

WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES 2010

# WHAT WAS UP

By Ina El Kobbia, Germany

FOR THE FIRST TIME, EUROPE THE MOTHERLAND OF MODERN EQUESTRIANISM HAD TO PACK AND CROSS AN OCEAN TO PARTICIPATE AT THE WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES (WEG) 2010. THESE GAMES WERE THE FIRST TO BE HELD OUTSIDE EUROPE AND THE FIRST TO TAKE PLACE IN THE USA. THE HORSE PARK IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY WAS AN IMPRESSIVE VENUE FOR THIS EVENT. THE FACILITY IS A 1,224-ACRE (4.95 KM<sup>2</sup>) PARK DEDICATED TO "MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HORSE".

▼ They were talk of the world; Dutch rider Edward Gal & the living legend Totilas







▲ The German gold medal team with their new federal trainer Otto Becker

The WEG 2010 featured 632 athletes with 772 horses and an audience number that topped 500,000. For the first time eight disciplines presented themselves; the newly introduced eighth discipline was Para equestrian (Para dressage). Back in 2006 HRH Princess Haya announced at the WEG in Aachen that Para equestrian sport forms part of the FEI Family. Four years later Para dressage riders lived their dream at the first integrative World Equestrian Games. Whereby the German Para equestrian team turned out to be the most successful team of all German teams at these Games. The five Para dressage riders brought five medals back home, a total of three individual gold medals, one individual silver medal and team silver. Additionally, the German Para dressage rider Dr. Angelika Trabert was granted the FEI Award 2010 "Against All Odds" out of the hands of Princess Haya who was by then newly reelected FEI President. Next to the fact that German horse sport had come into crisis after a series of doping allegations against top riders following the Olympics in Hong Kong, Germany started a strong cleaning

▼ German Para dressage rider Dr. Angelika Trabert gold medal winner in freestyle & winner of the FEI Award against all odds on her horse Ariva Avanti








▲ Endurance Racing was dominated by the UAE that won three medals in this discipline!

campaign against doping and completely reorganised its teams; it was therefore beyond expectations that the newly formed German jumping team would do so well and win the team gold medal right on the spot! As for dressage Germany had to settle with the team bronze medal and accept the fact that it was no longer the candidate for a gold medal. The Netherlands took a strong lead in this discipline with a couple that has been the talk of the world and already made history; Edward Gal and the amazing Totilas won all possible disciplines in dressage and even crossed the magic line of 90% - something that the world has not seen before. "With Totilas everything looks easy", Edward Gal said about a horse that the world named a living legend. However the horse is no longer his, German Paul Schockemoehle bought Totilas from the owners after the WEG for a rumored price between nine and fifteen million euros and brought it to Germany. German dressage rider Matthias Alexander Rath will be the new rider of Totilas; it remains to be seen what will come out of this new combination. It was surely not pure patriotism that made Schockemoehle buy this horse. "I wanted this horse", was the simple comment of Europe's strongest horse dealer and he got it!

When it comes to nation rankings at these WEG, the world had to learn that there was a new group of nations that were strong, dynamic and determined to reach for the best; these Games were the best ever for the Arab World that as a region gained four medals! The UAE alone took three medals in endurance racing and dominated this discipline. The team of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid al Maktoum took the team gold medal in addition to the individual silver medal that was won by His Highness himself, and the bronze medal went to his son Hamdan. In jumping the extra ordinary Saudi Arabian rider Abdullah Al Sharbatly took the individual silver medal ahead of former Olympic gold medallist Eric Lamaze, the individual gold medal went to Belgian Philippe le Jeune.

Finally, these Games also stood in light of the presidential elections of the FEI that took place shortly after the WEG on 5th November. During the Games eyes were therefore on HRH Princess Haya who had announced her intention to run for a second term. The Kentucky Games were a final public test for the Princess, who faced strong challenges from two European candidates equally running for

presidency. Against all predictions HRH earned a landslide victory by 90 to 124 votes at the General Assembly in Taipei to be president of the FEI for another term. As the newly reelected President Princess Haya announced that one of her strongest intentions will be to unify the FEI. Truly for anyone who devotes him- or herself to equestrianism, unity is a wish we all hope will come true for a sport that has a long history in mankind and is the only one that unifies two athletes, the horse and the rider! 



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