



I LA BAULE KICKS OFF THE THIRD SUPER LEAGUE SEASON

A REFOCUSED AND CONDENSED PROGRAMME

Eleven classes, 320,000 euros, four days of competition, such is the consolidated programme proposed by the Official International Jumping of France 2005 which will take place at La Baule from 5–8 May next, during Ascension weekend.

This first leg of the Samsung Super League, reserved for the eight best (*) CSIO***** teams on the jumping planet (only one CSIO per year and per country), signals the start of the 2005 outdoor season. A return to centre stage for the major teams following the winter season reserved for individual qualifiers, in the best of cases, for the World Cup final at the end of April.

The best eight teams make their comeback on grass to dispute the queen of tests with the Samsung Nations' Cup on Friday, 6 May.

The Saturday is reserved for the horses that will dispute the 'cross-country jumping' class which makes up the Derby of the Pays de la Loire Region.

And, finally, pride of place for individual performers in the Grand Prix Longines of the Town of La Baule, which will conclude the four feast days encompassing the best from the showjumping world.

In the end, the programme could be revamped with less intensity thanks to the abandonment of the classes reserved for seven-year-old horses.

(*) Studies conducted over all eight stages of the SSL in 2004 ranked the French stage at La Baule second in this premier division of jumping behind the German event at Aachen, in terms of coverage by written media as well as TV.

TIMETABLE

Below you will find the timetable for the three major classes that dictate the entire programme for the French CSIO at the François André stadium:

- Nations' Cup, Friday, 6 May: first horse on course at 3:00 p.m. (eight teams of four riders for each of the two rounds);
- Derby, Saturday, 7 May: first horse on course at 1:15 p.m. (note the new starting time)
- Grand Prix, Sunday, 8 May: first horse on course at 12.15 p.m. (first round), and 3:45 p.m. (reserved for the top 18 riders qualified from the first round)

Images of all three classes will be broadcast on the TV: France 3 national, Eurosport, Equidia, and Sport+. The complete timetable can be found on the internet: www.labaule-cheval.com

Otherwise, classes begin around 9:00 a.m. each day.

TOWARDS A FRENCH TRIPLE IN THE SUPER LEAGUE?

The Samsung Super League begins in La Baule for the third year. Two French victories in 2003 and 2004. What will happen in 2005? The answer will come next September in Barcelona, at the conclusion of the eighth and final stage of the 2005 edition of the Samsung Super League. In any case, the comeback of the French team is a rather delicate matter, as told to us by Jean-Maurice Bonneau. See his interview.

2005 Calendar for the CSIO*** SSL**

- La Baule, France: 5-8 May
- Rome, Italy: 26-29 May
- St. Gallen, Switzerland: 2-5 June
- Rotterdam, Netherlands: 16-19 June
- (European Championship, San Patrignano, Italy: 20-24 July)
- Hickstead, Great Britain: 28-31 July
- Dublin, Ireland: 3-7 August
- Aachen, Germany: 23-28 August
- Barcelona, Spain: 15-18 September

THE ARRIVAL OF THE SWISS

Having remained outside the door of the Super League since its creation, the Swiss team has finally earned its ticket to run with the members of the major teams (those that are) after winning Division II last year, tweaking respectively the noses and the beards of the Swedish women and men, and replacing the Italians who have been relegated to Division II. Markus Fuchs the 'veteran', gave an interview alongside their new Chef d'Equipe Rolph Grass. See the interviews.

The following nations will make up the Super League in 2005: Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States.

MORE THAN 60 RIDERS UNLEASHED, PLUS TWO COURSE DESIGNERS

In addition to the five official riders for each one of the eight SSL teams, there will be a squad of individual riders taking to the arena for the Official International Jumping of France, including:

- 15 French riders
- Spain: Luis Alvarez Cervera and Cayetano Martinez de Irujo
- Belgium: Judy-Ann Malchior, in addition to the Belgian team
- Italy: Emmanuel Fiorelli and one other rider
- Israel: Sonia Finquel
- Sweden: Svante Johansson

See the list of riders below.

The courses for the 11 classes will be designed by a French duo of course builders: Serge Houtmann and Frédéric Cottier.

SOUND, LIKE A PLAY

Inaugurated three years ago, and polished every year, the wiring for the sound at La Baule has become a reference point in terms of its value to sporting achievement: the breath of the horse, encouragement from the rider, the rhythm of the cantering stride on the turf, the trembling of a rail that totters but doesn't fall, and the crashes that cannot be reversed ... As many sounds, thus sound information, that the public witnesses live on stage. Stage sounds that are also captured for the production of images broadcast to televisions. This wired for sound arena – an idea of Jean Rochefort – has been installed with the support of the French Equestrian Federation.