

W26

TOURNAMENT MAGAZINE



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**OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT INFORMATION
FROM THE FEI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026**

Issue 2 – Wednesday, August 12, 2026


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for english
version





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358 Million Blades of Grass

Over 800 athletes and 177 medals: the figures involved in the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 are impressive.

The FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 is an event of superlatives. In six disciplines, new world champions will be crowned at Allianz Park through August 23. It is important to highlight the key numbers and facts. The German Equestrian Federation took a close look in advance – with impressive results.

A total of 59 gold, 59 silver, and 59 bronze medals will be awarded. Competing for them will be 814 participants and horses from nearly 70 nations. But the German Equestrian Federation went a step further and examined the Aachen showgrounds in detail: according to its findings, around 358 million blades of grass grow in the main stadium. The grounds are framed by about 2.9 kilometres of wooden fencing and 4.2 kilometres of hedges. Altogether, 340 trees shape the appearance of the historic Soers district. This special atmosphere has made Aachen “one of



The sacred turf: The ground in Aachen's equestrian stadium consists of 358 million blades of grass.

Photo: Harald Krömer

the most popular venues in international equestrian sport for decades.”

The numbers continue: around 1,500 staff members are on duty to ensure the championships run smoothly – including 90 FEI judges and officials, 85 stewards, more than

450 marshals, and numerous medical professionals. Media interest is also high: around 600 accredited journalists, photographers, and more than 250 TV crew members will report from Aachen. In Germany alone, more than 30 hours of television cov-

erage are planned. In addition, the championships will be broadcast worldwide and followed in many countries.

The welfare of the horses comes first. To care for the animals, organizers will provide, among other things, 22 tons of concentrated feed, 55 tons of hay, 17 tons of straw, and 1,900 bales of shavings. A modern veterinary centre with endoscopy, digital radiography, sonography, and its own laboratory will ensure medical care at the highest international level.

Six world championships, nearly 70 nations, 177 medals, and a host with decades of championship experience: the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 stands for top-level equestrian sport. The Soers will once again become a meeting place for the world elite, and Aachen the stage for a sporting event whose impact is likely to extend far beyond equestrian sport. (red)

Isabell Werth
8-fache Olympiasiegerin

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A magnificent stallion that can do it all

Glamourdale and Britain's Charlotte Fry are competing in dressage as defending champions. In 2022, the pair won Special and Freestyle gold in Herning, and in 2024 they took Olympic bronze, although the 2025 European Championships proved disappointing.

What remained most vividly in the memory was that outstanding canter: in the Special, Glamourdale's powerful canter on the diagonal had already earned a 9.9, and in the Freestyle all the judges unanimously awarded a 10. The crowd was beside itself: from the very beginning of the Freestyle to British pop songs, it cheered and roared, driving Fry and her jet-black stallion to peak performances. In only their second-ever Freestyle, they immediately posted a personal best of 90.654 percent and, after team silver with Great Britain, won both Special and Freestyle gold at the 2022 Dressage World Championships in Herning.

Fry, 30, and her now 15-year-old Dutch stallion Glamourdale travelled to the World Championships in Aachen over the weekend as champions. They are among the co-favourites, even if those favourites are once again Belgium's Justin Verboomen, Denmark's Cathrine Laudrup-Dufour, and Isabell Werth. But on a good day, the Briton could certainly make the podium again.

In 2023, the pair won Freestyle silver behind Jessica von Bredow-Werndl at the European Championships. After that, the stallion disappeared from competition for around nine months, taking a long break before the 2024 Olympics. He was seen again in Aachen before the Games, not at the CHIO but at the Aachen Dressage Days, where Glamourdale made a much-noticed comeback and won with ease. In Paris, the pair then added an individual bronze medal to their team bronze. Only at the 2025 European Championships in Herning did Fry come away empty-handed individually after team silver: ninth in the Special and tenth in the Freestyle were bitter disappointments for the world champion, whose stallion was not at his best in Crozet.

The careers of Fry and Glamourdale are closely intertwined. Lottie, as she is known, followed her mother – who had also competed for Great Britain at the 1992 Olympics – into the dressage saddle. She began riding at an early age and at 14 went to train in the yard of none other than Carl Hester, who had already guided Charlotte Dujardin and Valegro to the top and to victories at the Olympics, World Championships, and European Championships. He is also



Reigning world champions: Charlotte Fry and Glamourdale are also among the favorites in Aachen.

Photo: IMAGO / Bildbyran

once again leading the strong British team at the World Championships in Aachen, a team experts rate as the leading candidate for team gold, ahead even of defending champions Denmark and European champions Germany.

To finance her dressage training with Hester, "Lottie" later also worked in his stable. Hester told Anne van Olst about Fry and sent her to the Netherlands for further development. "Originally, I was only supposed to go to the van Olst stud in the Netherlands for a six-month internship. But I feel so at home there that it has now turned into twelve years," says the 30-year-old, who has been trained by van Olst ever since. The Dane, known in dressage under her maiden name Anne Koch Jensen, won silver with the Danish team at the 2008 Olympic Games in Hong Kong and moved to the Netherlands when she married.

At the stud in Den Hout, north of Breda, Fry met the then six-year-old black stallion. A year later, in 2018, she won the World Championship for seven-year-old dressage horses with him. In the same year, Fry also became U25 world champion on Dark Legend. "Glamourdale is the complete package – he can sim-

ply do everything," Fry says of the stunning stallion, who is also highly sought after as a sire. His father is Lord Leatherdale, and his mother is Thuka, regarded as one of the best Dutch broodmares.

Although the elegant pair made a widely noticed debut at Grand Prix level in 2021, they skipped both the Tokyo Olympics and the European Championships that same year. Instead, Fry rode Glamourdale's half-brother Everdale and won Olympic team bronze and European team silver. Glamourdale's first major appearance did not come until the 2022 World Championships in Herning. Silver and two gold medals were the haul – although Olympic champion Dalera and Jessica von Bredow-Werndl were absent. Still, Glamourdale received a score of 10 no fewer than 16 times in the Special; even Dalera would have had to stretch herself to keep the young star in check at that time.

Alongside Fry and Glamourdale, the British team also includes Hester on Fame, Fiona Bigwood on Donna Bella, and Becky Moody on Jagerbomb. Apart from Bigwood – Andrew Gould had been on the team in Crozet – these riders also competed at the 2025 European Championships

and won silver behind Germany. 59-year-old Hester is one of Britain's most successful riders, with Olympic gold in London in 2012, two European team titles, and 13 other championship medals. Moody has been a crowd favourite since Paris 2024, where the British team won silver, riding the home-bred and home-trained Jagerbomb. In April, the 46-year-old won the World Cup Final in Fort Worth. Bigwood is also highly decorated: with the British team, the now 50-year-old won silver at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, the 2018 World Equestrian Games in Kentucky, and the 2015 European Championships in Aachen, among other achievements.

The team medals at the World Championships in Aachen will be decided this evening. The first half of the riders competed in the opening part of the Grand Prix; today, from 8:20 a.m., the second part for the Lambertz Prize follows in the main stadium. At the 2024 Olympics and the 2025 European Championships, the German squad won gold on both occasions. After bronze in Paris, the British moved past the Danes into silver-medal position at the Europeans. Can they continue their winning run in Aachen and claim gold this time? (rau)

Special acrobatics in the city centre

Favourite team NORKA from the Cologne-Dünnwald vaulting club shows its skills ahead of the Championships.

In the run-up to the FEI World Championships 2026, the defending champions in vaulting have already familiarized themselves with Aachen. Between the cathedral, city hall, and Tivoli, Team NORKA from the Cologne-Dünnwald Vaulting Club impressively demonstrated what spectators at Allianz Park can look forward to in the coming days.

Wearing their light blue freestyle leotards, the six vaulters from the highly decorated Cologne club attracted plenty of attention. Handstands, jumps, lifting figures – their acrobatic repertoire already gave a sense of the athletic peak performances that the three-time world and European group champions will deliver on horseback. Iconic Aachen locations provided an equally first-class backdrop: in front of the cathedral and city hall, at the Super C and Elisenbrunnen, as well as at Tivoli right next to Allianz Park – everywhere, the vaulters were the

perfect subject for photographers and numerous passers-by.

Things get serious for the defending champions starting Thursday. In the specially covered Stadium 3 at Allianz Park, thousands of spectators will follow the competitions of the world's elite. "The excitement and atmosphere will be unique. We already get goosebumps just thinking about it," says Gianna Ronca on behalf of her entire Team NORKA.

Team NORKA competed for Germany at the 2018 World Championships in Tryon, where they won not only the team competition but also, together with Jannik Heiland and Kristina Boe, the inaugural World Championship title in the Nations Cup. At the 2022 World Championships in Herning, Denmark, they won team gold; in 2024 in Bern, Switzerland, they claimed gold in the team event and silver in the Nations Cup. Back in 2017, the group led by former world champion



The vaulters of Team NORKA also use the backdrop of Aachen's famous landmarks at the Elisenbrunnen.

Photo: ALRV/Leonie Minten

and lugner Patric Looser had already triumphed at the European Championships in Ebreichsdorf, Austria. At the 2023 European Championships in Flyinge, Sweden, they followed up with Nations Cup gold. The 2025 European Championships in Stadl-Paura,

Austria, also ended with a successful title defence for the team: gold in the team competition and gold in the Nations Cup together with Kathrin Meyer and Alina Roß.

Their dress rehearsal was also a success. Team NORKA lived up to its status as favourite at CVIO 2026 in Warendorf, the final selection event before the home World Championships in Aachen. The Cologne team competed with its top-class previous-year lineup: Bela Lehnert, Yara Jolie Scheel, Philipp Goroncy, Larina Herpertz, Fabio Ring, and Gianna Ronca. In the compulsory round, they pulled more than a point ahead of the rest of the field and then topped it off with their freestyle routine to a cover version of Rihanna's "We Found Love." Their nearly flawless performance was rewarded not only with technical scores above nine, but even with a perfect ten for artistry from Swiss judge Anita Flamand-Prochaska. (red)

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BUNDESWEHR

Still among the world's best at 67

Australian event rider Hoy on his successes, the value of experience, and what he's looking forward to in Aachen.

Living eventing legend Andrew Hoy is travelling to Allianz Park in a positive mood, with his long-time sporting partner Vassily. At 67, the Australian has already amassed an impressive collection of honours, including six Olympic medals and two World Championship medals — but slowing down is out of the question for him. In this interview, Hoy talks about his expectations for the FEI World Championships, the role his many years of experience play, and how important his family is to him.

You competed at the World Equestrian Games in Aachen in 2006. What expectations do you have now, 20 years later, for the World Championships?

Andrew Hoy: It's going to be a great event. That's the first thing that comes to mind. I still remember very clearly how perfectly Aachen was prepared in 2006. So, I have absolutely no doubts about the quality of the footing, the stabling, or the organization of the entire event.

With dressage, cross-country, and show jumping, the FEI Eventing World Championship – DHL Prize combines three equally important disciplines. What are you looking forward to the most?

Hoy: I know the cross-country course designed by Giuseppe Della Chiesa will be anything but a walk in the park. It will present real challenges at World Championship level. Vassily and I need to be as well prepared as possible to deliver our best performance. But what I'm looking forward to most is the crowd that comes to Aachen – it makes everyone feel like they are part of something very special. You only get that in Aachen.

You have already won numerous medals. Do you still have goals for the FEI World Championships?

Hoy: The last time I was at a World Championship in Aachen, we won a bronze medal. Of course, it would be wonderful to improve on that. But it's a World Championship, and there are so many people competing there who could do very well. We always dream of coming home with a medal. But all I can do is deliver the best performance possible — for the Australian team, for myself, and for the team around me.

Do you think your experience will help? Or can it also be an advantage to be a young athlete without reservations?



Andrew Hoy and his horse Vassily on the Aachen cross-country course.

Photo: ALRV/Arnd Bronkhorst

“*Sometimes, as a young, inexperienced athlete, I delivered astonishing performances, but I also experienced absolute disasters.*”

Andrew Hoy

Hoy: That's a very good question, because sometimes as a young, inexperienced athlete I delivered amazing performances, but I also experienced absolute disasters. I would say the knowledge I have now helps me most-

ly mentally. I know when I need to put pressure on myself and how to handle that pressure.

Do you have any advice for athletes who are taking part in a World Championship for the first time in their careers?

Hoy: What I often observe with people riding at their first World Championship is this: they invest so much, they devote an excessive amount of time to training, and they focus on every tiny detail — but it's exactly that obsession with detail that leads them to overburden both the horse and themselves. That's why I tell many people who are heading to their first World Championship: it's just another competition, only the whole world will be watching (he says, laughing). So, try to go there with the mindset that it's nothing different or extraordinary, stay calm, and don't change your routine.

How would you describe your feelings in three words when you think about the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026?

Hoy: I need to think about that for a moment. There are many feelings, but the three most important are definitely pride, focus, and excitement.

Your family will also be there. What does their support mean to you?

Hoy: My wife Steffi will be in Aachen in many different roles, but the most important role for me is being my personal counterbalance, the person who keeps me grounded in every situation. We've been through so many competitions together and spend a lot of time with our family, so she knows me like no one else. As an athlete, there are moments when you simply need time alone or with just one other person you're very close to, so your mind doesn't get overloaded with too many other things. And then of course there are Philippa and Oscar, the little fan club. They are six and eight years old and incredibly excited. A few days ago, they found their Australian team shirts and their little Australian flags and packed everything up. So they're ready for the action — and so am I. (red)

Between Sleep Deprivation and Perfection

For Jana Kun, the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 are among the highlights of her career. However, there are still numerous challenges to overcome before the event begins.

At Allianz Park, Jana Kun feels right at home; the tournament grounds in the Soers are, so to speak, her second living room. She regularly attended the CHIO Aachen with her parents. "I used to collect loose change from between the seats and buy myself ice cream with it. My parents would only pay for one. That way I could get as much ice cream as I wanted," she recalls with a laugh.

At the age of 15, she competed at the World Equestrian Festival herself. As the youngest recipient at the time, she was awarded the Golden Riding Badge. This was followed by six European Championship titles in the pony and junior divisions.

Today, almost 30 years later, the Dressage Discipline Manager organizes the competitions in which she once rode herself. For the 45-year-old, the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 are one of the greatest highlights of her life – even if, shortly



She is in demand as the dressage discipline manager in the first week of the World Championships: Jana Kun.

Photo: Tom Wayan Becker

before the start of the tournament, the biggest hurdles are still far from being overcome.

Everything must be perfect

The procedures are clearly defined. Nothing can go wrong. What works in her favour is that the World Championships are not her first major event. She has been responsible for organ-

izing the dressage competitions at CHIO Aachen since 2015. However, everything is different at the World Championships: five disciplines become six, which affects the entire structure of the tournament. That is why planning has been ongoing for two years.

Despite all the planning, some factors remain unpredictable: "If

the weather doesn't cooperate, it can throw the whole schedule off." Kun is certain that her biggest personal opponent will be lack of sleep. Long nights are likely to be rare during the tournament. "But the excitement still outweighs everything. We put the pressure on ourselves because we want everything to be perfect."

For the Discipline Manager, the FEI World Championships already began on Saturday, when the riders and horses arrived at the venue. She will only really be able to enjoy the event next Saturday evening, one week later. That is when the Grand Prix Freestyle begins – a highlight of the World Championships and the final dressage competition. By then, not much can go wrong anymore: "Otherwise, I'm only focused on everything happening around it. During the Freestyle, I can fully concentrate on the sport." (twb)

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 **STAWAG**

With Chipmunk, anything is possible for Jung

Eventing: Michael Jung and his horse narrowly missed out in 2022. Now they are aiming for World Championship gold.

At the World Championship four years ago, the ending was dramatic. Leading the field, event rider Michael Jung and his horse Chipmunk made a second mistake at the very last obstacle in the final show-jumping phase in Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy, dropping them back to fifth place. Now in Aachen, the pair want to do better. "Of course, it's disappointing when you're in front and then fall back in the jumping. But that's our sport. At a championship, everything simply must come together," says Jung, who has just turned 44. "It's always better if you can work your way forward from behind."

Jung, who was born in Bad Soden in the Taunus region and is the father of two children, has already collected many titles. His record includes four Olympic gold medals, three of them individually and one with the team, one individual world title and two team gold medals at World Championships, as well as three individual victories and five team victories at European Championships, in addition to many other medals.

"Eventing is the supreme discipline of equestrian sport," Jung says with conviction, even if show jumping has a much higher media profile. Dressage, cross-country, and show jumping – eventing demands a great deal from both horse and rider. A single moment of inattention can be decisive. That is why total concentration is required. And yet the right degree of relaxation is also needed. And the World Championship is, of course, an especially difficult test. "You can practically not afford any mistakes. At a championship, everything has to be just a little bit better than usual. At the same time, you mustn't tense up. The horse immediately notices if you want too much yourself," Jung says, offering insight into a rider's inner state. Courage on the cross-country course, stamina, and a good partnership between human and horse: "That's what defines our sport," says Jung.

With Chipmunk, Jung has an exceptional horse beneath him. Two years after the dramatic World Championship final, he won individual Olympic gold with him in Paris, and last year at the European Championship in Blenheim, England, he took individual silver and team gold.

Jung is full of praise for his 18-year-old gelding: "There's a saying: 'You can't just bake yourself a horse.' But



A great moment for Michael Jung and his Chipmunk: at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, the two won individual gold in eventing.

Photo: Rolf Vennenbernd/dpa

Chipmunk really has everything you could wish for. He has a wonderful character." The horse is "incredibly sweet, uncomplicated, affectionate" and at the same time exceptionally strong in all three eventing disciplines. "He is absolutely wonderful to ride and offers a great deal of riding comfort."

”

When the horse gets nervous, the rider must project calm.

Michael Jung

What binds Jung and Chipmunk together is something that cannot be trained: trust. "By now we know each other inside out," says the rider, who credits his top horse with "an incredible amount of routine," making anything possible with him.

To finish at the top, however, the human also needs to deliver a top performance. And anyone listening to Jung quickly realizes that elite sport in the saddle is about far more than technique. According to Jung,

horses notice the slightest change. "They notice everything—uncertainty, tension, nervousness."

That is why success often begins long before the first starting signal – during daily training, in the warm-up, in the stable. In the familiar routines with the grooms, who, according to Jung, play a particularly important role.

"If the horse gets nervous, the rider has to radiate calm," says Jung, who prepares meticulously for competitions. He writes down training routines, compares preparations with those for earlier championships, and uses video analysis.

Jung is approaching the home World Championship in Aachen with great anticipation. At the beginning of the year, however, he also had to endure a bitter personal loss and say goodbye to his horse Sam, with whom he achieved outstanding success. The event still lingers, but by now memories have replaced the grief. "We experienced so many wonderful moments," says Jung. Such a sad turning point is part of top-level equestrian sport, he believes.

Jung is not lacking in motivation, even though he has practically already won everything. Why does he keep going? "Above all because of the joy of riding." His passion for the sport drives him. "I simply enjoy riding enormously," he admits. And

he also says: "Winning never gets boring."

Michael Jung finds fulfilment in the daily work with the four-legged athletes. "It's simply a joy to train young horses and watch how they develop." But the older ones also continue to improve—for example Chipmunk, who, at 18, has taken another step forward. "I think he is currently at his peak level," says his rider, who also competes in many show-jumping tournaments over the course of a year. That was the discipline he originally started in before moving into eventing at the age of 14.

He has now been competing in the "supreme discipline" for 30 years. His experience is worth gold in the truest sense of the word. But will it be enough in Aachen? Individually, in the team event, or both? Jung believes the German team is well positioned. However, the competition is strong, especially the British, whom they were able to defeat on home soil at last year's European Championship.

"We have a good chance," says Jung, "and a very good team." "We all have to deliver our best performance and put the others under pressure." Because then careless mistakes could happen among their rivals. Jung knows how quickly that can happen – just remember the last jump at the 2022 World Championship. (ebr)

PROGRAMME AUGUST 12+13

Wednesday, August 12



MAIN STADIUM
08:20 - 18:30 CEST
Dressage: Lambertz-Prize
 ★ Team Final
 & Individual Qualifier



MAIN STADIUM
18:35 - 18:50 CEST
Dressage: Team Competition
Individual Ranking presented by LONGINES
 Awards ceremony

Thursday, August 13



STADIUM 2 - ALLIANZ PARK
09:30 - 17:00 CEST
Eventing: DHL-Prize
 Dressage Team & Individual



STADIUM 3 - ALLIANZ PARK
08:00 - 11:55 CEST
Vaulting: Prize of Sparkasse
 Individual Female Compulsory Test



STADIUM 3 - ALLIANZ PARK
13:00 - 14:30 CEST
Vaulting:
Prize of Sparkasse
 Individual Male Compulsory Test



STADIUM 3 - ALLIANZ PARK
15:15 - 17:55 CEST
Vaulting: Prize of Sparkasse
 Squad Compulsory Test

★ Medal decision



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Three disciplines, one goal

Eventing is considered the crown of equestrian sport. A new duel between Jung and Collett?

Eventing is often described as the crown of equestrian sport. Why? Because it demands absolute excellence from both horse and rider in three disciplines. In dressage, precision is everything; every mistake results in penalty points. In cross-country, courage, speed, and trust are essential: riders tackle solid obstacles, water, ditches, drops, banks, and must also meet an optimum time. In the final and decisive show jumping round, horse and rider then need nerves of steel.

Who are the favourites in a field with a remarkably balanced world elite, where many experienced champions meet talented riders of the next generation? Naturally, there is Germany's Michael Jung with Chipmunk. The pair won Olympic gold in Paris in 2024 and only missed victory at the 2022 World Championships in Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy, at the very last fence after a knockdown. Another favourite is Julia Krajewski, who benefited from that mishap in 2022 and won World Championship silver with Amande de B'Neville. This time, she competes with Uelzener's Nickel.

The British squad is notable for its great depth in quality. Alongside Germany, it is one of the favourites and includes the reigning world champion, Yasmin Ingham. In Aachen, however, she is entered only as the reserve rider with the ten-year-old mare Gypsy du Loir. She won her world title in 2022 with Banzai du Loir.

Instead, Laura Collett is competing with her top horse London. The pair won individual bronze at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris and individual gold at the 2025 European Championships in Blenheim. Collett had already won Olympic team gold with Great Britain in Tokyo in 2021. The British team repeated that success in Paris in 2024.

The British rider is known, above all, for her exceptional mental strength. Despite serious health setbacks, she has established herself among the world elite. She has trained London herself since he was five years old and describes him as the "horse of her life." The pair stand out especially for their strong dressage performances and lightning-fast footwork across country.

In 2013, Collett suffered a serious fall after which she had to be resuscitated five times and was placed in an induced coma for a week. She lost sight in her right eye. Nevertheless, she learned to judge distances



One of the favorites: New Zealander Tim Price won individual bronze and team bronze at the 2022 World Championships.

Photo: Dagmar Meyer-Roeger

again using only one eye and quickly returned to the saddle. At the end of 2025, she broke her collarbone, and in March she suffered another cross-country fall. After surgery, however, she was able to return to competition just a few weeks later. In addition to riding, she also works as a cross-country course designer.

Alongside Great Britain, New Zealand must also be a factor in eventing, having caused a stir at the 2022 World Championships. The team built around Tim Price, who won individual bronze at the 2022 Worlds, is very strong. As a team, the New Zealanders also won bronze at the 2022 World Championships. Price is also competing at the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 with Falco, the horse with which he enjoyed success four years ago.

Australia also traditionally features in the medal race. At the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, Christopher Burton won silver with Shadow Man. Surprisingly, however, he was not nominated for Aachen by the Australian federation. Even so, the team should still be strong. Another medal contender is the USA, team runners-up at the 2022 World Championships.

Eventing is known internationally as "eventing" and was formerly called "military." Today, the focus is much

more clearly on horse welfare than it was a few years ago. Safety standards for both humans and animals are high, and compared with the past, horses are now lighter and faster.

Aachen will be exciting not only because of the battle for World Championship medals, but also because qualification spots for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles will be awarded there.

In dressage, the Olympic test will be ridden: the "Olympic Short Test" at M** level. The cross-country course is between 5,600 and 5,800 meters long. Horse and rider must complete 38 to 42 jumping efforts. The average speed is around 34 km/h. Before the final show jumping phase, all horses must pass an official veterinary inspection. The show jumping course is around 600 meters long and includes 11 to 13 obstacles. The maximum height is 1.30 meters. The starting order is the reverse of the intermediate standings. Each nation may send a maximum of five combinations, four of which make up the team. For the team medals, the three best final scores of the team riders count.

As defending champions, Germany wants to have its say again in Aachen. Nominated are Malin Hansen-Hotopp with Carlitos Quidditch, Jung with Chipmunk, Krajewski with Uelzener's Nickel, Libussa Lübbecke with

Caramia, and Christopher Wahler with D'Accord. Arne Bergendahl with Bronco NRW will travel as reserve. Shortly before the start of the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026, all six combinations took part in a training camp in Bonn-Rodderberg. National coach Peter Thomsen was injured in a riding accident in mid-June. Since then, and also in Aachen, he has been temporarily replaced by Rodolphe Scherer. (ebr)



The eventing schedule

Thursday, 13 August
9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Dressage, team and individual competition, DHL Prize, Stadium 2 – Allianz Park

Friday, 14 August
9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Dressage, team and individual competition, DHL Prize, Stadium 2 – Allianz Park

Saturday, 15 August
9:15 a.m. – 3:55 p.m., Cross-country, team and individual competition, DHL Prize

Sunday, 16 August
1:00 p.m. – 5:20 p.m., Show jumping, team and individual competition, DHL Prize, Main Stadium

One of Europe's Most Modern Stable Facilities

204 new horse stalls underscore the ALRV's commitment to creating an atmosphere of well-being for truly all guests – including the horses.

The history of CHIO Aachen is also, and above all, a story of construction. That may sound strange, but one of the reasons why the equestrian tournament in Aachen became so popular with riders is the modernity of its facilities. The organizer of the annual CHIO and the FEI World Championships 2026, the Aachen-Laurensberger Rennverein (ALRV), has always used the championships held in Aachen as an opportunity to invest in its infrastructure beforehand. Before the World Show Jumping Championships, which were held in Aachen for the first time in 1955, the main grandstand was rebuilt — today it is known as the Mercedes-Benz Grandstand. Before the 1978 World Championships, the Albert-Vahle Hall was built; before the 1986 World Championships, the NetAachen Grandstand was roofed over and the judges' tower, which has since been replaced, was built; and before the 2006 World



Flexible and modern: The brand-new stables offer the horses the best conditions at the World Championships.

Photo: Andreas Steindl

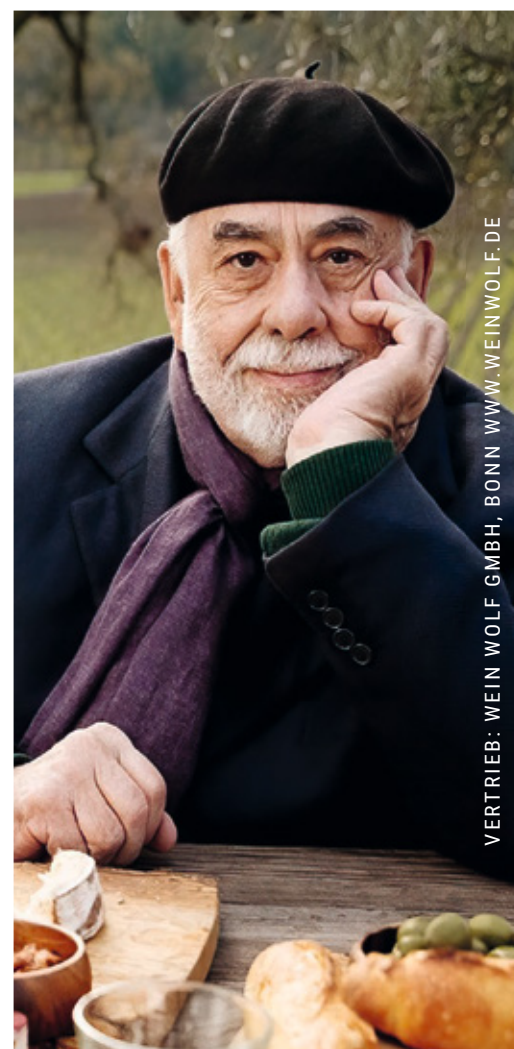
Equestrian Games, the Turkish Airlines Grandstand was opened.

ALRV has also invested ahead of this World Championship, spending more than ten million euros in total. One major investment was the completion of the stable modernization project, which has now been finished

after 20 years. The first phase began in 2006, the second before the 2015 European Championships, and this year the remaining historic stable facilities were replaced by a new stable. Although the word "stable" gives the wrong impression; "horse hotel" would probably be more accurate.

The new building has almost exactly the same dimensions as the roof of the STAWAG Grandstand. The stable facility is 127 meters wide and 40 meters deep, covering an area of 5,080 square meters. On this site, 97 old horse stalls were replaced by 204 new ones, making it likely one of the most modern stable facilities ever built in Europe. Each of the 204 stalls measures three by four meters, and the partition walls can be moved in such a way that an entire row of stalls can be mucked out mechanically in one go. This is a major relief, especially for the grooms.

Building a stable facility is not a mundane matter — especially not when the ALRV's goal is to create an atmosphere of well-being for all guests. "All guests" explicitly includes the horses. The fact that the ALRV spent around seven million euros on the new stable facility underscores its commitment to always keeping equine welfare in mind. (gego)



VERTRIEB: WEIN WOLF GMBH, BONN WWW.WEINWOLF.DE

When Mozart Enchanted Hearts

Why Aachen is magical for national coach and 2006 world champion Kai Vorberg

6,500 spectators in the new dressage stadium, thunderous applause, and a horse named Picasso that surpassed itself that evening. When Kai Vorberg performed his Mozart freestyle "Amadeus" in Aachen in 2006 and became world champion, it created one of the most famous moments in the history of vaulting. Two decades later, he returns as national coach—with new responsibilities, but the same emotions.

Some victories fade over the years. This one from 2006 has not. When the national coach speaks about Aachen today, he is still deeply moved. The world title in 2006 was, for him, the realisation of a dream he had dreamed years earlier. Even today, people keep bringing it up.

"Over the last 20 years, it has kept resurfacing in waves," says 44-year-old Vorberg. Many videos of his 2006 freestyle on the gelding Picasso are still circulating online.

For Vorberg, the 2006 dressage stadium had a truly unique atmosphere. "For some competitors, that was not easy at all—both for the people and for the horses. But my lunges and Picasso simply carried me through it. He was even better there than at other competitions."

Vorberg's special connection with Aachen had begun nine years earlier. In 1997, just five or six days before the event, he was unexpectedly called up as a reserve at the age of 15 for the European Championships. In Aachen, of all places. "All of a sudden, I was right in the middle of it and immediately won my first silver medal," he recalls.

As early as 2004, Vorberg won his first world title in Stadl-Paura, Austria. Before that, he had already collected several silver and bronze medals. But it was Aachen that truly created the legend. His Mozart freestyle became famous far beyond the sport of vaulting and earned him the nickname "the Mozart of vaulting." "A former vaulter once said to me: Others may have won more world titles. But you're the only one who made a freestyle famous," Vorberg says. The choreography combined classical music with spectacular acrobatics and a level of expressiveness rarely seen before.

That vaulting would one day define Vorberg's life was by no means

a given. He was more interested in tennis and dressage riding. "My mother was a vaulting coach, and my sister also vaulted. So as a child, I honestly wasn't very keen on always tagging along."

Everything changed when he was eleven. At a German Championship, Vorberg saw the top athletes: "I said to my mother, 'Oh, so that's how it's done. Well, then it's obviously cool.'" What fascinated him? "Pretty much everything. The athleticism, the artistry, and of course the connection with the horse."

”

I actually considered becoming an actor or a musical performer.

Kai Vorberg

To this day, Vorberg describes that bond with the animal as especially emotional. "As a child, I probably had more social contact with horses than with people," he says, adding: "I always found that the percentage of individuals you could trust was significantly higher among horses than among humans."

Artistry played a major role for Vorberg from an early age. "I actually considered becoming an actor or a musical performer." In vaulting, he was ultimately able to combine everything: sport, art, and horses. Outside his sport, he still enjoys sitting down at the piano or performing as a musician at smaller events.

Since 2023, Vorberg has carried the responsibility of national coach for the German team; before that, he worked for ten years as assistant coach to national coach Ulla Ramge. Training remains central, of course, but his tasks have changed. "Today, it's much more about strategy, planning, and management."



Sensational performance that thrilled the crowds: Kai Vorberg in Aachen in 2006 during his freestyle, with which he won World Championship gold.

Photo: Arnd Bronckhorst

Looking ahead to the 2026 World Championships, national coach and master horse manager Vorberg believes the German team is well positioned. "We are competitive in all disciplines." At the same time, he warns against seeing medals as the only measure of success. "Of course we want to be successful. But what matters most is that, in the end, we

can say: 'We did everything that was possible.'" High expectations rest on Team NORKA VV Köln-Dünnwald, the world and European champions who will represent Germany. According to the national coach, the main challenge is likely to come from France.

In the women's individual competition, Vorberg says Germany has two outstanding athletes in Kathrin Meyer and Alice Layher, who have shared many victories between them in recent years. In the men's individual, Thomas Brüsewitz, who won World Championship bronze two years ago, is once again among the favourites. And Germany's two pairs are also expected to be strong contenders in the pas de deux.

Now that Aachen is once again about World Championship medals, Vorberg will be standing on the sidelines rather than in the spotlight. That is exactly as he wants it to be. His athletes should write their own story. His already has a permanent place in the history of vaulting. (ebr)



Since 2023, national coach of the vaulters: Kai Vorberg. Photo: Pferdesport Deutschland/Sager

World-Championship Atmosphere

New floodlights and colourful selfie spots: What's new at Allianz Park?

The stage is set, where just a few weeks ago there was still a construction-site atmosphere, a venue for world-class sport has now emerged.

At the Championships Village, 200 international companies will be showcased in a shopping and experience village. More than 300 pagoda tents will be set up in total. Eye-catching and full of colour, street art artist Paul Sous is adding highlights with his selfie spots spread across the grounds. The colourful designs invite visitors to capture personal World Championship moments and take them home with them. The aim is to make the visit an experience that goes beyond the sporting competition itself.

Aachen is also showing its world-championship flair when it comes to food. Between the pagoda tents and stadium stands, the air is filled with the aroma of crispy fries, freshly grilled specialties, and regional dishes. In the exclusive Champions' Circle, the high-end Munich caterer Käfer will spoil guests with Miche-



The temporary roof in Stadium 3 at Allianz Park meets the requirements for the vaulting and para-dressage competitions.
Photo: ALRV/Saskia Stahl-Farrell

lin-awarded creations, while the Soers beer garden, with burgers, roast onion beef, and freshly tapped beer, becomes a lively social meeting place.

Behind it all is the work of a large team. Around 1,500 staff members, many of them volunteers, will ensure during the World Championships that everything runs smoothly both on and off the competition grounds. All of them are helping to create con-

ditions that make world-class performances possible – for the riders as well as for their four-legged partners.

To ensure that the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 meet the highest international standards, the Aachen-Laurensberger Rennverein has extensively further developed the venue over recent months. The floodlighting in the main stadium has been rejuvenated, a new

dressage surface has been installed in the main stadium, the cross-country course has been expanded, Stadium 3 – where the vaulters and para-dressage riders will compete – has been covered, and modern stables built in line with the latest animal welfare standards.

Sustainability is also a key focus. The FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 stand not only for outstanding equestrian sport, but also for a responsible approach to the environment and resources. The ALRV is focusing on energy efficiency, smart mobility concepts, waste reduction, and inclusion. Accessibility across the grounds has also been further improved – a clear commitment to strengthening para-sport and making the stay as comfortable as possible for everyone. The goal is to combine a major sporting event with an equally strong sense of responsibility – and to provide momentum that extends far beyond the days of the event. (red)



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Home event with medal chances

Vaulting: National coach Kai Vorberg is sending a strong team to the Aachen Soers.

The vaulters will begin their FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 campaign on Thursday. Until Sunday, the athletes will compete for medals in the men's and women's individual events, the groups, the pas de deux, and the team competition as part of the "Sparkasse Prize". All five medal decisions will be made over the weekend – three on Saturday and two on Sunday.

However, unlike at CHIO Aachen, celebrations at the World Championships will not take place in the Albert-Vahle Arena, but in the dressage stadium, which will serve as Stadium 3 in the Allianz Park during the championships. A temporary roof has been installed to protect the vaulters from rain and strong sunshine.

Competitive everywhere

Whether in the dressage stadium or the Albert-Vahle Arena, motivation to win precious metal is sure to be especially high at a home World Championship. National coach Kai Vorberg, world champion in Aachen in 2006 with his Mozart freestyle "Amadeus," says: "We are competitive in all disciplines."

Just how competitive the German team is will first be shown by the women on Thursday from 8 a.m., when they open the individual competition with the compulsory test. The technical test follows on Friday (from 8 a.m.), and the freestyle and medal decision conclude the individual event on Saturday (from 8 a.m.). Coach Vorberg has nominated Kathrin Meyer and Alice Layher, two athletes whose records speak for themselves.

Meyer, 25, has won two gold medals at World Championships and four at European Championships. This will be her last championship: "I would definitely say the pressure is a bit different this year. But I'm really looking forward to it. Of course, my goal is to be right at the front. But the competition isn't sleeping."

Injured for a longer period

Meyer's achievements also include three consecutive victories in the World Cup Final (2023 to 2025) and two overall wins at CHIO Aachen in 2023 and 2024. On both occasions, the "spoiler" who ended the reigning European champion's streak was Alice Layher, who had already become U21 world and European champion in 2022 and 2023 and celebrated her first CHIO Aachen victory in 2025.



Winner at CHIO Aachen 2025: Alice Layher.

Photo: Thomas Rubel

Last year, Layher was sidelined by injury for a longer period, and her horses were not in top form. The 24-year-old had to rely on her reserve horse, Candy – successfully. The mare will be back in the Soers again this year. Layher is in good form: she won the World Cup Final in Opglabbeek, Belgium, ahead of Meyer; at the final World Championship trial during the CVIO in Warendorf, she finished just behind her rival and her 17-year-old Oldenburg horse Captain Claus OLD in second place. There will be no title defence in the women's event: Austria's Eva Nagiller, world champion in 2024 in Bern, Switzerland, has ended her active career.

The men also begin their individual competition on Thursday (from 1 p.m.), followed by Friday (from 5 p.m.) and Saturday (from 1:15 p.m.) after the women. Alongside Leon Hüsken, who studied at FH Aachen, attention in the German team is focused on Thomas Brüsewitz and Bela Lehnen. On the international side, the name Quentin Jabet is likely to come up repeatedly. The Frenchman is highly decorated, having already won individual World Championship silver twice, but he is still missing an individual world title.

One last time

For Brüsewitz, as for Meyer, this will also be his last championship. "I

tried not to think about it too much, but lately I haven't really managed that so well," admits the 32-year-old with a laugh. He has won three gold medals at World Championships so far and is already a four-time winner at CHIO Aachen, making him the record winner of the "Sparkasse Prize" together with his national coach Vorberg. At the CVIO in Warendorf, he finished second individually with Belistano, who will also be in the Soers now.

Brüsewitz also finished in that position at CHIO Aachen last year – "thanks" to Bela Lehnen. The Cologne native became U18 European champion in 2022, had to take a longer break due to injury in 2024, only made his comeback last year, and was speechless after his victory in Aachen. In Warendorf, Lehnen finished just behind Brüsewitz in third place. There will also be no title defence in the men's event: France's Theo Gardies, world champion in 2024, is not nominated for the individual event but will compete in the pas de deux.

Who can stop Team Norka?

In the group competition, the big question is: who can stop Team Norka of VV Köln-Dünnwald with the eleven-year-old Westphalian gelding Ecuador NRW and lungeur Alexandra Knauf? The Cologne team has won CHIO Aachen four times in

a row and has claimed back-to-back world and European titles twice. Vorberg nevertheless warns about the neighbours from France: "They will demand everything from us." The compulsory round takes place on Thursday (from 3:15 p.m.), with the freestyle and medal decision on Saturday from 3:45 p.m.

The FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 will conclude for the vaulters on Sunday with the pas de deux freestyle (from 9:30 a.m.) and the team competition (from 12 p.m.). In the pas de deux, Germany will be represented in Friday's freestyle (from 7 p.m.) by Kimberly Hyks and Jannik Heiland as well as Philine Lindhorst and Cjell Aaron Richert. The latter pair won at the CVIO in Warendorf ahead of Hyks and Heiland and will contest their first championship together in Aachen. In 2024, Dianna Harwardt and Peter Künne won gold, but they are not competing this time.

In the team competition, two individual vaulters and one group will compete at the end, each performing a freestyle routine. France is the defending champion. "Of course we want to be successful. But what matters is that at the end we can say: 'We did everything that was possible,'" Vorberg emphasizes. Still, the national coach would certainly have no objection to Germany winning more world titles than in 2024. (lv)

Premiere on Familiar Ground

Henri Ruoste, the Finn living in Germany, is competing at a World Championship for the first time.

That likely made quite a few dressage riders prick up their ears. "Due to some ongoing commitments and unexpected financial pressure, I have decided to sell one of my up-and-coming Grand Prix horses," Henri Ruoste wrote on Instagram a little more than four months ago. However, the Finn ended the serious-sounding post with plenty of humour, fitting for April 1: "By the way: April Fools!"

The 44-year-old is again likely to be in good spirits in the coming days, as he will be competing at the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026. Ruoste is part of the Finnish dressage team and is celebrating a premiere: this will be his first World Championship appearance after four European Championships and two Olympic appearances in Tokyo 2021 and Paris 2024.

The Soers district is not unfamiliar territory for Ruoste. At CHIO Aachen 2025, the Finn placed third in the CDI4 Grand Prix* on Tiffanys



A well-coordinated team: Henri Ruoste and Tiffany's Diamond.

Photo: Imago/Lehtikuva

Diamond and finished second in the Special. Just over three months ago, at the Aachen Dressage Days, the 44-year-old was second in the Grand Prix on Delaurentis and won the Special. "Aachen is unique," he says.

The Finn has a special connection to this city and this country: Ruoste has been living in Germany since 2011. For more than a year and a half, his trainer

has been the internationally renowned Aachen dressage coach Ton de Ridder. Under de Ridder's guidance are four other World Championship participants: Maria Caetano, Vasco Godinho (both from Portugal), José Antonio Garcia Mena (Spain), and Nicolas Wagner Ehlinger (Luxembourg).

De Ridder says of Ruoste: "Henri is such a good rider, he doesn't need a

trainer. I would say we exchange ideas." One example is the horse Delaurentis. "He came to me two years ago as a sales horse, but since the end of last year he has belonged to me. Ton advised me to do that," Ruoste reveals.

The World Championship has come a little too early for the ten-year-old Hanoverian; the Finn will once again compete with his second Grand Prix horse, the 14-year-old Danish mare Tiffanys Diamond—as he did at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris and last year at the 2025 European Championships in Crozet, France.

"It's a big stage, and everyone has to see how they keep their nerves under control," says Ruoste, who wants to enjoy the World Championship "without too much pressure" if possible: "We'll do our best and then see what is possible. With so many spectators, the horse can lose focus now and then," the Finn adds, once again with a touch of humour. (lv)

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A mammoth technical task

For everything to run smoothly at the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026, every detail behind the scenes must be right. For almost 30 years, NetAachen - formerly known as Accom - has been responsible for the technical infrastructure on the showgrounds in the Soers.

Since 1999, Guido Ruthmann has been a project manager at NetAachen and, at major events on the showgrounds in the Soers, is responsible for network coverage. Without it, an event like the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 could not function: no televisions, Wi-Fi, TV broadcasting, results reporting, entrance systems, or card payment terminals would work. In an interview with Tom Wayan Becker, he talks about how NetAachen safeguards against problems, why the showgrounds in the Soers can be compared to a small town, and the moments from past major events he will never forget.

Mr. Ruthmann, what interests you more at the World Championships—the horses or network availability?

Guido Ruthmann: (laughs) Network availability, of course. For us, that is the foundation that allows the tournament to run smoothly in the first place.

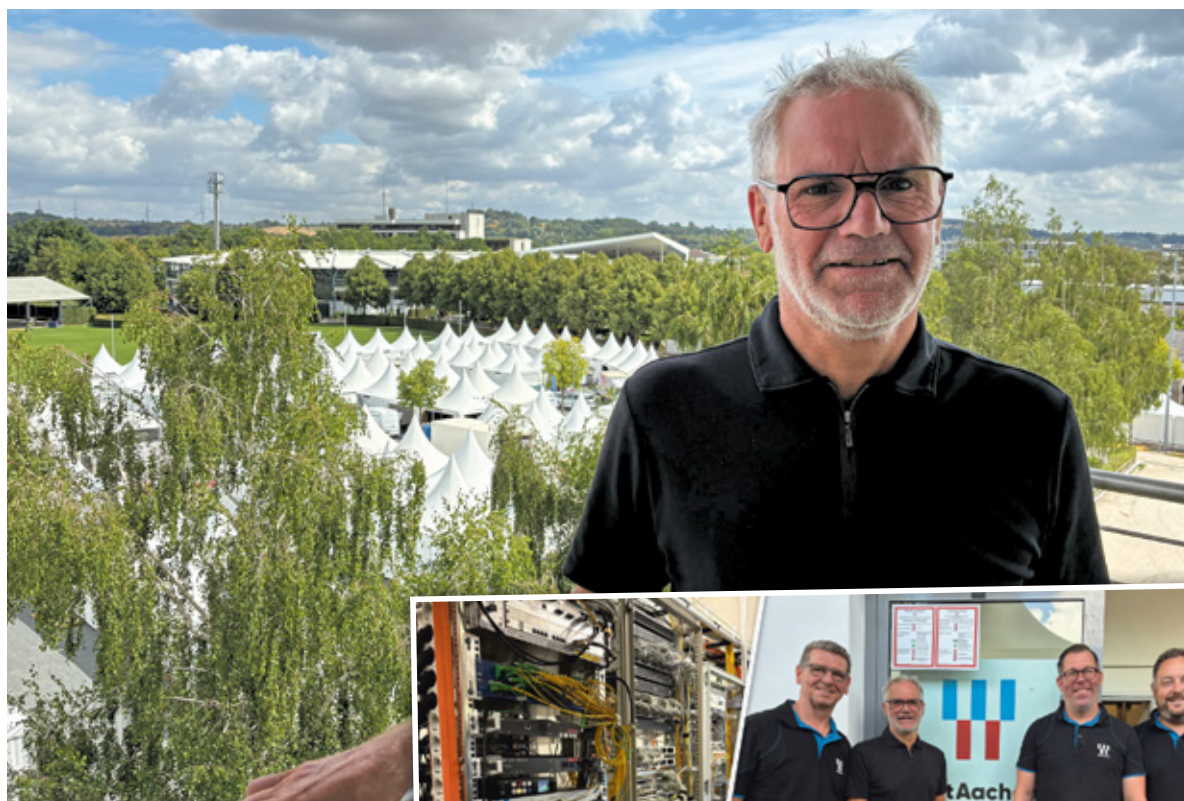
Setup begins weeks before the first competition. What puts the greatest demands on your team?

Ruthmann: Above all, time pressure. Everything must be finished by a specific date. At the same time, we know that surprises can always arise at an event of this size. And in Aachen, the weather naturally also plays a significant role. Thunderstorms, heavy rain, or heat – you must be prepared for all of that. As we all know, water and electronics are not exactly good friends.

When is the workload greatest—during setup, during the tournament, or afterward?

Ruthmann: Definitely during setup. You have to think of everything, and all the trades and service providers have to work together perfectly. I always say: if the setup went well, then the tournament is the reward. A lot then simply runs the way it should, and you even get the chance to enjoy the sport from time to time.

The dismantling, on the other hand, happens incredibly quickly. Within just a few days, everything is gone. That actually leaves a slight sense of sadness every year. You have worked together as a team for weeks, experienced a lot, and then suddenly it's all over.



Since 1999, Guido Ruthmann has been responsible for network coverage at the CHIO grounds. In the beginning, it was a major challenge every single time, but today his experience helps him.

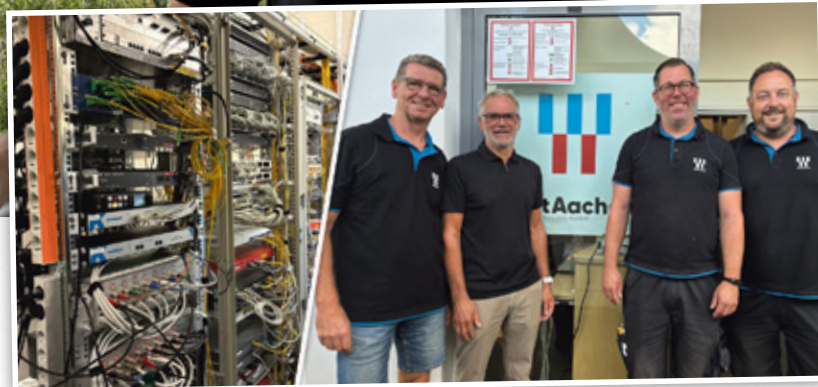
What would be your absolute worst-case scenario?

Ruthmann: Not a technical failure. Technology can be repaired or backed up. The worst thing would be if a person were harmed. That would be absolutely horrible for me.

How do you prepare for technical failures?

Ruthmann: By building in redundancy wherever possible – that is, by backing everything up twice. For us, the internet is almost as important today as electricity. That is why we bring fiber-optic connections onto the grounds multiple times and back up the central technology twice over. If something fails somewhere, another system takes over.

In fact, you can compare the entire site to a small town. The fiber optics form the infrastructure. On top of that sit the network, the Wi-Fi, internet connections, television broadcasts, and many other services. The exhibitors have their connections like houses in a town, and



Left: At the heart of the facility, all underground cables converge. Right: Guido Ruthmann (2nd from left) with three of the NetAachen employees responsible for network supply at the World Championships: Bernhard Beckers (from left to right), David Nüsser, and Daniel Pütz.

Photos: Tom Wayan Becker

for me the TV compound is something like an industrial area where particularly large amounts of data converge.

In all these years, has there been an incident you will never forget?

Ruthmann: There have been quite a few. One that stands out especially in my memory involved a large display board that kept dropping. We searched for the fault for a long time – until we realized that the problem always occurred when the spectators jumped to their feet cheering. The vibrations of the grandstand were crushing a fiber-optic cable. As soon as everyone sat down again, the display worked again. Moments like that show that technical problems can sometimes have very unusual causes.

With all that responsibility, is there any time left to enjoy the World Championships?

Ruthmann: More today than in the past. I used to constantly wonder whether I might have forgotten something somewhere. With experience and a well-coordinated team, I've become much more relaxed. When everything is running smoothly, I like to watch the floodlit jumping or enjoy the atmosphere at the Farewell of the Nations. That is what all the work is for.

And in the end, the most important thing is not actually the technology. What matters is cooperation—between colleagues, service providers, and the organizer. If everyone communicates openly, supports one another, and addresses problems immediately, then a World Championship will work too. (twb)

The World Championships in One App

Results, starting lists, news, and venue information at your fingertips: the official FEI World Championships Aachen app turns your smartphone into a digital companion throughout the championships – and even has a few surprises in store.

The FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 are the biggest sporting event of the year in Germany. At an event of this scale, it's easy to lose track: When does the next competition start? Where is the exhibitor you're looking for? And what was the result of a particular class? The answers are all available in one convenient place – in the official FEI World Championships Aachen app.

Starting lists and results can be accessed just as quickly as up-to-date information about the championships. Anyone who wants to follow their favourite discipline especially closely can activate personalized push notifications and stay automatically informed. In addition, the app offers the latest news, interviews, and the tournament newspaper – free of charge and delivered straight to your smartphone.

Test Your Knowledge and Win

However, the app is not just a source of information – it also invites fans to take part. In the exclusive live quiz, equestrian fans can prove their knowledge of the sport and past championships. It gets especially exciting for visitors in the main stadium: during the tournament, questions will be asked that can be answered directly via the app. Those who answer correctly have the chance to win attractive prizes – from free tickets to vouchers.

Your Digital Guide Through Allianz Park

The app also helps visitors find their way around on site: around 200 exhibitors will be presenting themselves in the Championships Village – from horse equipment and fashion to lifestyle products and unique decorating ideas. In-

stead of spending time searching for the right stand, users simply enter their desired destination into the app.

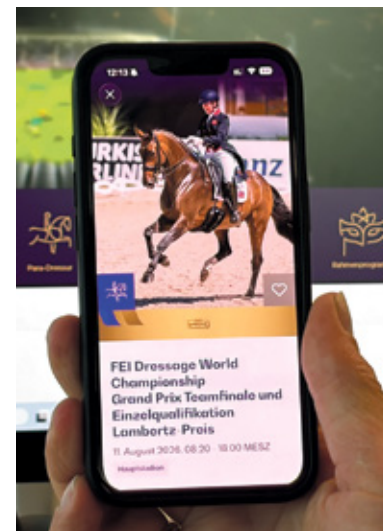
Interactive course maps are available for the DHL Prize in eventing and the Schwartz Group Prize, the four-in-hand marathon. Photos and videos provide a preview of the individual obstacles even before the competition begins.

Questions?

The Chatbot Helps

And if any questions remain despite all the information provided, a digital assistant is ready to help. The integrated chatbot answers questions about the tournament—such as when a competition begins or where to find a particular collection.

The FEI World Championships Aachen app is available free of charge for iOS and Android. (red)



With the app, always right in the middle of the action: Here you will find all the information about the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026. Photo: Tom Wayan Becker

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Driving is their life

Carriage collectors: Arnold and Marion Cremer from Oberzier drive honorary guests through the Soers.

In just a few days, the time will come: Arnold and Marion Cremer will polish up their black glass landau and, of course, their horses, and take their elegant outfits out of the wardrobe. They are heading to Aachen, where at the FEI World Championships Aachen 2026 in the Soers they will once again proudly and stylishly chauffeur one or two honorary guests. Just as they did over the past two years at the CHIO, when the couple from Oberzier had the honour of driving British Princess Anne and multiple Olympic dressage champion Isabell Werth into the main stadium.

"It is an indescribable feeling to drive into the riding stadium in front of tens of thousands of people," says the 61-year-old, especially because most of them are experts and can tell from afar, just by the grey top hat, that the owner of the carriage himself is holding the reins – a driver of a borrowed carriage would wear black headgear, explains the passionate carriage driver. "And they appreciate that the horses are well trained and stand still on command," adds Cremer. "It gives you goosebumps."

When Arnold Cremer talks about carriage driving, and especially about his carriages, his eyes light up—a sign of a passion he has shared for more than three decades with his wife Marion, along with their long-standing love of horses.

"We had actually always been interested in carriage driving," says the 61-year-old. Then in 1991, the time had come: the couple bought their first carriage. It would not be their last. Today, they own no fewer than 20, making them among the largest collectors of traditional carriages in the region.

In addition to the black landau already mentioned, Arnold and Marion Cremer also own a white counterpart that many people may have seen before. Until ten years ago, the couple used this magnificent vehicle to drive many a rifle king and May king couple in festive parades, as well as countless bridal couples on their way to and from the wedding ceremony. "Among them also the Princess of Merode, back then with a six-horse team," Arnold Cremer recalls fondly, remembering the impressive moment when they turned into the gardens of Merode Castle with the bridal couple in the carriage, drawn by six horses, where part of the European high nobility was already waiting for the newlyweds.



The Cremer married couple with their black Landauer at the CHIO in Aachen. Photo: Cremer

In a hall at Cremer's former business premises, a wide variety of models stand side by side, waiting for their next outing—from the small pony carriage for rides with their grandchild to the "wagonette," a light, open horse-drawn carriage from the 19th century, or a so-called "vis-à-vis," in which the passengers sit facing one another and can look

directly into each other's eyes. "Carriages that country estate owners once used to drive their guests or family on excursions," Cremer explains. The gems of the collection also include a roughly 120-year-old "Tilbury," a light, single-horse, one-axle carriage with large wheels, a high seat, and a removable roof, as well as a "Phaeton," "an aristocratic



Arnold and Marion Cremer with their "wedding carriage" in Hoeschplatz in Düren in front of the museum. Photo: Cremer

carriage for outings with two guests," explains the driver and collector.

Arnold and Marion Cremer attach immense importance to details, both in the fittings of their carriages and in their clothing: "When we drive out, we do it in style," emphasizes the 59-year-old.

But back to the 1990s: once infected with the carriage-driving bug, Arnold and Marion Cremer quickly became passionate about their new hobby, which soon became much more, as they themselves emphasize. "Back then, in our mid-thirties, we were among the youngest in the entire scene," recalls the 61-year-old, "but we were immediately welcomed everywhere." They attended courses, continued their training so that they could later train others themselves, built up their own business dealing in carriages made to their order in Poland and carriage accessories—a business they still run today—regularly exhibited at trade fairs, and took part in historical drives, with Arnold Cremer also competing in tournaments. "The passion grew quickly," recalls Marion Cremer. For years, the couple was on the road practically every weekend from April to October; summer vacation was an unknown concept. Looking back, she says: "Carriage driving was and is our life."

What very few people probably know: the carriages presented each year by Cologne's traditional corps in the Rose Monday parade were not only almost all supplied by Arnold Cremer; many a special request from the carnival participants in terms of fittings—such as a toilet or hydraulic brakes—was implemented and made possible by him. "At the time, that was a challenging development," explains the trained toolmaker, adding with a smile: "Run-of-the-mill was never my thing."

That the path would eventually lead to Aachen was almost inevitable. "Until 2024, I was a box and obstacle judge at the CHIO for 25 years," reports Cremer. Even during that time, his carriages were a welcome sight in Aachen, though they were driven by good friends. That changed two years ago. Now he sits on the coach box himself with his wife and enjoys these incredibly special moments, which Arnold and Marion Cremer are also looking forward to at the Equestrian World Championships. (ja)

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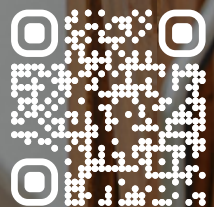
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