

Townend signs off

Oliver Townend ensures his season ends as it began when Polvier's Harold Spirit takes the OI to give him his 48th win of the year. Emma Collings closes the domestic season



Oliver Townend completes a successful season on Polvier's Harold Spirit, who is now for sale

THE 2005 season kicked off in East Anglia with the name of Oliver Townend at the top of the leaderboard, and it drew to a close in similar fashion on Sunday when Oliver guided Polvier's Harold Spirit to victory in Little Downham's Ames Motor Group open intermediate section.

As one of only two combinations to go clear inside the time across country, the pair finished on its dressage score of 34.3. This put them ahead of Piggy French and Chicago II, who added time-penalties to their dressage mark of 34.8 to complete on 38.

"She's had a few blips but, really, her form's

very good," said Oliver of the grey mare. "She's run in three advanced classes and won two of them. Things didn't really go our way at Bramham and she went to Burgie and was ill, so this is only her second run at the back end of the year after a break."

Having picked her up as a catch ride at Windsor last season, this is likely to be the last time Oliver will compete the 10-year-old Polvier's Harold Spirit, who is being sold by her owner-breeder Linda Evens.

"It's great that the whole partnership could finish on a win. Lin's been very supportive of me," said Oliver.

Australian vet Tony Warr also put in a speedy cross-country round on Boomer The Roo, finishing third after having two show jumping fences down. Things went a little more to plan

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Tony Warr

for Tony in the intermediate section with My King Of Hearts, where, having recorded an identical dressage score of 32.4, he kept a clean sheet throughout to land the spoils.

The enormous My King Of Hearts is just seven and, like Boomer The Roo, is owned by Tony and his wife. The pair put in a typically neat show jumping round and, as the penultimate competitors on the cross-country course, went closest to the time in that section, adding just 0.4pen. This meant that they relegated Oliver Townend and his father's six-year-old Young Milestone — who were nearly eight marks adrift — to the runner-up slot.

"It's scary. Imagine how good he would be with a real rider," said the self-deprecating winner of his progressive chestnut gelding by Political Merger.

The horse was bred by Irish course-designer Tommy Brennan, whom Tony is due to meet next week.

Tony added: "We didn't know anything about his breeder at the time, but we saw the horse as a three-year-old and liked him — and he was cheap. But then he just grew and grew. He's thoroughly advanced now because he was third last week, and he has to be aimed at two-star level at least next year."

Sarah Gibson filled third spot in the intermediate

section on Moy Boy. Like the first two horses, the 13-year-old recorded two faultless jumping rounds, but just fell foul of the time set for Robert Ure's cross-country course, clocking up six time-penalties to finish one point behind Oliver Townend. H&H

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