



'Eye-catching' — Oliver Townend believes former Flat racehorse Khoi Traveler is 'one for the future'

Townend takes two

Oliver Townend's rising stars dominate, while a former four-star horse wins with his new rider

Oasby (1), Lincs

By GEMMA REDRUP

OLIVER TOWNEND staked his claim on the top classes at Oasby with a double victory. He rode Note Worthy, owned by Andrew Cawthray, to the top spot in open intermediate (OI) section I, adding 1.2 time-penalties to a dressage score of 27.3.

"He's a good horse and lovely to ride — he is just starting to become established," said Oliver of the 13-year-old, who is aimed at Chatsworth CIC3*, followed by a CCI3*. "There was no pressure on him today and he found it easy."

Oliver's second win came in intermediate section J, riding the eye-catching chestnut Khoi Traveler, owned by Angela Hislop.

"I think he could be a good horse for the future," said Oliver. "We should have won at Isleham last weekend, but my rein snapped on the cross-country, which resulted in a

huge number of time-penalties."

The 12-year-old gelding added just 0.4 of a time-penalty to a dressage score of 28.2, around a cross-country track which only let two competitors get inside the optimum time on excellent going.

"Khoi Traveler started life as a Flat racehorse in the US," explained Oliver. "He then came over to the UK with Madeline Blackman, who was a working pupil for me."

"When she left, so did the horse but we managed to track him down so that I could take over the ride. He's a bit older due to having a previous career and there's still room for improvement on the flat, but he will catch up."

Lydia Hannon found herself to be something of a bridesmaid when taking second place behind Oliver in both sections.

My Royal Touch, who was third in the CCI3* at Blenheim, was second in section I.

"She was wild!" smiled Lydia of the 13-year-old Touchdown mare, who is entered for Badminton, and is owned by Carol and Christopher Harris, who also own the yard where Lydia is based.

"She was very happy to be out and quite strong on the cross-country, but she'll back off the fences when they get a bit bigger. We've worked hard over the winter on our dressage and jumping with Jeremy Scott and Andrew Fletcher respectively — I don't want to be competing to make up the numbers and thankfully my horses have come out this year feeling very good."

Lydia was also second in section J riding Tiero.

"My aunt, Linda Wallis, bred him and I've had him since he was three," said Lydia of the nine-year-old. "He's quirky and used to try to deck me every time I got on him, but I think he's growing up now."

TIME TO WIN

SECTION H of the OI went to a surprised Nini French.

"I rang [my sister] Piggy the other day and said it was a shame that I was in the OI as we'd be out-classed and complained that I wasn't going to get a rosette," laughed Nini, who was riding her own nine-year-old, Time For Harry. "It's exciting — I don't usually do winning!"

Nini said that she tried to sell Time For Harry as a five-year-old as he 'couldn't jump'.

"I rode his mother to novice level and then she had one foal [Harry], bred by my next door neighbour. He's taken time and we've gone slowly as he's grown from 15.3hh to about 17hh, but I enjoy him and it's lovely to have a nice one," she added.

Imogen Murray was second, riding Ivar Gooden (see box, right).

Ella Woodhead claimed the under-21 OI riding former four-star campaigner Westwood Mariner. "It's amazing to win, but it wasn't the plan," laughed Ella. "We haven't even been cross-country schooling."

Ella bought Westwood Mariner after her previous young riding horse died due to a field accident. "The day after we lost my horse, we saw Westwood



'He thinks he's the boss' — the talented but 'tricky' Cassan under James Robinson