

Pony Team USA Drives to Team and Individual Bronze Medal at the 2011 FEI Pony Driving World Championships



Lipica, Slovenia (September 30, 2011) – The United States’ reputation as a force to be reckoned with in the sport of combined driving just got stronger thanks to a stellar performance at the 2011 FEI Pony World Driving Championships. After the marathon, the US Pony Team was placed third and they defended that finish through the cones, bringing home the Team Bronze Medal. Their total of 402.3 earned them the medal behind Germany with a 359.4 and The Netherlands with a 375.4. Suzy Stafford, who was competing as an individual for the United States, brought home her second consecutive Individual Bronze Medal after a brilliant cones phase boosted her from fourth to third. Stafford won an Individual Bronze Medal in Germany in 2009 and an Individual Gold Medal at the 2005 World Pony Driving Championships in England.

Chef d’ Equipe Chester Weber was pleased with the US Teams’ successes. “The single Pony and Pony Pairs and pony teams all put in excellent performances here in Lipica,” Weber stated. “Team Bronze is a fantastic achievement for the Pony Team, and is highlighted by Stafford’s Individual Bronze Medal. The Pairs Team also had a great show, and both Teams gained invaluable experience showing and training on the international level.”

Weber, who finished second in the FEI World Cup Standings this year for Four-in-Hand Combined Driving, also served as Chef d’ Equipe for the Pony Team in 2007 and 2009, and this was his first year as Chef for the Pairs Teams. Weber is a seasoned international competitor in the Four-in-Hand, and returned to the States to win the US Four-in-Hand Reserve National Championship. While competing in Europe he was mentored by the US Four-in-Hand Chef d’ Equipe, Ed Young. “I have been working with Ed since 2006, and with Michael Young, the Team Coach, since 1998,” Weber said. “We were determined to use our knowledge and experience to improve the US Pony and Pairs Teams, and I think

we did just that. My hopes were that we could create a medal finish for the US while exposing our drivers to the sport at the highest level and increasing their depth of experience. Clearly the standings for both Teams and Suzy Stafford medaling in the individual competition are a mark of our success.”

For more information on the US Pairs and Pony Team and results from Lipica, visit <http://usefnetwork.com/featured/2011DrivingWorldChampionships/>. For more information on Weber and his combined driving team, visit their website at www.chesterweber.com.

Photo: Chef d' Equipe Chester Weber (far left) with Pony Team USA at the 2011 World Pony Driving Championships in Lipica, Slovenia. (Photo courtesy of Marie de Ronde-Oudemans)