

Talking with... Károly Fugli – Chairman of the FEI Driving Committee

Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia – 14th November 2011 - FEI General Assembly:

The election of the Chairman of the FEI Driving Committee was one of the topics. For most the outcome of the election was surprising - Károly Fugli from Hungary won the election with a majority of one vote over the Argentinian Wolf von Buchholtz.



Károly Fugli...Who is the man, who will be presiding for the next 4 years over the committee in charge of the International driving sport – and who will be have the leading reins in his hand during the important decisions – current ones and future?

Károly Fugli, 43 years old, horse sport expert, dynamic, modern oriented. He values Fairplay and has lots of years of experience in horse sport management and sport political knowhow. He was member of the organizing committee of the Driving World Championships in 1999, 2004 and 2009.

Furthermore he was involved in the organization of the FEI World Cup™ competitions in Budapest 2008 and 2009, and he was also „Chef de Mission“ of the Hungarian team of FEI World Equestrian Games 2006 in Aachen and Olympic Games Sidney 2000.

- HIPPOEVENT You are not that well known in the driving sport scene since you are neither an active competitor or engaged as judge, trainer or course designer. What do you think are the positive aspects of this situation, in relationship to your position as the leader of the FEI Driving Committee?

I am a Team player. My intention is to work with the support of the members of the FEI Driving Committee , FEI Headquarter and other experts. The FEI Driving Committee members are high professionals (Dr. Klaus Christ, Ed Young, Boyd Exell) – a highly experienced International O-Judge from Germany – an American O-Technical Delegate – the Chef de Equipe for the US team for many years, and one of the best drivers of the world. That is condensed experience and capability out of different „camps“, which I will be using without hesitation - without “blinkers” - for the benefits of the driving sport.

- HIPPOEVENT I can remember very well your words during our first meeting a few years back in Budapest: “The driving sport has a very special place in the heart of the Hungarians”. What does that fact mean in conjunction with your new position?

I am happy and much honored to be elected as the Chairman of the FEI Driving Committee. The driving sport has a lot of history and tradition in my home country Hungary and to date the driving sport is bringing excitement and enthusiasm to the thousands of spectators at the competitions. Hungary organized the very first FEI Championship in the discipline and Central Europe has also strong traditions in the driving sport.

I got to know and love the driving sport during my first job, after my university studies, when I worked for the Hungarian Stud Szilvássvár. With respect to my new position: You can only do something right and with full of energy, if you are passionate about it and fully engaged with your heart!

The position is an enormous responsibility and challenge. I know how much commitment, how many expenses and time-intensive efforts are needed in the driving sport.

To breed a horse, provide a good environment for them to grow up, train them, the equipment necessary for the first start at a sports competition, the transportation trucks, the transport costs, then the competition fees for the event...to do justice to all this is a great challenge for us - the FEI Driving Committee and everybody, who is involved in designing the driving sport.

Primary goal: provide the best conditions possible for the horses and the drivers in our sport.

The drivers have to find the best conditions supporting their sport. All the way from top-trained and fair judges to competent event organisers, which are equipped with modern technique.

I would like to be present at each FEI World Championship and at least one major driving event per year per continent.

- **HIPPOEVENT** You are a FEI jumping judge of the highest level and a very experienced sport politician – do you see an advantage out of the unencumbered, objective situation versus the driving sport, which you can use together with the other driving sport specialists in the Driving Committee to drive a modern, positive development in the driving sport?

I am very busy in the horse sport and was able to gather experiences globally. I have seen the horse sport from different angles and am highly interested to drive change constructively. It is my intention to - without bias - combine the best of past and the present with elements of change, which are necessary for the future. We have to build on the work of the past and present Committees. Incorporating the traditions but updating presentation.

A request and big project for the future is to find a general Sponsor for the FEI World Cup™ like we already have it in the FEI Olympic disciplines. This is an important step towards professional commercialization and joint image building as well as hopefully an example for further sponsors in the driving sport.

Furthermore we shall develop the Rules, additional attractive competition series with modern concepts to drive our sport further.

A very important part of the driving sport is its tradition. I do not believe, that it is necessary to change it totally, no, I actually believe it would destroy the sport. But it needs

modernization especially in the background. We have to modernize the driving sport as the Olympic horse sport disciplines have shown us and act more future-oriented.

Another aspect is obvious from we have to be an active committee. Be present at the show grounds during the competitions. I will try to increase the frequency of FEI Driving Committee meetings when it is necessary and there will be monthly teleconferences. We have to discuss so many important aspects of our sport.

- During the meeting Rio de Janeiro revised International Regulations for the driving sports were concluded. They also contained an important addition with the Annex for driving pony singles by children between 12 and 14 years of age. How important do you see the work with the young athletes to be in the driving sport and where do you see another development potential?

The future belongs to the young generation! One could see the importance of fostering the work with the young drivers while looking at the results of important competitions. The driving sport needs further development in that area. It will be necessary to widen the base of the pyramid we have at present to involve the younger generation and also more nations. I envisage a Worldwide Sport of Driving.

There are so many nations and societies in which the driving sport is enrooted (e.g. with the breeding of driving sport suitable horses, with the presence of horse sport in the past). They have a lot of potential and it is indicated to support with passion the development of new driving sport nations. I look forward to the sport being developed in other regions and continents, where at present no such participation exists.

We will have to work together – not in small groups, thinking globally. Driving sport must become more interesting for the media and the sponsors as well as for examples the breeders. To create more interest it is important to link the sport results and important breeding information within the FEI IT System, already established for the Olympic Disciplines.

- HIPPOEVENT There is 5 seats in the FEI Driving Committee. Currently 4 are taken (Dr. Klaus Christ, Boyd Exell, Ed Young) since your membership in the Driving Committee was going to end in the next year. What is now happening with the 5th position and the 5th vote in the FEI Driving Committee?

This position will be filled up. According the FEI Rules it will be open for applications , sent by National Federations . Afterwards the FEI BUREAU will nominate the new member upon the recommendation of the Driving Committee .

It will take some time, but the commitment and the efforts the FEI Driving Committee will work with are not going to be effected by that. We are already in contact with each other, the sleeves are rolled up and the entire team is looking forward to the work.

There are lots to do – let's get started!

Thank you very much for this conversation and we wish you lots of success for a constructive activity for a successful future of the driving sport.

HIPPOEVENT Jacqueline Zimmermann