

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CHIEF DE QUIP to SOLENT JUNIORS / SOLENT JUNIORS PROUD MUM:

Written by Sarah Bray, Mum of Jamie & Sam & Junior coordinator, about the Dressage Qualifiers on Saturday 24th January 2009

It was a lovely day, with our juniors setting a shining example of how young, well mannered, polite and friendly young equestrian enthusiasts, can behave. Whilst mucking out at 6.30am, thinking how organised the day ahead would be, things went rather pear shaped, when I received a text at 7.15 am, from Georgina's mum to say their pony had come out of the stable lame and could not compete!

As Jamie's pony, Mini, who was the official reserve, was stood in her stable looking cute and pretty, I just thought... WHY NOT! I then rang Claire Stockton, who promised to try to get everything sorted out, for this last minute substitution.

I plaited Mini up in 10 mins flat, and then dragged Jamie out of bed, to dress him in his showing attire. He was so thrilled with this early morning request! By this time, it was 8.20 and Jamie was competing at 9.06, even on a good run, it takes 40 minutes in the lorry, to get to Sparsholt! Had it been any other pony, I wouldn't have bothered, but Mini (BEING THE BEST PONY IN THE WHOLE WORLD) is always a good girl, even without a warm up.

We arrived at Sparsholt at 9.00, with Claire waiting for us. She had sorted out the paperwork with the organisers and even chatted to the judge and stewards, about the little 7 yr old boy, who was dashing to the show, as a last minute substitute. We chucked Jamie onto Mini and rushed him down to have a tack inspection. He was allowed then to trot once round the warm-up and then trot straight into the ring.

The judge stopped him and was very concerned that he needed to shorten his stirrups. When we asked why? She replied that she was worried for his safety as he had his feet through the stirrups and his toes down. We laughed and told her that he always looked like that, even whilst out hunting and that he would be perfectly fine and safe! By this comment we concluded that the judge had not thought he was a miniature "Carl Hester"!

Anyway, they did their little test, the best they possibly could, looking very cute and angelic. The judge was smiling and waving her approval and got 55%. Jamie was swarmed with admirers from the other teams, including the Isle of Wight Team, (who are just BRILLIANT by the way).

We then dashed from the arena, stuffed poor Mini back in the lorry and shot up to the other end of the car park, to help Keira tack up her pony. Once she was safely through

the tack check and warming up, I then rushed off to call the test for Keira, and was thrilled to see how calmly and accurately they rode their test. Keira was very happy with their performance and told me it was her first ever Novice test! I think they did an excellent job.

Justine was next; Kate was superbly turned out, with her coat gleaming in the sunlight and her tack absolutely spotless. Apparently Justine has worked all week, to make sure Kate was immaculate! Her hard work was plain to see and much appreciated! Justine rode a beautiful test and as usual, Kate was a perfect angel. We were extremely pleased with her test and not at all surprised to learn that she had scored 61%

Our last junior competitor, Tasha Harris arrived, accompanied by my children and Sophie/Nancy/Richard Harris and a full family of supporters.

Nancy too, was delighted to be relieved of her test calling duties, so Tasha and I entered the arena for her test. Her pony Fliss is either an angel or a total “Minx” so we had all our fingers crossed! Amazingly, Tasha had the highest Solent score of the day, including the seniors, so we were all very thrilled for her. She was actually joint first out of her class, beating all the seniors and scoring 65.4%. Tasha had a lesson practically every night last week, so she deserved her success for such hard work and dedication.

After much huddling around the scoreboard, the presentation finally came. Solent juniors had secured a very creditable 3rd place out of 4 junior teams. Peter Buist made a big fuss of Jamie at the prize giving and Jamie grinned and grinned with delight, making everybody laugh.

Solent juniors also received individual prizes of **4th for Keira** and **5th for Justine**, for their Novice tests and **Tasha received a 4th** for the overall prelim tests.

Everyone was very happy and all the hard work had paid off. Solent juniors had been an absolute credit to the club!

It was a really good day. Massive thanks to Claire Stockton, for all her help and to Denise Hallion for her excellent training for our juniors.

My boys and I went to bed, exhausted but happy at 8pm