

Eventing Mitsubishi Motors Badm

BADMINTON BANTER



PAUL SIMS was the only E complete, claiming the La Herode Joe Chambers' At Glengarnock to 28th (left); across country at the Swii Outlet Sunken Mound.

At a Badminton in which a gruelling cross-country test took centre stage and the results sheets harked back to the days of yore, a mare described by her rider as a "real tough nut" came through to take the honours.

Having been equal 25th after dressage, Australia's Sam Griffiths never expected to scale the order to claim eventing's most prestigious and valuable prize.

"I'm thrilled and it's a bit of a shock," he said. "It hasn't sunk in yet. When I was a little boy in Australia, we'd wait for the video tapes of Badminton to be sent out and then we'd all sit down and watch the highlights.

"My first ride here was a dream come true, to win is the completion of that dream. As a kid watching videos, to win Badminton was the pinnacle."

Sam's ride was the 11-year-old Paulank Brockagh. Bred by Paula and Frank Cullen — who also bred Welsh ponies with the same prefix, a combination of their names — in Ireland. By the top showjumper Touchdown, she was produced to one-star in the Emerald Isle by Heidi Hamilton.

Sam took over in 2010 and she is now owned by Dinah Posford, Jules Carter and the rider. Having been 43rd here last year and 15th at Burghley, Paulank Brockagh must have given her connections hope of a good placing, but she would not have been among the favourites to win.

But this competition, in which the dressage became virtually irrelevant in the face of Giuseppe Della Chiesa's new difficult cross-country course run on testing going, played to her strengths.

"She has a massive heart and tries and tries and tries," said Sam. "She's not a natural at dressage, but she has a huge jump and is really nice to have around. I can't speak highly enough of her."

Sam has been based in the UK since 1995 and now lives in Dorset with wife Lucy (née Matthews), who has ridden at three-star. They have a 16-month-old son, Oliver.

**'A very special place'**

THE two horses behind Paulank Brockagh are renowned for their jumping phases and they moved up from equal 34th and 46th after dressage. This was runner-up

2007 Headley Britannia (Lucinda Fredericks)



**SELECTION QUESTIONS**

BADMINTON threw up difficult questions about the selection of the British team for the World Equestrian Games. Oddly, none of the three Brits in the top six are certainties for the squad.

Armada has a dicey showjumping record; he has never had fewer than two down at four-star with Oliver Townend. Wild Lone has never scored below 50 in the dressage — 51 at Badminton was respectable, but top teams these days generally need counting scores to be in the mid-40s and below.

For Billy Beware, this could come a year too soon, although Pippa Funnell has gone well at championship on inexperienced mounts.

Tina Cook could yet get a look-in, but De Novo News' 20 showjumping penalties may be more concerning than his run-out across country. Izzy Taylor — one of our cover stars last week — was solid, but not stellar, on both her horses. Tom McEwen did not have a great week with either of his two.

Gemma Tattersall and Arctic Soul can improve on the dressage test they did here. Gemma is ready for team experience and selectors may forgive them for jumping the wrong side of a flag.

Francis Whittington's Easy Target did nothing wrong apart from tire. If he can reproduce that dressage form with solid jumping, he will be hard to ignore. And Nicola Wilson's Beltane Queen is one to watch.

Although they may reroute, our other two cover stars Sarah Cohen (Treason) and Sarah Bullimore (Valentino V), as well as Mary King (Imperial Cavalier), have probably blown it. But does Sarah B have a chance on the strength of Reve Du Rouet's ninth at Kentucky?

William Fox-Pitt remains a shoo-in, despite this weekend — he has proven form on Chilli Morning, Bay My Hero and Seacookie TSF, and is likely to expand his options at Luhmühlen (12-15 June). Zara Phillips will also be there with High Kingdom.

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LOOKING AT THE STATS

This year's cross-country course was undoubtedly the most influential of the past five years. This was partly down to the changes to the track itself, but the weather conditions also exerted a strong influence on the result.

**Cross-country 'Proper, proper Badminton'**

Riders get the true four-star question they asked for at Badminton, as energy-sapping ground combines with the revamped course to create a demanding test. With less than half the starters coming home, survivors make radical leaps up the leader board

THIS year's cross-country track was the first designed by Italy's Giuseppe Della Chiesa, after director Hugh Thomas stepped down from the job last year. Riders were unanimous in their approval and respect — "It's massive," gulped pale-faced first-timers.

"It's back to good old-fashioned Badminton," said Mary King. "It'll make us have sleepless nights."

William Fox-Pitt said: "There are a good few changes out there and one or two jumps have got us scratching our heads. There are more jumping efforts in the last minute, so you'll need power and energy at that stage."

Riders agreed the time would be difficult to get and impossible if you took any long routes.

Giuseppe has a long association with Badminton. Although his aspirations to compete were thwarted by horse injury, he based himself at the

estate for two seasons when he was eventing. He has frequently been the technical delegate here. He and Hugh worked in happy collaboration.

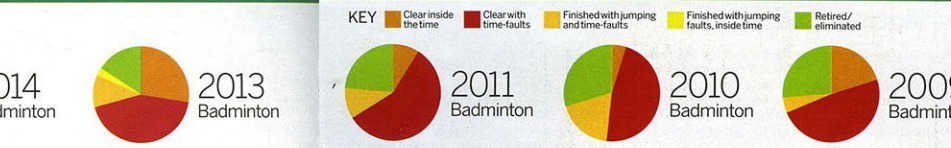
"This is a very traditional, iconic event and I tried to get back some old images of the competition, but in a way that's acceptable in the modern sport," said Giuseppe.

The one fence on a brand new site was the Gatehouse New Pond at fence 14, which has a gorgeous view of the house and will host tougher questions in the future.

In deference to the wet conditions (see box, p40), the middle element of the Swindon Designer Outlet (see box, p40) and fence 26 at the HorseQuest Quarry (fence 26) were taken out before the competition started.

**'As tough a ride as I've had'**

IZZY TAYLOR was the pathfinder on KBIS Briarlands Matilda. She



Comment

Ian Stark



**Fitness lessons, and riding stars**

GIUSEPPE gave Badminton a good dose of what it needed. His course was big and challenging with improved flow. There were lots of clever ideas and I adored the Vicarage Vee.

Hopefully we will see more fences like that, which scare riders but which horses will understand.

But there were quite a lot of unhappy pictures — horses sitting on the Huntsman's Close corners, for example — and rather too many horse falls. I'm sure Giuseppe will want to tweak things a little, as you always do.

We all underestimate how much more tiring the course is when it runs clockwise. Even so, I was disappointed that a lot of horses didn't look that fit. Riders may not have bracketed Badminton with Burghley in terms of its demands on fitness and it caught some out.

But this will be a wake-up call and we may not have such a huge wait list next year. Perhaps riders will want to wait until they are absolutely ready for Badminton and do an extra three-star first.

Some horses were leg weary but still jumping at the finish. We also saw good judgement calls from riders whose horses were spent.

There were certainly one or two surprise mistakes. Izzy Taylor showed that she is a real class act, though I am not sure either of her rides are quite team horses.

Pippa Funnell's Billy Beware is a star in the making, big and powerful but so talented. Perhaps Pippa was a little ring-rusty at this level — perhaps she needs to hit the gym to build some muscle. The next time we see these two will probably be in the winner's enclosure.

I also adored Harry Dzenis and Xam. He rode brilliantly until he made a huge error at the Mirage Pond. I am sure he will learn from it — until then he had team potential written all over him.

Oliver Townend, after a year or two in the wilderness, showed he has matured in every way. And though the selectors may not choose him, Harry Meade was incredible to ride in such style after his injuries. H&H


Mitsubishi Motors Badminton

Overall: final scoreboard

MITSUBISHI MOTORS BADMINTON HORSE TRIALS 2014						
Final position	Horse and rider	Dressage	Cross-country	Time	Showjumping	Total
1	Paulank Brockagh (Sam Griffiths, AUS)	46.3	-	17.6	4	67.9
2	Armada (Oliver Townend, GBR)	48.7	-	14	8	70.7
3	Wild Lone (Harry Meade, GBR)	51	-	16.4	4	71.4
4	Kilronan (Paul Tapner, AUS)	36	-	20.4	16	72.4
5	Minos De Petra (Pascal Leroy, FRA)	47.3	-	15.2	8	72.5
6	Billy Beware (Pippa Funnell, GBR)	42.3	-	24	4	74.3
7	Keyflow NOP (Tim Lips, NED)	52.5	-	14	12	78.5
8	Alexander (Ludwig Svennerstal, SWE)	53.2	-	18.8	8	80
9	Ringwood Sky Boy (Tim Price, NZL)	50	-	11.6	16	80.6
10	Ducati Van Den Overdam (Larade Liedekerke, BEL)	49	-	26.8	8	83.8
11	Willy Do (Lucy Jackson, NZL)	47.2	-	24.8	8	84
12	Koyuna Sun Dancer (Wendy Schaeffer, AUS)	57.3	-	26.4	-	86.7
13	Rumour Has It (Merel Blom, NED)	57.8	-	16	8	87.8
14	Leonidas II (Mark Todd, NZL)	41.8	-	39.2	8	91
15	Ringwood Mississippi (Austin O'Connor, IRL)	54.8	-	32.4	4	91.2
16	TS Jamaimo (Christopher Burton, AUS)	44.8	20	27.2	4	96
17	KBIS Briarlands Matilda (Izzy Taylor, GBR)	57.8	20	14	8	101.8
18	Thistledown Poposki (Izzy Taylor, GBR)	45	-	36.8	20	101.8
19	Johnny Cash (Johan Lundin, SWE)	53.8	-	24.4	16	103.2
20	Shanacough Creora (Geoff Curran, IRL)	59.8	-	20.4	24	105.2
21	Millthyme Corolla (Andrew Heffernan, NED)	51.8	-	22.4	28	105.2
22	Grand Manoeuvre (Nick Gauntlett, GBR)	46.3	-	43.2	16	105.5
23	Josephine MCJ (Marco Carvalho Jorge, BRA)	49.7	-	42	20	111.7
24	Euro Prince (Clare Abbott, IRL)	54.5	-	37.6	16	112.1
25	Ringwood Magister (Tiang Coudray, USA)	43.7	40	25.6	8	117.3
26	De Novo News (Tina Cook, GBR)	45.8	20	40.8	12	118.6
27	Shannondale Titan (Bill Levett, AUS)	44	21	41.6	16	123.6
28	Glengarnock (Paul Sims, GBR)	51.8	20	38.4	16	126.2
29	King Elder (Louisa Milne Home, GBR)	50	20	48.8	8	126.8
30	Sportsfield Othello (Joseph Murphy, IRL)	61.2	20	32.4	16	129.6
31	Diesel (Tom McEwen, GBR)	44.8	40	68.4	12	167.2
32	Sidificant (Clare Lewis, GBR)	60.7	60	30.8	12	170.5

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CHESHIRE-based Dutch rider Andrew Heffernan said it was "a massive thrill" to jump clear round his first Badminton.

"Badminton is what started me eventing — I showjumped first, but came here as a teenager and knew this was what I wanted to do," he said.

**Showjumping Aussie, Aussie, Aussie!**

With poles falling all around, Australia gets its sixth Badminton winner — but not the one everyone expects

THREE horses were withdrawn before the final trot-up, including Nicola Wilson's ride Beltane Queen, who had a small cut behind her elbow.

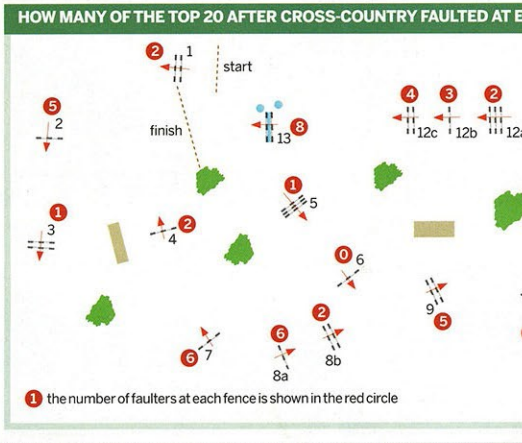
There was little drama at the inspection. Australia's Wendy Schaeffer — who had successfully appealed her 20 penalties at the Mirage Pond — had to take Koyuna Sun Dancer to the holding box, but he passed on reinspection.

Kelvin Bywater's showjumping track did an effective job of juggling the competitors and no one had a fault-free round.

"It wasn't an unfair test, but the result reflected what the horses had been through the day before," said Oliver Townend. "The cross-country was a very big course on stamina sapping ground."

The clock was a factor too, with 15 pairs picking up time-faults. These included Wendy and Koyuna Sun Dancer, who showed their pure showjumping experience to be the only pair to clear all the fences, and moved up from 18th to 12th.

Going into the top 10, Lucy



"I can't tell you how nervous I was before I started. Lucinda Green was brilliant last night — she went through every blade of grass with me."

Riding Millthyme Corolla, owned by Martin and Kerry Richards, Carol Baguley and Andrew, the 38-year-old finished 21st.

FINAL PLACINGS

1st Sam Griffiths on Paulank Brockagh (AUS)

2nd Oliver Townend on Armada (GBR)

3rd Harry Meade on Wild Lone (GBR)

Wendy Schaeffer and Koyuna Sun Dancer, who have showjumped at grand prix level together, put in the only jumping clear

Jackson collected 12 penalties on Willy Do, but it dropped her only one place to 11th. Ninth-placed Ludwig Svennerstal and Alexander knocked two, but still moved up one rung.

Harry Meade and Wild Lone's only fault was flattening slightly at 12a, beginning their relentless climb towards the podium from eighth overnight.

Tim Lips retained seventh with three down on Keyflow NOP, while Pippa Funnell's sixth position was unaffected by eight faults. She was lucky at fence two, which Billy Beware dived at, but had the spread down at nine and incurred four time-faults.

"I'm thrilled with the horse, but my husband [showjumper William] is not thrilled with me," she said. "It was silly of me to get time-faults and I should have been quicker on the turns. He unnerved me with how he jumped fence two and he was probably weary and getting a bit strung out."

But for a young horse to be sixth at his first Badminton — I'm not complaining.

Paulank Brockagh jumped well, just touching off the first part of the double at 8a for Sam Griffiths, who took over as the leader in the clubhouse from Harry.

It was clearly difficult for Oliver Townend to touch Armada's mouth without him hollowing. The uprights at fences 4 and 10 came down, dropping him behind Sam.

All was going well for Pascal Leroy and Minos De Petra, third at this stage, until the rider slowed right down for fence seven and the bay had no hope of jumping it. Dreams of France's second Badminton winner were over as he dropped to fifth with 10 faults.

**Top two hit four apiece**

OVERNIGHT runner-up Tim Price had warned that this phase is Ringwood Sky Boy's weakness. Riding in a hackamore, his problems started at fence