



## **P... like Powerful! The Polish Youth Driving Team.**

**We begin this series by Jagoda Karpińska with an interview featuring Marco Freund – trainer of the Polish driving athletes and coach of the Polish Youth Driving Team.**

**Marco, you started your own driving sport career at a very young age. How much do those experiences now help you when working with and coaching the next generation of young drivers?**

*Marco: Starting in driving sport at a young age provides a valuable perspective when working with today's youth athletes. When my own career began, there were only a limited number of young competitors in the sport. Looking at the international driving community today, it is fantastic to see how strongly youth driving has developed and established itself as an important part of our sport.*

*Youth driving is about much more than competition results. Through daily training, responsibility for their horses and ponies, teamwork, successes, setbacks, and international experiences, young athletes develop skills that will benefit them throughout their entire lives. They learn discipline, commitment, respect, patience, and responsibility. In many ways, the sport helps shape them not only into better athletes, but also into better people.*

*One of if not, my most important core belief is that „development happens together.“ Young athletes improve through shared experiences, through supporting each other, and through*

*learning as a group. It is very rewarding to see how strong this community within the Polish Youth Team is.*

### **What makes the Polish Youth Driving Team special today?**

*Marco: What makes this team truly special is the culture that has been created within the group.*

*There is very little jealousy and a great deal of mutual support. The athletes work together, help one another, and genuinely celebrate each other's achievements. Friendships exist not only on the competition grounds but also outside the sport itself.*

*One of the most inspiring aspects is seeing the older U25 athletes cheer for the younger Children and Junior competitors as if they were their own family. Everyone is happy to be part of the same journey and proud to represent Poland together.*

*The team is a true community where successes are celebrated together, setbacks are overcome together, and performances are analysed together in order to improve. These experiences are incredibly valuable for young people and create memories and lessons that go far beyond sport itself.*

### **How has youth driving sport developed in Poland over the last few years?**

*Marco: The development has been very positive and very encouraging.*

*Polish driving sport as a whole continues to move forward, and the youth sector is an important part of that progress. Across all categories, there is a clear commitment to continuous improvement. More importantly, the youngsters are being integrated into the driving community at an earlier stage than ever before. They are welcomed into the sport and encouraged to develop their skills within a positive environment.*

*Fortunately, Poland currently has a very healthy and motivated youth scene. New talents are quickly accepted into the community, and there is a strong willingness among athletes to support the next generation.*

### **What are the main goals and priorities for the 2026 season for the POL Youth Team?**

*Marco: The main focus for 2026 is clearly the European Championships in Romania.*

*The team is working hard to arrive there as well prepared as possible and to represent Poland at the highest level. Specific performance goals have been defined internally, but the primary objective remains maximizing the potential of every athlete and every horse-and-driver combination.*

*If the team succeeds in delivering its full potential across all three phases, strong results will naturally follow. Competing with the best athletes in Europe, achieving top placings, and potentially fighting for medals are ambitions that motivate the entire group.*

## How important are sponsors, supporters and federation structures for the development of young athletes?

Marco: *Youth development requires strong support from many different people and organisations. The federation, private supporters, families, clubs, trainers, and sponsors all play a crucial role in creating opportunities for young athletes.*

*A recent example was the initiative organised by the federation to provide the entire youth team with new KEP Italia Helmets. It may seem like a small gesture, but the impact was tremendous. The athletes wore them with pride during the recent international competition in Bogusławice, and it created a real sense of unity within the team.*

*Moments like these demonstrate that support is not only financial. Feeling valued, recognised, and supported can have a significant impact on motivation and team spirit.*

## What ambitions does the team have for upcoming international events?

Marco: *The ambitions are high. Every international event is an opportunity to gain experience, refine performances, and take another step forward.*

*In the coming weeks, the youth team will continue its preparation through additional training camps and focused work on the lessons learned from the first part of the season. The objective is to keep improving and arrive at the major championships in the strongest possible position.*

## Is youth driving sport today the foundation for future international success in Polish driving sport?

Marco: *Without any doubt!*

*The current generation of youth athletes represents the future of Polish driving sport. There is great pride in what this group has already achieved, but even more excitement about what lies ahead. These young athletes provide every reason to believe that the future of Polish driving sport is extremely promising.*

*I'm excited and proud to be their trainer!*



**Thank you, Marco, for the interview!**

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**The interview was conducted by Jagoda Karpińska.**

Over the next few days, we will introduce the members of the Polish Youth Driving Team and give you a closer look at the young talents representing Poland.