OMAHA EQUESTRIAN FOUNDATION

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#RidetoOmaha Thursday, April 6



Drama As The Opening Round of Burlington Capital FEI Vaulting World Cup™ Final Gets Underway

There was drama aplenty in the first round of the Burlington Capital FEI Vaulting World Cup[™] Final on Thursday, April 6, 2023. Vaulting takes place this week alongside Dressage and Jumping at the CHI Health Center Omaha in Omaha, Nebraska. The FEI World Cup[™] Finals Omaha 2023 runs through April 5.

Competition is held in three separate divisions for male athletes, female athletes, and Pas De Deux combinations, which can be of any gender. This first round, the technical test, is averaged with the results from the freestyle test on Saturday to determine the three Burlington Capital FEI Vaulting World Cup[™] Final champions.



Chiara Congia and Justin Van Gerven performing on Max. Photo by Alison Hartwell Photography

The red-hot favorites coming into the Pas De Deux competition — where two vaulters perform a two-minute routine — had to change horses just hours before the competition, when their intended horse, Highlight, came up lame. The German duo of Chiara Congia and Justin Van Gerven instead borrowed the 12-year-old Max for their routine.

Their performance, which earned 8.37, showed amazing harmony and spellbinding poise. At one point, Congia balanced face down, fully stretched with her back arched, on Van Gerven's shoulders with just her stomach touching him as they glided around the circle.

"It's a great score," said Van Gerven, who finished third at last year's FEI Vaulting World Cup™ Final with Congia. They are ranked number one in the world. "It was a little bit tough for all of us as we were unable to compete on Highlight. Max and Alex [Knauf, the lunger] helped us through this round. We are not super happy with everything we did, but we did the very first round with this horse inside that arena, so we can be really happy and show some better things on Saturday hopefully."



Jannik Heiland and San Classico S Photo by <u>Alison Hartwell Photographv</u>

In the male ranks, Germany's Jannik Heiland posted the day's top score of 8.436. The 30-yearold has twice won individual silver at the World Championships and was third in Leipzig at last year's FEI Vaulting World Cup[™] Final, but the champion's sash still eludes him. His routine was strong and smooth from start to finish, rounded out with a brilliant backwards somersault dismount. His exercise score of 9.033 reflected the high quality of the work.

"My horse at home was too old for this big journey, so this was my fifth time on San Classico," he said. "Everything was not perfect, but I think 90% of the technical test was very good. You never know how the horse will react in the arena because it is very big, but he did a great job."



Kathrin Meyer and San Classico S Photo by <u>Alison Hartwell Photography</u>

Eight athletes from six nations stepped forward into the electric main arena to contest the technical test in the Female ranks. The top performance came from the 22-year-old German Kathrin Meyer, who was lunged by her mother Sonja. Her smooth and assured routine, with difficult transitions and sequences, earned her 8.299 and the edge heading into the freestyle. She did a joyful double jump on landing to celebrate her first FEI Vaulting World Cup[™] Final appearance.

"There were small things that I wasn't 100% happy with, but it was the first time I showed this routine for the season, so it was a good job for the three of us," she said. "It's a challenge to combine everything together and still be within the time.

"I'm so proud of San Classico. We've had him for 10 years, and he's doing such a great job. The lights create a different atmosphere than a normal competition. The audience was great, and I'm happy to be here."

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FULL RESULTS



Vogel Has the Magic Touch In the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final Omaha 2023

Schou Slides Into the Overall Lead with Schwizer

Consistency leads to success in competition, and Round 2 of the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup[™] Final on Thursday, April 6, 2023, tested just that. It was Germany's Richard Vogel and his sensational mount United Touch S who could not be caught, claiming the top spot. Young talent Harry Charles of Great Britain finished in second with Balou du Reventon, and Andreas Schou (DEN) rounded out the top three with his Darc de Lux.

Riders returned in reverse order of their results from Round 1 for the technical course designed by FEI Level 4 Course Designer Bernardo Costa Cabral (POR). Rails fell throughout as horses and riders navigated the challenging questions posed. Some of the leading contenders had faults, while others moved up the leaderboard. Ultimately, nine combinations jumped clear to advance to the jump-off, which featured two tight rollback turns broken up by longer lines across the arena in the CHI Health Center Omaha.



Richard Vogel and United Touch S Photo by Alison Hartwell Photography

First to contest the short course was France's Julien Epaillard with Donatello d'Auge. Though his time of 32.97 was blazing fast, Epaillard incurred penalties at the second and last fences for an eight-fault score. Victoria Gulliksen (NOR) then delivered the first double-clear performance, crossing the timers in 38.71 seconds. Devin Ryan (USA) and Eddie Blue followed but had a heartbreaking rail at the last fence. Next to contest was Charles, who produced an electric effort, stopping the clock in 35.25 seconds fault-free. His lead didn't last long, though, as Vogel shaved fractions off the time, finishing in 35.11 seconds. Schou and Pius Schwizer (SUI) both came close with times of 35.58 and 36.18 seconds respectively, but in the end, the day belonged to Vogel.

"I think everyone can see how amazing this horse is," expressed Vogel of the 11-year-old Westphalian stallion (Untouched x Lux Z) owned by Julius-Peter Sinnack. "He has such a big stride, and that doesn't necessarily make it easy in such a small and delicate indoor. He just gives his best and tries his heart out. In such a jump-off, I was lucky enough to leave a stride

out here and there, and that suited us."



Richard Vogel and United Touch S in their winning presentation with Brittany Garcia, Longines Brand President for the U.S. and Caribbean, Mark Samuel, FEI Vice President, and Lisa Roskens, Omaha Equestrian Foundation Board Chair. **Photo by <u>Alison Hartwell Photography</u>**

Vogel, who has recently been working with Longines FEI Jumping World Cup[™] Final Omaha 2017 champion McLain Ward (USA), has been having an incredible season, notching wins on both sides of the pond in Europe and in the U.S.

"The biggest factor is to have such great horses, and the other is to have a great team behind me," said Vogel of his recipe for success. "You can only be as good as the team behind you, and you're only a good rider if you have a good horse too, so I'm lucky to have both of these for the moment."

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OVERALL STANDINGS AFTER ROUND 2

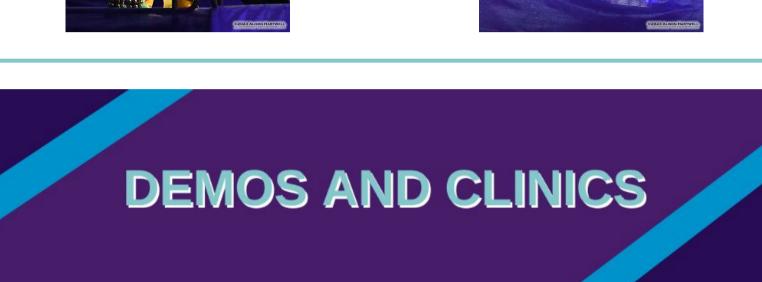
Text by Alice Collins and Amanda Picciotto Feitosa



Photos by <u>Alison Hartwell Photography</u>







Photos by <u>Tom Jodis Photography</u>



IN THE NEWS



The Omaha Equestrian Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that strives to bring equestrian sport into the mainstream by changing the way it is presented and to develop Omaha into a hub of the sport horse industry, attracting and developing championship competitions as both educational and economic development opportunities for the community.



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