



Best Of Spirits snatches the British Novice Championship from stable-mate Haveray Park Beau. Rider Oliver Townend also took fifth on Woodhouse Ben

EHOA/Martin Collins Novice Championship

OLIVER Townend gave his rivals no chance in the novice championship. He took home first, second and fifth prizes, having held a one-two-three stranglehold on the leaderboard for much of the afternoon. Ruth Edge (Impromptu) and Andrew Nicholson (Armada) sneaked into third and fourth towards the end of the competition, capitalising on highly placed dressage marks with fast rounds.

After Oliver endured a refusal on trailblazer Golden Hue at the troublesome third fence, Woodhouse Ben scorched into the lead from his 34th-ranked dressage with one of only two rounds inside the time. Oliver's following rides, Haveray Park Beau and Best Of Spirits, both finished 4pen ahead on 41, with the latter's faster time securing him the title. These top five booted out a rail apiece in an influential show jumping phase.

Oliver took on Best Of Spirits from Leslie Law three months ago, after spotting the chestnut at Weston Park and asking Leslie if he could take on the ride.

"Don't tempt fate, but it looks exciting," grinned Oliver when asked if he might have some good horses lined up for Beijing 2008.

He will earn his first senior Union flag next month at Blenheim, riding Topping.

Dressage leader Kitty Boggis wrecked an otherwise smooth round on Imperial Master with a stop at the house in the Dewpond. Abi Walters rode two of the five double clears in the class, taking sixth spot with Chalcofts Saracen.

Advanced

DAISY Dick's decision to take the pressure off by running three horses in the plain advanced sections rather than the British Open was

rewarded with a win, a second and a ninth place.

Her grey Hope Street snatched victory by from long-time leader Cindy Rawson (Ashdale Davids Way) as the last runner in advanced section I.

But Daisy's fortunes were reversed in advanced II when her Blenheim ride Spring Along was pipped by the final horse in that section, William Fox-Pitt's Bramham winner Mr Dumbledore. William retained his leading dressage position and also finished third on Birthday Night.

"I'm furious with William, but he beat me fair and square," admitted Daisy, who finished 5.1 pen behind. "With Blenheim at the back of my mind, I didn't push Spring Along but he didn't put a foot wrong and show jumped like a god."

Other Blenheim front-runners Bettina Hoy and William Fox-Pitt performed the two outstanding dressage tests in these sections with Ringwood Cockatoo (24.1) and Ballincoola (27.9) but both withdrew before cross-country. H&H



Daisy Dick and Spring Along, advanced runners-up. Daisy won the other advanced on Hope Street



Ruth Edge and Impromptu leap into the water on the way to third place in the novice championship