



Local Events with Gallo Salton, a horse prepared by Tina Fletcher



Flying the flag for Great Britain from left to right: John Hales, Harvey Smith, David Broome and Harvey Smith

to see which horses perform well on this surface," he said. "Most of the top league and the Europeans are on grass but Rotterdam and Rome are both on a surface."

"There are new combinations coming out. Tina with Unique, Scott Smith with a new horse from America, Nick, back to fitness with Big Star and Carlo. Kalico Bay made an excellent top league debut and went on to win the King George Cup with Tim. Ellen is back on board, Ben, Michael and John, Will, Peter, Scott (Brash), Robert to name a few.

two grand prix horses rather than one – this is an excellent step forward having one for the Nations Cup and another for the grand prix."

Gary Widdowson added: "Rob has brought a radical change and has power to make riders fall in line which is only right. I didn't think owners had enough connectability before and at this high cost you have to involve owners."

Alo Brake and her husband Andy are dedicated to building a team of nation cup contenders. "We're committed to producing top-level horses that can go on and compete for GB on the international stage," said Alo. "In doing that we aim to have the very best person involved at each stage of their development. My husband Andy produces them and they continue their career with Simon Crippen and John Whitaker."

"When John rode Voss into the ring at Hickstead and Aachen as one of his international horses we were so proud. Producing him from a three-year-old and seeing him ridden at Aachen by John was a really memorable moment - that is what we're in it for!"

"Rob Hoekstra has brought a different approach to the management of the sport at this top level. His inclusion and consideration for owners is key."

Emma Phillips of the Quainton Stud says there a number of factors involved in retaining top-class horses with her husband Michael.

"There's a huge amount of enjoyment and pride watching your horse compete at championship level," she said. "As a child I dreamed of riding in such competitions, and owning a championship horse gives me the next best thing with the added bonus of not having pressure to perform myself. As an owner you experience the thrill of winning, benefit from prize money and watching the horse you've produced win at top level."

"Showjumping is by its very nature highly competitive, with riders constantly battling it out against each other. It's encouraging to watch the dynamics change when the focus shifts off themselves as individuals and on to the betterment of team GB. When four of Britain's best riders put their heads and skills together, then suddenly so much more becomes attainable."

Rob is committed to building a strong pool of Olympic combinations and sees owners as holding the key to a medal.

"I want to have 16 combinations fighting for places," he said. "Many times before it's been the last man standing but now it's wide open. If I'm honest I don't know who is going to be in. The more difficult selection becomes the greater chance we have of a winning a medal."



An incredible owner and supporter for Great Britain Olga White with Rob Hoekstra at Olympia

Olympics. Then it will be possible to achieve the success of a home medal."

Rob said: "The whole build-up for this year is towards London and whoever comes up with the best form will be on the teams. We're looking at the combinations who did well last year and new ones proving themselves on the spring tours. It's an open playing field and several horses are at a similar level with very different riders."

"I used 11 horses in 2010 and hope to increase it to 15 or 16 this time."

Dawn Makin is an avid supporter of Ellen Whitaker and the British teams.

"We feel great pride when one of our horses is selected to represent Great Britain," said Dawn.

"There is no feeling like the lump in your throat when Britain is on the podium and the Union Flag is flying (Europeans 2007). Knowing you've played a small part in making this happen is a feeling which cannot be easily beaten."

"With the Olympics on home ground we have a great chance and need to seize this advantage and put British Showjumping back where it belongs."

Rob Hoekstra realises that he cannot leave a stone unturned.

"With an all-weather at the Olympics we'll be watching

"We've got up-and-coming combinations like Bruce Menzies and the Old Lodge Stud's Sultan who will be out on the Sunshine Tour. We've also got Laura Renwick and British number one Guy Williams in our armoury."

Amy Doran whose mother Lindsay owns Depardieu Van't Kiezelhof said: "It's an important year and Guy is taking time with our horse. He's very young and although we'd love to see Zak in London we've got four years time to look forward to."

Corinna Duncan said: "Old Lodge cannot think of anything better than owning a horse jumping at the Olympics; a horse like Sultan, British bred by Old Lodge would be the icing on the cake for our breeding programme - a lifetime achievement."

Rob said: "The riders will have to sharpen up and fight for their places and the message is to have your horse fit and ready for the Top League shows. Suddenly our British riders have