

Press Release

Saturday 26th November 2011

The Global Champions Tour Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 2011

Glorious Grand Prix win for Frenchman Roger-Yves Bost and Emphatic GCT title win for Australian Edwina Tops-Alexander

The Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi held at the Al Forsan International Sports Resort saw two battles unfold for supremacy. The Grand Prix alone had a purse of 400,000 euros that the top world riders were aiming for. The class also provided the showdown for the 2011 series title. The 2011 title challenge had come down to just two riders Australian Edwina Tops-Alexander and German Ludger Beerbaum.

And it was an unpredictable finale with Ludger and Chaman coming unstuck in the treble combination in the first round, retiring soon after. Edwina and Cevo Itot du Chateau, out two horses later felled two fences down and although she did not go through to the second round of the Grand Prix she had won the 2011 GCT title.

A just reward for a year of spectacular show jumping feats, she took home the 300,000 euro cheque as their part of the 1 million euros divided amongst the top 18 ranked riders.

Edwina was ecstatic with the win. "I am so happy for the great horse Itot is. He has had a very good year." Commented Edwina directly after her ride. It was the way it played out today and as you can see anything can happen in show jumping. For sure I would have liked to have had a better place in the Grand Prix. It is sport and that is how it goes sometimes. Overall I am really happy with my GCT performances this year."

Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi played out between 8 riders who jumped double clear to go through to the jump-off to determine the ultimate winner.

The Grand Prix provided all the excitement that spectators could wish for.

Cassio Rivetti riding for Ukraine with Temple Road was out to set the tone early on and looked quite quick over the first few fences. They knocked on down but kept maximizing the time going through the beam in 44.15.

Clarissa Crotta(SUI) was the first to jump clear setting the time standard of 49.92 with the scopey West Side V Meerputhoeve .

Rolf Goran Bengtson (SWE) in the best form at the moment with Casall La Silla took all the shorter tracks and galloped the long ride down to the last to be clear and faster in 43.28.

Dutch rider Maikel van der Vleuten had his young stallion VDL Groep Verdi was forward and jumping very confidently. He is not often on the GCT tour but placed third in Valencia.

He fell short with the time of 44.14 although the clear round was much appreciated by his sponsor Wim vd Leegte who had come to Abu Dhabi to support his VDL riders.

Quicker and quicker they came with Alvaro de Miranda blitzing the time with the big grey gelding AD Ashleigh Drossel Dan galloped to the last to be home in 42.20. The horse has been rested with an injury since Monaco and more recently come back into very good form.

Master of speed Roger Yves Bost turned shorter to nearly every fence and the round looked sharp. He made an inside turn after the second last before riding hand and heel to the last. They were home free and super quick in 41.14.

The second of the VDL riders to jump off Leopold van Aston motored around with his mare VDL Groep Quinara. The horse normally utilized for speed classes put in a cracking round but one rail on the floor and the a time of 44.15.

Presley Boy and Khlae Al Eid from the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia Arabia was a crowd favourite and a super scopey machine that had the goods to win. He risked nearly everything and was clear with the second fastest time of 42.08. As he finished he got off his horse and kissed the ground in appreciation.

It was a glorious win for Roger Yves Bost and Ideal de la Loge, who had won the first big class of the GCT season in Doha and now the last class of the season, the Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

Jaeger-LeCoultre presented Roger-Yves Bost with a GCT engraved Reverso wristwatch.

The Jaeger-LeCoultre Atmos clock, beautifully showcased in a GCT personalized casing came into Edwina-Tops Alexander's possession for winning the 2011 series.

The Global Champions Tour epitomizes what top show jumping is all about – the best riders, the best venues and the most exhilarating competitions.

This marked the first year that the Global Champions Tour has been held in Abu Dhabi and with another four years signed up the event is sure to grow in magnitude.

The Global Champions Tour epitomises what top show jumping is all about and in 2012 the tour captures new audiences. Committed to event acquisition the Global Champions Tour leverages from 10 events in 2011 to 13 in 2012 taking in new destinations of Wiesbaden (GER), Lausanne (SUI), Vienna (AUT) and Shanghai (CHN).

The tour also continues to create long-term legacies with sporting partners in Doha (QAT), Valencia (ESP), Hamburg (GER), Canne (FRA), Monte Carlo (MON), Chantilly (FRA), Valkenswaard (NED), & Abu Dhabi (UAE). All of the GCT events bring together top sport of show jumping, culture and lifestyle and 2012 will be exceptional!

PRESS CONFERENCE QUOTES

Elated Edwina-Tops Alexander said she was “very happy” after being crowned Global Champions Tour 2011 champion after the final in Abu Dhabi.

Australian Edwina, the top ranked female rider in the world, said: "It has been a long time until the final and I have been waiting for this. I am very happy I finished as the winner. I tried my best and my horse has been very consistent and that is why I am here today.

Referring to her husband, trainer and GCT President Jan Tops, Edwina said: "I am not the only one who has won today because Jan has also won and my horse."

Smiling after her overall victory was declared Edwina, who is sponsored by the luxury international brand Gucci, said the GCT Leader's armband had changed hands a few times during the season, between herself, Alvaro de Miranda and Ludger Beerbaum.

But she said she felt positive coming to Abu Dhabi because she had such a strong lead in the GCT ranking overall and the huge pressure of competing in the grand finale of the year eased when Ludger retired during his round.

"I knew I had won before I went into the ring today. I gave my horse a break before and he was maybe a bit fresh and I should have jumped another class. But with the results I have had I definitely can't complain."

2011 runner-up Ludger Beerbaum said: "I am actually really satisfied with my performance the whole GCT season."

On his performance in the Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi Ludger said: "Of course I was not satisfied with my performance today but that is part of the game. I simply was not good enough and things went wrong.

"But if I see the whole season, I was pretty consistent and I am more than happy to finish second."

Alvaro de Miranda, who came third for the overall GCT 2011 season after leading for three events, said: "I started very good but, unfortunately, after the show in Monte-Carlo my horse was not feeling very good and we decided to give him a break and not rush him.

"I was very happy with my other horses and because of them I maintained a good position and now I am feeling like a winner because I have my horse back that I love the most in my stables. I am very happy."

The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the last of 2011, was won in thrilling style by French rider Roger-Yves Bost on his bay stallion Ideal de Loge.

Roger-Yves admitted it was an "amazing" jump off and one of the best of the season.

He said: "It was most exciting, a very good jump off. I went fast and I tried the maximum possible.

"Today was my day. I wanted to win it."

He said a daring inside turn was probably part of his success in the jump off. It was Roger-Yves' second win of the season as he won the very first class in Doha, Qatar at the opening show and the last class in Abu Dhabi.

GCT President Jan Tops said: “When you look at the whole season, it is the sport that won.

“When you see the jump off here, it was maybe the crowning moment of the whole year. We have had different people in front and the competition is so strong. All the riders are so prepared for these events and that is why I am very satisfied for the whole year and the sport today.

Jan said the success of Middle Eastern riders like Khaled Al Eid from Saudi Arabia, who came second in the Grand Prix, was a clear sign of the growing success of show jumping in the region.

“It is tremendous and growing. It is important we involve the whole world and this part of the world is growing a lot in our sport. The result of Khaled coming second is a great achievement and everybody can be proud of him.”

At the post-Grand Prix press conference Jan was also asked about plans to expand the GCT to the UK.

He said: “We have plans for Great Britain. It is not finalised yet, but the minute I know more I will keep you all informed.”

Atef Nagib, managing director of the Al Forsan International Sports Resort where the GCT took place for the first time, said: “My evaluation from the feedback I had from guests, spectators and riders was great.

“It is a result of sincere effort from a small team here working the the GCT team. The infrastructure and the support of the Royal Family and the Government means we have a facility that can cater for such good events.”

Top 10 Placings of Grand Prix

| | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Roger-Yves Bost | FRA | Ideal de la Loge | 0/0/0/41.14 |
| 2. | Khaled Al Eid | KSA | Presley Boy | 0/0/0/42.08 |
| 3. | Alvaro De Miranda | BRA | AD Ashleigh Drossel Dan | 0/0/0/42.20 |
| 4. | Rolf-Goran Bengtsson | SWE | Casall La Silla | 0/0/0/43.28 |
| 5. | Maikel van der Vleuten | NED | VDL Groep Verdi | 0/0/0/44.14 |
| 6. | Clarissa Crotta | SUI | West Side V Meerputhoeve | 0/0/0/49.92 |
| 7. | Leopold Van Asten | NED | VDL Groep Quinara | 0/0/4/42.41 |
| 8. | Cassio Rivetti | UKR | Temple Road | 0/0/4/44.15 |
| 9. | Judy-Ann Melchior | BEL | Cha Cha Z1 | 0/1/72.42 |
| 10. | Athina Onassis de Miranda | GRE | AD Crosshill | 2/1/3/76.65 |

Global Champions Tour Rankings – top 18 riders, 2011

| | | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Edwina Alexander (Aus) | 238.00 | 10 | Christian Ahlmann (GER) | 160.00 |
| 2 | Ludger Beerbaum (Ger) | 218.50 | 11 | Pius Schwizer (SUI) | 155.00 |
| 3 | Alvaro de Miranda (Bra) | 210.00 | | Billy Twomey (Irl) | 148.00 |
| 4 | Rolf-Goran Bengtsson | 205.00 | 13 | Judy-Ann Melchior (BEL) | 146.00 |
| 5 | Luciana Diniz (Por) | 198.00 | 14 | Kevin Staut (FRA) | 143.00 |
| 6 | Denis Lynch (IRL) | 197.00 | 15 | Rodrigo Pessoa (BRA) | 136.00 |
| 7 | Philipp Weishaupt (GER) | 171.00 | 16 | Gerco Schroder (NED) | 123.00 |
| 8 | Clarissa Crotta (SUI) | 167.00 | 17 | Laura Kraut (USA) | 118.00 |
| 9 | Marco Kutscher (GER) | 164.00 | 18 | Marcus Ehning (GER) | 116.00 |

The Global Champions Tour ranking were updated after each leg of the tour based on the scores derived from the rider's performances in the Grand Prix. The best 7 results counted towards the final Ranking whereby the top 18 riders shared 1 million euros.