

Press Release

Monday 14th November, 2011

Top riders, top horses, top facilities for the GCT finale in Abu Dhabi

In its sixth season in 2011 the Global Champions Tour has to date held 9 events across 8 countries with the concluding round just around the corner - November 24-26, to be showcased at the Al Forsan International Sport Resort in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

All is set to welcome the world's best show jumping riders to this destination in Abu Dhabi for the exciting climax to the 2011 season. In recent weeks the Al Forsan International Sports Resort has transformed their already spectacular facilities to international show jumping standards in readiness to host the prestigious event.

Riders have now made decisions around which horses they will take to the final event. Two separate flights of horses leave Europe on 19th & 20th November and once landed in Abu Dhabi will be quickly transported and housed in plush conditions at the resort stabling.

Riders comfort, also at the forefront, will be flown via Etihad Airways and accommodated at the Hilton Abu Dhabi.

Ludger Beerbaum (GER) will bring just one horse to Abu Dhabi and has chosen Chaman as his front runner for the event. Edwina Tops-Alexander (Aus) takes Itot de Chateau for her Grand Prix ride and Mel D'Argences as her supporting horse. Both riders are attempting to claim the 2011 GCT Champion title.

Popular Irishman Denis Lynch, who has housed a good collection of performances of the GCT season, sits currently in 5th ranking position. He has nominated Lantinus and Lord Luis as his horses to be flown to the Abu Dhabi event.

Winner of the GCT Grand Prix's in Hamburg and Monaco and 2011 crowned European Champion, Rolf-Goran Bengtsson from Sweden will ride Casall La Silla and will be bringing Carusso LS La Silla as his second ride.

Dutch rider Gerco Schroder, winner of the GCT Rio de Janeiro, brings Eurocommerce Vigaro and Eurocommerce New Orleans who he will ride in the Grand Prix.

Brazilian Alvaro de Miranda Neto steps back out with AD Ashleigh Drossel Dan, the horse he had very good success with earlier in the season winning the GCT Grand Prix in Doha.

Irishman Billy Twomey lands in Abu Dhabi with Tinka's Serenade and a young Grand Prix mare Wings Sublime.

German Christian Ahlmann, who won the Grand Prix in Estoril, will not be taking winning horse Taloubet Z, instead will front with Lorenzo and Firth of Clyde.

Portugese lady rider Luciana Diniz, who sits in 4th position on the GCT ranking, takes Winningmood who ferried her to successful top placings at Monaco and Estoril.

The top FEI ranked riders who have accepted to ride in Abu Dhabi will be joined by UAE nominated riders and FEI wildcard nomination of Malaysian rider Syed Omar Almohdzar. The United Arab Emirates leading rider Sheikh Shakhboot Bin Nahyan Al Nahyan will compete with Muscaris d"Ariel who he placed 16 th in Doha and 9th in Valencia rounds of the tour series.

The arrival of the Global Champions Tour in Abu Dhabi must be seen as another significant step towards establishing United Arab Emirates firmly in the worlds equestrian sports market.

List of Accepted Riders

Extra jumping facts from the GCT 2011 series

*facts as post GCT Rio de Janeiro

Prizemoney

Top 3 rider earnings

- 1. Edwina Tops-Alexander (AUS) €486,326
- 2. Gerco Schroder (NED) €356,275 2
- 3. Ludger Beerbaum (GER) €282,801

Top 3 horse earnings

- 1. Itot de Chateau (Edwina Tops-Alexander) €439,860
- 2. Eurocommerce London (Gerco Schroder) €331,695
- 3. Casall la Silla (Rolf-Goran Bengtsson) €230,215

Clear Round jumping

A total of 167 clear rounds have been jumped in the Grand Prix events over the season to date. Ludger Beerbaum(GER) has jumped the most clear rounds; 15 with two different horses (Chaman and Gotha).

Edwina Tops-Alexander (AUS) jumped 13clear rounds also on two horses (Itot de Chateau & Ciske van Overis; although Ciske only counted for two of these clear rounds at the Doha event)

Clarissa Crotta (SUI) with Imperial Westside van de Meerputhoeve and Christian Ahlmann (GER) with Taloubet Z have both producing 5 clear round riding statistics with just one horse.

Doha_ 3 riders completed double clears in the first two rounds to go through to jump-off: Alvaro de Miranda Neto (BRA)- AD Ashleigh Drossel Dan, Pius Schwizer (SUI) – Carlina and Meredith Michaels Beerbaum (GER)-Shutterfly

Valencia- 4 riders completed double clears in the first two rounds to go through to jump-off: Billy Twomey (IRL) - Je t'aime Flamenco, Ludger Beebaum(GER)- Gotha FRH, Maikel van der Vleuten (NED)- VDL Groep Verdi and Laura Kraut (USA) – Cedric

Hamburg - 3 riders completed double clears in the first two rounds to go through to jump-off: Rolf-Goran Bengtsson (SWE) Casall La Silla, Ludger Beebaum(GER)- Chaman, and Janne-Friederike Meyer (GER) – Cellagon Lambrasco.

Cannes - 4 riders completed double clears in the first two rounds to go through to jump-off: Edwina Alexander (AUS) Cevo Itot de Chateau, Sergio Alvarez Moya (ESP) – Action-Breaker, Ludger Beebaum(GER)- Gotha FRH and Clarissa Crotta (SUI) - Imperial West Side.

Monaco – Rolf-Goran Bengtsson (SWE) was the only rider to complete two double clears with Casall La Silla deeming them winners without a jump-off taking place.

Estoril - 6 riders completed double clears in the first two rounds to go through to jump-off: Christian Ahlmann (GER) - Taloubet Z, Luciana Diniz (POR) – Winningmood, Ludger Beebaum(GER)- Chaman, Meredith Michaels Beerbaum (GER)-Shutterfly, Clarissa Crotta (SUI) - Imperial West Side, and Marco Kutscher (GER) - Cornet Obolensky.

Chantilly - 3 riders completed double clears over the first two rounds to go through to jump-off: Edwina Alexander (AUS) Cevo Itot de Chateau, Luciana Diniz (POR) Lennox, and Penelope Leprevost (FRA) Mylord Carthago.

Valkenswaard - 4 riders completed double clears over the first two rounds to go through to jump-off: Beezie Madden (USA) – Cortes 'C', Denis Lynch (IRL) – Lantinus 3, Jur Vrieling (NED) – VDL Bubalu and Edwina Alexander (AUS) Cevo Itot de Chateau.

Rio de Janeiro - Gerco Schroder (NED) was the only rider to complete two double clears with – Eurocommerce London deeming them winners without a jump-off taking place.

GCT Live Streaming & Eurosport

For those who can't make it to the Abu Dhabi destination GCT offer avenues to watch all the action as it unfolds.

The opening classes are set to commence on Thursday 24th November with the Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates set to start on Saturday 26th November at 20h45(CET). Live Streaming of the 5* events can be viewed at www.globalchampionstour.com along with the first round of the Grand Prix. The full Grand Prix action can be taken in via Eurosport who will broadcast at 22h15 (CET).

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Photo credits Stefano Grasso/GCT