



Newsletter n. 30 - 25 September 2022

SIXTH WORLD TITLE FOR EXELL. DUTCH TEAM GOLD FOR ELEVENTH TIME

Heavy rain couldn't spoil the party at the **FEI Driving World Championship at Pratoni del Vivaro**, Italy today where Australia's **Boyd Exell** reigned supreme to take his sixth consecutive individual title while **The Netherlands** claimed team gold for the eleventh time in the 50-year history of the event.

A tough Cones course set the stage for a nail-biting finale to four days of fabulous competition in which it was impossible to know the result until the very last moment. Team silver went to **Germany** while **Belgium** bagged the bronze, and it was Dutch veteran **Isjbrand Chardon** who clinched individual silver ahead of Germany's **Michael Brauchle** in individual bronze.

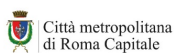


Boyd Exell (AUS) - ph. Massimo Argenziano

ALL THE PRESSURE

Exell had all the pressure when last to go this afternoon but held his nerve to win through. He established the lead in the Dressage phase but his considerable advantage was narrowed when he finished sixth in yesterday's Marathon won by Brauchle. Going into today's final test he was just over six penalty points ahead of the German, while Isjbrand Chardon was just over one penalty point further behind in bronze. There was little room for error at the top of the leaderboard.

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Lying ninth, Isjbrand's son and team-mate, Bram Chardon, was first to complete the course inside the tight time-allowed of 194 seconds, and although his week hadn't gone as planned the 29-year-old gave The Netherlands the best possible start today, putting them right in the frame in the race for team gold when temporarily taking over pole position and eventually ending up just off the podium in fourth place.

"I knew when I made the change of horse because my Freddie couldn't compete that dressage and marathon was going to be hard but I still had my A-team for Cones. This was the maximum I could do today, they felt amazing and I knew I had to put the pressure on the rest and see where it ends. I'm the current Dutch, European and World Cup champion but in the World Championship I have had unusual mistakes, the same as in Tryon four years ago. I needed the revenge on the Sunday there and I needed it today as well to show that I can do it!", he said.

BRILLIANT RUN

Koos de Ronde was lying fifth after a brilliant run in yesterday's Marathon but when he added 12.9 to his scoreline today it came down to Ijsbrand Chardon to ensure a competitive team finishing score, and he didn't disappoint. With all the skill he has shown since winning his first World Championship medal way back in 1996, the 61-year-old driver steered his team home safely with no knockdowns for just 2.35 time faults that would clinch it on a team total of 313.93. This left them well clear of Team Germany's Brauchle, Mareike Harm and Georg von Stein on 327.45 while Belgium's Dries Degrieck, Glenn Geerts and Tom Stokmans rounded up the bronze medal scoreline at 356.39.

Ijsbrand Chardon reflected on his performance this week. "I wasn't lucky in the Dressage, I came in after Boyd and there was huge applause and normally that's not a problem for my horses but one lead horse kicked over the trace before he came in which upset him and then in the final warm-up arena one of the fences came down in front of him which drove him even more crazy and that cost points in the first halt and walk. I was a bit behind Boyd after Marathon and then today got 2.35 points in the Cones so I hope in two years time I can do a bit better!", he said modestly. Discussing the long history of success for the Dutch team, de Ronde said Chardon Sr. has been on every one of those teams dating back to 1982, but Ijsbrand said he couldn't remember, "I'm not sure, but maybe....!"

De Ronde said he had three new horses at this Championship, "they only did Beekbergen and this show - the Marathon is my strength and I knew that was what the team needed yesterday and it went fantastic. Today was good until 19 and 20 so I'm happy overall with seventh place."

ON THE PODIUM

Once Ijsbrand had set his final score at 159.82 he was guaranteed a place on the podium and when Germany's Brauchle picked up 7.71 penalties for a final tally of 163.89 the Dutchman overtook him in the individual rankings and moved up to silver medal spot. Now it was down to Boyd Exell. Could he do it again and take the individual world title for the sixth time in a row? There was no need to doubt it as, cool as a breeze, he measured his advantage and returned with just 5.92 for time for the winning finishing score of 156.06.

"I have the pressure of fantastic horses so you can't let your horses down and that's one of the hardest things for me. They are 15 years old and so experienced, Carlos, Celviro, Checkmate and Ivor, and there's a huge

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team of people who support you so you are under all that pressure. And then you have to watch out for these guys!", he said, turning to his rivals from the Dutch team.

Earlier in the week he described his leaders as "the Totilas and Valegro of Driving" because of their extravagant movement. Talking about the quality of horse teams in general he pointed out that "when you look back in history Isjbrand had a lovely pair of leaders in Jerez (World Championship 2002), Chester Weber had Nick and Splash and there was Nicky and Rolex, another pair of fantastic leaders and I've been lucky to have Sam and Jimmy and Carlos and Celviro. So over time everyone has great horses and it's nice to remember them".

BIGGEST PRESSURE

The rain that began to pour down at the end of the day was the biggest pressure he faced today because not only was it difficult to maintain control of his team but the ground conditions suddenly changed.

"I was trying to keep the reins dry, I already had a second pair of gloves which I didn't think I was going to need and it started to come down and I could feel the horses starting to slip in the corners. The course was a good testing course today in good conditions, but all the u-turns back in the wet conditions made it hard. I got the feedback that Ijs (Ijsbrand) had a few time faults and he was my closest rival, but I didn't expect my horses to spook at the horse in the middle of the arena so I lost four or five seconds there, I didn't see that coming, but I tried to stay calm and not have any balls", he explained. In the end he was clear winner and it was time to celebrate.

PRESS CONFERENCE

When the Dutch team were asked at tonight's press conference what it's going to take to stop Exell from winning a seventh individual world title, Isjbrand Chardon laughed and said *"that's for the young people to answer!"*, and passed the microphone to his son Bram. It's an awesome prospect, but someone, someday has to do it....

"I think it's possible to get nearer to him and I think this year I would have had a fair chance with Freddie in my team but it's the way it is. But I see chances. I need to focus on my own performance, not look at Boyd all the time because you know he will be prepared and it's the same with the indoor shows. I think what we've shown last year Boyd and I together in Geneva, and at the World Cup Final in Leipzig this year. He's the reason I step on the carriage on a Sunday afternoon and I'm the reason he steps on the carriage again. We push each other to a higher level and that's what makes the sport fantastic. I won't stop trying until I have that individual gold medal!", he said.

For now however, incredible Exell remains the most dominant force in the thrilling sport of Driving.

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THE TOP 3

INDIVIDUAL GOLD - **Boyd Exell AUS** - age 50. Individual World Champion 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022. No. 1 in world rankings, winner FEI Driving World Cup Final 9 times. Born in Bega, Australia. Based in Valkenswaard, The Netherlands.

INDIVIDUAL SILVER - **Ijsbrand Chardon NED** - age 61, 9-time World Championship Team gold, four-time individual world champion, twice team silver, three-time team bronze. Double-gold at the FEI World Equestrian Games in Jerez (ESP) in 2002, double-bronze 1988, individual silver 2006 and 2010, individual bronze 1990, double-bronze 1994. 19-time Dutch national champion, twice FEI Top Driver Award. Won his first World Championship medals - team gold and individual silver - at Ascot (GBR) in 1986. FEI Driving World Cup champion 2016, vice-champion 2009 and 2012, finished third three times. 4 European Championship team titles, double-gold in Gothenburg (SWE) in 2017.

INDIVIDUAL BRONZE - **Michael Brauchle GER** - age 32, from Baden Wuttenburg, Germany. 3-time winner of World Championship Team silver in 2008, 2012 and 2014, World Championship Team bronze 2016. Team gold European Championship at Donaueschingen (GER) in 2019, Team silver 2015, 2017, 2021 and individual gold European Championship 2015 and individual bronze European Championship 2021. An amateur, he makes his living as a farrier.

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