



We are pleased to announce that Christina Liebherr has been appointed President of the International Jumping Riders Club (IJRC)

Christina Liebherr went to the FEI European Jumping Championships held in Herning (Denmark) as reserve rider for the Swiss team and came back as President of the IJRC. During the general meeting, the IJRC unanimously elected the 34-year-old from the French-speaking part of Switzerland to be their new President. Christina Liebherr, a very popular polyglot reveals her thoughts on becoming the first woman appointed President of the Club.

Christina, are you interested in politics?

Not really. As a rule I vote and I do what needs to be done but I don't take a particular interest in politics.

In the future, you will have to engage in the politics of sport. Why have you agreed to become the President of the IJRC?

I feel it is not appropriate to complain when we don't like something without doing anything about it. When they asked me to join the club, I saw it as an opportunity. This sport has given so much to my life and I am delighted to be able to share my knowledge and experience, and give all I can back to the sport.

What are the conditions you will have to fulfil in your role as future President of the IJRC?

The by-laws set out that only an active rider may take on this role. Additionally, the person in question should be independent, and must master various languages – especially English given that the meetings are held in this language. Moreover, the IJRC wished to implement a generational change and were looking for a younger President. I believe that there were five possible candidates on the IJRC list and I was lucky enough to be elected during the general meeting that took place during the FEI European Championships in Herning. So far, I am pleased that my appointment has earned positive feedback in various quarters.

You are the first woman to head the IJRC....

Yes, I believe this reflects the development of the equestrian world. Although it is still dominated by males, women are gaining importance within the sport, taking on more responsibilities, helping the sport to advance and create gender equality.

Is the time you have to set aside for this role compatible with your career as a rider?

This is the first question I was asked. There are other committee members such as Steve Guerdat, Ludger Beerbaum or Kevin Staut who are on the go even more than I am and yet also manage to fulfil their engagement within the IJRC. It is a matter of organising oneself. I am lucky enough to have a good team who I can count on and I also have trusted people in the stables, enabling me to delegate

tasks when I'm away. The IJRC can also count on Eleonora Ottaviani, a director who engages herself greatly with the Club, who is present at various events and has the time to talk to the organisers, something which is not always easy when you are an active rider.

Your predecessor, as head of the IJRC was a Spaniard, Cayetano Martinez de Irujo who had been in charge since 1999. Has he given you any advice?

Cayetano has given me his telephone number and told me to contact him if I need anything. We've known each other for a long time and get on very well. I believe Cayetano has done an excellent job as President of the IJRC and I'm delighted that he has stayed on as a committee member within the club.

The IJRC was established in 1977, two years before you were born. Do the names of founding members such as Raimondo d'Inzeo, David Broome or Nelson Pessoa still mean something?

Of course, these people have written the history of equestrian sport. I know the history of the IJRC which, just like the sport itself, has greatly advanced over the years. Beforehand, the IJRC was highly militarised – just as the rest of the equestrian world – and its objectives were more blurred, now they are clearly defined.

And what are the objectives of the IJRC?

The main aim is to represent the active riders. The sport's people – and by this we mean both riders and horses – are at the heart of our efforts. As active participants we wish to have the right to express ourselves in connection with our sport and exercise a certain amount of influence not only over events but also on the development of rules, whilst knowing that we must bear in mind the interests of organisers, sponsors and federations alike. We, the show jumpers, are not the sole guarantors of a quality equestrian sport. We are all equally responsible for the healthy development of the equestrian sport, for its establishment at the heart of the people and for the fact that it carries a positive image.

And your first official acts as President?

I've only been in office for a matter of weeks so I am currently in the process of getting acquainted with the various files. It's still too soon to talk about concrete measures. Clearly, there are many things currently moving within the sport and we need to follow them closely. Show jumping finds itself at a crossroads; on the one hand, as a result of the introduction of new assessments such as the new regulations of the FEI Nations Cup and on the other, knowing that in the last few years, many instances of doping and abuse of medication have put our sport under a negative spotlight and it is necessary to counter this. One of my strongest wishes is to ensure that all riders are aware of the responsibilities they carry towards their sport.

What are your personal aims as President of the IJRC?

I do not wish to entirely transform the sport of show jumping. I aim to represent all the members of the IJRC before the FEI and the organisers, as effectively as possible. As I have just said, show jumping finds itself at an important stage where the foundations for its future have been laid. I would therefore like to represent the role of active members within this framework and contribute to find satisfactory solutions for the future of our sport. Additionally, I believe it is my duty to represent the sport of show jumping before the public. Finally and, for myself as a rider, there is the real challenge of finding out about the other side of the sport and its mechanisms.

Interview by : Angelika Nido Wälty

Info sul Club inserito nella pagina..

The International Jumping Riders Club (IJRC)

This club was founded in Vienna in 1977 in order to promote the sport of show jumping, create a close collaboration among riders, organisers and federations as well as to improve its reputation before the public. Membership is open to the top 250 world-ranking riders as well as to those who have taken part in World Championships, Olympic Games and at least five FEI Nations Cups. The Club is financed by sponsors and membership fees and these fees are calculated in accordance with the riders' ranking, and range between Eur. 200 and Eur. 400 annually. Over the last few decades, the IJRC has also contributed to the development of the world ranking formula and has arranged the Rolex IJRC Top Ten final; it has also been granted that the riders are now able to exercise their influence over the organisers and FEI. The future collaboration between the IJRC and FEI is currently under discussion and the two parties are presently working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).*(ani)*