

Jo Prestwich sees Oliver Townend's ride score his second OI success

OLIVER Townend and Emily Birch's Jungle Diva Blue added nothing to their dressage mark of 31.4 to win the York Recycling Open Intermediate at Allerton Park, North Yorks.

Diva Blue, a son of Lostock Blue, was recording his second win of the season, following success in the Great Witchingham OI. He was also third in the CIC** at Osberton in the spring.

"The plan was to take him to Weston for the CCI** short-format," said Oliver. "Unfortunately, we were balloted out, so where we go now depends on where we can get in."

There are few possibilities and the horse could end the season in the advanced at Bishop Burton.

"We will have to sit down and decide," said Oliver. "I was thrilled with him today — he was good in all three phases, we just had a bit of a wobble in the dressage in the counter-canter, but managed to hold it together, and cross-country he was a machine."

Two penalties behind was Nicholas Collins with his parents' Ballyneety Duca, who finished just outside the optimum time. Caroline Scott, who was initially given a cricket score of time-penalties



Oliver Townend and Jungle Diva Blue winning the OI at Allerton Park. Left: Nicola Tweedle and Opposition Buzz, winners of the OI section G

Diva Blue is on song



generation home-bred, his dam being a daughter of Java Tiger. This year he won the area final at Floors Castle before finishing in the top six in the novice championship at Gatcombe.

"It was a testing course today," said Nicola. "I would think it was the biggest intermediate track I've jumped all year, but it was beautifully built and I had a great ride round."

The horse will have another run — probably at Aske Hall — before contesting the seven-year-old championship at Le Lions d'Angers to end the season.

As always, the course caught out the unwary, with penalties well spread out around the 23-fence track. The new drop to barrels at fence 15 was on a difficult angle and those with poor control were found out, but the intermediate water jumped much better, particularly at the out element.

after being held on the course before the bounce at fences 16 and 17, was promoted to third. After checking, all but two of the penalties were lifted, giving her own Rathmore Diamond a well-deserved placing.

The Waste Recycling Group Intermediate Section H produced an all-the-way win for Jo Andrews with her home-bred mare, Blue III. A dressage mark of 21 set them up and, having rolled a pole in the show jumping and picked up three time-penalties across country, they still had a couple of marks in hand.

"I cannot believe we've won," admitted Jo. "Having walked the course, I decided I would be happy if we just got round!"

Jo planned the long route at the influential beehives at fence five, but minor brake failure meant that Blue III chose the direct route herself.

"I've been having help from Mark Chambers and it's made all the difference," said Jo.

Blue, 11, is out of a Thoroughbred mare by

Jake, an Andalusian-Shire, and was given to Jo as a foal.

"My dad bred three from the mare and gave one to me, one to my sister and one to my mum," Jo explained. "Who got which was decided by the toss of a coin and I lost, but ended up with the best one."

This year, the pair won at the Riding Club National Championships and Jo's main aim now is a place on next year's Rural Riders European Championship team.

The second intermediate section, sponsored by Yorkshire Private Office Chartered Accountants, went right to the wire, with Nicola Tweedle on Rosemary Search's Opposition Buzz and Sara Roberts with Chancers Choice both finishing on 33.8.

Nicola's fastest time of the day tipped the scales, upgrading the son of Fleetwater Opposition in the process. Buzz is a second

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Oliver Townend

COURSE CHAT

■ **SECRECY** surrounded goings on at Allerton last year, with rumours of filming of a Harry Potter movie. In fact, the setting was the venue for a try-out of the machinery and set used for the opening ceremony at the Olympic Games.

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