

Showjumping Horse of the Year Show

Comment

Graham Fletcher



What a show for the ladies

NOT so long ago, it would have been considered quite a feat for a woman to win a major class at Horse of the Year Show (HOYS). So for lady riders to dominate, as they did this year, was remarkable.

Laura Renwick's achievement in winning the two most sought-after classes, the Foxhunter and the leading jumper, was once-in-a-lifetime stuff.

Ellen Whitaker's hat-trick of wins was exceptional and said a lot about her tenacity and determination — qualities that aren't always associated with such a "glamorous girl".

I really enjoyed our yard's success in the puissance. With the wall at 7ft 3in, it was a Saturday night with more atmosphere than I can ever remember at this famous show. There were Mexican waves and standing ovations, with nobody leaving their seat until long after the last fence had been jumped. It was unbelievable.

The standard of commentary both in the arena and on Sky TV has never been higher and helped make HOYS the big occasion that it is.

Judge for yourself

IT seems about a million years ago that my dad entered me for a pony showing class. I came last and thought the judging very unfair.

"Don't worry, we'll do better next time," said my dad.

With the arrogance of youth, I replied: "There's not going to be a next time. I'm only going to go into that ring again when a bell rings..."

So there I was on Sunday evening in the middle of the HOYS arena, judging the supreme horse of the year with the ghost of that judge from the past, who I'd criticised all those years ago, coming back to haunt me.

As they all galloped round and I had to make a judgement: did I get it right?

I didn't wait to find out. Only Usain Bolt could have passed me as I left the arena! **H&H**

Nicky, who was also second with Super Trooper De Ness in the newcomers final here in 2008.

The stallion will now return to Weston Park Stud for semer collection before their first season "against the big boys".

"This is his last year 'growing up' and then I'm hoping for team selection next year," said Nicky of the stallion she's had from a five-year-old.

With so much talk about British horses being sold abroad, and the lack of team horsepower available for WEG, Nicky stresses the value Old Lodge place on keeping their top-class horses on home soil.

"They have no plan to take them away," says Nicky. "They've been so supportive — I used to find it difficult even to qualify for HOYS, now I've got all these really good horses in the championships and it makes it seem so easy."

Don VHP is top of the class

LOUISE PAVITT was impressed with her six-year-old ride Don VHP's first round and went on to claim the title after jumping-off against 11 rivals.

"He felt fantastic in the first round," said Louise. "I normally take a stride out in the jump-off, but he covers the ground a lot quicker than you think and did the whole course so well, I didn't need to."

The Brendon Stud's entire son of Diamant De Semilly, who has his first crop of foals on the ground this year, added this title to the Walwyn novice championship, which he won at Royal Windsor in May. And in preparation for coming indoors here, he went to Patchetts in Hertfordshire the week before.

"We wanted to get him used to being inside," said the Brendon Stud's Shirley Light. "I was joking with [Patchetts manager] Stuart Reeve-Young that I was mad he hadn't put any flowers round the

Louise Pavitt and Don VHP follow up their Royal Windsor victory with the six-year-old championship at HOYS



fences, so he could get to see them."

Despite a recent hip and shoulder replacement, Di Fairclough motored round the British Showjumping amateur classic on Limerick to claim the title. A threat came from the reigning HOYS, British Open and national amateur and veteran champion Ian Wynne and Don Douglas, but a check before the double caused the first part to fall handing Di the win.



Di Fairclough and Limerick claim the BS amateur classic



Robert Whitaker and Mandy Hall's Waterstone II head the seven- and eight-year-olds

Results

British Showjumping amateur classic. — 1, Limerick (D Fairclough); 2, Belle Fleur (A Measor); 3, Tormaulkin (K Ellison). **Tri-Zone newcomers.** — 1, Molly Malone V (A Condon); 2, Strjder IV (G Crumley); 3, Ursula XII (M Turnbull). **7- & 8-y.o.** — 1, Waterstone II (R Whitaker); 2, Argento (K Durham); 3, Super Trooper De Ness (N Boulter). **9 Oct: 6-y.o.** — 1, Don VHP 2 (L Pavitt); 2, Zed II (D Walsh); 3, Zoomeroos (A Thompson). **10 Oct: grade C.** — 1, Super Trooper De Ness; 2, Tenor FM (M Armstrong); 3, Coco Loco (J Annett).