

14 horses from 5 nations yet entered for Heritage European Championship yet! 31st of October , Hippodrome de Wallonie in Mons (Ghlin).

The idea of Heritage Racing, tempting to bring horses of non-specialized classic pure Arabian bloodlines, back to the race-track is making slowly but surely its way. In many countries (North-Africa, Near-East ...) the majority of the breeding is still based on traditional bloodlines, for which racing only is one among the selection criteria of the desert steed: beauty, speed and endurance.

In Western Europe racing has been for several decades very much under the influence of the French bloodlines selected on speed only. A couple of stallions "fastened" the breed very quickly, but at the same time depleted them from other characteristics that we appreciated so much in the classic Arabian... Consequently almost no pure Arabians of classic bloodlines were left in race-training as they had no chance against the faster "race-Arabians".

In Belgium for example, only one Heritage-horse (by a World Champion show-sire out of a Polish mare) still was in training. In England there were a dozen left and in Sweden even less.

Fortunately the major studs in Poland and Russia still had a fair part of their breeding program that was kept free of this actual tendency to specialize the Arabian horse into three, almost distinct breeds: the Show-Arabian, the Race-Arabian and the Endurance-Arabian ...

Thanks to the concern of HH Sheikh Sultan Al Nahyan and a handful of persons that established under his guidance the Heritage Arabian Racing Club, Heritage racing came to a start in different countries. Last year, in Western Europe, the few Heritage horses in race-training were scattered too far apart to organize races for them alone. Nevertheless the enthusiasm was there, and in one year of time, the numbers of horses in training doubled (in Belgium even multiplied by seven)!

Time to bring a selection of them together to compete in a European Heritage Championship! If last year the idea of Nelly Philippot, President of AHRCB (the Belgian Arab race-club), was launched too late and found too few horses ready for it. This year enough owners and trainers react, so that even a symbolic "Nations Cup" can be considered! Thus far, three horses from Russia (Tersk Stud and Samavolov Stud), one four-years old and two three-years olds, with already quite a bit of experience, are yet in quarantine before travelling westwards.

Three horses from England, of more mature age and with nice race-records in their home-country, even against "speed-specialists", are also entered. They include the mare L.B. Farrah of Teresa Gavin that won a prep heritage race in Belgium.

Further two good Heritage-horses from Sweden of winning bloodlines, are entered yet, although the deadline for entries is still a couple of days ahead...

Possibly two Romanian mares (actually in training in France) of very old bloodlines (as Romanian breeding was totally isolated from the Western European influence for decades) might also join for that major race!

The three Belgian and the one Dutch horses that raced in the recent AHRCB prep-races, will also take part.

Entries are thus actually totaling up to 14 (+2) different horses, representing 4 nations with 3 horses at least. The nation with the lowest total after adding the ranking of its three best horses, wins the Nations Cup.

The decision to be taken yet is the distance over which to race! Indeed, as usual, AHRCB offers two sets of conditions (generally two different distances)... and the proposal that collects most entries is to be raced.

The English trainers and owners prefer the longer distance offered (2100m), which is also more corresponding to the original aptitude of the classic Arabians and thus should fit the HARC-horses better! The Swedish trainers (at least one) definitely prefer the shorter distances (1500m).

In one week, we will know the decision by the majority of entries!

As it will be an evening meeting, most horses will stay overnight on the track and all participants and accompanying persons will have the occasion to share dinner, right after the prize-giving reception offered for the Nations Cup, has brought us all together.

The race can be followed on-line on the French betting-site www.pmu.fr : <https://www.pmu.fr/> → <https://www.pmu.fr/turf/#!/11102016> → <http://www.pmu.fr/turf/live-et-replay/>.

The comments start some 10 minutes before the time of the race, with the comments and presentation of the horses in the paddock.

More about it on October the 15th, after the deadline of the supplementary entries and the decision over the distance to be run!