

LE PRINTEMPS DES SPORTS ÉQUESTRES

LE GRAND PARQUET - FONTAINEBLEAU

16 - 19 AVRIL 2026
22 - 26 AVRIL 2026

Press release
Fontainebleau, 18 April 2026

LE PRINTEMPS DES SPORTS ÉQUESTRES – CDIO 5*-NC GERMANY SHINES BRIGHT IN THE FFE GRAND PRIX, COUNTING TOWARDS THE FEI NATIONS CUP

The FEI World Championships will be held this year, and *Le Printemps des Sports Équestres* marks the first major outdoor event for the world's elite dressage riders competing in the CDIO5*-NC. Top-level sport was on the programme in Fontainebleau this afternoon for the FFE Grand Prix, which counts towards the FEI Dressage Nations Cup. Thanks to four highly consistent performances, the German team, comprising Isabell Werth, Svenja Kämper-Meyer, Frederic Wandres and Benjamin Werndl, came out on top today, ahead of Great Britain and Belgium.

Suspense down to the last moment

The audience knew they were in for a treat. A huge crowd turned out today to watch the FFE Grand Prix, one of only two events counting towards the CDIO5*-NC scheduled this year. Connoisseurs and novices alike were treated to a dazzling show, which kept everyone on the edge of their seats right up to the end. The seven nations involved fielded their best riders and horses.

Belgium brought its stars Justin Verboomen and Zonik Plus, who set a personal best of 83.500%, as well as the ever-consistent Larissa Pauluis and Flambeau (73.022%). They took third place overall with a total of 224.761. Great Britain was leading the provisional rankings after the first three rounds, notably thanks to the fine performances of Fiona Bigwood with Donna Bella (71.630%) and Carl Hester with Fame (76.152%). Then, Charlotte Fry, who was last out, put in the best British performance of the day with Glamourdale, leaving the arena with a score of 80.848% and taking the nation's total to 228.630.

Following on from Benjamin Werndl and Quick Decision Frh (72.652%), Svenja Kämper-Meyer and Amanyara M Frh (72.369%), and Frederic Wandres and Bluetooth Old (76.826%), Isabell Werth needed to perform a perfect routine in the Grand Prix to give Germany the win. And her experience and know-how once again made the difference. Isabell Werth and Wendy de Fontaine finished with a score of 80.587%, taking the national total to 230.065 and placing Germany on the top step of the podium!



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Mixed fortunes for the French riders

Bertrand Liegard and Ginger, the first French pairing to enter the arena, performed a decent routine, scoring 67.283%, and gave the team a confident start to the competition. Alizée Roussel and Bel Amour followed, with a score of 66.326%, which was very positive considering the couple are still on a learning curve at the highest level. Then, Alexandre Ayache, the third French rider to take to the arena, was admittedly disappointed with his performance with Ruling Olivia, posting a score of 68.848%. Finally, Pauline Basquin and Sertorius de Rima Z*IFCE were penalised for a few mistakes in their canter work and left the arena with a score of 71.261%.

Competing against the impressive line-up at this week's *Printemps des Sports Équestres*, France finished seventh in the rankings, but the results were nevertheless encouraging.

[Find the results here](#)

What they said:

Benjamin Werndl, German team rider, Winner of the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"Of course, I'm really pleased, and particularly happy to be part of this team, which was the team my sister (Jessica, ed.) won with in Paris in 2024. The setting was exactly same: it gave me goose bumps."

Svenja Kämper-Meyer, German team rider, Winner of the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"I actually have another job, which has nothing to do with this kind of event and competition! But it's been incredible to be part of this team and to ride in such an arena! My mare, who was born on my farm, was fantastic: the more she competes, the better she gets!"

Isabel Werth, German team rider, Winner of the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"I wanted to take part in the Nations Cup in Fontainebleau to do a bit of training, before starting the season. But when I saw the line-up, I thought "wow, this is going to be a bit more than a training session! I'm delighted with this first outdoor event for Wendy and I can't wait for the organising team to set up a World Championship stage in this same venue (laughs)."

Monica Theodorescu, Team Manager for Germany, Winner of the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"The main objective is the World Championships in Aachen this summer. In this Nations' Cup stage, we had two couples that were at Paris 2024, and two couples from the last European Championships. We'll have a card to play at home and today's result shows that we're on an excellent run of form."



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Ulrike Nivelte, President of the Ground Jury for this FFE Grand Prix, which is part of the FEI Nations Cup:

"Some of the judges who were here in Fontainebleau will officiate at the World Championships. It's an honour to have been able to see the best horses in the world perform here. We saw some top-quality sport today, with horses in great condition, and that bodes very well for this summer."

Sylvie Robert, President of GL events Equestrian Sport

"I would first of all like to pay tribute to Mrs Marini and the 'Compiègne competition', who organised this event for many years. In fact, we took the décor from the Olympic Games, which we were lucky enough to organise at the Château de Versailles. I thought it was a great idea to keep all these magnificent overlays so that the riders, the public and the equestrian world could continue to benefit from them."

Justin Verboomen (BEL), Winner of the FFE Grand Prix:

"As soon as I arrived, I was very impressed by the arena. It is magnificent. It's really very special to ride in such a beautiful setting. We have a lot of space where we can walk the horses to keep them moving during the day, and ride in different arenas. Zonik was really fantastic. It's hard to appreciate all the progress we've made. But, at home, I really ask myself 36,000 questions every day and night to try to find little improvements and make her as comfortable as possible. I still can't do what I really want to do, but he showed a lot of progress today. But in my dreams, the horse can be even more independent and at ease in the arena. There's still a lot of work to do. He is ten years old now and I think it will come naturally, if we carry on like this, working away quietly at home. The image I want to convey to the public is that both of us enjoy what we do. I really try to stay calm and focused. He's such a sensitive horse: the slightest change on my part can lead to big changes in the arena."

Bertrand Liegard, French team rider, seventh in the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"We've just come back from Doha and since then my mare hasn't done much work. So, without much preparation, I'm very pleased with what she did today. It was hot today, and despite everything, she's responded well, executing some really nice pirouettes. It's very positive for the future. She is getting easier and easier to ride, and the zigzags were really easy today; she is making progress! We were nervous about starting first, so we had to perform a good routine, without too many mistakes. I think we managed that. When we left the arena, I knew we'd performed a decent routine."



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Alizée Roussel, French team rider, seventh in the FEI Nations Cup at Fontainebleau:

"I'm pleased because, as things unfolded during the routine, I managed to regain the confidence that I had been lacking recently. Last year was complicated and the horse really lost a lot of confidence. So I'm happy; it wasn't as good as it could have been, but it's still positive. It's incredible to be in this arena, with the décor of the Games. It's an exceptional competition, one of the best in the world, I think.

My horse sneezed and that cost me a lot of points because he lowered his head, but he kept going with the routine, which is positive. There's still a long way to go, but we're definitely heading in the right direction. Tomorrow, I'll be riding in the Grand Prix Spécial; I like this routine, even if I haven't performed it for a long time. The aim will be to regain more confidence, so that the horse is happy to be here."

Alexandre Ayache, French team rider, seventh in the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"I'm more than disappointed, I'm angry. I didn't manage my horse in the way I should have. But that's the way it goes. That is not the kind of performance you want to give when you're in a team. There was a fault in the two-time changes, there was a problem in the zigzag and she caught her stride. She got a bit worried when we entered the arena and then, in the canter, she was a bit stiff in the hind legs and I couldn't get her back as she should be. Maybe I didn't make the right decision. You can put it down to experience, but it's not something you want to do for the team. These are clearly not the scores we want to achieve for the team."

Pauline Basquin, French team rider, seventh in the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"I'm quite happy with my horse. He is more confident on the trot, the passages and the piaffe: he's really gaining confidence! He was brilliant on the trot at the end of the routine, so, I'm delighted. In the canter, he made an unusual little mistake in two-time changes; he wanted to sneeze out and I told him 'no, no!' As a result, we misunderstood each other: it's a shame, it's not a mistake he usually makes. And then, he lacked a bit of balance through the canter. I wanted to perform a great routine, without mistakes, to show where we are at. The idea was to go through things cleanly without getting carried away, but still to score points. It's great to be back riding in the setting of the Olympic Games. There was a big crowd today, and an incredible line-up!"

Jean Morel, French Team Manager, seventh in the FEI Nations Cup in Fontainebleau:

"I'm pretty proud of my four riders. I'm really pleased for Bertrand, who rode very well. His mare just arrived from Qatar and made no mistakes. Congratulations to Alizée, who coped very well with the pressure. This experience will help her. I'm pleased with Alexandre Ayache's performance, because he's getting more and more relaxed on horseback. His mare is much better. It's not perfect yet, but things are improving. As for Pauline, she feels more assured with her horse. And the horse has shown that he is in great shape. This team has an excellent spirit: it's the driving force of this team, it always has been, and it showed again today."



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Do not miss tomorrow's great programme at the *Printemps des Sports Équestres*
9:00am - CDI05* - NC Grand Prix Spécial presented by Saur - Carrière des Princes
9:00am - CPEDI3* Freestyle Prix Fonds Éperon - Puits du Cormier
1.30pm - CDI05* - NC Grand Prix Freestyle Région Île-de-France - Carrière des Princes

True to its philosophy, *Le Printemps des Sports Équestres* is open to the public free of charge throughout the fortnight of competitions. Various events and shows will be organised around the competition arenas to provide additional entertainment during the days.

PRESS CONTACTS

LE PRINTEMPS DES SPORTS ÉQUESTRES

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About GL events Equestrian Sport

GL events Equestrian Sport, the GL events Group's equestrian department, is acknowledged for its expertise throughout the world. The GL events Group has been involved in all the equestrian events at the Olympic and Paralympic Games since 1992.

Since its creation, GL events Equestrian Sport has played an active role in supporting equestrian sports, while placing constant emphasis on the well-being of horses. The team is involved in the long-term international development of equestrian disciplines, as an organiser and overlay-provider to tier-1 events.

- Organiser of Equita Lyon and the Longines Equita Lyon CHI,
- Creator and organiser of the *Printemps des Sports Équestres* in Fontainebleau,
- Provider and partner of the Saut Hermès at the Grand Palais, on behalf of the Maison Hermès,
- Partner to the French Equestrian federation for the Masters Pro,
- And partner to the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) for the World Cup Finals in 2014 and 2018.

GL events Equestrian Sport and its expert teams also contributed to the success of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, notably working on the equestrian and para-dressage events organised in the magical setting of the Gardens of the Château de Versailles.

In 2026, GL events Equestrian Sport will be organising the CDI05, France's official dressage competition, for the first time at the Grand Parquet de Fontainebleau, as part of the *Printemps des Sports Équestres*.*



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