

Von Danwitz Takes Individual Test Gold at 2013 European Junior Riders Championships

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2013 European Junior and Young Riders Championships

In a league of her own German Johanne Pauline von Danwitz outclassed her rivals and took the individual test gold medal at the 2013 European Junior Riders Championships in Compiègne, France, on Saturday 13 July 2013. The Individual Test Junior podium was a good example of how well the sport is progressing for the smaller dressage nations. Silver went to Norwegian Alexandra Andresen and bronze to Dutch new comer Jeanine Nekeman.

Whereas Von Danwitz produced a stand-out performance that could only have meant the gold medal, the second to seventh placed riders all scored in the 72% bracket and could easily have swapped places. It was hard to predict who was to land on the podium and the scores

reflected this. A large group of equally strong horse and rider combinations appeared in the show ring Saturday morning for a tough battle. If it had come down to the quality of the horse Vlingh and Remming were most likely the best ones of the lot, but fault-free-riding-wise Abbelen, Nieuwenhuis and Sorensen were a worthy match. France's eight placed pair Salome Sadoun could easily have joined that club as she produced an admirable test on a very willing horse. The unknown Belgian Nastassja Roussel should have joined that club of top ten riders, but probably because she is not a name (nor carrying a Dutch/German flag) did she peak proper judges' attention. It could also be the fact that her horse is far from a beauty. This could have been the cause for Roussel's surprisingly 'low' score of 69.763% (13th place). German judge Katrine Wust hit the nail on the head with her 72.763% though.



Alexandra Andresen, Johanne Pauline von Danwitz, and Jeanine Nekeman win silver, gold and bronze at the 2013 European Junior Riders Championships
Photo © Astrid Appels



Von Danwitz on Habitus

Back to Von Danwitz. Aboard the Luttgen family's 16-year old Hanoverian gelding Habitus (by Hohenstein x Weltmeyer) she was untouchable. The dark bay gelding is so elegant in trot, he has super self carriage, the poll is always the highest point and the trot extensions are wonderful. Their trot tour was simply "hors categorie". In the collected walk the clarity could have been better. There was a slight loss of impulsion before the right walk pirouette and Habitus blocked in the left one. The canter work was excellent with superb, uphill flying changes and a powerful canter extension. Von Danwitz scored 75.789% and ranked first with all five judges.

The panel consisted of Saleh (FRA), Wust (GER), Markowski (POL), Myhre (NOR) and Phillips (GBR). They were marking reasonably consistently at the top, but here and there there were a few banana-

style slips. This happened, for instance, with silver medal winning Norwegian Alexandra Andresen on the 9-year old Westfalian licensed stallion Belamour (by Belissimo M x Lord Sinclair). The 2013 Nordic Baltic Junior Champion finished second with 72.974% but Wust gave her 75.658% whereas Phillips had her at 69.737%. Rousell's scores veered between 67.500% (Saleh) and 72.763% (Wust), by the way.

Andresen and her chestnut stallion Belamour showed active and flowing lateral movements in trot, but overall the horse should have been more collected in the frame so that the withers could come up more. The stallion moved a bit horizontally in trot. Also the collected walk craved for more collection. The canter is certainly the horse's best gait. Belamour is ground covering in it, he showed three lovely changes, but one was a bit short. The amiable Andresen kept a quiet and steady contact with the bit.

Dutch Jeanine Nekeman was the lucky rider to cover the third step of the podium for bronze. The new comer on the Dutch team exceeded all expectations on her gorgeous 11-year old Dutch warmblood gelding Vlingh (by Flemmingh x Donnerschlag) and became Holland's strongest performing junior, surpassing routiniers Jeanine Nieuwenhuis and 2012 European Junior Rider Champion Dana van Lierop (on a new horse). Nekeman's Vlingh is a super expressive mover and a

real eye-catcher with his massive shoulder freedom, but the regularity in the trot needs to improve in the future. There were too many passagey steps in the voltes and on the short side for the gait to flow smoothly. The extended walk could have more overstep, but the collected was outstanding. Nekeman rode a solid canter tour which could improve even more if the horse were to swing more relaxed over the back. All changes were decent, but the first was short behind and the second crooked at the onset.



Andresen and Belamour



Jeanine Nekeman on Vlingh

Just missing out on a podium place was Anna Christina Abbelen on her sympathetic 8-year old Rhinelander Furst on Tour (by Furst Heinrich x Rubioso). Their trot work was fluent with outstanding shoulders-in and ground-covering trot extensions, which should be more uphill oriented though. The collected and extended walk were wonderful but in one walk pirouette the horse stalled for a moment. Furst on Tour executed four textbook flying changes. The combination scored 72.500%

British Charlotte Fry and Mr Connor's 15-year old Dutch warmblood Remming (by Flemmingh x Dreamstreet) could easily have finished in the top three as well; it would have made the individual test podium a truly international affair for the developing dressage countries. This British duo presented one of the nicest dressage silhouettes in the junior individual test: a horse working actively from behind, free in the shoulder, moving with a constant uphill tendency and light in the bridle. The trot tour was active, lightfooted and floating. The extended walk could have

been a bit more forward and in the collected the rhythm was slightly compromised. Remming became crooked to the left in the extended canter on the left lead, the right one was outstanding. The flying changes were super straight. The pair scored 72.368%.

Jeanine Nieuwenhuis and her 7-year old Dutch warmblood Baldacci (by Havidoff x Rubiquil) landed sixth place with 72.342%. The trot was smooth but in the ground covering extensions the nose needs to come out more so that the horse lengthens in the frame as well. The walk was very well regulated and the canter movements were executed steadily, although Baldacci could show more elasticity in this gait.

Danish Alexandra Sorensen and her 10-year old Danish bred Camiro Mandoe (by Future Cup x Alfarvad Champion) slotted in seventh with 72.000%. The former pony rider seems very well at home on her tall bright bay gelding and had no difficulties riding all the trot movements with great ease and precision. The gelding could be a big more lightfooted in trot, though, but he makes up for that with his springy canter and big flying changes. The horse did occasionally get a bit deep in the canter but the work looked very confirmed nonetheless. The home crowds revelled in the performance and the eighth place of France's Salome Sadoun on Marina van den Berghe's 7-year old Oldenburg mare Dona Primera (by Don Primero). The wonderful, dry boned bay mare is incredibly willing to work and engaged from behind. In trot she appeared a bit hurried and could have shone even more with some more quietness in the gait. The extended walk was extraordinary, the extended canter huge. The horse needed to develop a clearer walk in the simple change but all the flying changes were good. The pair got 71.895% from the judges but that mark could easily have been more!



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Astrid Appels took photos of all combinations competing at the 2013

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