



GERMANY TAKES 2016 FURUSIYYA TITLE
**ON A NIGHT TO REMEMBER
IN BARCELONA**

By Louise Parkes

TEAM GERMANY CLAIMED THE FURUSIYYA FEI NATIONS CUP™ JUMPING 2016 TROPHY AT THE REAL CLUB DE POLO IN BARCELONA (ESP) TONIGHT, BUT NOT WITHOUT A FIERCE FIGHT WITH THE RUNNERS-UP FROM GREAT BRITAIN. ON A NIGHT TO REMEMBER, IT CAME DOWN TO A BREATH-TAKING JUMP-OFF BETWEEN NEWLY-CROWNED INDIVIDUAL OLYMPIC CHAMPION NICK SKELTON AND GERMANY'S MARCUS EHNING TO DECIDE THE RESULT. AND EMOTIONS RAN HIGH AS WINNING TEAM MEMBER, LUDGER BEERBAUM, SAID GOODBYE TO THIS GREAT SPORT WITH A TRADEMARK FOOT-PERFECT PERFORMANCE. YOU COULD HARDLY HEAR A PIN DROP DURING HIS LAST-TO-GO ROUND WITH CASELLO WHICH ENSURED THE TWO-WAY SHOWDOWN THAT WOULD SEAL VICTORY FOR HIS COUNTRY.

Team USA claimed the third step of the podium when finishing with just four faults on the board, but they were hotly pursued by Italy, Ireland and Switzerland who each finished with five as the time-allowed played its part. The defending champions from Belgium had to settle for sixth place ahead of the Dutch whose form seems to have deserted them in recent months.

Cream

Once again course designer **Santiago** Varela presented a superb track that took a lot of jumping and brought the cream to the top. The majority of mistakes came at the end of the course, with the penultimate triple combination taking a heavy toll, but there were accuracy questions all the way around. The eight teams that qualified from Thursday's first round all started on level pegging again today so it was a wide-open contest from the start. It quickly became apparent however that the British would be major contenders when Skelton's opening clear with his Olympic gold-medal-winning ride Big Star was followed by another from Michael Whitaker and Viking.

Under the unique set of rules for the **Furusiyya Final** each country nominates a total of five riders and it was notable that the top three teams all called up new recruits today for their four-member sides. British Chef d'Equipe, Di Lampard, brought in Jessica Mendoza and Spirit T in place of John Whitaker and Ornellaia, but with 12 faults for the youngest team member it fell to Scott Brash to rescue the situation with a clear from Ursula which saw his side post the first zero score of the competition.

And the only ones to match them would be the Germans, although they also had to wait for their last man to go. **World no. 1**, Christian Ahlmann set them up with a lovely tour of the track from the ever-reliable Taloubet Z, but they stuttered when Marcus Ehning's Pret a Tout hit the last element of the triple combination. Janne Friederike Meyer was called up to replace Daniel Deusser and First Class van Eeckelghem and she steadied the German ship with a typically flamboyant clear from the fabulous Goya which meant that if Ludger Beerbaum could follow suit then they could continue to stalk their British rivals.

Spine-chilling

Tonight's round by Beerbaum was spine-chilling, so many people around the ring willing the 53-year-old rider around the arena because they really wanted to see this man who has been such a hero of the sport for so many years go out on a good note. He will continue to ride as an individual, but tonight was his curtain-call as a team-member and everyone wanted it to go right. The entire stadium was gripped with tension waiting for him to cross the line, and when he did there was a huge burst of applause and it would take a jump-off now to decide the new Furusiyya champions.

The Americans were already assured of third place, Lauren Hough's four faults with Ohlala - at the very final oxer - followed by a double-error from Audrey Coulter and Capital Colnardo before 19-year-old Lillie Keenan pulled it back with a fantastic clear from Super Sox. Called in at the last moment when Lucy Davis' Barron wasn't quite himself, Keenan really measured up under pressure and when Laura Kraut was also fault-free with Zeremonie then the US total of four faults would drop them in behind the two teams now vying for the title.

Scorched

Skelton was first into the jump-off and scorched around the new track in 41.82 seconds to set the target. This would ensure a generous share of the **€200,000 bonus** on offer to riders jumping double-clear over the first round and again today. But Ehning said afterwards that he already knew he could beat the Olympic champion. "I watched him go and I knew I could be faster than him. I was really under pressure - I wanted this win for Ludger as it was his last Nations Cup" he explained. Ehning once said that he will never be the fastest rider on the planet so that is why he uses his turning skills to full effect, and tonight he did just that, cutting corners everywhere and galloping down to the last more than two seconds up on the clock to clinch it.

For all of the German team, tonight's win was particularly poignant. Janne Friederike Meyer put some perspective on it. "I can still remember my first Nations Cup with Ludger in Rotterdam, he has always been a great idol for my generation and I was so proud to be with him again in his last Nations Cup. I was called in for Daniel and I knew Daniel could have done a clear round so I wanted



Germany's Daniel Deusser & First Class van Eeckelghem



Germany's Marcus Ehning & Pret A Tout



Netherlands's Gerco Schroder



Germany's Ludger Beerbaum & Casello



Egypt's Abdel Said & California



USA's Laura Kraut & Zeremonie



Germany's Ludger Beerbaum & Casallo

© Hippo Foto - Dirk Caremans



Belgium's Gregory Wathelet & Coree

© Jim Hollander/FEI



Mexico's Jose Antonio Egua Chedraui & Ninloubet, 22

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Team Germany

© Richard Julliant / FEI



Team USA

© Richard Julliant



Austria's Julia Kayser & Sterrehof S Cayetano Z

© Jim Hollander/FEI

to do this clear round for Daniel and for Ludger and the whole team. There are some special days and today was one of them - everyone could feel it when Ludger went in and everybody knew this man had to go clear to keep the chance of winning. Every single fence, everybody jumped with him and then he was clear and everyone went crazy!" she said.

Send-off

For the Germans, this Furusiyya Final has always been about giving Ludger Beerbaum a good send-off from the team. "In the last couple of weeks we were really looking forward to Ludger's last Nations Cups" said Daniel Deusser tonight. "We really wanted to win a medal in the Olympic Games and to do one big thing again. We have had a lot of very strong teams over the last couple of years and the last couple of months but in the end we were always missing a little bit of luck, one fault too many. At the Olympic Games we were really happy, we had a great fight and finished with the bronze medal which made us extremely happy but somehow the last last big win was still missing. This weekend didn't start really good with my horse getting sick, but everything turned out perfect at the end. All five of us worked together and the dream really came true, that we won Ludger's last Nations Cup, it couldn't be better!"

Beerbaum admitted that tonight's prizegiving brought back memories of his individual gold medal victory with Classic Touch at the Real Club de Polo during the Barcelona Olympic Games back in 1992. And he was very touched by his team-mate's tributes. "The way they expressed their thoughts, their feelings, their emotions about our performances in the past months, the good luck, the bad luck, the good moments but also the disappointing moments that says it all. They were really fighting for me today and it's unbelievable to have this support. For me it couldn't be a nicer end", he said.

Transformed

FEI President, Ingmar de Vos, talked about the input from Furusiyya that has transformed the sport of Nations Cup Jumping in recent years. "Four years ago my predecessor HRH Princess Haya was here at the first press conference for the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup. Today I got a message from the Saudi Equestrian Fund, from His Highness Prince Faisal - the brain behind the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup - to really congratulate the German team on this victory. We are very happy with the Furusiyya series. What it has done for the FEI and the sport in general is incredible.

"In 2012 we had discussions about remodelling the Nations Cup, making it a series with qualifiers and a final, and at that time it was a very controversial decision. But I think we have proven together with Furusiyya and the Saudi Equestrian Fund that it's the way to go. They invested in this product to create a legacy and we are very grateful for that. This partnership is coming to an end as you know, and it is up to us to find a new partner. Thanks to the Saudi Equestrian Fund and HRH Princess Haya we have a sustainable series for the future."

Longines Challenge Cup

The Longines Challenge Cup has now been rescheduled for Sunday morning. The starting time for the competition is provisionally 11.30, but that will be confirmed tomorrow morning at 09.00 depending on the weather conditions.

Result:

1. Germany 0 in first round, 0/39.80 in jump-off: Taloubet Z (Christian Ahlmann) 0, Pret a Tout (Marcus Ehning) 4/0 39.80, Goja (Janne Freiderike Meyer) 0, Casello (Ludger Beerbaum) 0.
2. Great Britain 0 in first round, 0/41.57 in jump-off: Big Star (Nick Skelton) 0/0 41.57, Viking (Michael

Whitaker) 0, Spirit T (Jessica Mendoza) 12, Ursula XII (Scott Brash) 0.

3. USA 4 faults: Ohlala (Lauren Hough) 4, Capital Colorado (Audrey Coulter) 8, Super Sox (Lillie Keenan) 0, Zeremonie (Laura Kraut) 0.

4. Italy 5 faults/ 223.03 seconds: Casallo Z (Piergiorgio Bucci) 8, Ensor de Litrange LxII (Lorenzo de Luca) 0, Antonio (Gianni Govoni) 1, Tower Mouche (Bruno Chimirri) 4.

5. Ireland 5 faults/225.81 seconds: Golden Hawk (Shane Breen) 8, Go Easy de Muze (Darragh Kenny) 0, All Star 5 (Denis Lynch) 1, MHS Going Global (Greg Broderick) 4.

6. Switzerland 5 faults/226.34 seconds: Quorida de Trejo (Romain Duguet) 0, Corbinian (Steve Guerdat) 8, Lord Pepsi (Paul Estermann) 1, Clooney 51 (Martin Fuchs) 4.

7. Belgium 16 faults: Bisquet Balou C (Nicola Philippaerts) 4, Cas de Liberte (Niels Bruynseels) 8, Grand Cru van de Rozenberg (Jerome Guery) 8, Coree (Gregory Wathelet) 4.

8. Netherlands 20 faults: Emerald NOP (Harrie Smolders) 9, VDL Groep Arera C (Maikel van der

Vleuten) 8, Caruso S La Silla (Jeroen Dubbeldam) 4, Glock's London NOP (Gerco Schroder) 8.

Facts and Figures:

Team Germany won the fourth edition of the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup™ Jumping Final at the Real Club de Polo in Barcelona, Spain tonight.

8 teams qualified for the second and deciding Final competition, and it came down to a jump-off between the eventual champions and Great Britain when each were tied on a zero score after the first round.

Great Britain was represented by the horse-and-rider partnership that claimed individual gold at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games last month - Nick Skelton and Big Star.

Germany's Marcus Ehning steered Pret a Tout to a faster jump-off round to clinch it when second to go against the clock.

German veteran, Ludger Beerbaum, made his final appearance for his national team tonight a winning one, producing a vital clear with Casello to ensure a jump-off.

According to the special rules applying to the Furusiyya Final, countries were permitted to call up reserve riders for tonight's competition and each of the podium placed teams did so.

Team USA finished third when posting a four-fault result.

The winning German team also included world no. 1, Christian Ahlmann with his 16-year-old campaigner Taloubet Z and Janne Friederike Meyer riding Goya.

Quotes:

Santiago Varela, course designer: Congratulations to the winners, they did a super job on Thursday and today. I'm really happy with the result, really proud of the winners, and Ludger winning his last Nations Cup was super exciting! Marcus did an amazing job, his turn to fence no 10 was unbelievable and to beat Nick is unbelievable!"

Otto Becker, Chef d'Equipe Germany: "Thank you to FEI and to Furusiyya and Prince Faisal that for what they did this for the sport and for the Nations Cup. And thanks to the Organising Committee - when we saw the weather yesterday it was so bad

but then today we had perfect conditions."

Christian Ahlmann GER: "Overall it was a perfect day for all of us, it couldn't have been better today from first to the last! Ludger's clear at the end, Marcus' jump-off, it was exciting to the very end, a great class for all of us and couldn't be more happy today!"

Francisco Espinós, President of Real Club de Polo: "The Barcelona Olympic Games were an unforgettable moment for our club, not to mention a key element in the expansion of equestrianism in our city. Since then, Ludger Beerbaum has become a legend for us all, and in this sense, thank you Ludger for all these years and the best of luck for this new phase in your career."

Ludger Beerbaum GER, talking after a special presentation this afternoon to mark his retirement from team competition: Ludger : "Life has been good to me and I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to do the sport. I am grateful in many areas, my family, my owners, the people who trusted in me. Now is the time for me to be aware of this and thank everyone for what is important. I'm happy with the decision, it wasn't taken over

the last few days or weeks, it was made some months before Rio and I have no regrets. I'm really thankful, and of course I wish of my team-mates the best of luck for the future."

Count of Salvatierra, Cayetano Martínez de Irujo, Spanish showjumping legend and former President of the International Jumping Riders Club: "The first time I met Ludger at a meeting of the International Jumping Riders Club he seemed cold and distant. But in the end he turned out to be a hard-working, goal-driven and kind person. He learned to be more comfortable around his colleague, and over the years he has established many long-lasting friendships."

Otto Becker, Chef d'Equipe Germany: "I'm very, very happy with my team - all five were involved in the two rounds, and I'm really proud of how all five rode today. I'm especially proud of the two who took the pressure, Ludger had to go clear in Rio and here in his last Nations Cup and he had to do it again. Marcus had very bad luck in Rio but he was amazing under pressure today." 🇩🇪

This article was first published on FEI.org



Great Britain's Scott Bash & Ursula XII



France's Penelope Leprevost & Flora de Mariposa