

JUMPING VERONA

2015

Longines FEI World Cup™
Jumping Verona 5-8 Novembre 2015



PRESS RELEASE #2 / 05.11.2015

PROUD PENELOPE IS ONE TO WATCH AT JUMPING VERONA



On-form French rider, Penelope Leprevost, comes to Jumping Verona 2015 this week with the possibility of making it a hat-track of wins in the Western European League, and also of becoming only the second female rider to win the Italian leg of the Longines FEI World Cup™ Jumping series.

The 35-year-old is on a roll following her double of victories which began at the opening leg of the 2015/2016 World Cup season in Oslo, Norway three weeks ago and continued at the third leg on her home turf in

Lyon, France last Sunday. Both successes were recorded with the lovely 10-year-old mare Flora de Mariposa, and Leprevost said today, "I'm really happy with Flora and I'm feeling very proud! Things have been going very well for me lately, and I have moved up to number three in the world rankings - it's the highest ranking I have ever achieved!"

Her improved level of success is no accident. As she explained this afternoon, in previous seasons she didn't always have top horses, so the decision was taken by her patron, Madame Genevieve Megret, to purchase some seven-year-olds and work on developing their talent. "I have had to be patient so they could build up the experience they need, and with both Flora and Vagabond I have been waiting a long time to see how they would come along. I never thought they would turn out so well!" she said.

Easiest journey

It hasn't always been the easiest journey however. "Sometimes I found when I entered them for events they were not quite ready", Leprevost explained. And she feels her result at last year's World Equestrian Games (WEG) in Normandy was a good example of that. "After the WEG I gave Flora a few months rest, but then she got an injury at La Baule in May and she had to have another unplanned break." Now, however, she says Flora feels "really well and fresh", and she has certainly produced some glorious jumping over early legs of the new indoor World Cup season where the chestnut mare's extraordinary speed has left the rest trailing in her wake.

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Flora remains at home this weekend however, and instead Vagabond de la Pomme, the horse with which Lerevost finished second at the 2015 Longines FEI World Cup™ Final in Las Vegas, USA in April, will step up to the task in the fourth leg of the Longines series next Sunday afternoon. Lerevost says Vagabond prefers indoor arenas, and he's another speedy horse with enormous scope and courage. The French rider also has the 11-year-old Nice Stephanie and nine-year-old Sultane des Ibis in her string at Verona.

Turn another page

Lerevost will turn another page of the FEI World Cup™ history book if she comes out on top in Sunday's World Cup qualifier because only one other female rider has been successful in the 32-year history of the competition in Italy. That was Lesley McNaught Maendli who won with Dulf in Bologna back in 1999. However there are many other strong female contenders this year, including three-time FEI World Cup™ Jumping champion Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum from Germany.

Lerevost is a big fan of Martinengo Marquet, who is also coached by French horseman extraordinaire Michel Robert - "she's a super rider and a super competitor" the Frenchwoman pointed out today.

And with reigning Olympic and Longines FEI World Cup™ champion Steve Guerdat from Switzerland, World No. 1 Scott Brash from Great Britain, German stars Ludger Beerbaum, Daniel Deusser and Marco Kutscher, Olympic silver medallist Gerco Schroder from The Netherlands and Swedish hero Rolf-Goran Bengtsson also on the startlists, it's going to be a spectacular weekend of sport.

Brilliant grey mare

Last year's Longines FEI World Cup™ winner in Verona was 19-year-old Irishman Bertram Allen with his brilliant grey mare, Molly Malone. A year later and the now 20-year-old, who has been holding the world no. 7 spot for almost all of that time, brings the veteran stallion Romanov to defend his title. All-comers have to take on the home runners who traditionally perform very well at this venue however, and the enigmatic Luca Maria Moneta brings out his two top rides, Neptune Brecourt and Connery, to put the pressure on the visitors.

Lerevost says she doesn't feel pressure however, not even if it comes to a super-quick jump-off in Sunday's Longines FEI World Cup™ competition. "I don't really watch the other riders, I just set my own plans and see how the course rides and take it from there. There are so many top riders and horses competing here that anyone can win. My strategy is simple - I just do my best, and if I have to be fast then I will do my best to be the fastest!"

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