



PRESS RELEASE

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AN IRISH TOUCH TO KICK OFF THE JUMPING INTERNATIONAL DE LA BAULE – OFFICIEL DE FRANCE

The Jumping International de La Baule – Officiel de France got underway this Thursday with the opening competitions of an event that will conclude on Sunday with the Rolex Grand Prix Ville de La Baule.

As always, the world's top riders have answered the call and already thrilled the crowds at the Stade François André. Among them was Ireland's Cian O'Connor, winner of the FFE Generali Prize. He will return on Friday determined to secure a second consecutive victory for Ireland in the Barrière Nations Cup, a highly anticipated event for all, just two months ahead of the upcoming World Championships.



Cian O'Connor & Genghis Khan

The first jumps, the first gallops, and the first thrills. This Thursday, the François André Stadium welcomed the world's top riders for the opening of the four-day 2026 Longines Jumping International de La Baule – Officiel de France. Under a beautiful blue sky, Ireland's **Cian O'Connor** (world No. 32) proved the fastest in the FFE Generali Prize (1.50m speed class), a qualifying event for the Rolex Grand Prix Ville de La Baule. Riding Genghis Khan (formerly Gengis Kann de Londé), a 10-year-old Selle Français horse previously ridden by Frenchman Emeric George until 2024, O'Connor claimed victory. "It always gives you confidence to win a major class on the first day of a show," said the Irish rider, bronze medallist at the 2012 Olympic Games and European Team Champion in 2017. "I've been coming to La Baule for many years, and it's always a pleasure. Genghis Khan is a French-bred horse, and it's fantastic for his breeders to see him return to France and, even better, to see him win here. He will compete again in the Saur Prize on Saturday. On Friday, with the Irish team, we will try to defend our title in the Barrière Nations Cup. Beyond the possibility of achieving a double victory, and with the World Championships only two months away, it is also very important for all teams to compete on an arena like this one, which is very similar to Aachen."

By just four hundredths of a second, he edged out France's 2016 Olympic champion **Kevin Staut** and Féline de Hus HDC. Starting near the end of the class, Canada's **Erynn Ballard**, riding De Flor 111 Z Santa Rosa, pushed **Julien Épaillard** and Le Coultre de Muze (formerly ridden by Philippe Rozier) off the podium.

Earlier in the day, the Pro-Confort Prize (1.45m two-phase class) gave many riders the opportunity to provide their horses with their first taste of competition in La Baule ahead of Friday's Barrière Nations Cup. The class was won by 20-year-old Swiss rider Gaëtan Joliat aboard Scarlina de Tiji Z, finishing ahead of Sweden's Amanda Landeblad (Hadriana du Ter) and Great Britain's **Jessica Mendoza** (Malou HX). Later on, Martin Fuchs once again brought the Swiss national anthem to the fore by winning the Boss Equestrian Prize (1.45m two-phase class) with Falcon du Toultia Z. He finished six hundredths of a second ahead of former world No. 1 **Henrik von Eckermann** of Sweden, riding Glamour Girl, while Brazil's Pedro **Junqueira Muylaert** (winner of the Grand Prix in 2017) took third place aboard Quax 76.

CSI1*

In the CSI 1* classes held late on Thursday, the Atlantique La Baule – Guérande Agglo Prize (1.10m, two-phase class) was won by **Mélanie Cisneros** aboard Gemme de Rouillac. A regular standout performer in La Baule with two victories and a runner-up finish last year she was nearly two seconds faster than **Lisa Gaulier** (Utchello) and **Carlotta Sacchetti** (Helectre du Bodery).

Runner-up in last year's CSI 1* Range Rover Grand Prix, **Camille Fuzeau Thomas** got her 2026 campaign off to the perfect start by winning the Ouest France Prize, once again partnered with Emingway CT. Anne-France Dolleans (Atout Cœur d'Yville) and Nathan Quivaux (Flore de l'Home) completed the podium.

Also noteworthy was the ninth-place finish of Nicolas Touzaint, the multiple Olympic medallist in eventing (gold in 2004, silver in 2024, and bronze in 2021), who is competing in La Baule with Diabolo Menthe.

THE BARRIÈRE NATIONS CUP: A TRUE TEST AHEAD OF THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

This Friday, the **Barrière Nations Cup** (1:30 p.m.) will be the highlight of the day.

Following the traditional parade of teams behind their national flags, ten nations will compete to succeed Ireland, last year's winner. With the World Championships in Aachen, Germany (19–23 August for the jumping competitions), just two months away, every chef d'équipe is approaching the La Baule fixture as a genuine test.

The World Championships will also serve as a qualifier for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, with the seven best-placed nations (excluding the United States) securing qualification. Competing on a grass arena similar to the one that will be used in Aachen, teams will have a valuable opportunity to gather key information and assess their preparations.

"At every show I attend whether in Aachen, Rome, or St. Gallen, all of which are held on grass you can feel the pressure building within every team," said Édouard Coupérie, France's chef d'équipe. "That pressure will increase even further at the La Baule CSIO5*, which is one of the final grass events before team selections are announced. Every chef d'équipe will be taking stock of their squad. Of course, our French riders will feel some pressure, but they are used to it, so that doesn't worry me. The magnificent grass arena of the Stade François André is truly special, and we can't wait to compete there."

Still searching for their first Nations Cup victory in La Baule since 2017, the French team will line up, in order of go, with **Nina Mallevaey** and Dynastie de Beaufour, **Olivier Perreau** and Dorai d'Aiguilly*GL Events, **Antoine Ermann** and Floyd des Prés, and **Julien Épaillard** and Fringan de Vesquerie.

Order of Go for the Nations (Draw):

1. Germany, 2. Great Britain, 3. France, 4. Switzerland, 5. Italy, 6. Ireland, 7. Saudi Arabia, 8. Sweden, 9. Belgium, 10. United States of America (USA)

The day will get underway at 8:15 a.m. with the Markel Equine Insurance Prize (CSI 1*, 1.15m speed class). Action will continue at 10:10 a.m. with the Hus Reproduction Prize, a CSIO 5* event (1.45m speed class), before concluding at 5:50 p.m. with the Datanaute Prize (CSI 1*, 1.25m speed class).

Throughout the day, visitors will be able to enjoy a wide range of activities in the Exhibitors' and Partners' Villages. The Equine Well-Being Village will also host numerous panel discussions and conferences.

STARTLISTS & RÉSULTS

PHOTOS

FIND ALL THE INFORMATIONS ON THE JUMPING DE LA BAULE WEBSITE



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