

Even without longtime anchor rider Bezie Madden in the second round, Team USA resumes terrific Olympic track record.

The U.S. Olympic show jumping team won the silver medal in a down-to-the-wire competition. Led by chef d'équipe Robert Ridland, the team of Lucy Davis and Barron, Kent Farrington and Voyer, Bezie Madden and Cortes 'C', and McLain Ward and Azur finished the two-round competition with five faults.

France won the gold with three faults, while Germany and Canada tied for third on eight. Ultimately, Germany captured bronze following a jump-off with Canada for the medal.



A total of 44 athlete-and-horse combinations representing 19 countries, eight of which remained in the hunt for team medals, competed at the Deodoro Olympic Equestrian Center in the final round of the team competition, which also served as the third and final qualifier for the Friday Aug. 19 individual final.

The U.S. started the day with only three riders, as Madden and Cortes 'C', a 14-year-old Belgium Warmblood gelding owned by Abigail Wexner, withdrew from Wednesday's competition after sustaining a tendon injury on Tuesday. That added pressure for each of the U.S.'s three remaining riders, as the team would not have the luxury of a drop score because each team's three best scores counted.

Guilherme Jorge designed a course worthy of an Olympic final; it demanded expert riding, power and speed. Riders faced a 1.60m wall as an introduction to the 13-jump course that had a time-allowed of 82 seconds. Jorge's impressive course quickly separated the teams with only 15 riders able to finish within the time and only five going clear.

“The course was tremendous, a real Olympic championship course,” said Robert Ridland. “We knew that when we walked it, all the riders did. We were pretty sure that it wasn’t going to be won on zero [faults]. All our scores had to count today, we knew that. It didn’t affect any of them. They were all unbelievable. Unbelievably focused, they knew what their job was and they got it done. It was tremendous.”

Setting the tone for the U.S. once again was Farrington (Wellington, Fla.) and Amalaya Investments’ 14-year-old KWPN gelding, Voyeur. For the third straight round this week, they dominated the course, clearing each jump with ease. Although the duo succeeded in leaving all the rails in the cups, they exceeded the time allowed, adding one fault to their overall score, their only fault to date in their Olympic debut.

“My horse jumped fantastic today,” said Farrington after his round. “I saw a lot of horses struggling to jump the triple combination clear so I really set him up for that. Every rail was going to matter today, so I wanted to secure that before I took a bigger risk on the time. The course was a lot bigger than the other day and a lot more difficult. We’re going in one round at a time and trying our best to jump clear.”

The second U.S. rider to enter the ring was Davis (Los Angeles, Calif.) with Old Oaks Farm’s Barron, a 12-year-old Belgian Warmblood gelding. Davis and Barron showed brilliance in the first half of the course, clearing each jump and making good time around the large arena. The triple combination came late on course at fence 11, where Davis and Barron tapped the top rail out of the cups at 11b, resulting in four faults.

“I was pleased with the round, although not thrilled because I would have liked to have gone clear, but he jumped amazing all three days,” said Davis. “I wasn’t really expecting that rail because he was jumping so confident and smooth. I came around the turn and saw my distance, and I don’t know if he saw something or what. I am just happy that we could get through it and stay within the time. That was really key because I thought it was going to be really close, so hopefully I helped the team in that way.”

Under Pressure

September 2016 - Rio Report: Team Silver for Show Jumping

Written by CRM
Thursday, 01 September 2016 05:25

