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### FREDRICSON FLIES TO VICTORY IN REGIONE SICILIANA FINALE

Sweden's Peder Fredricson showed exactly why he is the number one rider in the world right now when galloping to victory in the Regione Siciliana feature class as the first day of Jumping Verona 2021 came to a dramatic close this evening. Partnering the 14-year-old gelding H&M Christian K he was last to go in the 16-horse jump-off and won through with a blistering round that stopped the clock on 34.68 seconds.



Photo JV/M.Proli

Third into the jump-off, Colombia's Carlos Lopez was first to break the 35-second barrier with a great round from the 16-year-old Admara in 34.98 but, sixth into the ring for the second time, The Netherlands' Willem Greve produced a spectacular run from the nine-year-old Highway M TN to reset the target at 34.74 seconds.

Many more of the world's best horse-and-rider partnerships tackled Uliano Vezzani's track without threatening for the lead until British veteran, 66-year-old John Whitaker, set off with just three left to go. And with the Italian crowd urging him on to the very end he galloped down to the last fence up on time with Unick de Francport, but a pole off that final oxer saw him having to settle for ninth place despite having the quickest time of 34.65 seconds.

Now only Austria's Max Kuhner and Sweden's Fredricson stood between Greve and victory, and when Kuhner's EIC Carolis des Isles crossed the line with two fences down then it was up to Fredricson to decide it.

And what a way to do it, the man who has taken the sport by storm over the last year with multiple epic performances including clinching team gold for his country at the Tokyo Olympic Games where he also collected individual silver, simply slicing through the track to break the beam in 34.68 seconds for the win.

*"I'm very happy!", he said afterwards. "It was a big jump-off with many riders and it was very fast, but I was last to go which was an advantage because you know what you have to do and today was my day! Christian K is a really cool horse, the jump-off suited him because there were a lot of turns. If I ride straight on he gets very strong, but with these turns it keeps him a little bit in balance", he explained.*

Now he's looking forward to Sunday's Italian leg of the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Western European League and as he said this evening H&M Christian K is one of several great Grand Prix horses he has to choose from.

*"I'm planning to ride him on Sunday, I'm not sure if this was the best warm-up for the World Cup but he feels in good form so we will do our very best!", he said.*

### AMERICAN SUPERSTAR SPRINGSTEEN SCORES IN SAFE RIDING OPENER

America's Jessica Springsteen got Jumping Verona 2021 off to a flying start when galloping to victory in the first international competition of the show today with a brilliant performance from Tiger Lily.

Going 34th in the big field of 61 starters, she showed the rest a clean pair of heels when racing through the finish with her 14-year-old chestnut mare in 30.39 seconds. This left her well clear of runner-up Filippo Marc Bogni who broke the beam in 30.95 seconds with his ever-reliable 17-year-old stallion Quidich de la Chavee while Bogni's Italian compatriot, Luca Marziani, finished third when fractionally slower with Don't Worry B.



Photo JV/M.Proli

Sweden's Petronella Andersson and Jeunesse van T Paradijs lined up in fourth ahead of former Egyptian rider Sameh El Dahan and Suma's Zorro who are now flying the flag of Great Britain. And rounding up the truly international field, Brazil's Marlon Zanotelli finished sixth with his exciting young mare, the nine-year-old Chili.

Jumping Verona 2021 has attracted a fabulous field of top showjumping riders and horses from all around the globe for three days of world-class jumping leading to Sunday's Italian leg of the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ series, and Springsteen's win highlights the quality that can be expected over the coming days.

The 29-year-old daughter of rock legend Bruce Springsteen is 33rd in the world rankings and a super-talented horsewoman.

Riding Don Juan van de Donkhoeve, she was a member of the silver medal winning American team at this summer's Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

## BELGIUM'S PHILIPPAERTS WINS BANCA PASSADORE SPEED

Belgium's Olivier Philippaerts stormed to victory in the Banca Passadore Speed class at Jumping Verona 2021 this afternoon. But only one-hundredth of a second separated him from runner-up Mark McAuley from Ireland.

McAuley set the early target with a super-fast time of 59.46 seconds with his nine-year-old chestnut mare O'Hara ELS when fourth to go of the 51 starters. But, eighteenth into the ring, Philippaerts squeezed fractionally ahead when racing through the timers in 59.45 with the Belgian-bred chestnut gelding Miro. And despite their best efforts none of the rest could better that. Jessica Springsteen, winner of the first class of the opening day with the mare Tiger Lily, produced by far the quickest time when racing through the finish in 57.13. But a very tight turn to the double at fence nine didn't pay off, and when she crossed the line leaving two fences on the floor it wouldn't be the American on the top step of the podium this time around.

Instead that honour went to 28-year-old Philippaerts who has become one of the most consistent younger riders on the international showjumping circuit in recent years. He was only 22 when a member of the winning Belgian team at the Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Final in Barcelona, Spain in 2015, and he was back in the Belgian side that finished second at the Spanish fixture this year.

Philippaerts has twice finished fifth at the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final, in 2018 and 2019 with H&M Legend of Love, and will be one to watch out for in this Sunday's World Cup qualifier in Verona.

Third place in today's Banca Passadore Speed class went to Italy's Ricardo Pisano whose lovely rhythm and light hands brought the handsome 11-year-old grey stallion Charlemagne JT Z home in 60.83 seconds, while Ireland's Denis Lynch slotted into fourth with In the Air when stopping the clock on 61.85 seconds.

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