



ONE INSIDE THE TIME
PIGGY FRENCH and Oliver Townend had to settle for second and third. Both were hungry to give their horses a second CCI5* victory, but both will have driven home relatively satisfied. Neither had had the ideal preparation.

Trevor Dickens' Vanir Kamira had spent a long time at stud after Badminton and had been reshod by a different farrier while there. When she stopped, three strides out, at a fence into water with Piggy in the open intermediate at Keysoe two weeks ago, it was the first time the 14-year-old mare

to win a CCI5* in any country — she ran her heart out — and then to get back on their hocks, be careful and respect these fences is hard."

Probably the only current horse with a better CCI5* record than Vanir Kamira is Karyn Shuter, Angela Hislop and Val Ryan's Ballaghmor Class, who has not been out of the top five in all his starts at the level. Considering Oliver seriously aggravated an existing disc problem in his back on Tuesday and couldn't sit, walk or ride on Wednesday, it was a miraculous performance. He declared that British team physio

Ash Wallace was the miracle worker, but it was an exceptional effort from the rider, too.

"I get sick of people putting the Germans on a pedestal," Oliver suddenly said at the final press conference, referring to Germany's European team gold and individual gold and silver. "Look at what we [himself, Piggy and Pippa] have achieved this year. Put the Germans round this track and see where they are."

MORE ESTABLISHED
PRE-EVENT favourites Oliver Townend and Ballaghmor Class pulled off a mark of 21.1 at Badminton, and fans wondered if he might be able to better that. However, the rider's slipped disc might have affected his ability to produce the electrically charged performance of which this very well-trained horse is capable.

He rested his off-hind in an otherwise square second halt, which affected both that mark and that of the rein-back. It was still a commanding test but it lacked that extra 2% of "star power" and

was awarded 25.3 — not enough for the lead.

"If we went in again, I could probably get him a bit more revved up," admitted Oliver. "But when he won two years ago I was still putting the flying changes into him in the warm-up, and he is becoming more established."

Pippa Funnell had given Oliver Townend the chance to go ahead of her, and he and the Courage II 12-year-old, Ballaghmor Class, looked utterly together as a partnership. But he was five seconds over the time and they finished on 27.3, 0.4 of a penalty behind Piggy French, for third.

"What can I say — he's perfect," said Oliver. "We probably lost those five seconds in the air, as I was on my minute-markers all the way. I couldn't have given him a smoother trip and he couldn't have given me a better ride." ...

round — at least you finish on a high," she said with a smile.

Tim Price and Bango were spot on and rose two places to fifth, while Sarah Bullimore and Reve Du Rouet were confidently clear and capitalised on Ludwig Svennerstål's two down on Stinger to take his fourth-place slot, while the Swede slipped to eighth.

But in the audience's eyes these were all preliminaries to the main act — the teeth-clenchingly

tense head-to-head between Pippa, Piggy and Oliver for the title. All three, in the end, hit a fence — Oliver the second, Piggy the first and Pippa the eighth. Ballaghmor Class actually jumped the best round, demonstrating that while he has yet to deliver a clear at this level, he is more than able to do so. But the placings remained unaltered, although the same could not be said for the spectators' heart-rates. **H&H**

Oliver Townend's grit and ability, and Ballaghmor Class' talent, come to the fore as they produce the second-fastest clear despite Oliver suffering with a spinal disc problem. They went on to finish third

TING LAND ROVER BURGHLEY

Scoreboard

Overall: final scoreboard

Final position	Horse and rider	Dressage	Cross-country Jumping Time	Showjumping Jumping Time	Total
1	MGH Grafton Street (Pippa Funnell, GBR)	22.8	- 4	4 -	30.8
2	Vanir Kamira (Piggy French, GBR)	26.9	- -	4 -	30.9
3	Ballaghmor Class (Oliver Townend, GBR)	25.3	- 2	4 -	31.3