



'He's becoming Mr Reliable': Sultan V and Bruce Menzies claim their second championship in as many weeks

CUSHIONBED  
BRITISH SHOWJUMPING/  
SCOPE NATIONAL CHAMPION

1st Sultan V  
(B Menzies)  
2nd Leonardo 590  
(J Clayton)  
3rd Tin Tin  
(G Lovegrove)



# Sultan swings into the spotlight

HORSE-BOUND  
7-PAGE  
SPECIAL  
REPORT



The 2010 role of honour includes some exciting champions. But the star is Old Lodge's stunning young home-bred given, as usual, an immaculate ride by Bruce Menzies. Margaret Shaw and Suzanne Jones report from Staffordshire County Showground

EVERY time out, Old Lodge's exciting home-bred Sultan V shows there is a glittering international career ahead. He effortlessly jumped into the spotlight to be crowned British Showjumping national champion and give Bruce Menzies his biggest win.

"When I looked at the startlist of big names [Olympians John Whitaker and Geoff Billington to name but two], I didn't think we stood a chance," said Bruce. "The jump-off track was really jacked up, but Sultan was eager to get in there."

A quartet of course-designers

— Peter Gillespie, Keith Bristow, Dave Conway and visiting Australian Michael Hayes — produced a 12-fence test for the 34 starters. Related-distance questions were strong and an early "Z" line of triple bar, oxer to a "pelham" vertical proved difficult.

"I opted for seven strides in each," said Bruce. "Sultan's keen, with a big stride, but he has to learn to wait."

Faults also came at the final two fences, both walls — one grey followed by a harlequin, multi-coloured wall oxer. However, Joe Clayton encountered a different

problem on Leonardo when an electrical failure saw the building plunged into darkness. Lights temporarily flickered back, but after a 20min break, order was restored and an unflustered Leonardo returned to jump clear.

Nine reached the second round, but favourites fell from contention, including Laura Renwick's Beluga and newly-crowned ladies' and gents' champions Robert and Louise Whitaker. Just three clears were realised.

"Sultan uncharacteristically hit a warm-up fence hard before the second round and I worried it

frightened him," said Bruce. "He's a big horse and the warm-up is tight, but he wasn't fazed."

He had scope to burn over the 1.60m track when posting a clear.

"I could have made it three holes higher," said an impressed Peter Gillespie.

Chasing hard, Graham Lovegrove hit the penultimate vertical on Tin Tin and, although faster, Joe Clayton's luck ran out at the double's second element to leave Bruce and Sultan ahead.

"The last-but-one vertical was gappy and Sultan was getting strong, so I gave it room," said

Based on responses to Blue Chip Challenge surveys, compiled by 360i. See www.bluechipchallenge.com for more detailed feedback.

Enrique likes to jump at speed, so there was no point playing safe

Abbie Squires after victory in the under-21 championship



Whitaker sibling double: Robert takes the gents' championship with BF Utopia



**MIDLAND EQUESTRIAN GENTS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

- 1st BF Utopia (R Whitaker)
- 2nd Sultan V (B Menzies)
- 3rd Mr Darcy V (J Clayton)

...while sister Louise lifts the ladies equivalent with Rostaar



**RIVERSIDE LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIP**

- 1st Rostaar (L Whitaker)
- 2nd Beluga II (L Renwick)
- 3rd Dazzle II (L Whitaker)

Bruce. "But he was in good form. He's becoming Mr Reliable — he's won two championships [including Addington's young horse eight-year-old title] in as many weeks."

**Whitaker siblings shine**

MAKING it a family affair, siblings Louise and Robert Whitaker snared the ladies' and gents' titles with new rides BF Utopia and Rostaar.

The identical tracks were technically tricky, with a long, four-stride distance from triple bar to a beefy, square oxer claiming several.

"It was a big triple bar right off the corner and even caused trouble in the jump-off," said

Robert, who topped the Midlands Equestrian Gents with BF Utopia.

The final pelham vertical claimed others, but 13 jumped-off for a tense and exciting finale. Bruce and Sultan relegated Joe Clayton's early target on Mr Darcy, but their lead was shortlived. Robert eased BF Utopia into a 1sec lead.

The Lord Z 14-year-old joined Robert three weeks ago from Tim Gredley.

"He's naturally fast with plenty of scope," said Robert, who will take the Dutch-bred bay to Madrid and Barcelona with Omelli and Casino.

Louise claimed the ladies'

crown from reigning champion Laura Renwick, but it was not without drama.

Defending her title from the front with Beluga, Laura's round drew audible gasps as the game mare attempted to bank the penultimate triple bar following a tight turn, but quickly snatched her hindlegs out of the poles. The steep landing momentarily dislodged Laura, leaving her sitting on Beluga's neck, but she struggled back into the saddle. The time lost, however, cost them the title.

Although the course involved tight turns, Louise opted for sensible lines, but maintained a forward pace to guide new ride Rostaar into a 0.5sec lead.

"Robert had watched Laura and said I had to go, so I set off fast and got into a rhythm from the start," said Louise. "It's only the third time I've jumped him so we're at the get-to-know-you stage, but he's rather sweet and seems easy to ride."

She wasn't bettered, but brought second ride Dazzle into third.

"I only had myself to beat on Dazzle and actually thought I was quicker on her," she said.

Both horses are owned by Mandy Hall, with the Inferno 12-year-old Rostaar, previously ridden by Julie Andrews, acquired six weeks ago and ridden by Robert into third in a good class at Hickstead.

**LOW POINTS**

**1** Forever Crystal leaving the arena at speed after depositing Jasmine Cain and bridle, hitting a low trailer outside and flipping over against a wall. The pony then galloped up the tarmac before being caught. The mare had staples to her chest and cuts and grazes, but is on the mend.

**2** A power cut plunging the championship arena in darkness.

**3** Dismayed competitors in the four-year-old championship were upset after a scoresheet mysteriously went AWOL. It was found 24hr later.

**1** Sultan V winning the grand prix, giving British breeding a massive boost.

**2** Spectators cheering, clapping and stamping their feet as James Whitaker, younger brother of William, produced the only British clear in the Geoffrey Robinson 148cm Dunglenn championship on Cavalcade. He finished third.

**3** William Whitaker almost body-popping on the sidelines as he jumped every fence with James and punching the air in delight as Cavalcade jumped clear.

**HIGH POINTS**

**BRITISH-BREDS LEAD THE WAY**

How the senior, young horse and young rider champions were bred

