

‘It is what it is’: Sophie Wells falls agonisingly short of a second individual medal in Aachen

Sophie Wells and MSJ Gold Standard finished fourth in the grade V freestyle – agonisingly close to another World Championships medal – rounding out a mixed week



Sophie Wells and MSJ Gold Standard competing at the 2026 World Para Dressage Championships in Aachen

(Image credit: BEF/Jon Stroud Media)

Sophie Wells scored 76.76% to finish just off the podium in the grade V freestyle at the World Para Dressage Championships in Aachen.

It rounded off a week of contrasts for Sophie – an emotional grade V gold on Thursday, a tougher team test on Saturday, and now a fourth-place freestyle finish, agonisingly close to a second medal – just 0.68 percentage points shy of bronze.

Gold went to Lena Malmström and Fabulous Fidelie for Sweden on 79.68%, with Regine Mispelkamp and Highlander Delight’s taking silver for Germany on 78.19% and Britney de Jong and Caramba NOP bronze for the Netherlands on 77.44%.

“It was a bit of a mixed bag”

Sophie entered the arena, gesturing to the sound technicians to turn the music up – a remix of covers by Croatian cellist HAUSER, including Waka Waka, Sway and La Isla Bonita.

“It was so much quieter than the sound check, but a few people had said that earlier in the order, so I was a bit prepared for it,” Sophie explained. “It’s the sort of music that needs to be a little bit louder anyway.”

It was a technical floorplan, and Sophie could count herself unlucky not to have picked up more marks from the judges – the watching crowd had her on 77.93%.

“The extended canter was good – I think that’s a really nice, bold thing she can do,” Sophie said. “But overall it was a bit of a mixed bag – she was fresh coming out, so I didn’t quite know what I was going to get in there. It was nice that she was feeling energetic on day three though, because I didn’t expect that.”

“Of course it’s disappointing – it’s four percent off my best. But equally, it wasn’t our best test either – there were mistakes; she dropped me in the two half-circles, and the simple changes weren’t the best she could do. It is what it is, and we just try to get home, regroup, and get better.”

Looking ahead, Sophie confirmed MSJ Gold Standard’s owner, Emma Blundell, plans to sell the 10-year-old mare after these championships, with Sophie’s focus already turning to the horses waiting in the wings for her at home.

“We’ll see what happens – the plan was always that she’d be sold after worlds,” Sophie said. “We’ve got other horses coming up too, like seven-year-old Ontario LC, who did his first international at Hartpury this year.”

Sophie also still has her Paralympic medallist LJT Egebjerggards Samoa, whose talent she rates highly for grand prix work, alongside her para career.