

'He has his own style,' says Piggly French of CIC3* victor Westwood Mariner



Oliver Townend's decision to reroute Harthill Percy to Burgham pays off

CCI3* qualification, and finished 11th with Killealy Brief in what was only their third outing together.

Oliver Townend was off the pace with Sandiman II after finishing the first phase on 42.9. However,

like Paul Tapner aboard Vanir Kamira (fourth) who followed him across country, Oliver definitely had his "game face" on as he hustled the striking dund around the track to come home 5 sec

inside the time for third.

The course, generally deemed not to be a top-end CIC3* track, caused few problems but included two good questions into water at fences 13 and 14.

The most influential fence was a pair of open corners at 10ab. This was the site of 20 penalties apiece for Frog Rock (Annabel Wigley), Skyhills Cavalier (Oliver Townend) and Papillon (Polly Jackson).

Victory on first visit

BLYTH TAIT made his first visit to Burgham a winning one with owner Ronnie Bartlett's ex-hunter Bear Necessity V. Blyth pipped Oliver Townend (who had re-routed Harthill Percy from Cholmondeley Castle in search of what he felt would be better ground) to second in the Howard Russell Construction CIC2*.

Blyth said of his winner: "He's a doddle to ride, but is not built like a classic event horse. He's not a flashy mover but he's very trainable and I've spent a lot of

time getting him more supple and softer on the flat, which is starting to pay off."

Blyth toyed with switching his entry to the CIC3* after walking the course but, in hindsight, was glad he didn't.

"He didn't have a great time in the CCI3* at Tattersalls, where we retired after a run-out, so it was really nice for him to come out here and enjoy an easier run before going back up to three-star level," said Blyth.

Another horse back on track following confidence problems was Balladeer Durban Hills, who finished third on 47 under Sarah Parkes.

"He had lost his confidence in water when I took him over about 18 months ago," said Sarah. "I've spent the time since then slowly building it up by making sure he gets his feet wet on virtually a weekly basis. Luckily I'm based near Aston-le-Walls so I'm able to make the most of the facilities there."

Andrew Hoy and Caroline Powell dominated the small open intermediate section, filling the top four places between them. Andrew took top spot with the Gatcombe-bound Cheeky Calimbo, owned by his rider and Christiane Classen. The pair completed on their excellent dressage score of 22.6, with Caroline taking second and third with Cameron Crawford's duo Onwards And Upwards and Up Up And Away.

"Cheeky is very consistent in the dressage, but it's an ongoing job trying to find the right formula with him across country," admitted Andrew. "He's quite little and he tries very hard. When horses try that hard you really have to get the balance right between riding positively and sensitively."

Saturday's two intermediate sections were won by Nicola Wilson with Hero Motivator and Aoife Clark with Rienneo Lucky Ranger. H&H

Blyth Tait and CIC2* winner Bear Necessity V, who is 'not built like a classic event horse'

