

Switzerland Withdraws Dressage Team From Olympics

Team's top rider will not compete in Hong Kong.

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The Swiss Equestrian Federation has withdrawn its dressage team from the 2008 Hong Kong Olympic Games following a statement by its top dressage rider, Silvia Iklé. Iklé announced that she will not take her 14-year-old gelding Salieri CH to the Games, nor would she allow her second horse, Romario, ridden by teammate Veronika Marthaler, to compete. Iklé cited the humidity, distance and time difference of Hong Kong as reasons not to take her horses.

In a press statement, Iklé said, "Participating in Hong Kong would place extraordinary stresses and strains, exertions I do not wish to impose upon my horses."

After Iklé's statement, the Swiss Equestrian Federation decided to withdraw the entire Swiss dressage team from the Games, pointing out that, without Iklé, the team would be weak.

Swiss team trainer Jurgen Koschel has resigned as a result of the Swiss Equestrian Federation's actions.