



## In brief

Longines is the Official Partner and Official Watch of the International Federation of Gentlemen and Lady Riders (FEGENTRI). Created in 1955 and comprising 24 member countries, the Federation aims to promote and develop international races for amateur riders.

In February 2015, Frenchwomen Barbara Guenet and Maxime Denuault were declared winners of the 2014 championship at a gala evening in Oslo. They were presented with a Longines watch and a crystal vase.

As Official Partner and Official Watch of FEGENTRI, Longines also lends its name to the rankings for riders taking part in these Championships: the Longines World FEGENTRI Championship Rankings for Lady Riders and the Longines World FEGENTRI Championship Rankings for Gentlemen Riders.



# Nathalie Bélinguier

## President of FEGENTRI

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF GENTLEMEN AND LADY RIDERS

**Mrs. Bélinguier, can you explain to us the criteria used as the basis for the rankings in the Longines World FEGENTRI Championship Rankings for Lady Riders and the Longines World FEGENTRI Championship Rankings for Gentlemen Riders?**

This is a championship in which the rankings are determined by points awarded for each place. At the end of the year, the man or woman having amassed the most points is declared World Champion of the Longines World FEGENTRI Championship for Lady Riders or for Gentlemen Riders.

**What do you consider the essential qualities that a lady or gentleman rider must have in order to win the championship?**

All the riders that take part in the Longines World FEGENTRI Championships have been selected by their national clubs because they are the best in their country. Aside from their qualities as riders, they must also be able to adapt to an environment with which they are not familiar: racecourse, horse, etc. They also need to be "good travellers": at the height of the championship season they can be catching planes very frequently, and not always at the most sociable hours. And all the while managing their professional lives, or their school or university studies, since they are amateurs, which means they are not paid to ride - it's a passion. And, of course, they need a little bit of luck.

**How much time do these amateurs devote to their passion, on average?**

It all depends whether they are starting out as amateurs: in that case, they need to be riding very regularly - several times a week. Once they have a confirmed status, of course training on the horse is still important, but they can also prepare themselves by doing other physical activities to keep themselves in peak condition. Horse racing requires energy, stamina and excellent reflexes due to the speed involved. A race lasts between two and three minutes, during which time the rider must control a horse galloping at 60 km/h. Amateurs therefore need to be in top physical condition.

**In 2015, there were two French title winners. Is France particularly active in its support for amateur racing?**

France has a clear policy in terms of amateurs. France Galop, which organises horse races in France, considers amateurs to be an integral part of the race system; this means that amateurs who have "hung up their boots" may become involved in organising races or own their own racehorses.

**You yourself were a rider. What opportunities does FEGENTRI provide for amateur riders?**

The Longines World FEGENTRI championships are the experience of a lifetime for these young people. This championship gives them the opportunity to exercise their passion at the highest level, meet riders from different backgrounds and experience different cultures. Aside from the competition, it's also about friendships, socialising and elegance. The riders are ambassadors for their countries throughout the year.

*"This championship gives them the opportunity to exercise their passion at the highest level."*

**You have been President of FEGENTRI since 2007, when you were the first woman to be appointed as the head of the Federation, and you were re-appointed last year for a three-year term. What are your objectives for 2015?**

Since 2007, the Board members and I have been determined to make FEGENTRI the benchmark for amateur world championships. This year, we sent a questionnaire to all the FEGENTRI member countries asking for their views on governance, the championship, riders and races. The aim of the questionnaire was to prepare FEGENTRI for the future. Our Federation was created in 1955 in St. Moritz by five countries, which has since risen to twenty-four countries across three continents. We must evolve while staying true to our values.