

So easy, Guild does it with he

Forfar rider Lucy Guild continues her good run of form with Titi D'Oase, landing the winter grand prix at Aintree



AINTREE INTERNATIONAL EC PREMIER SHOW, LIVERPOOL, MERSEYSIDE 3-6 November

By Margaret Shaw

SCOTLAND'S Lucy Guild clinched the £1,000 top prize in the winter grand prix riding her Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) winner, Titi D'Oase.

With 21 finalists coming through to the jump-off, the final round proved a real crowd-pleaser and, after the very much in-form Geoff Lockett set a blistering pace (38.39sec) with Old Lodge's R Little Lefanie from third draw, it was a case of who dares wins.

Lucy Guild and Titi D'Oase are never ones to shirk a challenge and, from penultimate draw, they dropped, turned and galloped wherever they could to break the beam in 38.38sec.

A series of turns and optional routes at the top of the arena proved influential, as did the all-important gallop back down to the final upright.

"I watched Geoff go and thought the only way to stand any chance of winning was to take one extra stride to the fourth fence to cut inside to the next two," said Lucy, who then set sail at full speed to the last. "I was going to take a flier but chickened out and just managed to fit in a half-check."

Lucy has ridden Titi D'Oase for the past four years, and they have been in great form this season. The pair started with an area trial victory at Warrington, before representing Britain at the young rider European Championships

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Lucy Guild on her hair-raising run-into the final upright

where they took team bronze and individual fourth. They also claimed a HOYS wildcard at Rowallan and most recently won the young riders championship at Birmingham.

"I thought he felt quite laid back in the [grand prix] first round, but he certainly did the business in the second," added Lucy.

Beaten by a very good horse

THE Forfar rider had fired a warning shot when winning a hotly contested 1.40m here.

An angled approach to the last caused problems for some, but despite Lucy confessing to "closing her eyes" Titi D'Oase absolutely pinged it to win.

Resolute in defeat, Geoff Lockett said the draw did not favour him, but accepted R Little Lefanie had been beaten by a very good horse.

"I was just pleased to see how fast Lucy had to go to beat us," said Geoff.

Lucy now intends to let Titi D'Oase down a little while she spends more time

Show in numbers

160 stables booked for the show — a full yard

33 riders (a full bus) enjoyed a night out at Alma De Cuba Nightclub in Liverpool

16 tins of chocolates consumed

learning the ropes in the family building business.

This grand prix attracted plenty of spectators and it was pleasing to note how many young riders were in the awards. Four of those — Max Routledge, Chloe Aston, Louise Saywell and Emma Stoker — all finished in the top 10 of the Team Murka under 23 competition.

Of the 17 competitions jumped here, this class was one of the highlights over the four days.

Although Sue Barratt's course was built to height, no horse or rider visibly struggled despite