



Switzerland performs as leader in St. Gallen

(wy) For the first time in the history of the CSIO Switzerland the Swiss Riders perform as leaders of the Meydan FEI Nations Cup at their home tournament in St. Gallen.

After the CSIO Rome, where the Suisse Equipe confirmed their victory of La Baule with the third place, the team of Rolf Grass is leading the most outstanding team-competition, which is celebrating its 100th birthday this year.

The Swiss equipe, which will compete with its best entrants, is ranking at the top in the „Champions League“ of the show jumping riders after two of eight team competitions with 15,5 points, followed by the winners of Rome, the US-Team (12), the promoter France (11), team-defender Germany (9,5) and World- and European Champion Netherlands

„We have a bigger variety of riders at the top. There are new riders and horses coming up, that allows me, to have a wider range of entries at the biggest CSIO's“ is Chef d'Equipe Rolf Grass' satisfied conclusion. Markus Fuchs, as the Swiss Rider with the highest reputation in international competitions, will be going for another victory in his 145. Nations Cup on Friday. On Saturday, after the Generali Jagdspringen, which he has won three times in the past, he will retire from his sport career. But nevertheless, Grass does not fear the future of his equipe, whether in regard to the European Championship in August in Windsor (GB) or the World Equestrian Games 2010 in Lexington/Kentucky.

The top is getting wider

„At the moment we are in a better position than others“. In this respect Grass is thinking of the established riders like Christina Liebherr/No Mercy, Steve Guerdat/Jalisca Solier, Tresor and Ferrari, Pius Schwizer/Nobless, Ulysse and Carlina, Daniel Etter/Peu à Peu as well as the newcomer Werner Muff/Campione CH and Quax and the two ladies / Amazons (ich bin mir nicht sicher, ob man Amazonen im englisch so braucht wie wir in Deutsch) Clarissa Crotta/Westside (two clear rounds in the Nations Cup in Rome) and Jane Richard (10. with the only eight year old mare Zekina in the GP Rome). „These results give me more possibilities for entries in the big Nations Cup-Tournaments“.

The Chef d'Equipe who lives in Appenzell also counts on Cantus, on which one could always trust in the last title championships. After an infection through a virus a month ago with 41 degree fever the gelding is giving his comeback in St. Gallen. Niklaus Schurtenberger: „Cantus got infusions during five days. That was the reasons, why we had to miss out for the CSIO in Rome. But now he is well again and we are building him up step by step“.

Time to win

The team competition has new a price giving money of 200'00 Euro and will be live on Swiss Television, SF Info Channel, starting at 13.30 h. The last first place in this competition fort he Swiss equipe lies nine years back. In the millennium year 2000 they won the Nations Cup in



Lucerne for the eleventh and last time. After that, six second places resulted. Now it's time for the Swiss to win during their home tournament, even though the competitors are strong like always. After all the internal quarrels about doping, dissolution of the pool of riders, suspension (Ludger Beerbaum) and injuries (shoulder operation of Marco Kutscher) Germany will be competing weakened, but not without chances. Grass is sure „Such back-strokes cost substance“. So that double World Champion Franke Sloothaak could replace the suspended Ludger Beerbaum, who won Olympic Gold four times, all Chef d'Equipe had to give their approval during the CSIO in Rome. This, because the born Dutch was not on the nominative list for St. Gallen.

Attention must be taken to the Dutch team in the Nations Cup, they will be going for the hattrick, as well as to the USA (the winners of Rome) and the strengthened French. The Swiss team will not get a gift in any way at their home tournament, for which the budget has been increased to 3 million Swiss Francs.