

Slow start for Two Thyme hands spoils to Townend

BURNHAM MARKET (1)

By Hilary Manners

OLIVER Townend capitalised on a streak of mischief from Ruth Edge's Two Thyme to win the first CIC*** section at the SPC Holdings Ltd Burnham Market horse trials.

Pepper Anne jumped the fastest round of the class to make it two wins out of three starts this season.

"She wasn't overly confident across country when I got the ride and she can still be a little excitable," said Oliver of the 11-year-old daughter of Pavarotti Van De Heile.



France's Virginie Cavallier and Nepal Du Sudre, fifth in CIC** section A

"However, she's definitely got loads of ability."

Oliver was also in the ribbons on the Badminton-bound Armada, confessing: "He's hot and strong with his own opinions but I'm loving the challenge."

While Oliver also took the runner-up spot in CIC** section A riding Black Tie II it wasn't all plain sailing. He was left sporting a large bruise from his ride on ODT Sonas Rovatio who smacked him in the face when surviving a sticky moment at the Dewpond.

Two Thyme might be 18 years old but the CIC*** runner-up still has some tricks up his sleeve as pilot Ruth Edge explained: "I came down to the cross-country start a tiny bit early and for the first time ever Jasper decided that he didn't want to leave the box. We wasted 10 seconds which cost us the win – but he jumped superbly."

Georgie Davies rounded up the top three riding the Badminton-bound Orlando.

"That was just what we needed," she said. "I came hoping for a nice settled dressage test and not necessarily a placing. Orlando was full of beans in the warm up but he let me ride him in the arena."



Bouncing back

Clayton Fredericks led from the off to claim CIC*** section D with Wallerstown Don who missed last season through injury. The 16.3hh gelding was originally competed by Diarmuid O'Brien and then based with the Fredericks when Diarmuid decided to sell.

"I was looking for a new horse and then I realised that there was one in my yard," smiled Clayton. "We popped round the one-star at Fontainebleau but this was his first proper outing since coming back. I did question whether I should go for it but it's not every day you are in the lead. He's a super jumper and galloper."

Piggy French and DHI Topper W were the fastest of the three-star combinations around Alec Lochore's cross-country track, adding 2.4 time penalties to their dressage score for second place.

With double clears on all five of her rides Piggy said: "They needed a spin and the ground was good. Jakata [fourth in section C] felt great. I'm always fiddling around with bits for him as he's very sensitive and I need to change things from time to time. Today he was back in a rubber gag with no flash."

Lucy Jackson and her third-placed ride Animator II just missed out on Badminton

Oliver Townend and Pepper Anne notch up the fastest cross-country round in CIC*** section C for victory

qualification so they are aiming to contest CICs for the rest of the spring, "and hope that the [New Zealand] selectors like what they see. Animator has an enormous ego but I hero worship him. I've just got to get faster across country than Piggy."

The majority of the three-star horses negotiated the solid fences cleanly, although the silver birch corner at 10 had to be removed early on when Caroline Edwards and Baggrave Summer Sonnet rendered it irreparable. The skinny brush at 8b was influential, in part because there was no easy route to represent at following a run-out, and the two narrow cottages at the second water complex caught out Zara Phillips (Silver Lining V), Kate Honey (Fernhill Now Or Never) and Jules Stiller (Chapel Amble) among others.

Picture by Peter Neven



Jaroslav Hatla and Westwinds El Divo finish fourth in CIC*** section D

A Rebellious streak

Niklas Eschorer, 17, completed on his dressage score with Christopher Bartle's Ballyengland Rebel to take CIC** section A on his first attempt at the level. Niklas has been based at the Yorkshire Riding Centre for the last 18 months and is at school in the UK.

"This horse is amazing across country but he can be a little lazy in the dressage," said Niklas of the Ricardo Z-sired gelding who he is aiming at a CCI** and the Young Rider Europeans.

Ireland's Sarah Ennis earned a clutch of good CIC** placings, finishing third aboard Steller Rebound behind Oliver Townend and Black Tie II in section A and taking sixth place with Horseware Malachi. The Fairhouse-based ride was also fourth in section B with BLM Diamond Delux.

CIC** section B was claimed by Jodie Amos and Wise Crack, with the jockey saying: "He's a really competitive horse in all three phases. He didn't jump at all as a five-year-old because he used to bolt. He's so quick that even though I cantered through the finish we were still 12 seconds inside the time."

Fiona Hobby and Royal Colours took second spot, adding nothing to their dressage score and moving ahead of third-placed Piggy French and

Kiltealy Brief who collected time faults as a result of a near blip across the country.

"He took a dislike to the circular saw on the Saw Bench and set sail in the wrong direction," explained Figgy.

As in the three-star, the two-star brush corner at 8 took its toll, scalps including Georgie Spence (Ricoshea), Tom March (Nadal) and Sue Chadwick (Samuel Thomas II). The Brush Roll to Corner at 10ab caught out James Sommerville (Kings Temptation), Sienna Myson-Davies (Tambourine) and Louisa Lockwood (The Diva), while George Hilton-Jones and Dollar Hill parted company at the water (16) and Tonia Gillett's Real Frozen fell at the Sussex Farm Log (17).

Coloured challenge

Bettina Hoy's Lanfranco TSF was not the only horse to inadvertently jump a novice fence backwards while tackling the second water complex but this pair still claimed the advanced section, in the main thanks to producing one of just two clear show jumping rounds.

"He's a top class horse but quite a challenge mentally," said Bettina. "I've learnt to let him flow more between fences and now he feels ready for Badminton."

William Fox-Pitt and Neuf Des Coeurs took the runner-up spot



Katy Hurst and Weston IV en route to fifth place in CIC** section B

with Andrew Nicholson and Tristar II in third.

The cross-country was the same as for the three-star but the show jumping was bigger – and over heavier ground given that it ran at the end of the final day. The going had been irrigated before unscheduled heavy rain fell on the Tuesday night and the organisers were forced to move the jumps between all but the three-star and advanced classes.

Richard Jones and Highland Ford sped around the cross-country to claim the OI ahead of Matthew Wright and Hugginstown but Matthew was victorious in intermediate section P on Olympic Expression.

Austin O'Connor piloted Hope It to victory in the remaining intermediate, relieved to find that a commentator's suggestion that he had notched up 20 time penalties was incorrect.

Third-placed Lucy Jackson and Animator II will spend the rest of the season contesting CICs



5 things you didn't know about Lucy Jackson

- 1 She is a qualified physiotherapist
- 2 She trained with Gill Watson for 25 years but only started riding full time three years ago when she took on a job with Ann and Nigel Taylor
- 3 Her first pony was Wizzy, who wasn't. "He was 13hh, about 35 years old and a real dope on a rope"
- 4 She once arrived at a show in New Zealand only to discover that she had loaded just four out of the five horses she had entered
- 5 She survives mostly on Haribo and Lucozade, "although mum and the New Zealand Federation are battling to get me on the straight and narrow"