

JustWorld Rider Representative Gregory Wathelet Wins at CSI4* La Coruna

Thursday, August 04, 2005

Gregory Wathelet of Belgium claimed victory in the 66,000 Euro Telefonica Grand Prix at CSI4* La Coruna, Spain, on July 29, 2005. Wathelet is a Rider Representative for JustWorld International, a not-for-profit, humanitarian organization founded to work as a catalyst for positive change in the developing world and helping underprivileged children.

A large starting field of 43 riders took attempted to master the Friday evening Grand Prix with only 10 posting a clear round to advance to the determining jump-off. Only four were again able to post clear rounds, but Wathelet was the fastest, clocking in at 39.69 seconds to edge out the new European Double Gold Medalist, Marco Kutscher of Germany, who placed second aboard Cash 63, and third-placed finisher, current Olympic Champion Rodrigo Pessoa of Brazil riding his most famous partner, Baloubet du Rouet.

Wathelet's partner was Hugo Gesmeray, a 10-year-old selle francais stallion by Rosire. At only 24 years of age, Wathelet of Dinant, BEL, has been enjoying great success riding for owner Haras des Hayettes. In fact, riding Hugo Gesmeray in the Grand Prix was his third choice of horses – Lady des Hayettes, who he had originally intended as his Grand Prix partner, was injured just before leaving for the show, while his second pick, Iqbal des Hayettes, did not jump well in earlier competition at La Coruna, leaving him with Hugo Gesmeray. The choice proved to be the right one, as Wathelet picked up 20,000 Euros for his victory.

"I was the first rider out on course for the jump-off and I knew I was followed by many strong riders so I gave it my all," noted Wathelet, the 2001 Belgian Young Riders' Champion. "Thankfully, my horse made a good effort, and together we were able to win. I have been riding Hugo for three years now and although he is a testy stallion with a strong character, he is also easy to handle and ride."

Also riding Hugo Gesmeray, Wathelet won the 45,000 Euro Derby at CSIO5* La Baule, FRA, in May. With his other horses, he has enjoyed victories at CSI3* La Courneuve, FRA, CSI3* Lons le Saunier, FRA, and CSI2* Meise, BEL, and has been selected for several Nations' Cup competitions, including CSIO5* Lummen, BEL, and CSIO5* Dublin, IRE. His results have catapulted him into the Top 30 in the FEI World Rider Rankings, an impressive achievement considering his young

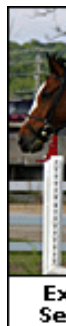


JustWorld International Rider Representative Gregory Wathelet and Hugo Gesmeray on their way to a hard-fought victory in the 66,000 Euro Telefonica Grand Prix at CSI4* La Coruna, Spain. - Photo © Manuel Queimadelos

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age. However, riding for a cause, namely JustWorld International, has given added meaning to Wathelet's success.

"I chose to ride for JustWorld International because I wanted to make a difference, however small, in the world and I was touched by all that the organization is doing," said Wathelet, who donates ten percent of all prize money won at JustWorld partner competitions to the not-for-profit organization. "When I traveled to the Honduras project site in March, it was inspiring to see how much JustWorld International is doing to better the lives of children that would otherwise have a miserable destiny. Their work gives these children an opportunity to improve their quality of life and a chance at a brighter future."

His tremendous recent success has been an inspiration to other riders, many of which have joined the JustWorld Rider Representative program.

"Gregory has been on a roll the past few months, winning or placing in almost every major class he has entered," noted Jessica Newman, Executive Director of JustWorld International. "In turn, his success brings excellent exposure to JustWorld and all that we are trying to accomplish, and we hope that many other riders will choose to follow in his footsteps. He is one of the most talented young riders in the world today, making it very exciting for JustWorld International to watch one of its ambassadors make his way to the top of the sport. And we also appreciate that no matter how much success he enjoys, he remains humble and appreciative."

JustWorld International Rider Representatives include Angela Covert-Lawrence of Canada, Kevin Babington of Ireland, Christophe Barbeau of Switzerland, James Benedetto of the United States, Federico Fernandez of Mexico, Marcus Fuchs of Switzerland, Herve Godignon of France, Imke Hofschroer of Germany, Eric Lamaze of Canada, Rutherford Latham of Spain, Olivier Guillon of France, Candice King of the United States, Peter Leone of the United States, Titi Mills of Honduras, Eric Navet of France, Ludo Philippaerts of Belgium, Philippe Rozier of France, Tim Stockdale of Great Britain, Ray Texel of the United States, Marilyn Vorpe of Switzerland and Gregory Wathelet of Belgium. Through various initiatives, including donating a portion of their prize money and giving clinics to benefit JustWorld International and encouraging their owners, sponsors and youth to follow their lead, riders are able to support the organization's projects and programs.

Founded in 2002, JustWorld International offers fellowship programs for students from around the globe to learn leadership skills and acquire the tools necessary to make a positive difference in the world. Cooperating with local partners, JustWorld International implements sustainable, culturally sensitive projects that benefit underprivileged children. JustWorld International trains and empowers international and local university student volunteers to create and realize these projects, providing them with hands-on experience in promoting social justice. With three project sites located in Cambodia, Honduras and Senegal, as well as a new initiative being launched in Kenya, students are working for change in a wide variety of environments on behalf of JustWorld International. For more information on JustWorld International, please visit www.justworldinternational.org.



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