

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS ENDURANCE

Euston Park, England 2019

by Talitha Bakker ■ photos by Imke Lamsma

On the 17th of August,
the beautiful scenery of Euston Park,
England was hosting the 2019 FEI
European Championships Endurance
over a distance of 160km.

The distance was divided in six loops with a break in between each loop where the horses are being checked for locomotion and vital status. The horse and rider can only continue when the vet gives his ok.

Favourites in this Championships were Marijke Visser from Holland (2nd place European Championships 2015 and 2nd place World championships 2014), Jaume Dachs Punti from Spain (Winner European championships 2015) and Maria Ponton Alvarez from Spain (Twice winner of the World championships in 2008 and 2010 and winner European championships in 2009).





For this event, Marijke Visser took the 11 years Australian bred Castlebar Gameboy (Castlebar Tempest x Aloha Gossip) who is owned by Sh. Faisal bin Saqr al Qassimi

from Dubai. Marijke and Castlebar Gameboy won the CEI 1 here in Euston Park last year and later in the year they finished 2nd at the CEI 2* 120km endurance at Pontchateau Endurance. This year they finished 5th at the CEI 3* of 160km Endurance in Ermelo what qualified them for this European Championships. Castlebar Gameboy is a steady horse with a good record, despite finishing only one 160km prior to this championships. When ridden Wiseley he could have a good chance with Marijke.*

Jaume Dachs Puntí is riding Twist Maison Blanche (Arques Perspex x Hishame de L'Ardus) – a 12 years old grey gelding. Together they did a throw at the European Championships two years ago where they were unfortunately vetted out after the 4th loop. In June this year, the gelding successfully completed a 160km in Kings Forest showing he is ready for revanche! In 2016, Jaume and Twist Maison Blanche won the World championships Endurance in Samorin with an average speed of 23.61 km/h. It is a very experienced horse and a strong competitor for this year's European Championships.

Maria Ponton Alvarez is riding Mandany (Madjani x Viceversa), a chesnut mare born in 2010. Together they qualified at the CEI 3 160km endurance in Dubai earlier this year. The year before they were second at the CEI 2* of 120km in Tordera. Mandany is a young horse with no*







major ride experience. We will see how he will stand in this strong field of competitors! With a rider as Maria, he has a fair chance!

The race started at 7:00 UK-time with the first loop of 40km. The leadgroup was going with an average of 23 km/h and included favourites Marijke Visser, Jaume Punti and Maria Ponton. It was the Italian rider Carolina Tavassoli Asli, riding the 14 years old Sequinte of the F3 Stables who came in first. With an average of 23.57 km/h and a recovery time of 1:13 minutes and a heartrate of 45 she kept her first position during the first vetgate. Her teammate Constanza Laliscia, riding Sacha el Kandhaar (Kandhaar x Movoska), also from the F3 stables, followed in 2nd with an average of 23.52 km/h and a recovery time of 1:42 minutes. Third with an average speed of 23.45 km/h and a recoverytime of 1:44 minutes was the Spanish rider Paula Muntala Sanchez, riding the experienced 12 years old gelding Táime de Coeuer (Ulm de Domenjoi x Termir HH). Favourites Maria Ponton, Marijke Visser and Jaume Punti were also in the leadinggroup, coming in 5th 6th and 13th.

The second loop was over a distance of 32km. Carolina Tavassoli Asli continued to keep the lead and came in again as first, with an average speed of 22.49 km/h and a recovery time of 1:21 minutes. Again followed by her teammate Constanza Laliscia with an average of 23.53 km/h and a recovery of 1:50 minutes. Came in third was the Slovakian rider Michaela Supekova riding the 13 years old mare Girola de Quercus. With an average speed of 22.55

km/h and a recovery time of 1:45 minutes she moved up one position. Maria, Marijke and Jaume were still with them in the leadergroup, coming in as 4th, 8th and 6th.

The next loop went over 26km. With an average speed of 23.60 km/h, the two Italian ladies stayed in the lead with recovery times both under the two minutes. Also the Slovenian rider Michaela kept her third position. Unfortunately the race ended here for Marijke Visser and her Castlebar Gameboy as they vetted out lame. Maria kept going at a steady 4th position with an average speed of 21.77 km/h and a recovery time of 2:27 minutes. Jaume followed her closely at the 6th position with an average of 20.98 km/h and a recovery time of 3:50 minutes.

The next loop was over 20kms. Again no change in the top three positions. With an average speed of 21.48 km/h, Carolina stayed in the lead. Also Maria kept her 4th position with an average of 20.85 km/h and Jaume came in 7th now with an average of 19.63 km/h.

Off they went again on the 5th loop of 22kms. The two Italians kept in the lead with an average speed of 20.66 km/h. This time the 3rd position was for Paula Sanchez with an average of 20.93 km/h and a recovery of 4:19 minutes. Maria kept her 4th position with a average speed of 19.27 km/h and a recovery of 4:44 minutes but decided to retire her horse from the competition, giving the position to her teammate Omar Blanco Rodrigo with the 12 years old Priam des Roches (Limane Du Bosphore x Zakita).



Jaume came in 6th with an average speed of 19.43 km/h and a recovery time of 4:56 minutes.

The last loop was 20km and here it was seen that some horses were getting a bit tired. Leading rider Carolina Tavassoli had trouble motivating her horse and with an average speed of 17.55 km/h she came in third at the finish. The horse of her teammate, Constanza Laliscia was still fit and with an average speed of 22.72 km/h she finished first and became the European Champion!

At the second position finished the Spanish Paula Sanchez who rode the last loop with 25.83 km/h. Fourth in was Jaume Punti with 21.68 km/h in the last loop.

Unfortunately, the Italian rider Carolina was disqualified as she had insufficient weight at the finish line, which resulted in a bronze medal to Jaume!

It was a surprising finish of an exciting European Championship with 31 successful finished and 32 eliminated. The teamgold went to Spain, the Silver to France and the bronze to Germany! □