

Road to Aachen The Top Stars Answer

Chester Weber | USA

Chester Weber – Ready for the World Championship!



Only a few days – almost just hours – remain before the US four-in-hand team sets off for Aachen and checks in for the **FEI Driving World Championship**.

Chester Weber – one of the outstanding dressage drivers in four-in-hand driving – is ready.

Shortly before departure, he took the time to answer your questions. An exclusive insight – exciting, personal, and absolutely worth the read.

Hi Chester,
thank you for taking the time for this interview despite your busy schedule on the road to Aachen – the entire Hippoevent community truly appreciates it!

The record dressage performance at Szilvásvár

At the FEI Driving World Championship in Szilvásvár in 2024, you delivered one of the most remarkable dressage performances in four-in-hand history, scoring an incredible 31.06 penalty points – the lowest dressage score ever achieved at a World Championship.

What is the philosophy behind your dressage training? What do you consider most important in the education and daily training of your horses, and what do you believe makes the difference between a good dressage test and an exceptional one?

Chester Weber: *„An outstanding dressage test is not created on the day of the competition. It is the result of years of correct training, consistency, and attention to detail. For me, the foundation is to educate every horse individually before asking four horses to perform together as one team.*

Each horse has a different role. The leaders need to be confident, responsive, and expressive, while the wheelers must provide power, straightness, and stability. But regardless of position, every horse needs to understand the same system: rhythm, relaxation, balance, acceptance of the contact, and an immediate response to the aids.

At championship level, the biggest difference is often made by the details—the quality of the transitions, the accuracy of the figures, the balance through the corners, and the ability to maintain expression without creating tension. You need power, but the performance must never look forced.

In Szilvásvár, the horses were confident in their work and trusted the system. That allowed me to drive the test rather than spend the test correcting or managing problems. When four horses are truly connected, straight, and working with the driver, the whole performance appears effortless. That harmony is what the judges recognize.

The score was a special result, but it also represented the work of our entire team. A performance like that is never the achievement of one person or one day.“

Flying the horses between the United States and Europe

Every year, you transport your horses from the United States to Europe for the competition season before returning home again – an impressive logistical undertaking.

How do you prepare your horses for such a long journey? What are the most important aspects before, during and after the flight? Do horses experience anything similar to jet lag, and how much time do they need after arriving in Europe before they are ready to compete at their best?

Chester Weber: *„The preparation begins well before the horses get on the airplane. There is the veterinary documentation, testing, shipping coordination, feed, equipment, staffing, and ground transportation on both sides. The goal is to remove as many variables as possible and keep the horses' routine familiar.*

Before departure, I want the horses fit and healthy, but not tired from heavy training. Hydration is extremely important, and we pay close attention to what they eat and drink before, during, and after the journey. We use experienced people who know the horses and can monitor their temperature, appetite, hydration, and behavior throughout the trip.

Once they arrive in Europe, the first priority is recovery—not immediately beginning serious training. During the first day or two, we monitor them closely, hand-walk them, give them time to rest, and allow them to settle into the new environment. We then gradually reintroduce light work before returning to normal training.

The precise timeline depends on the travel schedule and the individual horse, but I want enough time before the first competition to see that every horse is eating, drinking, resting, and working normally. You cannot force that process. The horses tell you when they are ready to increase the workload.

They can experience something comparable to jet lag, although it is not exactly the same as it is for people. Their daylight cycle, feeding times, sleeping pattern, and general routine have all changed. We move them onto local time immediately, but we remain flexible and watch each horse carefully. Some adjust very quickly, while others need several more days.

The most important principle is not to arrive and immediately ask for maximum performance. The journey itself is a significant effort, and respecting the recovery period is part of preparing them to compete successfully later in the season.“

Goals for the 2026 FEI World Championship in Aachen

The FEI Driving World Championship in Aachen is the highlight of the 2026 season and one of the most prestigious events in our sport.

What are your personal goals for Aachen? Looking beyond medals and results, what would make this World Championship a successful and memorable one for you and your team?

Chester Weber: „Aachen is one of the greatest stages in equestrian sport, and a World Championship there will be incredibly special. My first goal is to arrive with the horses healthy, confident, and peaking at the correct time. Everything during the season has to be planned backward from that championship.

From a sporting perspective, the objective is to be competitive for a medal. We want to produce a dressage test that puts us in a strong position, drive a fast and controlled marathon, and still have a team that is fresh, responsive, and accurate for cones.

A championship cannot be won in one phase, but it can be lost in any of the three. The challenge is to produce three complete performances. It is not enough to have a brilliant dressage test and then give away the result later in the competition.

Of course, the goal is to win. We have enormous respect for the quality of the other drivers and teams, but we are not making the journey simply to participate. We want to compete for the individual title and contribute to the strongest possible result for the United States.

At the same time, success is not defined only by the medal table. A successful championship would mean that the horses remained healthy, that our team executed its plan, and that we left the arena knowing we gave the horses every opportunity to produce their best performance. If we achieve that across all three phases, we will have put ourselves in a position to earn the result we are working toward."

Thank you, Chester!

A big thank you to Chester Weber for taking the time, in the middle of an intense preparation phase for the **FEI Driving World Championship 2026 in Aachen**, to answer our readers' questions so openly and in such detail.

Dear Chester, we wish you, your team, and your horses all the very best for Aachen – success, health, and that little bit of luck that so often makes the difference at the highest level.

Enjoy the unique atmosphere of this exceptional championship and show the world once again why you are among the very best in four-in-hand driving.

The entire Hippoevent team is cheering for you – and we will be covering Aachen extensively.