

# 'Let's not lose Townend long term'

## Mark Phillips makes some predictions for Burghley and the worlds

AFTER weeks of heat and drought, it seems strange to be back into a normal English summer. My two recent high-profile course-designing jobs were Barbury — with a course William Fox-Pitt called boring, despite or even because of the new layout — and Gatcombe, where Harry Meade condemned the "roundabouts". I guess no one can get it right every time, but my most exciting part of the season is coming up now.

This year's Burghley track could be one of the hardest ever to get the time over here, which will up the excitement, especially as most of the fastest horses have been selected for the World Equestrian Games (WEG) in anticipation of the much vaunted hill in the eighth minute.

### SELECTION DILEMMAS

DESPITE WEG, there are some very good horses and riders entered for Burghley alongside

Former Olympic team gold medalist and four-time Badminton winner Mark Phillips is one of the world's leading cross-country course-designers.

### OPINION

around 20 first-timers. Oliver Townend rides three and Andrew Nicholson two, and they will have the extra edge trying to prove how much they will be missed in Tryon.

Andrew has not been available for selection since his fall out with the Kiwi team after the Normandy WEG four years ago, but for Oliver to be on the British reserve list with three horses must be galling. His statement to the press was a masterpiece of diplomacy and all I got was a wry smile when I saw him at Somerford Park.

With 45 years of team experience as a rider and chef d'equipe, I understand how "team spirit" really helps in this most individual of sports. I know Oliver did not endear himself to many after Badminton, but I cannot remember the last time a Brit who finished first or second at Badminton missed selection for the next championship other than for soundness reasons.

Let's hope Oliver finds favour again and does not



become an outcast like Andrew Nicholson. It would be sad if the Brits were to lose the benefits of his undoubted talents in the long term.

The Brits have Tina Cook's experience as well as the next generation on show for WEG and who knows what they could do with a little bit of luck.

Don't discount the Kiwis. They were only the second team to beat the Germans in Aachen when they won this year and have been working hard.

The Germans have a great base with Michael Jung and Ingrid Klimke. They need support from Andreas Dibowski

and a change of championship fortune for Julia Krajewski.

I'm not convinced the Aussies have enough quality support for Chris Burton, who must be in line for an individual medal, although I expect Sam Griffiths to go clear and Andrew Hoy is running into form.

### A TIGHT FINISH

TRYON is uncharted waters for everyone. We've never run a three-star World Championship over just 10 minutes and at 135 metres per jumping effort. There is a lot of water, the fourth minute contains eight jumping efforts, the eighth minute has two efforts and the hill.

Teams will need a strategy, especially as there are a couple of fences horses and riders won't have seen before.

But with so many class pairs present, the cross-country should not prove too daunting. With no dressage co-efficient and the marks so close, the showjumping is bound to be a nail-biting affair. **H&H**

NEXT  
WEEK

New Zealand WEG rider Mark Todd