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FEI Eventing European Championship Haras Du Pin 2023

This summer, from August 9th to August 13th 2023, the European Championship will take place at the French National Stud, Le Haras du Pin, in the heart of Normandy. With one year to go before the Olympic Games in Paris, this European Championship come as a preparation and an indicator as of who may be the contenders ahead of Paris 2024. The ringmaster, Pierre Le Goupil, will also be designing the course of the Olympic.

A major sporting event

The European Championship is an opportunity for athletes, coaches and teams to compete against each other ahead of the Olympics Games and try to add a medal to their record or on behalf of their nation. The record for organising the event is held by Great Britain, which has hosted the Europeans 11 times. France, meanwhile, will be hosting the event for the fourth time. There will be 80 pairs from 20 nations taking part in this championship. Great Britain swept the board in Avenches (Switzerland) in 2021, winning the team title and its rider Nicola Wilson won individual gold on JL Dublin.

With a length of around 6000 m, the course will require a minimum gallop speed of 570 m per minute to complete the course within the allotted time. 300 volunteers, including some from the UK, are mobilised to ensure the smooth running of the event, which will welcome 30,000 visitors over the four days of competition. Spectators will be able to enjoy a wide range of events. The Haras du Pin will offer free guided or commented tours of its historic site. Between two events, spectators will have plenty of time to eat or stroll through the aisles of the exhibitors' village. Once the day's competitions are over, spectators can discover the 1000-hectare site known by many as the «Versailles of the horse».

Eventing an Olympic Discipline

Eventing is one of the three equestrian Olympic disciplines, alongside dressage and show jumping. Eventing is also commonly known as the equestrian triathlon. As a result of their strong cultural heritage, Great Britain, Germany and France are among Europe's leading nations in the sport. The European Championship will count as a pre-Olympic qualifying stage. At the end of the competition, two nations will leave with a qualification for the Paris Olympic Games. France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland have already qualified.

The cross-country course is design by Pierre Le Goupil, who will also be officiating in Paris. *"These championships have to be selective"* explains Le Goupil. The novelty of this FEI Eventing European Championship lies in the duo made of Pierre Le Goupil and Dominic Moore. The Brit, known for his achievements at Hartpury (GBR), is a specialist in fences construction. *"We worked together last year at Lignières-en-Berry, so we got to know each other. I wanted to be supported by an operational team, so I could focus on design. The course is 100% new. We're using existing natural elements and new obstacles from Dominic's imagination, a fervent advocate of raw wood and green profiles. The aim is to create a park that we will reuse in subsequent years. I want to vary the profiles and materials used and challenge the riders' skills."*

A historical venue

The European Eventing Championships is held in the heart of the exceptional Haras National du Pin. Desired by Louis XIV and built under Louis XV, the national stud has a rich history, which gives it its magnitude and charm. The creation of the Royal Stud was in response to a desire and a need to produce for transport, agricultural work, military cavalry and the court of Versailles. The main activity of the stud farm was therefore to select breeds and produce horses. On the eve of the French Revolution, the stud had 196 stallions. The estate is home to various occupants, partners and tenants over 1100 hectares to develop all horse-related activities (training, research, conservation, sport).

Brand new facilities

The site underwent a major redevelopment prior to the European Championship. The freshly renewed facilities are more modern, functional and respectful of a precious unspoiled and historical environment. The site is now equipped with four arenas (two main arenas for major competitions, plus two leisure arenas). In order to save water resources, the latter will use sub-irrigation watering techniques. The project also saw the construction of 290 permanent boxes to improve the comfort of the horses. Lastly, the project includes the creation of a public reception building with a restaurant and premises for ticket offices.

Normandy, Land of horse excellence

Normandy's equine heritage is exceptional. For decades, the region has been a land of excellence for horses and a world-renowned reputation for breeding horses, both for racing and for equestrian sports. Historical and living, the equine heritage is intimately linked to the Normandy region, its history, its culture and its very special way of life. Discovering the territory through the horses will enable you to discover an authentic, dynamic and passionate region. With its many dedicated tracks through unspoiled landscapes, Normandy boasts over 1000 km of signposted equestrian trails across the region.

Key Figures

- 5 days of competition
- 80 pairs from 20 nations
- 3 different tests: Dressage, Cross-Country and Show Jumping
- 36th edition of the FEI Eventing European Championship
- 30 cross-country fences
- 300 volunteers
- 30k spectators expected over the four days of competition
- 6 euros entry fee
- 87 medals won by Great Britain in individual team competition since the first edition of the FEI Eventing European Championship

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