



PIAZZA di SIENA

91° CSIO ROMA 2024
MASTER D'INZEO

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FRANCE OPEN WITH A WIN, BUT IT'S A BRILLIANT FIRST-DAY DOUBLE FOR ITALY

Emeric George claimed the first win of the week at CSIO Rome - Master d'Inzeo 2024 at Piazza di Siena this morning, but Italy dominated for the rest of the day.

Host nation riders claimed the top four placings and five of the top seven spots in the MAG Two-Phase competition won by **Emilio Bicocchi** this afternoon, while the day concluded with victory for the hugely popular Italian star **Lorenzo De Luca** who set them a merry dance in the ENI Speed class.



Lorenzo De Luca ph. Fotografi Sportivi.

Impressive

Emeric and his eight-year-old mare Gloria Mercoeur impressively pinned Olympic champion Ben Maher from Great Britain and Enjeu de Grisien into runner-up spot in the Safe Riding Winning Round in which Tokyo Olympic team gold medallist Peder Fredricson from Sweden had to settle for third with H&M Bahia. Bicocchi was 61st to go in the massive starting field of 75 in the MAG Two-Phase and was chasing the target-time of 24.98 seconds set by talented compatriot Guido Franchi partnering the 10-year-old stallion Enjoy One. The winner is a real Piazza di Siena veteran, and steered the 10-year-old Divina home more than a second quicker when breaking the beam for victory in 23.30.

"I know this place and I love it! I'm happy for this mare and for her owner and breeder (Giuliani Silvio) who lives here in Rome!", the 47-year-old rider said.

It was a real Italian pile-up with Emanuele Gaudiano and his extraordinary 15-year-old gelding Chalou finishing third while Roberto Turchetto and Asjenemou Sr Z filled fourth spot. Fifth and sixth places went to Germany's Mario Stevens (Carrie 22) and The Netherlands' Lars Kersten (Boebka vh Marienshof Z) but Italy was back in the line-up again with seventh spot for Francesco Turturiello and the unlikely-named Chicken George 3.



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As he pointed out it was his relentless ride on the turn to the penultimate oxer at fence 12, which proved the undoing of many others, that clinched it for Biccocchi. *"I was really direct and that's where I won it!"*, he pointed out.

From the front

De Luca and the 14-year-old stallion Cash du Plessis clinched their victory from the front.

Fifth of the 66 starters into the ring, the pair pinned the target time at 60.93 seconds and none of the rest could match or better that despite their best efforts as the class turned into a battle for second place.

Runner-up spot was finally filled by Belgium's Zoe Conter and the 10-year-old mare Tombola Z, while Italy's Giulia Martinengo Marquet slotted into third with the 14-year-old gelding Scuderia 1918 Calle Deluxe.

"It was amazing! I was at the beginning of the class but the horse is very fast and it's so great to have him back at such a high level again. I've always loved him and today he showed me that he's with me once more!", De Luca said.

The 14-year-old stallion picked up an injury two years ago but is coming back to his best again at last. *"He jumped his first 5* Grand Prix in Valkenswaard (The Netherlands) and was second, and then I was unlucky with him after Dublin (Ireland), he got a little injury. Then last summer I started to build him up again and now he is just amazing. I'm very happy!"*, he explained.

The 37-year-old Italian star was not at all confident that he had done enough with his round so early in today's class, although his strategy worked brilliantly in the end.

"I took a risk at the triple bar at fence three because I know I can trust him 100 percent! I didn't think I was fast enough to be honest because at the last rollback for the plank I took an extra stride. But he was very, very fast everywhere so we did it - he is naturally a very, very quick horse and I'm so happy for him!", De Luca said.

Spotlight

Tomorrow the spotlight turns to the **Intesa Sanpaolo Nations Cup** which will be contested by teams from 10 countries, and the hosts have the best of the draw when running last.

De Luca will lead the way for Italy partnering Cappuccino followed by **Giacomo Casadei** with Marbella du Chabli, **Emanuele Camilli** with Chacco's Girlstar and **Giulia Martinengo Marquet** with Delta del'Isle.

It's going to be a mighty contest with last year's winners from Ireland leading the way, and the action begins at 14.30 local time.

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