

WELL DONE TEAM EUROPE

From June 22 to June 29 the annual NCHA Western Nationals took place in Denver USA. In the course of this show a USA vs Europe Non Pro Challenge was carried out for the first time. This competition was launched by Jack Enright (Ireland), NCHA USA and the sponsor Hay-Rite.

The winning team was determined by three Go Rounds. Each team nominated eight Non Pro riders. Lead by three RBC members, namely Sasha Schwind, Lea Hirschauer and Michael Popov, Marek Medvecký, Hansrüdi Bauman, Koen Hertekant, Jack Enright and Damiano Avigni represented Europe in the competition. As their coach Denis Pini assisted the team throughout their stay. Teams, each consisting of a representative of the two opposing sites were drawn right at the beginning of the competition. Two horses were assigned to each team for the three Go Rounds. The first two rounds the riders switched horses among each team. For the third Go Round the horses were drawn again. Every rider had the chance to get familiar with their horse by riding a Practice Pen and by working the flag.

At one o'clock in the morning (CET) on June 25 the Challenge began. It was opened by a ceremonial entrance of all participating riders, each carrying their country's flag. Everyone was introduced individually.



Lead by our two girls Sasha and Lea the European team headed extraordinarily good into the competition. As a final result they managed to occupy the first five spots. First day won them a great advantage. Sasha Schwind (219) and Lea Hirschauer (218) received the Highscores of the day. Marek Medvecky followed closely with a score of 217.5. Damiano Avigni and Koen Hertecant were both awarded with 215 points. Michael Popov, Jack Enright and Hansrüdi Baumann had a bit of bad luck with tough cows but contributed some important points to Europe's lead.

Preliminary result: 83 - 53

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1st Go in the USA vs Europe Division. European Non-Pro Challenge

Place	Rider	Team	Rnd 1	Tie
1	SASHA SCHWIND	EUROPE - GERMANY	219.0	
2	LEA HIRSCHAUER	EUROPE - FRANCE	218.0	
3	MAREK MEDVECKY	EUROPE - SIOVAKIA1	217.5	
4-5	DAMIANO AVIGNI	EUROPE - ITALY	215.0	
4-5	KOEN HERTECANT	EUROPE - BELGIUM	215.0	t
6	DENISE SEIZ	USA - GEORGIA	214.0	
7	SHAUN STRICKLAND	USA - TEXAS	212.0	
8-9	NICOLE PIETRAFESO	USA - COLORADO	210.0	
8-9	JASON REED	USA - SOUTH DAKOTA	210.0	t
10	WHIZZY HARPER	USA - COLORADO	201.0	
11	MICHAL POPOV	EUROPE - CZECH REPUBLIC	195.0	
12	HANSRUEDI BAUMAN	EUROPE - SWITZERLAND	194.0	
13-14	LINDA WERNER	USA - COLORADO	192.0	
13-14	KRISTEN YORK	USA - WYOMING	192.0	t
15	JACK ENRIGHT	EUROPE - IRELAND	182.0	
16	ORA DIEHL	USA - FLORIDA	180.0	

America's selection wanted to show their best and round two (next day) was their chance. Second Go Round started at one o'clock in the morning (Central European Time) again. Our European team had a bit of a hard time this Go

Round. Until shortly before the ending it looked like Team USA would be able to close the gap but Sasha Schwind prevented this. She was awarded 217.5 points for her great Go and once again secured herself Highscore of the day. Team Europe continued their lead. Team USA caught up by collectively gaining important points. Only 18 points separate Team Europe and Team USA. Standings: Jack Enright, 4th place (215); Marek Medvecký, shared 5th place (213); Hansrüdi Baumann and Koen Hertecant, 10th place (210); Lea Hirschauer, 12th place; Michael Popov, 14th place; Damiano Avigni, 15th place.

Second preliminary result: Europe 145 - USA 127

2019 Western National
2nd Go in the USA vs Europe Division.
European Non-Pro Challenge

Place	Horse	Rider	Rnd 2	Tie
1	SASHA SCHWIND	EUROPE - GERMANY	217.5	
2	NICOLE PIETRAFESO	USA - COLORADO	217.0	
3	DENISE SEIZ	USA - GEORGIA	216.0	
4	JACK ENRIGHT	EUROPE - IRELAND	215.0	
5-8	JASON REED	USA - SOUTH DAKOTA	213.0	
5-8	SHAUN STRICKLAND	USA - TEXAS	213.0	t
5-8	LINDA WERNER	USA - COLORADO	213.0	t
5-8	MAREK MEDVECKÝ	EUROPE - SIOVAKIA1	213.0	t
9	ORA DIEHL	USA - FLORIDA	211.0	
10-11	HANSRUEDI BAUMAN	EUROPE - SWITZERLAND	210.0	
10-11	KOEN HERTECANT	EUROPE - BELGIUM	210.0	t
12	LEA HIRSCHAUER	EUROPE - FRANCE	209.5	
13	KRISTEN YORK	USA - WYOMING	209.0	
14	MICHAL POPOV	EUROPE - CZECH REPUBLIC	204.0	
15	DAMIANO AVIGNI	EUROPE - ITALY	202.0	
16	WHIZZY HARPER	USA - COLORADO	193.0	

Once again at one o'clock in the morning (Central European Time, June 29) the third Go Round got started. All 16 participants were motivated and determined to contribute to their team's win. The two strongest riders of Team Europe headed into the competition right at the beginning. Marek Medvecký (Score 216) and Sasha Schwind (218) held Europe's flag up high.

Unfortunately, the rest of the team wasn't able to show their full potential while Team USA maxed out their great experience and showed some nice Go Rounds. They were consistently awarded higher scores and were able to win the competition 213 – 195.

2019 Western National

3rd Go in the USA vs Europe Division.

European Non-Pro Challenge

Place	Horse	Rider	Score	Tie
1-2	ORA DIEHL	USA - FLORIDA	218.0	
1-2	SASHA SCHWIND	EUROPE - GERMANY	218.0	t
3-5	NICOLE PIETRAFESO	USA - COLORADO	216.0	
3-5	LINDA WERNER	USA - COLORADO	216.0	t
3-5	MAREK MEDVECKY	EUROPE - SIOVAKIA1	216.0	t
6-7	WHIZZY HARPER	USA - COLORADO	215.0	
6-7	KRISTEN YORK	USA - WYOMING	215.0	t
8	SHAUN STRICKLAND	USA - TEXAS	209.0	
9-10	JASON REED	USA - SOUTH DAKOTA	208.0	
9-10	DENISE SEIZ	USA - GEORGIA	208.0	t
11-12	JACK ENRIGHT	EUROPE - IRELAND	206.0	
11-12	LEA HIRSCHAUER	EUROPE - FRANCE	206.0	t
13	KOEN HERTECANT	EUROPE - BELGIUM	203.0	
14	MICHAL POPOV	EUROPE - CZECH REPUBLIC	199.0	
15	HANSRUEDI BAUMAN	EUROPE - SWITZERLAND	196.0	
16	DAMIANO AVIGNI	EUROPE - ITALY	191.0	

Team USA did indeed gain upper hand overall but all European riders showed that they are too a force to be reckoned with. They had to go into the competition with foreign horses and had only one chance to practice and still showed extraordinary performances.



RBC member Sasha Schwind was awarded best rider of the challenge which constitutes a second partial win. She won the first two rounds and shared first place in the third Go Round. Cutting friends in Europe are happy with the results and would love a renewal of the event next year, maybe even in Europe!

Well Done Team Europe