

Michael Mayer joins Beekbergen: looking ahead to 2027 and the 2028 World Championships

A new course designer, an international competition to look forward to and a World Championship on the horizon: Beekbergen is preparing for two exciting editions. Swiss FEI Level 4 Course Designer Michael Mayer will design the courses for Paardenspektakel Beekbergen, taking place from 29 July to 1 August 2027, and the 2028 FEI Four-in-Hand World Championships in Beekbergen.

For Mayer, a good marathon starts with a simple question: “Would I want to drive this course the way I have designed and flagged it?” It is a question rooted in personal experience. Introduced to driving by his father, Werner Mayer, he competed internationally in single-horse driving for five years before working as a groom for Tomas Eriksson and Stefan and Werner Ulrich. Alongside that work, he began designing courses in Switzerland and attended his first FEI Course Designer course in 2018. In 2025, he reached FEI Level 4, the highest qualification for a course designer.

Having experienced the sport as a driver, groom and course designer, Mayer brings several perspectives to the drawing board. His aim is to create courses that give horses and drivers the opportunity to show their skills, while offering spectators an exciting competition to follow.

Technical challenges, flowing lines

Mayer’s approach centres on a balance between technical obstacles and flowing sections. Even the more technical combinations, he believes, must allow horses and drivers to find a good rhythm.

“The horses and teams should be challenged during the marathon, but not over-challenged.” That balance will guide his work in Beekbergen: technical skill and speed should both play a part, with fairness to the horses central to the design.

Building towards 2027

Although new to Beekbergen as its course designer, Mayer already knows the venue. He attended the 2025 World Championships for Pairs as an assistant to the Technical Delegate, gaining a valuable look behind the scenes. He was impressed by the infrastructure and sees the large sand arena added for that championship as a strong foundation for the coming editions.

His next step is a visit in spring 2027. Together with the organising committee, he will examine the venue, discuss ideas and assess which changes can be made for the July competition, as well as what could be developed for 2028. Detailed course planning will follow that visit. While it is too early to reveal individual obstacles or routes, Mayer’s ambition for 2027 is clear: an exciting, varied marathon that is interesting for horses, drivers and spectators alike.

Looking ahead to the World Championships

The 2027 competition will also provide an opportunity to test selected elements ahead of the 2028 FEI Four-in-Hand World Championships, particularly the course layout or parts of it. However, Mayer intends to keep new elements in reserve specifically for the championship.

For the world's best four-in-hand teams, he envisages a fair but demanding marathon, alternating technical sections with faster passages. The championship will require a higher level of difficulty, while maintaining the balance between sporting challenge and horse welfare.

"I am very happy to be part of the World Championships in Beekbergen. A World Championship is always a special opportunity and a great challenge." Above all, Mayer is looking forward to great sport, a friendly atmosphere and working closely with the organisers and his team. With preparations for 2027 leading towards a world title contest in 2028, there is plenty to look forward to in Beekbergen.

Save the dates:

Paardenspektakel Beekbergen | 29 July–1 August 2027

FEI Four-in-Hand World Championships | 6–10 September 2028

Riant Equestrian Centre, Beekbergen, the Netherlands

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