

OTTO BECKER
**ON GERMANY'S PREPARATIONS
FOR CHIO AACHEN & THE FEI
EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

WE HAD A PHONE CONVERSATION WITH OTTO BECKER THE CHEF D'EQUIPE OF THE GERMAN SHOWJUMPING TEAM. HE SHARED HIS INSIGHTS ON THEIR PREPARATIONS FOR CHIO AACHEN AND THE FEI EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS. HE WAS EN ROUTE TO AACHEN WHEN WE SPOKE, PROVIDING US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE TEAM'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE EVENTS. THE RIDERS SELECTED TO REPRESENT GERMANY AT THE MERCEDES-BENZ NATIONS CUP ON THURSDAY THE 3RD OF JULY INCLUDE HANS-DIETER DREHER, MARCUS EHNING, SOPHIE HINNERS, CHRISTIAN KUKUK, AND JANA WAGNERS.



How are the preparations coming along for CHIO Aachen and for the Longines FEI Jumping European Championship in A Coruña?

We're quite excited. I am on my way to Aachen now. You must know, equestrian sport has a unifying effect because it brings together everyone; riders, grooms, fans and owners. While some people may be interested in the sport itself or perhaps not, when it comes to representing the country, it becomes something truly special. So, we are all set.

There's significant emphasis placed on Nations Cups; explain the importance and how their rewards and prestige differ from those of Grand Prix events?

Nations Cups are crucial in preparing for major championships. With my riders and their horses, I manage to observe and study the most about their abilities and how they may perform under pressure. Similarly, representing one's own country, stepping into the arena to ride as a team member, and the novelty of competing as a team is a wonderful experience.

As a trainer, how do you typically select the riders with their horses to compete at these events?

It's commonly important to make long-term plans for the jumping calendar given that the riders are busy all year long. To have good management of the horses. We try to develop a plan with the riders well in advance to ensure we know who is strong enough to compete in the 5* Nations Cup, and to also identify new combinations or young horses that we want to develop. We also focus on improving our younger combinations in the 3* levels. Keep in mind that it's also essential to stay flexible and be able to adapt when unexpected situations arise.

In my opinion, making a long-term plan is especially crucial for the top riders and horses—deciding whether they will participate in events like the World Cup or other ones. This planning makes a significant difference. For example, riders competing in the LGCT Global Tour might not be used as frequently in the Nations Cup.

How do you think riders handle the mental challenges of riding at home and meeting spectator expectations?

CHIO Aachen is a special show and Nations Cup night is a special night. We have 40,000 spectators attending and they generally expect German wins. Our selection this year is very experienced. We naturally want a win for the home crowd and also win a medal in Spain at the FEI European Championships. I think we have a strong team and they'll handle the crowds just fine.

You've been the trainer for the German team since 2009. How do you feel about the whole experience?

Well, I love the sport. But did you know I was a wine maker?! It was my passion along with riding and I am lucky to be able to make a career out of my passion. I have so much fun in the sport and during the shows. I enjoy working with the horses. The riders seem to like me and the Federation supports their choices. So, its all a very rewarding experience. 🍷

Photos by Stefan Lafrentz



Otto Becker and Co-Coach Ralf Runge