



THE ROLEX GRAND PRIX AT CHIO AACHEN
**GREGORY WATHELET
CLAIMS VICTORY**

23 JULY 2017, AACHEN, GERMANY – THE FIRST EQUESTRIAN MAJOR OF THE YEAR HAS BEEN WON BY BELGIUM'S GREGORY WATHELET RIDING COREE, THRILLING THE 40,000 CAPACITY CROWDS IN THE MAIN ARENA AT CHIO AACHEN IN A DRAMATIC JUMP OFF. PORTUGAL'S LUCIANA DINIZ RIDING FIT FOR FUN 13 WAS SECOND AND THE NETHERLANDS' MARC HOUTZAGER RIDING STERREHOF'S CALIMERO TOOK THIRD PLACE.

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A cool, overcast day welcomed the 40 horse and rider combinations who had qualified for the **Rolex Grand Prix** on Sunday 23 July, the finale and highlight of the nine-day **World Equestrian Festival** in West Germany. As one of the four Major's which make up the Rolex Grand Slam of Show Jumping, every rider had travelled here with one aim, to win one of the sport's greatest outdoor arenas.

The Rolex Grand Prix course, designed by the notoriously demanding **Frank Rothenberger** asked these world class pairings continuous questions over the first round, with 16 demanding jumping efforts to tackle. Rolex Testimonee **Scott Brash** was third to go and despite a seemingly faultless start, the penultimate triple combination saw Brash take an unlucky four faults.

Testament to the difficulty of the course, only seven clear rounds were produced within the time, including a foot perfect round from Canadian Olympic 2016 Bronze medalist and Rolex Testimonee, **Eric Lamaze**. Two seconds faster than the rest of the field; he had set the bar high for the second round.

18 riders progressed through to round two, with Scott Brash and Eric Lamaze joined by fellow Rolex Testimonees Kent Farrington and Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum both of whom carried four faults from the first round.

The course was altered for the second stage of the competition; a revised track of 15 jumping efforts tested each horse and rider combination, requiring utmost accuracy and precision to leave the poles standing. Clear rounds were easier to come by and after Luciana Diniz of Portugal followed Marc Houtzager by posting the second double clear; the crowd knew they were going to be treated to a **jump-off**. Gregory Wathelet of

Belgium and Laura Kraut of the USA followed suit, taking the final round to four competitors. Despite recording the fastest first round ride, Rolex Testimonee Eric Lamaze had an unlucky four faults, taking him out of contention of winning the Rolex Grand Prix.

First to go in the jump off was Marc Houtzager, posting a clear round with a time of **53.66** seconds, but this was quickly beaten as Luciana Diniz raced around the course in **47.40** seconds. With two riders left to go, a hushed silence descended over the crowd as Wathelet entered the arena aboard his mare Coree. The pair turned up the pressure and took another second off the fastest recorded time, finishing on **46.60**. The cheering crowd once again quietened as the last rider to go, Laura Kraut, entered the arena. Unfortunately, luck is not always on your side in this sport and Kraut knocked the last rail, dropping her into fourth place, giving Wathelet the title spot.

Speaking about his first Rolex Grand Prix win at CHIO Aachen, Wathelet remarked *"Rolex have the best Shows to form the Rolex Grand Slam with Aachen, Calgary, Geneva and Den Bosch and every rider wants to win. For me it is a dream come to true to win the Rolex Grand Prix at Aachen and have my name on the wall and Calgary would be the same so I hope to get a good result there also."*

Show Director Frank Kemperman spoke after the Rolex Grand Prix, *"First of all I would like to congratulate the winners, and you presented some fantastic sport today, a special thank you to your horses. A big thank you to Rolex because without Rolex it would not be possible to have this Grand Prix today. This is the start of a new Rolex Grand Slam for Gregory; our friends in Calgary and Geneva are waiting for you."*

Along with the prestigious Rolex Grand Slam of Show Jumping trophy, Wathelet also received an engraved Oyster Perpetual Datejust II. All eyes will now be looking ahead to the next equestrian Major at the CSIO Spruce Meadows 'Masters' in September, where Wathelet will be attempting to continue his reign as the live contender of the Rolex Grand Slam of Show Jumping.

FINAL RESULTS OF THE ROLEX GRAND PRIX AT CHIO AACHEN 2017

1. Gregory Wathelet (BEL) riding Coree
2. Luciana Diniz (POR) riding Fit For Fun 13
3. Marc Houtzager (NED) riding Sterrehof's Calimero
4. Laura Kraut (USA) riding Zeremonie
5. Andreas Kreuzer (GER) riding Calvilot
6. Henrik Von Eckermann (SWE) riding Chacanno
7. McLain Ward (USA) riding HH Azur
8. Eric Lamaze (CAN) riding Fine Lady 5
9. Scott Brash (GBR) riding Ursula XII
10. Cian O'Connor (IRL) riding Good Luck

This is the official press release of Rolex/Revolution sports

ROLEX'S EQUESTRIAN HERITAGE

Rolex's support of show jumping dates back more than half a century. The prestigious Swiss watch brand's

close and long - standing association with equestrianism demonstrates its appreciation of a domain in which fair play, equality, horsemanship and tradition highlight superior skill, accuracy and achievement. From Pat Smythe, the greatest female show jumper ever to represent Britain and Rolex's first equestrian Testimonee in 1957, to Scott Brash, the only rider in history to win three consecutive Majors in the Grand Slam in September 2015, Rolex continues to support riders in the three Olympic disciplines of show jumping, dressage and eventing, all of which demonstrate qualities of excellence and perfection.

ABOUT ROLEX

Rolex, the Swiss watch brand headquartered in Geneva, enjoys an unrivalled reputation for quality and expertise the world over. Its Oyster and Cellini watches, all certified as Superlative Chronometers for their precision, performance and reliability, are symbols of excellence, elegance and prestige. Founded by Hans Wilsdorf in 1905, the brand pioneered the development of the wristwatch and is at the origin of numerous major watchmaking innovations, such as the Oyster, the first waterproof wristwatch, launched in 1926, and the perpetual rotor self-winding mechanism invented in 1931. Rolex has registered over 400 patents in the course of its history. A truly integrated and independent manufacturing company, Rolex designs, develops and produces in-house all the essential components of its watches, from the casting of the gold alloys to the machining, crafting, assembly and finishing of the movement, case, dial and bracelet. Rolex is also actively involved in supporting the arts, sports, exploration, the spirit of enterprise, and the environment through a broad palette of sponsoring activities, as well as philanthropic programmes. 

