

EUROPEAN PAINT HORSE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2008  
Kreuth, Germany  
Day five

Saturday, Sept. 19

The Youth Reining classes today were encouraging, because there is a remarkable improvement one could observe in the quality of the youth reiners.

The barrel racing classes were fun and exciting, as always. The high-class event of the day though was the Senior Reining, with some top contenders in it on some really nice reining horses, five from Germany, three from Austria, and one each from Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland, and Canadian Jonathan Gauthier riding an Austrian horse.



*Volker Schmitt added an European Championship titel in Senior Reining to XP Absolute Rooster's credentials*

XP Absolute Rooster, a stallion shown by one of Germany's elite reiners, Volker Schmitt, was quite the star, spinning and sliding in world-class fashion to win the event hands-down and taking home the Gold for the Austrian owner, Franz Vorraber. The score of 217,5 doesn't sufficiently express the dynamic run we were fortunate to watch. A well-earned Silver Medal went to Birgit Bayer, Germany, on her mare Drive By (209), and Angelika Schürmann, also of Germany, steered her gelding Docs J Delta Go On to the win of the Bronze Medal.



*Awards ceremony European Championships Senior Reining. Volker Schmitt (Germany) and XP Absolute Rooster, Gold for Austria. Birgit Bayer and Drive By, Silver (Germany). Angelika Schürmann and Docs J Delta Go On (Germany)*

Starting shortly after 1:00 pm, another highlight of the show, the Nations Cup drew team entries from seven European nations for some fierce and tremendously enjoyed competition. Of the originally entered eight nations, Team France unfortunately had to scratch because of a lame horse. The Nations Cup traditionally means great excitement and was conceived and inaugurated in 2003 by the Paint Horse Club Germany. Each team consists of five riders, one for every discipline, with one substitute rider allowed for every discipline. The disciplines were Trail, Western Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, Showmanship at Halter, and Reining. The winning team is the one which got the highest cumulative score.

Austria was represented by Noemi Pichler and Wynning Chex, Nina Leiner and Genuine Technique, Sophie Muhr and Smart Bandit, Carmen Sillaber and Seven Up Franze, and Herbert Neuherz and ES Diamond Lou.

Showing for Team Denmark were Ib Krause-Kjaer and A Lot Of Dots White, Marianne Krause-Kjaer and Left Whites Smart, Laura Schultz and Whata Queen, Freja Olson and Coups Matoska, and Line Bach with Blue Dry Peppy.

Team Germany consisted of Oliver Bahn and Doc Tomahawk, Manuela Voigtländer and Revolution Crunchynut, Alena Helmke and Shes Doolins Nikita, Heike Strambach and Shilohspotted Star, and Birgit Bayer riding Drive By.

For Italy were showing Matteo Sala and Stylish Sensation, Francesco Bassi and Zip Like A Lady, Silvia Pozzoli and Mega Imprint, Giovanna Alban and RJS Color Cocktail.

Team Norway – a first-ever – was made up of Silje Terning and Little Boston Mac, Valborg Bergsli and Whata Expensive Hobby, Stine Moen and Brave Lucky Kiss, Hanne Christiane Oeverli with Missachicabee, and Per Erik Haugom with Cortez The Killer.

In Team Sweden were Maria Kaki and Dol Dollar Lena, Veronica Karlsson and Miss April Sunshine, Cecilia Andersson and Meant To Be Lucky, Jessica Sandervig and Whata Freck Boon Us, and Maria Arvidson riding Mr Badger.

The members of Team Switzerland were Christine Höltschi and Majestic Red Shandy, Doris Müller and Cash Snow King, Maja Pfister and Forest Solo Gunspin, Robin Feldmann and Cool Charisma, and Bettina van Oordt with Te N Tes Gamble.



*The winning team, Austria, with Team Leader Franz Vorraber in the middle, APHA President Carl Thurow on the right, and APHA European Director Markus Rensing on the far right*

Flags were flying and an enthusiastic crowd were rooting for their respective national teams until the very end. After each class, the points earned were announced, and then the total score for each country/National Team. When the trail, Western Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, and Showmanship at Halter classes were over, Team Italy had accumulated 69 points, with Germany leading Germany but just one point. The thing was that Italy didn't have a reining entry, so chances for Team Germany to clinch the win were very good. Team Austria was holding 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 65 points and anything was possible as their reining entry, Herbert Neuherz, had already shown the previous days that he is a contender. Unfortunately, Birgit Bayer, riding for Team Germany, had her "war horse" Drive By shying at a conspicuous flag in the grandstand, sitting down hard and with no inclination to move on toward the scary object – which meant a zero score, and paved the way for Austria to take over the lead. In the end, Austria won with 83 points, Italy held second place with 69 points, Germany was third with 68, trailed by Sweden with 58, Denmark (39), and Norway (38). APHA President Carl Thurow presided in the awards ceremony, presenting special APHA Trophy Buckles for the winning team. 600 Euros in prize money had been sponsored by Germany's Longhorn Ranch, owned by the Brechtel family, and presented by Longhorn Ranch's trainer Matthias Frisch.

After an eventful day it was partytime, as the Paint Horse Club Germany celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a banquet and a live country band, honoring its 2008 German Champions, the German Youth Team that won first-place honors at the 2008 APHA World Youth Games, and Hall of Fame members Uwe "Buddy" Pauls and Hardy Oelke.

It was a great conclusion of our annual "Paint Horse Week", the European Paint Horse Championships in Kreuth, Germany. See you all again next year!