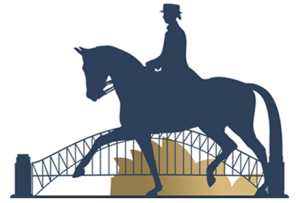




OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA SYDNEY CDI

2 - 5 May 2018 Sydney International Equestrian Centre, Horsley Park



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA Sydney CDI through the judge's eyes

This year's OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA Sydney CDI*** will bring together judges from around the world to cast experienced eyes over the nation's best horses and riders, and Danish FEI 5* judge Hans-Christian Matthiesen is no exception.

Dr Matthiesen is currently President of the International Dressage Officials Club, a member of the 2018 World Equestrian Games (WEG) Ground Jury, and former FEI Dressage Committee member.

He was last in Australia for the 2016 Sydney CDI, and here he discusses his enthusiasm for the 2018 event.

Your last visit to Australia was in 2016 for the Sydney CDI. What were your impressions of the standard of horses and riders in Australia?

My impressions were good. I have judged Australian riders in Australia and in Europe. Many good horses and skilled riders. There is a strong will and a lot of hard work behind the scenes.

The 2018 OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA Sydney CDI will be the first event in Australia to use the Degree of Difficulty (DoD) freestyle system. Have you judged under the system overseas, and how do you think it affects competition or enhances equity?

I have now used and judged with the system since the beginning. I have used the system at many Western European World Cup shows. I have talked to many riders and judges about it, and I strongly believe in the system. It's good for the riders, and it makes my judging even more consistent and precise. I am happy that the Sydney CDI decided to use it, and that I will have the chance again at WEG.

Our young horse classes at the Sydney CDI are always very competitive. What are you looking for in a quality young dressage horse, and what was your impression of the young horses competing at the 2016 Sydney CDI?

I look for good quality paces, a good type of sport horse and good mechanics with potential for collection. The rideability is extremely important. We have lots of horses with extravagant movement, but it often comes back to the riders and their ability to handle it. The education of the younger horse is paramount for welfare, long term health and later on good results as a dressage horse.

The competition also features a strong young rider program, with a CDI-U25, CDI-Y, CDI-P, and for the first time, a CDI-J for Junior riders aged between 14 and 18 years.

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As a judge, what advice can you offer our younger riders who will take to the arena perhaps for the first time in such a major competition?

I used to be Chef d'Equipe for the Danish junior and young rider teams. It was a great and exiting challenge, I enjoyed every minute. My advice would be: don't be too hard on yourself, accept that dressage is difficult and good results only come with time and hard work. Experience and routine is a major factor, learn from your mistakes - that means: forgive your horse and analyse your own performance. Even the top riders started somewhere!

The 2018 OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA Sydney CDI will be held at SIEC from May 2 to 5, and is an Equestrian Australia Nomination Event for the 2018 World Equestrian Games.

This year's event will feature competitions spanning levels from Advanced to Grand Prix and Para Equestrian, as well as young horse classes, attracting top riders from around Australia.

Included in the line-up are CDI 3*, CDI-U25 (for riders under 25 competing at Grand Prix level), CDI-Y for Young Riders 16 to 21 years, CDI-P (International Pony) for riders aged 12-16 years and for the first time, a CDI-J for Junior riders aged between 14 and 18 years.

Tickets for the event have already gone on sale, and seats for the ever-popular Saturday evening Grand Prix Freestyle to Music event are selling out fast.

For more information about the event or to purchase tickets, visit the event website at www.sydneycdi.com

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Information on OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA: <http://www.bsmsportequestrian.com.au/ottosport/>

ENDS

Captions: HC1.jpg Danish FEI 5* judge Hans-Christian Matthiesen officiates at the 2016 Sydney CDI Young Horse classes. PICTURE: Franz Venhaus.

HC2.jpg Danish FEI 5* judge Hans-Christian Matthiesen (left) at the Young Horse final of the 2016 Sydney CDI. PICTURE: Franz Venhaus.

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