



FEI European Eventing Championships

for Young Riders & Juniors 2016 - Presented By Saudia Airlines



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ITALY IS AWAITING THE NEXT YOUNG EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS

The FEI has assigned the European challenge to Italy. An event set for september, awarding twelve continental medals. The countdown begins for "FEI European Eventing Championships for young riders and juniors".

It will be a busy year for Italy's young eventers and eventing trainers who are preparing for an outstanding challenge, the "FEI European Eventing Championships for Young Riders and Juniors" which will be held in Rome at the Military Equestrian Centre of Montelibretti. Having chosen the same venue for both championships one can say Italy's bid has been very well rewarded by the FEI. 12 medals will be presented at the event which is set for september. The Military Equestrian Centre of Montelibretti has hosted three Nations Cup Eventing competitions and other prestigious international equestrian events in the past and is now preparing to celebrate the 2016 european upcoming champions.

Although six "FEI European Eventing Junior Championships" (Pratoni del Vivaro 1974, 1983, 1987, 1994, 2000, 2004) and two editions of the "FEI European Eventing Young Riders Championships" (Pratoni del Vivaro 1997, Turin 1991) have already been hosted by Italy, the country is not amongst the major organizers of this type of eventing competition. With a total of 16 editions (9 juniors, 7 young riders) this leadership belongs to Great Britain, followed closely by Germany (14 editions, 8 junior/6 young rider) and France (14 editions, 10 junior/ 4 young rider).

Great Britain also holds another important record. British riders have been the most successful in both categories winning 33 junior and 31 young rider gold medals. Their results outshine Germany's tally of 29 junior and 23 young rider golds. Third place goes to France with 16 junior and 8 young rider gold medals.

In Montelibretti the British will try to defend their 2015 young rider individual and team title, while the Germans will do their best to bring back the junior individual and team gold for the second year running.

Out go all teams, the most eager will be the Italians. Their latest junior individual gold medal has been won by Vittoria Panizzon with Grommet back in 2000 (Rome, Pratoni del Vivaro). Vittoria has since developed into one of the world's leading eventing riders. She has taken part in 2 Olympic Games and has recently conquered a place for Rio thanks to her outstanding competition record. Italy's most recent junior team gold medal was won in 2003 (Filippo Tabarini/Arnoldo, Martina Sgarzani/Faramon, Evelina Bertoli/Elektra, Luca Bommino/Allegra) at Pardubice (CZE), while young rider gold medals have always eluded the country's riders.

Being able to host two European championships at the same time and in the same place is no mean feat. Being chosen by the International Equestrian Federation is an accomplishment in itself and for that the country has to credit Gianfranco Ravà who officially submitted Italy's bid during the time he was acting as Special Commissioner FISE (Italian Equestrian Federation), a role he was appointed for by CONI (Italian Olympic Committee).

"The Equestrian Military Centre of Montelibretti - said Gianfranco Ravà - is well known by the FEI. Many international events have already been successfully organized on its premises. The Italian Equestrian Federation has immediately welcomed the addition of this event to its international calendar knowing that the high standard of Montelibretti's facilities and Organization Committee would guarantee the ability to meet the FEI's requirements."

With Ravà's pursual, Italy obtained the assignment from FEI. A success that has given THE NATION one more prospective for the promotion of equestrian sports, especially eventing.

"The Military Equestrian Centre of Montelibretti - said Michele Perugini, Lieutenant Colonel and Sport and Training Branch Chief of the Equestrian Military Centre of Montelibretti - is delighted and honored to be hosting such a prestigious event, which is an acknowledgment of the work done over the years in the organization of international events. The experience and the professionalism of our staff will be a valuable contribution to the success of the "FEI European Eventing Championships for Young Riders and Juniors - presented by Saudia Airlines". Preparations are already underway and we will work hard to make our Italian Equestrian Federation shine at the Military Centre of Montelibretti, while promoting our fascinating discipline".

Vittorio Orlandi, President of the Italian Equestrian Federation, welcomes the continental event with enthusiasm: *"Italy, and in this particular case, the Mili-*

tary Equestrian Centre of Montelibretti, have proven their organizational abilities more than once and are well capable to meet the very high standards required by an event like the "FEI European Eventing Championships for Young Riders and Juniors". The show that will be staged next september is a fantastic opportunity for the development of our sport. First of all it will give our juniors and young riders the chance to compete and prove themselves against the best European athletes. Furthermore it will also be very motivating, helping them to mature both as sportsmen and as individuals. To the Italian riders competing in Montelibretti I say 'stay cool and concentrated'. From my own experience I know how hard it is to keep calm and focused when you have to represent your country with the added pressure of competing on home ground. In any case, I am confident that our riders will battle like young gladiators. In the past these championships have proven a valuable springboard for many international riders' senior careers. Only to mention a few Marina Sciocchetti and Anna Casagrande (Bronze Junior European Team medallists in 1976 that have later conquered an Olympic team silver, 1980), Stefano Brecciaroli (one of our most successful eventers and three-time Olympian who has won individual and team gold at the Junior Europeans in 1992 and has claimed an individual bronze medal at the Young Riders Europeans in '94) and Vittoria Panizzon, a junior individual champion herself who has represented Italy in two editions of the Olympic Games (she won individual gold and team bronze in 2000 and individual silver and team bronze at the European Young Rider Championships 2003)".

For the ninth time in Equestrian history Italy is preparing to welcome young eventers in their quest for European glory. The Military Equestrian Center of Montelibretti in Rome will host an event that will witness the abilities of the next generation of champions.

Excitement is building up as Italian talents and their coaches are concentrating on their mission of adding more medals to their tally. Italy's young riders have never achieved individual or team glory and a gold medal in the under 21 championship will be their main goal. The last medal captured by an Italian young rider is Eleonora Boschi's individual silver aboard Hotchkiss McManus in Malmo, Sweden, in 2012. The last time the team has stood on the podium was back in 2008 when Federico Riso/Well Measured, Mattia Luciani/Flying Brinkmann, Sara Breschi/Riva Ruel, Stella Benatti/Monarc Du Parc collected the bronze medal. Since Vittoria Panizzon claimed the individual title in 2000 riding Grommet in Pratonì del Vivaro (Rome) a win has eluded Italian juniors. Their last individual medal has been captured by Evelina Bertoli who won bronze on Elektra in Pratonì del Vivaro in 2004. As a team Francesca Banchelli/Joker d'Helby, Martina Camilla Crippa/Jenga, Francesca Malaspina/Cancun and Umberto Riva/Milady de la Loge have claimed bronze in Bad Segeberg (Germany, 2010).

One cannot talk about Juniors and Young Riders European Eventing Championships without mentioning Great Britain's records. The British have hosted 16 European Eventing Championships (7 for Young Riders and 9 for Juniors), more than any other nation, but more importantly, they have won the largest number of medals too.

31 Young Riders and 32 Juniors gold medals have been conquered by riders wearing the Union Jack. An incredible achievement. In Rome British young riders will be defending champions as they have claimed both the individual and the team title in 2015.

Regarding records Germany is biting on Great Britain's heels. Germans have won gold 53 times (23 young riders, 30 juniors) and hold both the individual and the juniors 2015 titles.