



III RETURN OF THE FRENCH

A YEAR OF TRANSITION

GROUP 1, and the others

At the beginning of March, the Committee for High Level Sport (CSHN), recently created by the French Equestrian Federation (FFE), and chaired by Christian Paillot, issued a list of the 12 combinations of which it is composed (in alphabetical order):

- Florian Angot / First de Launay HN
- Eugénie Angot / Cigale du Taillis
- Gilles Bertran de Balanda / Crocus Graverie
- Hubert Bourdy / Ève des Etisses
- Patrice Delaveau / Envoyé Spécial
- Laurent Goffinet / Flipper d'Elle HN
- Michel Hécart / Kannan
- Christian Hermon / Éphébe For Ever La Silla
- Jean-Marc Nicholas / JPC Modesto
- Philippe Léoni / Cyrenaïka
- Michel Robert / Galet d'Auzay
- Philippe Rozier / Héritière d'Adriers

This leading group for the French team will be revised three or four times throughout the year. If one combination is promoted to Group 1, another must vacate their place. From now on, this strictly numbered system thus imposes an element of competition even within the French team. The national trainer, Jean-Maurice Bonneau, shouldered by the 12 members of the CSHN, will only be able to draw 'his selections' for the major events – Nations' Cup Super League and European Championships in Italy at the end of July – from this Group 1. The first revision will be made at the conclusion of the Official International Jumping of France at La Baule, the first major rendez-vous at the highest level.

The 'Blues' know, therefore, what is to come. A 'conquest' in the Grand Prix of the François André stadium could half-open, or open the access door to G1. Indeed, as host country, France has the right to line-up not only its Super League team, but 15 supplementary couples. An opportunity that only arises once each year for the 'blue jackets' on the occasion of the CSIO of France.

Among those on the list of 12 who will be absent, foreseen as of right now:

Philippe Léoni, who has remarkably qualified himself in the list of 18 Europeans who will dispute the World Cup final in Las Vegas (20-24 April), and taking into account the close proximity of dates, the chairman of Spir Communication (Groupe Ouest France, editor, among other things, of the free daily newspaper '20 Minutes'), could be in La Baule but will be resting **Cyrenäika** at his stables in Aix-en-Provence.

Hubert Bourdy will perhaps be in the same position as his fellow countryman Philippe Léoni. Currently (as at the end of March), he is first reserve on the list of qualifiers for Las Vegas, so **Ève des Etisses** may or may not delay her outdoor comeback depending on the possible American journey for this couple from Bourg-en-Bresse.

First de Launay HN who makes up half of one of the most regular couples on the French team with Florian Angot, will take a break from high-level jumping arenas for a few weekends in order to establish his career this year as a reproducer.

Finally, from among the other absentees of the French team who contested the major events of last season, and of whom two were members of the Athens team at the Olympic Games:

Dilème de Cèphe: injured at the Olympic Games in Athens, will not return for a few months yet in order to continue his convalescence. His stable companion, Hooligan de Rosyl, will carry Bruno Broucqsault in order for him to defend his World Cup title in La Vegas at the end of April. The latter will therefore be taking a well-earned break during Ascension weekend.

Dollar du Mûrier: also injured during the Olympic Games in Athens will not be returning from the stables of Eric Navet. The stallion's owner has decided otherwise! Will he once again rediscover jumping arenas? Who will ride him? Those are the questions. For the moment, Mr. Philippe Bodinier's stallion is servicing mares!

Finally, in terms of bad news, and a 'notable absentee', the desertion of **Tlaloc M**, the stallion of Reynald Angot, who underwent emergency colic surgery (twisted intestine) in the middle of March, so the horse of Gregory Mars, having recovered from an enforced break since last year, and who made his comeback in competition last January, can only ponder a probable return to the French team

Eugénie Angot and **Cigale du Taillis** will not be at La Baule for the opening of the Super League Season. The mare needs to rest following a brush with piroplasmosis.

Undermining everything, the Olympic team is 'on the carpet'!

Finally, to close the long list of convalescent horses, one comes to the last name:

Galet d'Auzay, the Grand Prix horse of Michel Robert, has joined the ranks of the wounded. Following a severe fall in the Grand Prix of the CSI-W Bordeaux last February, the horse has been confined to his box to take care of a foreleg tendon problem

According to Jean-Maurice Bonneau, "this third campaign for the Super League is rather delicate. The triple is always playable, but from bases appreciably renewed. I have three SL events to prepare for the European Championships. That's not much. On the other side, I will profit from La Baule for preparing my selection in view of the Mediterranean Championships in Almeria (Spain) at the end of June. Over there I want to play the card of couples which have true potential without yet having experience of the very high level, but who one can imagine as tomorrow's relief in terms of the Olympic Games for Beijing. For La Baule 2005, my selection will draw from the French fishpond."

Who will thus be the new pillars of the French team for 2005, and in the future? The Official International of France should already give us some indication in the face of adversity, with seven other teams for reference.

The complete document on the presentation of the new high-level policy of the French Equestrian Federation: <http://www.ffe.com/accueil/documents/certificat.pdf>