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LONGINES

Hopes for the 2021 horse show go unfulfilled

No 2021 STUTT GART GERMAN MASTERS The regulations and requirements are too high

Stuttgart – Hopes were high, and planning was in full swing. In the past weeks and months, many ideas and concepts were played out but in the end all that remains is the knowledge that the International STUTT GART GERMAN MASTERS Horse Show once again cannot be staged in 2021 in its regular form and in a way many equestrian fans would like.

“It was and is a difficult decision for us as organisers, but it simply can’t go ahead. We cannot ignore and fulfil the prevailing regulations and requirements, including the health and safety laws. The horse show is simply the biggest and most complex event in our ‘Hallenduo’,” says Andreas Kroll, the CEO of the in.Stuttgart Veranstaltungsgesellschaft. Additionally, the hoped-for vaccination herd immunity has not been achieved and the possible corona options with either the vaccinated-recovered-tested or the vaccinated-recovered rule still means it is compulsory to wear European FFP2 masks.

At a joint meeting, the project management, the horse show directors and the executive directors weighed up all the pros and cons at the start of the week. After intensive consultations they decided to cancel the STUTT GART GERMAN MASTERS. “Our aim was to stage the horse show in the way everybody is used to with all the classes. An abbreviated solution with a watered-down programme was never an alternative for us,” stresses Kroll and “asks all the equestrian fans and naturally the riders for their understanding. We would have loved to have had presented the successful Olympic and European champions and medal winners to our crowd in Stuttgart, but it’s still not something we can do this year.”

“It’s a great pity for equestrianism and the World Cup season,” says horse show director Kai Huttrop-Hage in unison with his co-directors when putting the situation in a nutshell. It was something Andreas Krieg had unfortunately feared after taking a look at the corona requirements in place for the CHIO show in Aachen – compulsory wearing of masks, the vaccinated, recovered and tested rule and only a third of the spectators able to attend the outdoor venue. “Stuttgart is however an indoor horse show and it’s not so easy to keep out of each other’s way,” says Krieg.



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"For me, it feels like being in a state of shock." Carsten Rotermund, who recently worked at the European Championship in Riesenbeck, cannot imagine being able to stage the Stuttgart horse show in full. "Not only the restrictions for the visitors played a part in making the decision, organisational issues were also key," says Rotermund.

Behind the scenes at the horse show with all the stables, the organisational infrastructure, the media centre, the course building services, the entries desk and a whole lot more cannot be put into place to meet the social distancing rules. There is very little space as over 1,000 people work over the five days of the horse show. "We have to simply recognise all the details and have, as organisers, a big responsibility towards all the people that have a role to play at the event," says the project lead Claus Lederer. "Permanent equestrian facilities generally have far more space and can be expanded. In an indoor venue, we come up against limitations in many areas that make it impossible for us to comply with health and safety regulations to the necessary degree. The risk of a positive corona case during the horse show is something we can't and don't want to take. And the incidence rate has been increasing for weeks now."

What now remains is the hope for the coming year when the 36th International STUTTGART GERMAN MASTERS Horse Show will reconcile equestrian fans from 9 to 13 November 2022. The organisers are in regular contact with the International Equestrian Federation (FEI), the German Equestrian Association (FN) and the regional Baden-Württemberg Equestrian Association and the cancellation has been agreed and accepted by everyone. Stuttgart will retain its 5-star status and will continue to host the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ qualifier at the horse show. "It was and is very important for us," agrees all the stakeholders.