

Ravel Rewrites the Record Book and Wins 2009 Rolex FEI World Cup Final for Steffen Peters

Peters and Ravel are the first American team to win a dressage World Cup Final.

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American rider Steffen Peters and Ravel are at the center of the universe.

The suspense built throughout the night at the 2009 Rolex FEI World Cup Final in the Thomas & Mack Arena, and with only one American horse remaining in the competition, the crowd had to wait until the third to last horse in the ring. With \$102,000 USD on the line and a Rolex watch, the competition was fierce.

Ravel, in first World Cup Final with Steffen Peters, rose to the occasion in a very difficult Freestyle. His flying changes and piaffe and passage were perfect, the movements were incredibly tough and the horse thrived. He got better as the test went on and was rewarded with a mark of 84.95%. It was plenty for the win.

"It is fair to say, and I think I speak for Ravel too," said Peters. "It was magic soil in there. To share that moment in time with the most amazing dressage fans in the world is an incredible feeling. It hasn't quite sunk in yet."

Owned by Akiko Yamazaki, Ravel, an 11-year-old Dutch gelding, won the Rolex Grand Prix on Friday afternoon, the first time an American has ever won that competition.

"Ravel has an amazing mind," said Peters. "I honestly didn't have to push him. Tonight I could ride him a little more sensitively, he was with me so much. Naturally he's a very, very solid horse. He was extremely confident when we schooled, so I knew he wasn't too bothered by the atmosphere. I can't take credit for his mind, he was born like that. I'm one of those really lucky guy who gets to ride a horse like that."

Fourth in the Olympic Games, Ravel has continued to improve and had beautiful piaffe half pass at the end of his test, showing his strength and concentration. The transitions were flawless and the crowd were rewarded for their patience for their hero. He changed his music from the Games, but the basic choreography stayed the same.

"We worked on the timing," said Peters. "We changed the trot music, it had an Asian theme in Hong Kong and I didn't think that would be suitable for Las Vegas. We changed it to Coldplay Vida la Vida."

Isabell Werth and Satchmo, Team Gold and Individual Silver medalists for Germany at the 2008 Olympic Games turned in another stellar effort.

But 84.500% just wasn't quite good enough.

The 15-year-old Hanoverian gelding sometimes shows objection in the piaffe and passage (as he did at the Olympic Games) but tonight he cooperated and tried very hard. As usual his half-pass and canter work were fantastic.

"Really, really happy with Satchmo," said Werth. "He was super, he had no problems inside the arena. We both were really concentrated so it worked."

Werth rode him very, very confidently. This pair won the 2007 World Cup Final in this same venue. The horse was very accurate and correct, but it wasn't a match for Ravel.

Anky van Grunsven, nine-time World Cup Champion and Painted Black were third on a score of 82.150%.

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