

# Chester Weber Wins Record-Setting Seventh Win at United States National Four-In-Hand Driving Championship



Lexington, KY – Combined Driving National Champion Chester Weber is known for setting goals and achieving them. He added a factor of risk to it this year, by announcing his goal was to become the first driver to win the USEF National Four-In-Hand Driving Championships seven years in a row.

It was a risk worth taking for Weber, who captured his seventh win during the Four-In-Hand Driving Championship at the Kentucky Cup and Lexington Driving Classic. “When you set goals and make them clear to everyone around you it does add more pressure,” Weber said. “However, you also make the goal very clear to yourself and your team and there is no question what you are trying to achieve.”

Weber won the record setting title by 10 points, beating out fellow American Tucker Johnson, who was also going for the lucky seventh win. Throughout the three phases of the competition, Weber and his team won the dressage and cones phase and came in second to Australian driver Boyd Exell in the marathon.

Ed Young, the Chef d’Equipe of the United States Driving Team, was very pleased with Weber’s seventh win. “I was most pleased with the improvements Chester has made in both the marathon and cones phases of the competition. Chester has spent a great deal of time and energy identifying his strengths and weaknesses as a competitor and then sought out the support necessary to strengthen the weaker areas,” Young said. “Weber’s ability to set goals and focus on those goals, without being distracted, is an incredible asset to a high performance athlete.”

Weber said his biggest challenge during the competition was to drive clear on Sunday. “I knew that I could have three balls down in the cones and still win the competition, however I wanted to win convincingly,” he said. “In order to prepare myself for next season I forced myself to not become lax but to concentrate more.”

Weber’s concentration paid off, but was challenged a bit by his well-known horse Jamaica, the 2008 USEF Horse of the Year. Instead of using Jamaica in the marathon and cones, Weber saved the 18-year-old superstar for cones only in hopes of keeping the horse fresh. Jamaica turned out to be too fresh and a bit of a handful, giving Weber the added pressure of an excited horse. “We still got it done,” Weber said with a smile, adding that despite everything Jamaica is a seasoned professional.

Weber is always quick to give credit to his equine team members, and said his proudest moments throughout the competition came from his five-year-old horse Reno W who competed all three days in the lead. “He was a star in the dressage and he tried his hardest in the marathon. I am sure it was a little overwhelming for him as I tried for a win and not just to maintain my position,” Weber said.

Weber, who is known in combined driving circles for his dedication and hard work, spent the past months training with difficult cones courses to prepare for the National Championships. Weber said Germany's Michael Freund came to his farm in August and September to help Weber prepare for his seventh victory as well as work on Weber's goal of competing in the World Equestrian Games in 2010.

"Michael wanted me to train on some very difficult courses as he knows that next year at WEG that is what it will come down to," Weber said. "We were unable to drive cones at the Laurels due to the weather, so we used training elements from difficult courses at the big CAI's in Europe this past summer. By the end I was training on courses made up of only those difficult elements. It was nuts and there was little to no flow, but I figured what doesn't kill me makes me stronger."

Weber's determination not only paid off, but has allowed him to now shift his focus toward the future. "I guess we will work all winter preparing for number eight at the Live Oak International next March," he said, adding that after Live Oak he is looking forward to WEG.

Weber isn't the only one eager for the United States combined drivers to compete at WEG. As the chef d'equipe for the US four-in-hand, Young said, "I feel very optimistic about the US Driving Team's ability to be on top at WEG 2010 and I expect Chester to play an important part in that goal."

*Photo: Combined Driver Chester Weber earned a record-setting seventh win at the Four-In-Hand Driving Championship at the Kentucky Cup and Lexington Driving Classic at the Kentucky Horse Park. Weber had stated throughout the year that his goal was to become the first driver to win the Four-in-Hand National Championship seven years in a row.*

