

A seventh team gold for Britain



Britain claims her seventh successive team gold, led by the evergreen individual silver medalist Mary King. And France's Nicolas Touzaint regains his 2003 title with a peerless performance on Galan De Sauvagère. Catherine Austen reports

BRITAIN'S strength in cross-country riding secured a seventh consecutive team gold medal in a bloodless victory at the European Championships in Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy (13-16 September).

Second after dressage to Germany, three superb clear cross-country rounds from Zara Phillips, Mary King and Daisy Dick with just a sprinkle of time-faults left them miles ahead going into the final day. They needed just a couple of the 22 fences they had in hand over France, and the result was never in doubt.

The individual competition was much more exciting. It was finally won by a supreme horseman on an incomparable horse — Frenchman Nicolas Touzaint with his 2003 European Champion, Galan De Sauvagère, who jumped a flawless show jumping round following the only cross-country clear inside the time to add nothing to their second-placed dressage score of 29.4.

I feel very lucky at my ripe old age — I'm old enough to be some of my team-mates' mother

Mary King

"I am very happy, and I would like to thank my horse," said Nicolas. A tearful Zara Phillips lost the silver medal to Mary King after a show jumping stop and two fences down. For Mary, this was a second individual European medal to add to her 1995 bronze, also won here at Pratoni when she was five months pregnant with her daughter, Emily. Mary, 46, pulled off Britain's only faultless

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COURSE CHAT



Britain's Mary King storms through the final water complex on the way to individual silver with Call Again Cavalier

■ CHAMPIONSHIP chic: national symbols as quartermarkings. Flags for Britain, shamrocks for Ireland and cockerels for the French (above). Also, equine ear covers during the dressage for the Brits and Austin O'Connor. And Swiss rider Tiziana Realini's horse sported some very fetching bows in his plaited tail on the final day.

■ PRATONI was buzzing with Brits. Mike Tucker was technical delegate, Ed Holloway was commenting and a whole gang was over for the technical delegates' course which was running at the same time, including Alec Lochore, Jane Starkey, Eric Winter and Ian Stark.

■ QUOTE of the weeks Kristina Cook, in Italy to commentate for the BBC, was asked: "Are you Ginny Leng?" by a spectator.

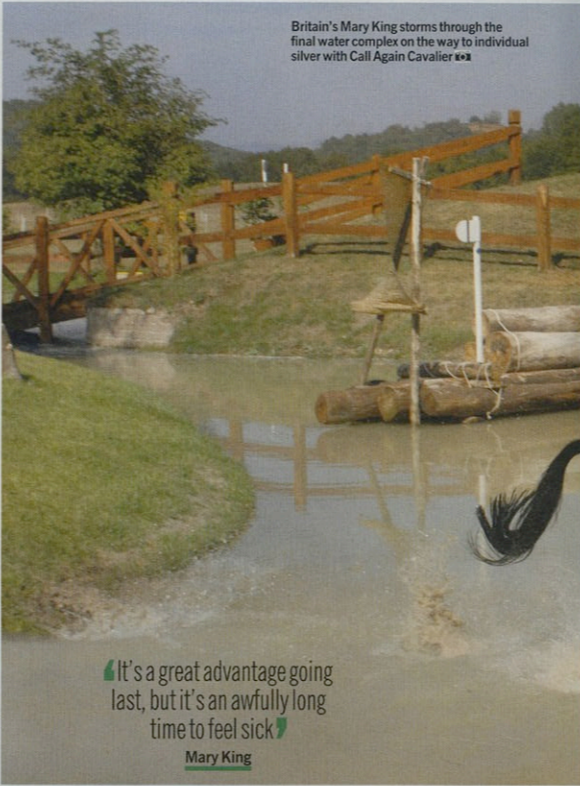
show jumping round on Call Again Cavalier, and when Bettina Hoy, who has so often seen leads after dressage evaporate with problems cross-country, hit a fence on Ringwood Cockatoo. Mary moved up to bronze and then silver after Zara and Toytown struggled uncharacteristically with the striding between fences eight and nine and refused, accumulating 12 jumping penalties in total, plus seven time-faults. This pair have not even had a cross-country stop for five years, but it just was their day.

"It didn't go the right way for me in the show jumping, but I'm really pleased for the team — that was our main aim," said Zara, who quickly regained her composure. "And I'm so happy for Mary."

Bettina still took home bronze for Germany — her first individual medal since she became European Champion herself at Burghley in 1997. Mary King admitted that it was very special to win another medal.

"I feel very lucky at my ripe old age — I'm old enough to be some of my team-mates' mother," she said, and laughed when Vittoria Panizzon, whose eighth place individually secured team bronze and Olympic qualification for Italy, said that she had come to Pratoni 12 years ago to collect autographs, and was very excited to be competing against some of the same people who rode there. The French team of Nicolas Touzaint, Didier Dhennin, Arnaud Boiteau and Eric Vigeanel won the silver medal — but if their selection had been different, it would have been gold. Apart from Nicolas, the highest-placed French riders were Jean Teulère and Cedric Lyard, fourth and fifth, who rode as individuals.

Dressage GERMANY immediately set the standard on the first day of dressage. Ingrid Klimke, second to go, used all her experience in pure dressage to coax an immaculate test out of FRH Butts Abraxas for 31.5pen. Ingrid was called up to the German



Mary King



Vittoria Panizzon, best of the bronze medal-winning Italians, speeds round on Rock Model



French individual Jean Teulère on Espoir De La Mare, 2002 World Champions, finish fourth

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COURSE CHAT

■ THE biggest climb up the leaderboard came from Belgian individual rider Sarah van Hasselt, who languished in 47th after dressage on Artic Fox Too, but jumped clear cross-country and hit only one show jump to rise to a very respectable 16th.

■ THE members of the ground jury weren't afraid to use their powers during the cross-country. Russian rider Elena Melnik was stopped and made to retire, and the yellow "warning" flag, which indicates the ground jury wishes the rider to know it is unhappy with how the combination is going, was used for the first time ever on Austria's Daniel Dunst, who then retired Top Gun 7.

■ DAVID Wood, chief executive of the Hurlingham Polo Association (HPA), was a surprise face at Pratoni. "I can only get him to go on holiday if it's somewhere horsey," said David's wife, Fra.



Britain's Daisy Dick tackles the boat at the final water on Spring Along to post the day's first clear

team only a week and a half before when Dirk Schrade's horse went lame, and this was her dark bay 10-year-old's first championship.

"I came out of the arena really thrilled with him — he was totally focused on his job. He always tries so hard to do what you ask," said Ingrid, who won individual bronze at the 2005 Europeans on Sleep Late.

Nothing came near them for the rest of the day. Daisy Dick was first off for Britain, and Spring Along settled well among the scant crowds, avoiding getting a little lit up as he did at Aachen last year, and produced a pleasing test.

"He was as relaxed as he could be," said Daisy. "He was lunged for an hour beforehand and worked twice yesterday, and he was foot-perfect today."

The ground jury (Christoph Hess, Sue Baxter and Katherine Lucheschi) gave him 42.3, and Britain was off to a flying start.

Oliver Townend's test on Flint Curtis was probably the best he has done — this horse, when relaxed, really shows off in a dressage arena, and if Christoph Hess had liked it as much as the other two judges, it might have finished with a high 30s mark. But he received 44.2 and ended the day sixth, with Daisy fourth.

Between them and Ingrid were Belgium's Joris van Springel with Bold Action, a full 1.0 marks behind Ingrid with 41.5, and, on 41.9, a slightly stunned Swiss competitor, 23-year-old Tiziana Realini, who was riding Gamour CH, her 2004 young rider championship partner, in their first senior championship.

"I've learnt everything with this horse — and normally dressage is our worst phase," she said. French team member Arnaud Boiteau lay in fifth on Expo Du Moulin.

The second day's dressage is very often stronger at three-day events, and so it proved here. Britain's squad debutante, individual rider Georgie Davies, 24, started brilliantly on the pretty mare Fachoudette, but a loss of balance in the first extended trot caused them to break into canter. Although the rest of the test was good, the judges didn't hit the eight and nine buttons again and she scored 45.4.

Disappointed, Georgie said: "Most of it was really nice, but there were a couple of big mistakes I could have done without."

Following George into the arena was Bettina

Hoy. Bettina has consistently produced chart-topping tests for the Germans, and she pulled it off again. Ringwood Cockatoo is 16 now, but his extensions remain as dazzling as ever. Whether it was worth 27.1 is hard to know — Christoph Hess certainly thought so, consistently giving her the highest marks.

Bettina flew into the lead, saying: "This is the best score Cockatoo has had. I was just pleased to get into the arena because he slipped over while tied up outside the stable this morning and has scrapes on his bum and hocks."

"I'm so proud of him — he was on my side and trying hard."

Bettina, riding as an individual because she and Ringwood Cockatoo have not had much match practice this season, stayed at the top and led the field going cross-country.

Her fellow German and last year's Luhmühlen winner, Frank Osthoit, went into eventual fifth on

Air Jordan 2 with 33.1, one place below Ingrid Klimke. Toytown and Zara Phillips performed another super test, only spoilt by a little tension in the first couple of movements, for 29.8, their best international score. Zara finished the day in third because Nicolas Touzaint, last to go for the French team, rode an elegant and correct test on Galan De Sauvagère. They collected a score of 29.4, 0.4 ahead of Zara.

Belgian rider Karin Donckers did her best test at this level for 33.5 and sixth place on Gazelle De La Brasserie.

The other Brits were hovering — Mary King was seventh on Call Again Cavalier with 36.5, Daisy was 12th, Oliver 14th, Georgie 17th and Britain's other individual rider, Rodney Powell, was 19th on 45.5.

"This was only Langarth Darcy's second three-day event with me, and second CC*** — he didn't do his first advanced until this year," said Rodney. "He showed his greenness today. But he was breathing by the end of it — and so was I!"

Rodney originally went to look at the son of Langarth Triple on behalf of an Italian rider.

"I told her to get off because I wanted a go," he said.



British squad first-timer Georgie Davies takes 17th place after the dressage on Fachoudette

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Constantin van Rijckevorsel jumps the upright rails on Our Vintage



Ground jury: Katherine Lucheschi, Sue Stewart and Christoph Hess



The Italian team take bronze: Vittoria Panizzon, Roberto Rotatori, Fabio Magni, Susanna Bordonio



Frank Osthoit celebrates his dressage test, but he failed the cross-country

With three riders in the top 10 — Hinrich Romeike and Marius Voigt-Logistik were eighth — Germany led after dressage. But the Brits were just six points behind. The French, vying to secure their Olympic qualification here, were third, ahead of the Belgians and Italians, who were also chasing one of the two available qualifying berths.

Cross-country THE British team manager, Yogi Breisner, admitted that the cross-country track was stronger than he thought it would be, and most other nations concurred. The two toughest combinations looked to be the first real combination, fence nine — three round, high flower boxes



Britain's Zara Phillips, eventual sixth, jumps the Roman Stonewall on the way home to take second overnight



Tiziana Realini, 17th, has a run-out at the second 'target' after the slide

on a difficult line — and the famous slide down a sheer, dusty slope at fence 11. Called the Rifle Range, it consisted of a log drop before two impossibly narrow arrowheads with bulls'eyes painted on them. But at championships, there have to be a range of alternatives so that weaker nations aren't wiped out, and both had a variety of routes.

Pratoni's terrain is twisting and hilly, and the intense heat was also expected to play its part, with horses finishing tired.

In fact, fence nine hardly caused a problem. Early riders took the longer option, and because this could be jumped pretty quickly, it became standard. A few riders got great crosses for going straight — Tiziana

Realini was the first, and others included Italy's experienced team rider, Fabio Magni, riding Loro Piana, Southern King V — but most played safe, including all the Brits.

The Rifle Range claimed some notable scalps, though. Most came early on, before riders settled for taking one or other of the alternatives — either the log drop, the first bulls'eye and then a gallop down the hill right-handed to a slightly wider third, or the log drop, through the trees to a brush drop, then the wider arrowhead.

Ingrid Klimke, second out for Germany, tried to go straight and ran off the second bulls'eye. But she was the first to finish — the Russian in front of her, Pavel Sergeev, had a

fall and retired — and was delighted with FRH Butts Abraxas.

"He did a great job all the way round — he was just a bit bold down the hill and then couldn't work out what to do," she said.

She was fast, too — 9.2 time-faults, even with a stop and a long option at nine.

"He's a little racehorse," said Ingrid.

Daisy Dick proved it was all about by riding a fantastic clear — the first of the day — on Spring Along for Britain. The pair emphatically laid the ghosts of run-outs at Luhmühlen this year and, along with Georgie Davies, were the only ones to go the straight route at fence 11.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER TEAMS?

■ TWELVE teams started, but only six completed the competition. The Dutch, trained by Lucinda Fredericks, were first to go — they fielded three riders, but Madelein Brugman withdrew Sundancer 6 after dressage.

Sweden lost Sara Algotsson (right) when she broke a bone in her foot the night before the dressage, and neither Johan Lundin nor Katrin Norling made it round the cross-country. The first Russian team for many years sadly only got two home — Andrey Kurshonov and Valery Martyshev — as did the Austrians.

Ireland took only three riders — Geoff Curran's Balladeer Alfred went lame before the team set off — and although Louise Lyons jumped clear across country on Watership Down and Austin O'Connor just had one run-out on Hobby Du Mée, Sally Crosscadden's 21-year-old Millridge Kaimar found his second-ever CC*** too much and retired. And the mighty



Germany, in the lead after dressage, lost Frank Osthoit on the cross-country and then Hinrich Romeike overnight.



Belgium's Joris van Springel jumps clear for ninth on Bold Action

"Pheew!" she said with relief. "It felt like a long, tough track, and he was really honest after I wanted to give him a big pat after fence 11, but I thought we'd better concentrate and finish first."

Daisy picked up 2.8 time-faults. Although Flint Curtis gave watchers a mini-heart attack by clobbering the second fence, he bolted round with Oliver Townend clear on Italy's Francesca Simoncini, riding Terra Nova II, and Poland's Pawel Spisak.

Georgie Davies was next for Britain. She set off well, and when she became only the second rider to jump straight through the slide at fence 11, supporters were confident of a great round. But the

rest of the round was good and they were going so fast that they collected only four time-penalties.

Joris van Springel put a clear on the board for the Belgians, but he and Daisy were the only ones for a long time until Denmark's Peter Flarup and Silver Ray, Carl Bouckaert got another one for Belgium on Rampant Lion, but with 29.2 time-faults.

It was now that the French selection began to look doggy. Arnaud Boiteau and Expo Du Moulin were eliminated for three stops at the fence that turned out to be the surprise troublemaker — 24abc, the Roller Coaster, three angled logs, with the middle element over a ditch. Fellow team member Didier Dhennin also had a stop here on Ismene Du Temple, while Cedric Lyard and Jean Teulère, individuals, went clear on Jolly Hope De Treille and Espoir De La Mare.

The Germans were also in a bit of trouble. After Ingrid's stop, second team member Peter Thomsen had an uncharacteristic run-out on The Ghost Of Hamish — another Rifle Range victim. One of their individuals, Beeke Kacke, jumped clear with 16.8 time-faults on Sinjang 2, and there were also clears from Italy's Francesca Simoncini, riding Terra Nova II, and Poland's Pawel Spisak.

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Bettina Hoy makes up for being left off the German team by claiming individual bronze on Ringwood Cockatoo

French-bred Fachoudette stopped at the second part of the trakehner combination at fence 20, and picked up a second run-out at the Roller Coaster.

A hot and disappointed Georgie said: "She started to get a bit tappy and low at her fences, which is so not like her. It felt like riding a different horse out there."

Then it was Bettina Hoy's turn. She had been in this position before — leading going into cross-country — only to fluff it. Now she could prove the team selectors were wrong not to have her, and her doubters were wrong not to believe in her.

She set off fast on what was only her 10th cross-country round of 2007, and Ringwood Cockatoo answered her every call. She knew she could go the long ways at fences nine and 11, and still be competitive, and did so, but it was a great fault, but said, rather prematurely: "I thought with a 27 dressage I could afford a few."



British individual Rodney Powell on Langarth Darcy at the second water

on a score of 38.3, but this lasted minutes. Toytown picked up 2.8 time-faults, and jumped into the lead on 32.6. Now, only Nicolas Touzaint could go above her, right at the end of the day.

Before Nicolas, Louise Lyons jumped a clear round for Ireland, and the German dentist, Hinrich Romeike, cheered up the German supporters with a fast clear on Marius Voigt-Logistik.

Rodney Powell did not have such a happy time. Langarth Darcy ran out at the skinny on the island that formed the third part of the third water, then seemed to lose confidence and stopped twice at the Roller Coaster at 24.

All eyes were on Frank Osthoit to halt Germany's downward spiral. But Air Jordan, who has won so much, including the CC**** at Luhmühlen, never looked happy and when the chestnut refused to jump straight through the slide at fence 11, supporters were confident of a great round. But the

retired him. He said Air Jordan had been suffering from travel sickness and a slight temperature.

Mary King and Call Again Cavalier, last of the British, have been on terrific form across country this year, and they posted another great round here. Their only hairy moment was at the first water (the Splash and Turn at fence four), where the horse, by Cavalier Royale, put in a huge jump in and landed flat on all fours.

"He's a difficult horse to bit and he was quite sensitive to the American gag early on," said Mary later.

But they were spot on and fast everywhere else, galloping over the finish line for 4.8 time-faults.

"It's a great advantage going last, but it's an awfully long time to feel sick," said Mary. "I rode to team orders taking the long routes at nine and 11 but that's exactly how I would have ridden anyway."

Karin Donckers was devastated to be eliminated for jumping the wrong



Oliver Townend and Flint Curtis follow team orders at the Flower Bed

side of a flag at fence 24, the Roller Coaster. But the day belonged to the last man out, Nicolas Touzaint. As the Italian sun dipped behind the surrounding hills, he was bold enough to jump the straight route at nine perfectly, but not to risk going direct at fence 11. He never had a risky moment, and when it was announced that he was the only rider to go under a stop the previous day on Coronado P, he was not surprised when there were further six clears among his team.

The first of these came from Tiziana Realini, who was one to finish 17th for Switzerland. Germany's Peter Thomsen jumped clear to finish 15th, Joris van Springel got a little consolation for Belgium miss out on Olympic qualification clear and ninth place.

Oliver Townend touched on to finish 12th for Britain, but Dick dropped from fifth to six with two down. The two Gerri Ingrid Klimke and Beeke Kacke both had two fences on the F 10th and 11th places, and P Spisak did a great job for Poland finishing 13th on Westus.

Zara Phillips's stop — which later blamed on herself — and down gave her 12 faults. But seven show jumping time faults don't count towards qualification these days. That did not impair her of heading to Hong Kong next in quest to complete the hat of European, World and Olym medals. Though the dream of being her European individual title has been thwarted, Zara's obvious disappointment show only to stiffen her determination to 2008. Just look out for that for Frenchman on his dark grey.

Show jumping WHEN Hinrich Romeike withdrew Marius with a chipped stifle before the final horse inspection, Britain's prospects of gold looked even

EUROPEAN EVENTING CHAMPIONSHIP 2007 FINAL SCOREBOARD

	PENALTIES			
	Dressage	Cross-country	Show jumping	TOTAL
	Time	Faults	Faults	
1 Galan De Sauvagère (Nicolas Touzaint, FRA)	29.4	-/-	-/-	29.4
2 Call Again Cavalier (Mary King, GB)	36.5	4.8	-/-	41.3
3 Ringwood Cockatoo (Bettina Hoy, GER)	27.1	11.2	-/-	42.3
4 Espoir De La Mare (Jean Teulère, FRA)	41.3	4.4	-/-	49.7
5 Jolly Hope De Treille (Cedric Lyard, FRA)	48.3	2.8	-/-	51.1
6 Toytown (Zara Phillips, GB)	29.8	2.8	12/7	51.6
7 Spring Along (Daisy Dick, GB)	42.3	2.8	8/-	53.1
8 Rock Model (Vittoria Panizzon, ITA)	48.3	4	8/-	60.3
9 Bold Action (Joris van Springel, BEL)	41.5	25.6	-/-	67.1
10 FRH Butts Abraxas (Ingrid Klimke, GER)	35.5	9.2	20	68.7
11 Sinjang 2 (Beeke Kacke, GER)	46.7	16.8	-/-	71.5
12 Flint Curtis (Oliver Townend, GB)	44.2	4	20	72.2
13 Westus (Marius Voigt-Logistik, POL)	53.1	12.8	-/-	73.9
14 Silver Ray (Peter Thomsen, BEL)	56.2	2.8	-/-	74.4
15 The Ghost Of Hamish (Peter Thomsen, GER)	47.5	8	20	75.5
16 Artic Fox Too (Sarah van Hasselt, BEL)	57.9	17.2	-/-	79.1
17 Gamour CH (Tiziana Realini, ITA)	41.9	18.4	20	80.3
18 Rampant Lion (Carl Bouckaert, BEL)	51.3	23.8	20	98.1
19 Coronado Prior (Eric Vigeanel, FRA)	49	16.4	20	85.4
20 Watership Down (Louise Lyons, IRE)	54.8	28.4	-/-	87.2
21 Nebelwerfer (Harald Siegl, AUT)	48.8	32	-/-	88.8
22 Della Malaspina Khan De Viages (Roberto Rotatori, ITA)	49.4	8.8	20	90.6
23 Loro Piana Southern King V (Fabio Magni, ITA)	49.6	36	-/-	93.6
24 Ava (Susanna Bordonio, ITA)	44.8	20.4	20	97.2
25 Victor (Marius Voigt-Logistik, POL)	52.3	29.2	-/-	97.5
26 Ismene Du Temple (Didier Dhennin, FRA)	51.3	23.8	20	98.1
27 Hobby Du Mée (Austin O'Connor, IRE)	49	24.4	20	101.4
28 Fachoudette (Georgie Davies, GB)	45.4	12.4	40	101.8
29 Our Vintage (Constantin van Rijckevorsel, BEL)	52.9	26.8	20	103.7
30 Bally (Andrey Kurshonov, RUS)	71.5	30	-/-	121.5
31 Bally's Geonimo (Viktoria Calzerbach, SWE)	59.1	36	20	115.1
32 Call Back (Kim Lowe, DEN)	45	34	20	119
33 Joli Roger III (Francesca Zaza, ITA)	53.6	31.2	20	120.8
34 Giggly Mouse (Melanie Berckwits, FRA)	60.8	25.8	40	124.1
35 Terra Nova II (Francesca Simoncini, ITA)	71.7	24.4	-/-	128.1
36 Kinshah (Valery Martyshev, RUS)	64.2	50.4	-/-	130.6
37 Agent Mulder (Jenssen Biech, SUI)	51.3	56	20	131.3
38 Equine Hero (Bertrand, ITA)	60.8	25.8	40	131.6
39 Ballycartan Hero (Christoph Heiden, AUT)	56.3	37.2	20	133.5
40 Langarth Darcy (Rodney Powell, GB)	47.5	30.8	80	166.3
41 Bayarone (Gabriele Savoini, ITA)	76.7	50	40	170.7
42 Ostler (Julius Karmarsch, POL)	50.4	50.4	65	193.8
43 Moosroodoo (Nynke Smits, NED)	66	95.4	16/-	238.4

* denotes team member

Withdrawn after dressage — Sundancer 6 (Madelein Brugman, NED) 49.4. **Eliminated on cross-country —** Major Tom (Julius Karmarsch, POL) 61.2; Expo Du Moulin (Arnaud Boiteau, FRA) 45.5; Ekisat (Igor Artobov, RUS) 70.2; Top Gun 7 (Daniel Dunst, AUT) 60.2; Colombo (Elena Melnik, RUS) 48.5; Nick Natch (Barbara Steiner, AUT) 67.5; Air Jordan 2 (Frank Osthoit, GER) 33.4; Tarango De Lully CH (Sebastien Poirot, SUI) 60.8; Gazelle De La Brasserie (Zara Phillips, GB) 33.5; **Retired on cross-country —** Galadi (Pavel Sergeev, RUS) 57.7; Ecu (Marco Biasia, ITA) 61.2; Sunny Side Up 3 (Francesca Cerulli Irelli, ITA) 58.8; Lamellé Chumshawurba Vincent (Martens, BEL) 66; Millridge Kaimar (Sally Crosscadden, IRE) 54.8; Ozon (Annetmarie van Merkensteijn, NED) 59; Pandora Emm (Katrin Norling, DEN) 48.5; Freetown (Marius Voigt-Logistik, POL) 65.5; Gildan Nirda (Harald Ambros, AUT) 58.5; Striking Heights (Stefano Brecciaroli, ITA) 57.5. **Withdrawn after cross-country —** Jarnus Voigt-Logistik (Hinrich Romeike, GER) 37.9.2.0.

TEAMS	
1 Great Britain (Spring Along, Call Again Cavalier, Flint Curtis, Toytown)	146
2 France (Ismene Du Temple, Galan De Sauvagère, Expo Du Moulin, Coronado Prior)	219.9
3 Italy Della Malaspina Khan De Viages, Loro Piana Southern King V, Rock Model, Ava)	244.1
4 Belgium (Our Vintage, Gazelle De Sauvagère, Carl Bouckaert, Bold Action, Rampant Lion)	254.4
5 Denmark (Silver Ray, Call Back, Victor)	290.9
6 Switzerland (Gigi Du Mourier, Gamour CH, Agent Mulder, Tarango De Lully CH)	336.7



Technical delegate Mike Tucker and assistant Ricardo Bordoni in control on cross-country day