



An excited Silver-medal winning Chester Weber at the World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship.
Photo by Rinaldo de Craen

Weber Wins Silver at 2008 World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship

By Cindy Timmer for the USEF

Beesd, the Netherlands – The nineteenth edition of the World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship 2008 in Beesd, the Netherlands concluded today with a thrilling Final. The best four-in-hand drivers in the world showed the highest level of horsemanship and carriage driving sport in the crowded main arena in Beesd.

The overall winner of the World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship 2008 is Ijsbrand Chardon. Chardon, who won his fourth individual World title on his home soil in Beesd, drove a double clear round in the final obstacle driving competition and also contributed to the Gold medal of the Dutch team.

Chardon withstood a valiant charge on Gold by the USA's Chester Weber, who will bring Individual Silver home to his Ocala, FL base. It was an exciting Final for Weber who was in second place in the standings after his fantastic dressage victory and a good marathon. Weber fought until the very last minute, but Chardon proved unbeatable. With 8.22 penalty points ahead of Weber, Chardon secured his fourth Gold medal. Chester maintained silver, while Australia's Boyd Exell took the bronze.

Weber's teammate, Tucker Johnson was in 17th position after the first two phases and passed the finish line of the cones course with 6.28 penalty points to add to his score. As a result, he climbed one place in the individual standings.

"I already failed my usual rhythm in the marathon," said Johnson. "It did not go the way I would have liked it to go, but to have competed here was a great experience."

For James Fairclough, the World Championship did also not meet his expectations, but he agreed with Johnson on the fantastic atmosphere in Beesd. Two of his horses came up sick just before the World Championship so Fairclough could not put down his typical performance. He did not go home empty handed: he won the presentation competition on the opening day in Beesd.

Team USA battled for every point in the team competition. After four days of high-class sport, Weber, Johnson and Fairclough ended in fifth place in the Team portion. Host nation the Netherlands took the team gold, ahead of Germany and the drivers from Hungary.

The 2008 World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship was a milestone in the history of driving sport. Perfect organization and great sport greeted over 90,000 spectators at the wonderful event over five fantastic days of competition.

Beesd 2008 is history, it was a great festival of driving sport and the driving community is already looking forward to the next World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship, which will take place as part of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games in Kentucky in 2010.

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