



## International Show Jumping of France – La Baule 2008

Press release, May 9<sup>th</sup>

### SAMSUNG SUPER LEAGUE WITH FEI

A full stadium, an enthusiastic and expressive crowd, a challenging jump course, all provided for a fabulous moment in the world of horse sport during the first of the series of the Samsung Super League with FEI 2008 disputed at the renowned equestrian stadium, François-André at La Baule.

*“I am so very proud of my riders”* beamed Lucien Somers, the Belgium National Trainer. *“What a terrific beginning and we hope to continue with these excellent results for the following competitions.”*

They have a lot to be happy about .....Ludo Philippaerts and his 9 year old horse, Cavalor's Winningmood, achieved a double clear round.... *“At only 9 years old my horse jumped a brilliant clear round on a very technical rather than high course. I give a lot of credit to the course design which helped us achieve this beautiful first victory in the 2008 Super League Series”* enthusiastically adds, the 48 year old seasoned Belgian rider, Ludo Philippaerts, 4-time Olympian with a 4<sup>th</sup> individual placement and a 6<sup>th</sup> team ranking in the 2004 Olympics. But this victory, of course, is not thanks to just one rider...the Belgium team has depth and youth....Philippe Le Jeune with Vigo d'Arsouilles had two bars down due to a bad warm-up. Then the young and talented, Judy-Ann Melchior turned the score around with an excellent first clear round riding Aktion Pur Z before having 1 bar down in the second round. But what counts is the final result!

There was suspense until the very end...with 20 points each, Switzerland, the United States and Ireland tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place!!

### A COURSE DESIGNED FOR THE RIDER....

The same course in two rounds with 12 jumps and 15 efforts, including a double, a triple and two vertical bars at 1.60 meters high with a maximum time of 72 seconds allowed, provided for a thrilling show! The course designer, Frédéric Cottier, former national champion for the French Jumping Team (1980-1990) created a course to test the rider's abilities and the horse's obedience. The Samsung first oxer of the triple (jump n°13) proved to create most of the faults as well as the high Samsung vertical at 1.6 meters (jump n°5).

*“The first jump of the triple proved to be the most difficult jump of the course. I do like to create a course design that effectively challenges the riders yet one that is comfortable for the horses. I believe that this course did not present difficulties that were beyond their capabilities. They all should be in tip top form for Sunday's Grand Prix.”*





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7 of the 36 couples to compete in the Samsung Super League with FEI rode clear rounds in the first phase and only two couples successfully completed double clears.

*“You must ride smartly and have a horse who has the physical ability to clear the difficult triple at the end of the jump course”* states France’s National Trainer, Gilles Bertran de Balanda.

### AND THE FRENCH TEAM ?

A 5<sup>th</sup> place ranking for the French team did not satisfy the French National Trainer. “I am not too disappointed to place 5<sup>th</sup> with two times 8 points, one time 4 points and 1 time fault. However, we could have placed higher without the one time fault! We had some good rounds but we must continue to improve in-order to win!

The first French team member’s performance set the stadium on fire with Kevin Staut’s first clear round with Kraque Boom. Then Michel Robert’s brilliant double clear round - one of only two riders to perform perfect rounds – set the crowd afire. .. *“The most difficult job in the Super League is to perform the second round as well as the first. I am so happy to be able to share my experience with the younger members on our team!”*

