

## Eventing : the CCI 4\*-L in Saumur on the road to Tokyo

In a tense health-care context, which concerns both humans and horses since the appearance in February of an epizootic of rhinopneumonitis, the Equestrian Committee of Saumur, organizer of one of the three French major eventing competitions, and its partners have made the courageous decision, in the name of sport, to maintain their spring event: Saumur Complet and its iconic competition the CCI4 \* -L, from April 29 to May 2. «In the name of sport» because the 35th edition of the event is a central issue in the athletes preparation for the Olympic Games in Tokyo, where France will have a leading place to defend.

From now on until the Tokyo's Olympics Games, opportunities will be rare for European eventers to perfect their preparation: in Western Europe for example, only seven CCI 4 \* -L and CCI 5 \* -L have been maintained on schedule up to the 30th of June. This shows the importance of each meeting! Last qualifying step for the French riders, Olympic Team champions and individual vice-champion (Nicolas Astier) in Rio in 2016, the CCI 4 \* -L de Saumur Complet will be run from the 29 th of April to the 2nd of May, under strict sanitary conditions, in closed session. The public will not be able to physically access the Hippodrome de Verrie. On the other hand, an exceptional digital device is being developed to allow everyone to follow the action remotely, within the limits of digital technology.



**Saumur : a world-renowned reference in equestrian eventing.**

French capital of the equestrianism, host of the prestigious IFCE - Cadre noir de Saumur, Saumur has the horse and riding in the blood. The first edition of Saumur Complet was run in 1986. Since then, all the greatest have at one time competed in this competition which they dream of adding to their palmares. The beautiful pages of

this equestrian Anjou story, in this territory labeled «Terre de Jeux» for Paris 2024, are being written by the legends of the discipline. Triple winner of the competition, the legendary New Zealander Mark Todd, double individual Olympic champion in 1984 and 1988, won in Saumur in 1987 with Charisma, the companion of his victories in Los Angeles and Seoul, and paved the way for other icons. In 1991, for its sixth edition, the competition was won for the first time by France, thanks to french rider Marie-Christine Duroy together with Quart du Placineau. Followed by Didier Seguret with Coeur de Rocker in 1993, Jean Teulère Olympic Team champion in 1994, and Rodosto, ten years later in 2004, the local Jean-Lou Bigot with Derby de Longueval in 2005, the «Archange» Nicolas Touzaint with Tatchou in 2007, also a member of the victorious French team in 2004, Maxime Livio with Qalao des Mers in 2014, until finishing with the first place, Mathieu Lemoine with Bart L in 2015, current Olympic title holder with the Blues.

If Saumur smiles on France, another nation feels at home in Maine-et-Loire, and what a nation! : Australia, three times Olympic Team champion since 1992. In Saumur, nearly a third of the victories in the International equestrian eventing (10/34) returned to the Aussies riders! The tenant of the competition is actually an Australian. With Quality Purdey and then with Polystar I, Christopher Burton has indeed won here in 2018 and 2019.

### **A CCI 4 \* -L, but not only !**

True equestrian triathlon, the eventing competition consists of three tests: dressage, cross-country and jumping. It demands great versatility from the horse and its rider. Until January 1st, 2019, the eventing competitions were presented in two formats: CCI and CIC. Since then, the difference has been made between the so-called "short" (CCI-S, "short") and "long" (CCI-L) formats. The CCI-L, by their level and their prestige, remain the top category of the eventing. In April-May, the cross-country of the CCI 4 \* -L of the Saumur Complet will be run for example over a distance of around 5,700 m. Only the best will manage to return without a fault, within the allotted time, decided by the course manager. In parallel with the CCI 4-L of Saumur Complet, two other formats will be offered to riders: a CCI 3 \* -S and a CCI 2 \* -L. This multiplication of formats allows riders to arrive in Saumur together with several horses, including mounts in training, who will «learn the work» on tests 2 and 3 \*. It also allows European Juniors and Young Riders to prepare for their European Championships, which will be held in Sweden at the end of August.

From the 29th of April until the 2nd of May, more than 200 horses are expected in Maine-et-Loire. In addition to the closed session put in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19, strict health care protocols will be put in place to protect the health of the horses.