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TALKING TO SHOW DIRECTOR GIUSEPPE DELLA CHIESA

Giuseppe Della Chiesa is the Show Director for the **FEI World Championships 2022 Eventing and Driving**, an event at which he will also be the cross-country course designer.

The experience he acquired as a rider added to his professional training as an agricultural entrepreneur with a passion for IT (he created the first computerised system for the management of results for eventing) plus his own passion for the sport and his family's traditional link to the equestrian world, have all resulted in him playing an important role in the global eventing community.



Giuseppe Della Chiesa sitting on one of the new cross-country jumps at Pratoni del Vivaro.

Show Director for Eventing and Driving at the 1998 **FEI World Equestrian Games™** in Rome, an FEI technical delegate and course designer since 2002 – his important contributions in this role include four editions of the **Badminton Horse Trials** (2014-2016) and the **FEI European Championships** held at the Pratoni del Vivaro (2007) – a member of the **FEI Board** as well as Chairman of the **FEI Eventing Committee** (2010-2017), Della Chiesa also had a successful career as an amateur jockey (flat racing and steeplechasing with 75 wins to his name), as an event rider (Italian champion and reserve rider for the Italian team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games) and in show jumping.

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Twenty-four years after the FEI World Equestrian Games™ in Rome, Pratoni del Vivaro once again hosts a top-level global event. What has changed in the sporting aspects of the disciplines that will be staged at next September's World Championships?

"The most significant change is certainly the one linked to the technical format for the cross-country of both championships – hence both the cross-country and the marathon will have reduced distances and phases as well as more technical fences in eventing. The endurance element has become progressively less relevant, putting more emphasis on technique. The standard ratio of the influence of the eventing phases was calculated at dressage 3 / cross-country 12 / show jumping 1. Now, a horse-and-rider combination must be equally competitive in all three tests. The same applies to driving. Such changes have obviously also affected the type of horses chosen, the manner in which horses and riders train, the building of cross-country fences and the way courses are designed. Nowadays, nearly 90% of cross-country jumps are portable, as are 50% of obstacles in the marathon. The timben we will use comes from Poland. Logs of this size hard to find in Italy have arrived and are still arriving. The fact that the fences are portable, and therefore can be stored in a warehouse, allows us to use an effective alternative instead of only using chestnut, which lasts forever since it is extremely resistant but it also very expensive. Compared to 24 years ago, I have to acknowledge that great progress has been made as far as attention paid to equine welfare and rider safety is concerned, factors that have become essential when organising events."



Left to right: Manuel Bandeira de Mello (FEI Driving Director), Giuseppe Della Chiesa, Tim Hadaway (FEI Games Operations Director), Catrin Norinder (FEI Eventing Director) photographed when inspecting the Pratoni del Vivaro last November.

Who are the members of the team working with you?

"As far as Eventing is concerned I am supported by Giulia Rocchetti as my assistant and by Carola Brighenti who is be the Sports Manager. Carola, a former eventer, has worked in the UK for years and her experience includes being the Equestrian Coordinator at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. My assistant course designer will be France's Alain Ponsot who already worked at Pratoni last November. Then there is also all the staff working during the competition. For the Driving Championships we have the team that works in Aachen with Birgit Rosenberg (Sport Director) and Fritz Otto Erly, who is an FEI Technical Delegate for both Driving and Eventing. The Show Office will be run by Cindy Timmer. Driving course designer will be Germany's Josef Middendorf who will be able to rely on assistance provided by our own very professional Gabriele Panier Suffat".

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What is your attention focused on during the first months of work?

“The reorganisation of the facility required a great deal of resources, both in terms of time and investments. At the time of the FEI World Equestrian Games™ in 1998 we had only six months to set up. With its established facilities in Rome, Italy had been assigned the organisation of the Games after Dublin’s withdrawal and the Organising Committee led by the Monti Riffeser Publishing Group together with the Italian Equestrian Sports Federation, performed a small miracle organising an event that received unanimous acclaim. The Pratoni equestrian centre was fully active at the time and often hosted competitions of the highest international importance and our team was amazingly efficient, relying on the decade-long experience of two key men such as the respected course designer Albino Garbari and Vittorio Gavini. Rome’s candidature for the FEI World Championships 2022 began a lot earlier (2019), after a decade of ordeals caused by bureaucratic issues with the area being sold, problems that caused the facility to be closed and, sadly, to its deterioration. Its management was subsequently entrusted by the Municipality of Rocca di Papa to the Italian Equestrian Sports Federation. In view of these World Championships the entire area has undergone land reclamation work while all the arenas, warm-up areas, with the exception of the legendary grass arena that hosts the show jumping (120x80 metres) have been rebuilt from scratch. We are talking about a silica sand arena (90x60) for the dressage phase of the eventing championships with its own warm-up arena (65x45) and two silica sand warm-up/training arenas (80x60 and 45x70). The stable area, which also includes a veterinary clinic, will have 320 stables and all the infrastructure for the athletes’ area (secretary’s office, toilets and washing facilities, grooms’ accommodation, offices, restaurant, accreditation office etc.). This centre has an immense amount of experience and traditions in hosting great events. The Test Events in May will be an effective trial. We are all motivated and delighted to once again see Pratoni del Vivaro at the centre of the world’s attention.”

8 MARCH: LADIES ON THE PODIUM

There is a particular feeling between lady riders and eventing. Since 1966, the year in which the first championships for this discipline were held, **55 lady riders** have won a total of **77 medals**, both individual and team.

It started with the first championship at Burghley in 1966 when Ireland’s **Virginia Freeman-Jackson**, riding Sam Weller, took home individual bronze and team gold, together with **Penelope Moreton** riding Loughlin, and concludes with the last two individual world champions, Germany’s **Sandra Auffarth** (Opgun Louvo) in Caen 2014 and GB’s **Rosalind Canter** (Allstar B) in Tryon in 2018.



Ingrid Klimke (Germany) – photo FEI / Richard Julliard.

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Six of the fourteen individual gold medals in as many editions of the Eventing World Championships were won by women, including: Great Britain's **Zara Phillips** (Toytown) in 2006 in Aachen, **Virginia Holgate-Leng** (Priceless) at Gawler in Australia in 1986, **Lucinda Green** (Regal Realm) at the 1982 World Championships in Luhmühlen and Mary Gordon Watson (Cornishman V) at Punchestown, Ireland, in 1970.

To these medals must be added the three silver and eight bronze medals won by female riders: at Gawler, it was an all-female line-up with **Virginia Leng**, New Zealand's **Trudy Boyce** taking silver (Mossman) and another British rider **Lorna Clarke** winning the bronze (Myross).

In 1994 at The Hague, an **all-female British team** nicknamed 'the Golden Girls', triumphed: **Mary Thomson (King)** on King William, **Charlotte Bathe** (The Cool Customer), **Kristina Gifford** (Cook) on General Jock and **Karen Dixon** (Get Smart), also the individual bronze medallist.

The most successful female rider in eventing world championships is Great Britain's **Virginia Holgate-Leng** (4 medals: one individual gold, two team gold medals and one team silver) followed by her compatriots **Mary King** and **Kristina Cook** (both with two team gold medals and one silver), **Karen Dixon** (one team gold and one team silver and one individual bronze medal) and **Zara Phillips** (one individual gold medal and two team silver medals), Germany's **Ingrid Klimke** (two team silver medals and one individual bronze) and France's **Marie-Christine Duroy** (three team silver medals).

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