

Canadian Show Jumping Team takes fourth in Spanish Nations' Cup

The Canadian Show Jumping Team comprised of Caledon resident Yann Candele, along with Kara Chad, Jaclyn Duff and Chris Pratt, finished fourth in the Nations' Cup of CSIO5* in Gijon, Spain, Saturday.

A total of nine countries were represented in the FEI Nations' Cup, presented by Banco Sabadell.

Course designer Avelino Rodriguez Miravalles set a testing, yet fair track in the historic grass arena that would see four double clear performances as the day progressed.

Pratt, 48, got the competition off to a strong start for Canada by delivering a faultless opening round riding Concorde, a 10-year-old chestnut Dutch warmblood gelding owned by The Epic Group LLC. Based in Valencia, California, Pratt's last Nations' Cup performance was also in Spain, when he was a member of Canada's fourth-placed team in Barcelona in 2011.

Duff, 30, of Edmonton, was next in for Canada, riding EH All or None, an 11-year-old bay Hanoverian gelding owned by Windermere Stables Limited. The pair has benefitted from being based in Europe with 2008 Canadian Olympic Champion Eric Lamaze this season, and produced a clear jumping effort only to stop the clock in 78.10 seconds, exceeding the time allowed of 78 seconds for a single time fault.

Chad, 21, of Calgary, and Bellinda, the travelling alternates for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, rode third in the rotation for Canada. Chad and the 11-year-old bay Dutch warmblood mare owned by Stone Ridge Farms Ltd. produced a beautiful clear effort to add nothing to Canada's first round score and reduce the pressure on anchor rider, Candele.

Candele, 46, provided the drop score for Canada. Things started to unravel when the white gate at fence eight came down, and another four rails before they were through the timers resulted in 20 faults for Candele and Chaventyo, an 11-year-old chestnut Oldenburg gelding owned by Legacy Stables LLC.

Counting Duff's one time fault, Canada was sitting in second place at the end of the opening round behind France, who had maintained a clear scorecard. The Netherlands, Mexico and the home side of Spain were tied in third position heading into round two. Great Britain and Ireland trailed on 12 faults apiece, followed by Germany with 16. Egypt, who posted a first-round total of 18 faults, failed to be among the top eight teams to qualify for the second round.

Canada's fortunes changed in the second round when Duff was eliminated following refusals at the double combination and again at the 'b' element of the triple combination.

Pratt picked up four faults at number three, an unusual oxer filled with brush, while Chad had eight faults after rails fell at the white gate at number eight as well as the penultimate fence. Candele had the comeback of the day, jumping clear with Chaventyo, but Canada was still one fault shy of a podium finish. With one fault in the first round and 12 in the second, Canada ended its Nations' Cup bid in fourth place with a two-round total of 13 faults.

France, the reigning Olympic champions, claimed victory with four faults, helped by a double-clear effort from anchor rider Nicolas Delmotte riding Ilex VP.

The Netherlands, who currently hold the World Championship title, finished second with eight faults while the newly-crowned European Champions from Ireland edged ahead of Canada to take third with 12 faults.

"The first round was spectacular with impressive performances from Chris, Jaclyn and Kara," said Karen Hendry-Ouellette, acting as chef d'équipe of the Canadian Show Jumping Team. "Going into the second round we were in a fantastic position. Everyone's hopes were high after the first round, but we knew we couldn't take it for granted and it wouldn't be a walk in the park. We needed to go out and produce the same way we had in the first round. Unfortunately, even with Yann delivering a brilliant clutch ride, we missed the podium by one fault."

"Overall, the team camaraderie was fantastic, with everyone working together and supporting each other," he added.

Canada's next Nations' Cup appearance will be on home soil in the \$400,000 BMO Nations' Cup this Saturday at the CSIO5* Spruce Meadows Masters tournament in Calgary.

Mario Deslauriers, Eric Lamaze of Schomberg, Ian Millar and Kean White will ride for the maple leaf in the Nations' Cup event, which will enjoy same-day broadcast on CBC television from 4 to 6 p.m.



Caledon resident Yann Candele guided Chaventyno over this jump in the Nations' Cup of CSIO5* in Spain Saturday. Photo by Xurde Margaride / www.xurde.net