

The moment

October 1994: Wembley Arena, London

“ I remember the long trip down to Wembley and standing behind the curtains shaking with nerves before I entered the arena ”



Oliver Townend

TAKING the junior newcomers title with Cool Mule at Horse of the Year Show in 1994 was the first big class I won. It was also the first time I'd been to London — and the first time I'd ever really been out of Yorkshire with horses.

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It never crossed my mind that I would win the title, but I never

thought I couldn't win it either, if that makes sense? Even at the age of 11, I was just doing my job.

We bought Cool Mule for £825 from an advert in *H&H*. When we got him home, he was seriously hairy — his coat was 6in long — and seriously naughty. He bucked for two weeks and Dad [an eventer and horse dealer] had to sort him out before I could ride him.

But he went on to be a very special pony, taking me to the pony eventing European

Championships two years later.

When I was 14, we sold him for a lot more than we had paid for him. It was a massive learning curve — I realised that, with the right horse, I could win anything and that I could make a living out of selling horses on. Having Cool Mule was an experience that moulded my whole business.

I loved showjumping as a child. When I'm older and I've taken a few more tumbles eventing, I might even go back to it. *H&H*