



Newsletter n. 27 - 22 September 2022

AMERICA'S WEBER TAKES THE EARLY LEAD

American individual athlete **Chester Weber**, team gold medallist at the FEI World Equestrian Games 2018 on home ground in Tryon, took the lead with a score of **41.52** on the first day of Dressage at the FEI Driving World Championship 2022 at Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy today.

The 47-year-old Floridian, winner of world team silver in **both 2002 and 2010** and **four-time individual silver medallist**, pinned young German individual, 27-year-old **Anna Sandmann**, into second place on her score of **42.52** while veteran German team member, 50-year-old **Georg Stein** posted **49.44** for third at this early stage. Sweden's **Frederik Persson** is also chasing down an individual medal and slotted into fourth on a mark of **49.98** while the last man into the arena this afternoon, Belgium's **Dries Degrieck** slotted into fifth ahead of Belgian legend **Koos de Ronde** in sixth.

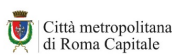


Chester Weber (USA) - ph. Massimo Argenziano

A total of **19 drivers** and their teams started today but with **another 18** still to take their turn tomorrow including Australian superstar **Boyd Exell** the leaderboard looks set for a big shake-up as the day progresses.

FIRST-DAY LEAD

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Despite going into the first-day lead **Weber** wasn't entirely happy with his performance this afternoon. «*Only the first half of the test was really on point*», the man from Ocala, Florida said. He moved to Europe in May in order to prepare for this week's Championship because «*the way the sport is if you want to be in the top five you have to spend time competing against those top five*». His team of horses are all **Dutch Warmbloods** and two of them are veterans of that thrilling US team victory in Tryon four years ago. «*Typically I'm trying to score in mid 30s but that's the score (41.52) now and everyone else has to beat it!*», he said.

For **Sandmann**, whose father Christoph is a three-time team world champion, today's second placing was a really big moment. «*This is my first Four-in-Hand World Championship so I'm really happy with the score. This was the best test I've ever done with my horses, the extended trot and the reinback were really good. I've had this team two years now, they all have a lot of movement and I think that makes them special*», said the rising German star who has been **training with Boyd Exell** since 2016.

German **team member Stein** was unlucky at the start of his test when flies were annoying one of his leaders, leading to a mistake. «*After that he was good and my team was perfect and nice and easy to drive. It's a young team, three horses are seven-year-olds and the other two are together two years at this big level. My best discipline is normally the Marathon and the course here is fast and technical but it's similar to my home terrain near Frankfurt so we will see what we can do...*», said the man who has earned **two World Championship team silver and two team bronze medals** during his illustrious career.

INTERESTING CHARACTERS

The field of competitors is filled with **dedicated drivers and interesting characters** who are in the sport on both a professional and amateur level but who all have one focus this week - a place on that podium when, after Saturday's Marathon and Sunday's Cones phases, team and individual medals will be decided.

Belgium's **Dries Degrieck** is an interesting competitor. The 27-year-old is a **farrier** by trade and one of his horses, D'Aguistinie, has only one eye but remains a leader he can really trust in his team. Dutch driver **Antonie Ter Harmsel** is also a farrier,

German individual **Rene Poensgen** runs a big bakery near Aachen that specialises in gluten-free foods, French driver **Sebastien Vincent** is a videographer and Belgium's **Tom Stokmans** runs an air-conditioning, heating and plumbing business near Antwerp.

Only **Team Belgium** fielded two drivers today while **Germany, The Netherlands, France** and **Hungary** fielded one each so the team standings remain uncertain. The second day of Dressage action begins in the morning with French team member, **Anthony Horde**, first into the ring at **10.00 local time**.

Follow all the action at this link

https://www.clipmyhorse.tv/en_EU/events/8870/fei-driving-world-championship-2022-pratoni-del-vivaro

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