

## Seniors - Baptism of Fire

Hi everyone, sorry for the delay in getting this report to the website, as some of you know, I haven't had my feet touch the floor since the Team Competition at Sparsholt, especially as I was going off on holiday on the Wednesday afternoon.

As the heading suggests, it was a definite 'baptism' into becoming Chef d'Equipe for the Senior Dressage Team. It was a very quick learning session as to what needed to be done and when!

Thank you so much to everyone that attended the Nicky Cross training sessions at Ganderdown, I'm sure that you all found them rewarding and for the few that didn't make the team this time round, there is always July. I saw so much improvement in all of the different pairings and the encouragement between all of the riders was inspiring.

Firstly please may I thank Jane Porter and Lesley Carter for filling in, when Vaccination cards let us down. They are such confusing things but I have found a solution and this will follow at a later date.

Well, enough of that, let's get on with the report for the Area 17 Team Dressage Competition at Sparsholt. The day dawned bright and a little bit chilly (I had ordered dry weather for the day as Sparsholt is not nice when it is raining and blowing a gale)! I arrived early, too early in fact, I was the first person on site, but that wasn't going to cause a problem as I had received a phone call from Sarah Bray (in charge of the juniors) to say that Georgina's pony had been withdrawn lame, so would it be possible to put Jamie Bray in her place. I amended the declaration and called Sarah back to confirm that she could continue with her journey and Jamie would be able to compete. So all I had to do was wait for the team members to arrive.

Julia Carden was the first to arrive with Harry and Dexter, followed by Karina Bell in her car, ready for a mad dash back to collect Justine for the juniors later. Karina and Dexter rode an enthusiastic test, I felt like I was riding with her while I read her test. The judge thought he had a lot of potential, just needed a little forward planning, they got a score of 53.60%. As Karina finished, I ran down to the indoor arena, just in case I was needed to read for Julia, thankfully not required. Julia and Harry rode a very accurate and positive test, which was very pleasing to watch, with a score of 57.50%

By the way in between Julia and Karina arriving and reading for Karina, Sarah Bray arrived with Jamie with literally minutes to spare. I had managed to save a parking space next to Julia's lorry and directed her in. We rushed to get Jamie on board and ready. I had already primed the prelim judge and ring steward (who were really helpful) that Jamie and Mini would be on a mission for tack check and test. Peter Buist had already been made aware of the situation and was happy.

After Karina and Julia had ridden, there was a short breather before Dave Mew and Dorint had their turn. This was time enough to help Julia get Dexter loaded so that she could be on her way. Dave rode a lovely test, receiving comments from people who looked in on their way by as to what a lovely horse. They received a score of 61.43% and came 5<sup>th</sup> individually in the class.

It was now time for Leanne Lacey and Cash to do their prelim test. I had agreed to read for Leanne, now, there is nothing more funny than reading a test and having to jump up and down and wave your arms to help catch the rider's attention when they turn left at C instead of right!! Oh, how we've all giggled about that. However, once on the 'right' track they rode a lovely test, a little bit keen and forwards in places but all in all pretty good – this was reflected in a score of 62.40%.

Time for breather and double check if Kelly Donoghue and Maddie were all o.k. and then off to the indoor school for their novice test. Thankfully Kelly was first in, which proved to be useful as Maddie was a little 'on her toes'. They rode a tactful and accurate test with a score of 63.93% and were pipped into 7<sup>th</sup> place.

Once I had read for Kelly, I was ready for Jane Porter and Cassie, where were they? Just on their way down to the warm up, spot on timing. Jane as always was beaming away, brilliant to see such a happy smile. Jane rode a very respectable test with Cassie shining all the way, they received a score of 59.29%.

Last but not least were Lesley Carter on Hot Chocolate Chewy and Lynn Carter on Ha'Penny, both riding the prelim. Lesley was first in out of the two of them and rode a lovely bouncy test, with a score of 63.60% 9<sup>th</sup> in the class. Time for a cup of tea and then it was Lynn's turn. Lynn rode a very sympathetic test and rode beautifully, the judge's comments were very encouraging confirming what Lynn already knows that they have great potential, they received a score of 58.80%.

By 2.15 all of the Solent Riding Club members had ridden their tests and were able to start relaxing. I was very impressed by the team spirit, encouragement and support all of the riders gave each other. The classes for the teams finished at 2.34 and by 3.30 I had been able to collect all of the sheets ready to forward on to everyone.

So congratulations to Dave Mew and Dorint for his individual 5<sup>th</sup> in his class. Unfortunately no other individual places went to the Solent Seniors and the teams came =12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> overall. Congratulations to the teams that were placed, IOW team were a great bunch (I think they wanted to kidnap Jamie Bray a they all they all thought he was so cute)! I feel the day was a great success and everyone who took part did their best, enjoyed their tests and all came away feeling inspired – it is not the winning that matters, it is the team spirit that counts – AND I know there was an awful lot of that about on the day.

So, thank you once again to everyone that took part, well done and see you at the next training sessions. Thanks also to Sarah Bray for being on hand when needed too.

Sorry for the rambling, but this has been put together while on holiday in Chicago where the temperatures are on average -25degrees (brain freeze)!