

## 2006 FEI World Dressage Challenge

Once again, the FEI World Dressage Challenge was held this year without a sponsor. Though the number of participants slightly decreased compared to last year's competition, the Challenge is still considered one of the most important events in some of the countries involved.

Unfortunately, the NFs of Kazakhstan, Philippines, Slovenia and Chile had to withdraw from the competition. A week before the Challenge was scheduled in Chile; several clubs were hit by an outbreak of equine influenza and therefore unable to organize the event.

It was a great pleasure for us to count the NF of Croatia as a new member of the FEI World Dressage Challenge family.

Our Judges were very enthusiastic to see the progress of some of the riders and noticed great improvement concerning the organization of the competition in some countries. The FEI World Dressage Challenge is indeed a team effort, since its success is entirely due to the hard work of our Judges, the NFs and the participants. However, we have to think how to make this competition more attractive for riders, sponsors and media. It has been frequently reported by judges and NFs that Children find difficult to move from the Children's class to Novice level. This will be taken into consideration and a review of the tests will be done during the year 2007.

### **Group 1:** ARG, BRA, RSA, URU

Once again, the riders from RSA have distinguished themselves by winning all four categories of the Challenge. In addition to winning first place RSA also won 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the PSG and Children Class. BRA is the only NF who was able to win 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Advance and Novice Class over RSA.

### **Group 2:** COL, CRC, GUA, MEX, PER

This year again, the Group is lead by the NFs of COL and MEX. COL won the PSG, Advanced and Children Class. Although MEX only won the Novice Class, it always had at least one rider on the podium in each Class. PER finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the team classification as opposed to 5<sup>th</sup> in 2005, this shows great progress in the performance of its riders.

### **Group 3:** BOL, DOM, ECU, ESA, HON, VEN

Quite a few changes occurred in Group 3 if we compare the results with last year especially concerning HON which managed to win 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the team classification as opposed to 4<sup>th</sup> place in 2005. ECU lost a few ranks since it finished 3<sup>rd</sup> this year in the team classification after winning in 2005, we can however point out that ECU won 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Novice Class. VEN not only won the team classification but also the Advanced and Children Class.

### **Group 4:** CYP, GRE, ISR, ROM, UAE

GRE riders have won two out of the four classes as well as the team classification. ISR remains one of the leading NFs in the group by winning the Novice and Children Class and finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> this year again in the team classification. Judges, Peter Holler (GER) and Eduard De Wolff Van Westerrode (NED) were very pleased to see noticeable progress in the riders, and the organisation of the competitions.

**Group 5:** BLR, CRO, HUN, RUS, UKR

This year's Challenge was a great success for the riders from BLR, since the winners of both the PSG and Children Class were from BLR. Also by winning 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Novice and Children Class, the BLR team was assured victory. Unfortunately, HUN was unable to compete in the team classification due to the elimination of all 3 Children participating to the Challenge. We hope this will not have an effect on HUN's dedication to this competition.

**Group 6:** CZE, EST, LAT, LTU, SVK

The leading trio was composed this year of CZE, EST and LAT. CZE riders won the Novice and Children Class, whereas EST riders won the PSG and Advance Class. LAT distinguished itself by winning 2<sup>nd</sup> place in both PSG and Novice class.

**Group 7:** BOT, KEN, NAM, SWZ, ZAM, ZIM

NAM riders won the Novice and Children Class, which consequently allowed them to win the team classification followed by ZIM and ZAM. Comments by FEI Challenge Judge Else Mouw (NED) were very positive regarding the evident progression of the organization and riding skills in both ZIM and ZAM. It is also Mrs. Mouw appreciation that although the number of competitors in NAM was limited, the quality of riding was the best of Group 7. Unfortunately, 6 horses in SWZ were unable to compete due to food poisoning and African Horse Sickness.

**Group 8:** INA, IND, MAS, SIN, THA

INA riders won three out of the four classes, leaving the victory to SIN in the PSG Class. Our FEI Judges Mrs. Furuoka (JPN) and Mr. Van Daele (BEL) were very pleased to find that the riders had taken into consideration the advice that was given to them the previous year and that their hard work was starting to bear fruit. Our Judges also appreciated the quality of the horses in each country and the general efforts provided by the people in charge of equestrian sports to try to improve the interest of general public by organizing more shows in each country involved. It is a great satisfaction to know that all countries are working hard to promote our sport through the Challenge year after year.

**Group 9:** CHN, HKG, KOR, NZL, TPE

This year again, NZL riders have excelled during the FEI World Dressage Challenge by winning the Novice and Children Class and finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the PSG, Advanced and Children Class as well. CHN won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the PSG Class and TPE in the Advanced Class.

**Group 10:** ANT, BAR, BER, HAI, JAM, TRI

BAR distinguished itself by winning both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the PSG and Advanced Classes. Our FEI Judges Kathy Amos-Jacob (FRA) and Victoire Mandl (AUT) found that the level of the children in Jamaica was very good in comparison to other countries, which is reflected by the results of JAM in the Children Class winning 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. This shows that the regular clinics conducted by Belgium's Denis Soyer since several years have produced good results.