

THE 9TH EDITION OF THE MOROCCO ROYAL TOUR

# STEADY STEPS TOWARDS PERFECTION

YEAR AFTER YEAR, THE MOROCCO ROYAL TOUR PROVES ITSELF AS AN ESSENTIAL EVENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL EQUESTRIAN CALENDAR. THE SHOWJUMPING CIRCUIT IS ANNUALLY ORGANIZED IN THREE BEAUTIFUL MOROCCAN CITIES OVER THE COURSE OF THREE SUCCESSIVE WEEKENDS IN OCTOBER.

By MENNA LOUTFY





Puis Schwizer - Switzerland



Ghali Bouka \* Morocco

course. World class course designer **Uliano Vezzani** built a technical course requiring high concentration and precision. Even top international riders like Germany's Marco Kutscher and France's Simon Delestre had difficulties with the course with four penalty points each.

The second round witnessed eight riders fighting for the best time. The first to achieve a double clear round was the French Emeric George, riding Chopin des Hayettes with an excellent time of 37.64 seconds, which no rider managed to reach during the rest of this second round.

*"The course was delicate, which is often the case with Uliano Vezzani's ones. Here, the poles are quite light, we cannot afford many mistakes, and we need be precise and choose the right distances. The course focused on both height and technique. In the jump-off, I think I saved some time on my turn behind the vertical N° 2, with Qatar colour. Chopin managed to turn very fast, he was willing, and I could ride him during the course by taking all the risks. I had an advantage, riding a smaller horse, with those tight*

*curves. Chopin is in great shape, and I am thinking about riding him again in the Nations Cup on Sunday. I will also count on him to the CSI4\*W in El Jadida next week," he said.*

The winner of the previous edition of this Grand Prix, Belgium's Jérôme Guery, finished in second with a time of 38.22 seconds, followed by Switzerland's Yannick Jorand in third.

The following day was the Nations Cup with eight countries competing for the title.

**SECOND NATIONS CUP TITLE IN A ROW FOR SWITZERLAND**

It was a rainy day in Rabat but the crowd was present to support their teams and to attend the Nations Cup that everyone awaited.

Eight teams made it to Rabat to take part in the competition. These teams were Belgium, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, France and Morocco.



Team Switzerland - Nations Cup Winner



Simon Delestre - France

Abdel El Kabir Quaddar - Morocco

**THE ROYALE GARDE OF TETOUAN**

**BREATHTAKING HOME WIN FOR GHALI BOUKAA**

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon when The Morocco Royal Tour offered its first 4\* Grand Prix win to the Moroccan Rider Ghali Boukaa.

Riders and supporters of Boukaa rushed to him with tears to carry him in triumph with non-stop applause from the audience, a very moving moment that will give anyone inspiration.

*"This audience really carried me today and recognized me as the hero of the day. It's more than extraordinary: a win at home, in Morocco, for my first CSI 4\*, finally. I had already participated in the 'four-star' Bourg-en-Bresse where I was able to qualify for the World Championships, but here it's different. I am more than happy and I thank His Majesty King Mohammed VI who supports horse riding in Morocco, Charif Moulay Abdellah Alaoui and the Moroccan Royal Federation of Equestrian Sports as well as our national coach, Marcel Delestre."*

When asked about the difficulty of the course he said.

*"It was really a very very hard course. And indeed, the Italian course designer Uliano Vezzani had proposed difficulties closer to a '5-star' with obstacles reaching a height of 1.60, so that among the ten finalists, only eight riders, out of forty-four at the start, could achieve a faultless round. And only three of them were able to double the stake."*

The following weekend brought us to Rabat for the Nations Cup and another Grand Prix.

**A FRENCH WIN IN RABAT GRAND PRIX**

The second leg of the Moroccan Royal Tour was held in the Moroccan Capital Rabat (Dar es Salam). After fierce competition between forty two participating riders in Princess Lalla Amina 4\* Grand Prix, France's Emeric George won the Gold.

Only **seven riders** managed to finish the first round without any penalty points due to the difficulty of the





Philippe Rozier and Father Marcel Rozier - ElJadida



Simon Delestre - ElJadida



Ghali Bouka - ElJadida

The first round carried some difficulties for most of the teams; while France, Belgium and Switzerland excelled with very close scores of 4, 0, 4 points. The second round carried very exciting moments with the French team of Pierre Alain Mortier, Emeric George, Olivier Perreau and Nicolas Dezeuses achieving very close scores to round one with only one rider stepping down. And Belgium's team had a weaker performance than the first round with Dominique Hendrick, Virginie Thonon and Stephanie Andries despite Jerome Guery who made a double clear. On the other hand, the Swiss team clinched the competition with three clear courses by Puis Schwizer, Elian Baumann and Yannick Jorand along with Pauline Zoller who only had four penalty points which guaranteed the Gold for Switzerland.

*"Rabat is a wonderful competition and we are always very welcomed. I composed a team mixed with young riders in need for experience and others, more accomplished. The scores were tight after the first round and I asked my team members to focus on their riding, I really wanted them to enjoy their time in the arena. We could count on Pius, the backbone of this Swiss team, to deal with pressure and to sign the last clear round we needed for victory,"* \_Team leader Andy Kistler.

#### EL-JADIDA

#### VICTORY FOR THE OLYMPIC CHAMPION PHILIPPE ROZIER

Down to the final yet most exciting leg of the tour, El-Jadida held an amazing Finale for this equestrian spectacle.

The 4\* Grand Prix of El-Jadida was built to a high technical level by Uliano Vezzani, the course designer

which was pretty close to a 5\* level. In the first round, with thirty nine riders entering, only four managed to make a clear round with no faults including Philippe Rozier, Olivier Perreau, Abdullah AlSharbatly and Perdo Junquiera Muylart.

Ten riders were there to participate in the second round with Puis Schwizer, Henk Van De Pol. Pierre Allen Mortier, Alberto Marques, Roberto Arioldi and Simon Delestre added to the list with four and single faults.

This second round was against the clock with riders still carrying their first-round scores. At the end, only the Olympic Champion Philippe Rozier made the double clear round of the class, earning him this amazing victory.

Philippe Rozier has also been the Moroccan national team coach for many years.

*"Emotionally, it is an important victory for me," he said. "It is amazing, I love those feelings and it is why I get up every morning, even after thirty-five years! Cristallo A\*LM is a small wonderful horse. He has a big heart and will give anything to please his rider. He arrived at the perfect time in my career, Rahotep de Toscane [his Olympic Games horse – ed.] was hurt for almost a year and Cristallo took over from him with brio. I am really lucky that the Laiterie de Montaigu believed in me and entrusts me this horse. I cannot wait to go back to competitions with both Rahotep and Cristallo in the beginning of next year, it will be incredible!"*

The final results of the indoor Grand Prix were as follows, the Italian Roberto Arioldi came in second place with Dundee van het Marienshof and the French Simon Delestre followed in third, riding Ulane Belmaniere. 🏆



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