-WINNING PERFORMANCES AT THE ALLTECH FEI WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES™ IN NORMANDY IN AUGUST, THEY OOOZED CLASS AND CONFIDENCE AS THEY PUT THE RESULT BEYOND DOUBT WITH FABULOUS CLEARS FROM THEIR FIRST THREE RIDERS.



Last to go, Gerco Schroder was only competing for his share of the €200,000 on offer to the horse-and-rider partnerships who could leave all the fences up in both Thursday's opening round and again in the Final, because his team-mates had already done all the hard work. When Glock's London hit the first element of the triple combination, Schroder had settled for his share of the team winnings instead - a massive €500,000 - but he wasn't complaining. It was all smiles at the post-competition press conference during which the unity within the winning side was clear for all to see.

Popular, hard-working and self-effacing, the team that includes new world champion, Jeroen Dubbeldam, proved beyond doubt that, right now, they are simply untouchable. But they were quick to point out that they owe much of what they have achieved to the inspiration of "one special man" as Jur Vrieling called him. "Our Chef d'Equipe Rob Ehrens is really good at team-building, he is a positive man, and he can really inspire us. He has inspired Jeroen Dubbeldam to a completely other level, and Jeroen is now the best rider in the world for sure. This Final has been unbelievably good, and I think we all owe that to Rob" Vrieling insisted.

ANOTHER BIG ONE:

The Final's course was another big one, with a testing triple combination at fence eight proving influential. However it was the oxer-to-vertical double at 11 that played the most significant role in the early stages, the first element hitting the deck on numerous occasions.

The Dutch were the only side to produce a clear from the first-line riders, Jeroen Dubbeldam's Zenith this time looking much more like the horse that clinched double-gold in Caen for him just a few short months ago. In Thursday's opening round the pair collected eight faults and the 10-year-old horse seemed a little less concentrated. But tonight the pair were focused, clean and clear and once the world championship winning team had the bit between their teeth they were always going to be difficult to rein in.

Germany arrived at the Furusiyya Final with a side filled with super-stars, but they didn't live up to expectations,



finishing fifth of the eight nations that made the cut to the Final's last competition. A mistake at the water and another at the first element of the double at 11 for openers, Christian Ahlmann and Codex One were followed by an uncharacteristic 16 faults from Marcus Ehning and Plot Blue. Daniel Deusser and Cornet D'Amour were the only German pair to go clear, and this left the reigning Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping champion sharing that €200,000 double-clear bonus at the end of the Final. But when Ludger Beerbaum and Chiara hit the oxer at fence seven then the German total was 12 when the best three scores were counted, and they lined up just ahead of the British who finished on the same scoreline but in a slower time. Italy and Brazil shared a final tally of 13 faults each to fill the last two places, and it was the Canadians who came closest to the winners when posting just a four-fault result.

CLASSIC CLEAR:

Yann Candele and Showgirl clipped the bogey opening element at 11, but Tiffany Foster showed just how much her partnership with Tripple X, the horse that won team gold for Britain's Ben Maher at the London 2012 Olympic Games, has matured this year, as they cruised home for a classic clear. Ben Asselin's Makavoy hit the second element of the triple combination, but when Eric Lamaze produced a faultless run from Zigali PS then that would prove plenty good enough for the Canadians to pick up the €300,000 second place prize money.

The Swedish team edged Belgium for third place by just a single fault when finishing with eight on the board. The pressure was all on Henrik von Eckermann when last to go with Cantinero after eight faults for Peder Fredricson and H&M Simon, 12 from Alexander Zettermann and Cafino, but a fabulous clear from Malin Baryard-Johnsson with H&M Tornesch. And von Eckermann kept a really cool head to deliver not only the podium placing but a tidy €50,000 for himself as one of the four to share the double-clear bonus.

Olivier Philippaerts and Cabrio van de Heffinck and Pieter Devos and Dylano each faulted just once for Belgium while Niels Bruynseels and Pommeau



A study in concentration. World Champion Jeroen Dubbeldam & Zenith SFN were foot-perfect to lead the Dutch team to a €500,000 victory



Brazil's Pedro Veniss shows his frustration after picking up a single time fault with Ouabri de L'Isle in the Final



Olivier Philippaerts & Cabrio van de Heffinck



Shadow play! Peder Fredricsson & H&M Sibon danced their way to a clear to put Sweden through to the €1.5 million Final

du Heup left two on the floor. But the single time-fault from Judy-Ann Melchior in an otherwise copy-book round with As Cold as Ice saw them missing out on that coveted podium position.

ALL ABOUT THE DUTCH:

In the end however it was all about the Dutch and their incredible superiority right now. They are the last ones in the world to sing their own praises, but in the end their success seemed almost inevitable. Such was the sense of calm confidence amongst them that Rob Ehrens could be seen snoozing by the ringside earlier in the day, stretched out on a sofa looking as if he hadn't a care in the world.

Teased about that during the Final's press conference, he admitted that he did indeed feel confident about his side's chances of taking the trophy. "It was a nice comfortable week, with a lot of time in between, and I was nicely lying there and feeling really comfortable because we had a good start on Thursday, horses jumping well, and the riders went home today to the hotel, also for a little rest - yes it felt good" the team manager said. But he pointed out that no win is ever in the bag until the last jump has been cleared. "You could also have had the situation today where you have four magnificent riders and horses but each of them had just one mistake and you end up with 12 faults. Every team is evenly matched, but I must say for a coach it's not often you have four riders on a team who can finish the job the way mine do. They can go into the arena with an instruction and follow it right up to the finish line. Add to that these four brilliant horses, and that's what you need to win" he pointed out.

Maikel van der Vleuten said that none of the Dutch team members are taking anything for granted despite their incredible recent successes. "Yes, we've had a wonderful season, we have enjoyed a lot of success but I think it's important that when you have success that all four riders remember that the next Nations Cup can be very different to the last. As Rob said, a fault is easily done, so we all four know that we have to be sharp in every competition and try to get the best out of it".

COMMITMENT AND INVOLVEMENT:

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Saudi Equestrian Fund, HH Prince Faisal talked about Furusiyya's commitment and involvement with the revamped FEI Nations Cup™ Jumping series. "The spirit of Furusiyya is about giving everyone a chance. The team won that won today deserved it, but the feeling I am getting is that we are here for the sake of the sport, and everyone is a winner!" HH said.

FEI Jumping Committee Chairman, John Madden, pointed out that "We saw really fantastic sport, great horsemanship, and we had fantastic victors in the team from The Netherlands at this Final. They proved it at the World Equestrian Games, and they proved it again here. The course designer Santiago (Varela) was wonderful, the Real Club de Polo have been the most gracious hosts and provided us with a magnificent Final, and of course none of this would be at all possible if it wasn't for Furusiyya, and the wisdom and the guidance of Prince Faisal. This is an absolutely wonderful partnership - the FEI, the Saudi Equestrian Fund and Furusiyya. It is truly an honour and a pleasure to be involved in producing this fantastic celebration of the horse" he said.

JEALOUS:

The Dutch team were asked if they thought their rivals would be feeling jealous of all their recent success and Jeroen Dubbeldam laughed and replied - "I hope they are!" John Madden interjected however to say, "My wife also rides a little bit" referring to American star Beezie Madden who claimed team and individual bronze at the recent World Championships, "And I would say every other team is incredibly jealous but also extremely respectful and understanding of the partnership they (the Dutch) have with each of their horses and the partnership they have together, and the horsemanship they exhibit, so jealous is not a very nice word. I think we are extremely respectful and honoured to be involved with these five people" he said, looking at the Dutch side.

It certainly was a proud day for the Netherlands. Jeroen Dubbeldam put it into perspective when he said, "It feels very good I must say. Today I had to make up for some mistakes I made on the first day - as I said already I just wanted to check if the other boys were sharp, and they were! But today I had



William Whitaker is all concentration during his round with Fandango in the first leg, with Britain qualifying in eighth place for the Final



Maikel Van Der Vleuten & VDL Groep Verdi during Final First Competition



Beezie Madden & Cortes C in the Challenge Cup



Kevin Staut & Estoy Aquil de Muze HDC flew the French flag at the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup™ Final, but France failed to qualify for the €1.5 million Final



Britain's Michael Whitaker & Cassionato soar over a fence in the Final, in which the British team finished sixth

to be sharp as well because today the pressure was on and it was top sport. We knew we needed for sure three clear rounds today to win, and it did turn out to be necessary to have three clear rounds. I think we have a wonderful team - these guys here are not only unbelievable riders, they are also unbelievable mates, fantastic friends and fighters, we fight for each other and I am very proud of this Dutch team!" he concluded. 🇳🇱

RESULT:

- Netherlands 0 faults: Zenith SFN (Jeroen Dubbeldam) 0, VDL Groep Verdi (Maikel van der Vleuten) 0, VDL Bubalu (Jur Vrieling) 0, Glock's London (Gerco Schroder) Ret.

- Canada 4 faults: Showgirl (Yann Candele) 4, Tripple X (Tiffany Foster) 0, Makavoy (Ben Asselin) 4, Zigali PS (Eric Lamaze) 0.

- Sweden 8 faults: H&M Sibon (Peder Fredricson) 8, Cafino (Alexander Zettermann) 12, H&M Tornesch (Malin Baryard-Johnsson) 0, Cantinero (Henrik von Eckermann) 0.

- Belgium 9 faults: Cabrio van de Heffinck (Olivier Philippaerts) 4, Pommeau du Heup (Niels Bruynseels) 8, As Cold as Ice Z (Judy-Ann Melchior) 1, Dylano (Pieter Devos) 4.

- Germany 12 faults/245.17 seconds: Codex One (Christian Ahlmann) 8, Plot Blue (Marcus Ehning) 16, Cornet D'Amour (Daniel Deusser) 0, Chiara (Ludger Beerbaum) 4.

- Great Britain 12 faults/247.10 seconds: Fandango (William Whitaker) 4, Utamaro D'Escaussines (Joe Clee) 8, Wonder Why (Spencer Roe) 0, Cassionato (Michael Whitaker) 9.

- Italy 13 faults/247.20 seconds: Neptune Brecourt (Luca Moneta) 4, Casallo Z (Piergiorgio Bucci) 4, Elky van het Indihof (Lorenzo de Luca) 5, Bonzai van de Warande (Juan Carlos Garcia) 9.

- Brazil 13 faults/249.51: AD Rahmannshof's Bogeno (Doda de Miranda) 8, Quabri de L'Isle (Pedro Veniss) 1, AD Clouwni (Marlon Zanotelli) 4, Status (Rodrigo Pessoa) 13.



HH Prince Faisal bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Saud congratulates the winning Dutch Team as they hold the trophy aloft



Team USA winners of the Challenge Cup Chef d'equipe: Robert Ridland, Margie Engle, Beezie Madden, Lauren Hough, Mclain Ward



American singer/songwriter Alos Blaco wowed the crowds at the Real Club de Polo de Barcelona after the Dutch team won the Final



World Champion Jeroen Dubbeldam acknowledges his fans on the lap of honour with Zenith SFN after the Dutch team's victory



To cap it all! Beezie Madden's nde Cortes C sports the winner's cap after Team USA claimed victory in the €500,000 Challenge Cup

SEE FULL RESULTS HERE:
<http://goo.gl/eG5hYL>

FACTS AND FIGURES:

- The newly-crowned world champions from the Netherlands claimed the 2014 Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup™ Jumping title.

- They completed on a zero score, as they also did in the opening round on Thursday.

- Eight teams competed in the title-deciding last competition at the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup™ Jumping Final 2014 in Barcelona, Spain.

- Canada finished second on four faults and Sweden placed third on a total of eight.

- There were 9 clear rounds in today's competition.

- The Dutch claimed the winner's purse of €500,000.

- A total of four riders shared the €200,000 bonus on offer to those jumping clear in both Thursday's opening round and again tonight - The Netherlands' Jur Vrieling and Maikel van der Vleuten, Sweden's Henrik von Eckermann and Germany's Daniel Deusser.

QUOTES:

- Jur Vrieling NED - "There's a lot of know-how in Holland, we have a lot of really good trainers, but it's been a long road to get here".

- Rob Ehrens, Chef d'Equipe NED - "I'm really happy, - what is a coach without four really good riders, and four really good horses, and a really good management team behind them from the Federation giving them all the support they need. When you have that, then it's an easy job!"

*The Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup™ Jumping 2014 Final took place at Real Club de Polo in Barcelona, Spain from 9-12 October 2104.

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