

World Class Start & Potential Newsletter Update

U23 Classic Final

After seven qualifying competitions, six of which were held at BSJA Premier League shows at various equestrian venues nationwide, the top twenty riders, based on points accumulated throughout the qualifying series' competed in the BEF World Class Start & Potential U23 Classic Final at the British Open Show Jumping Championships in Sheffield on Saturday 8th April.

Joe Whitaker (18), brother of Ellen, was one of the four clears in the first round and won the jump off with another clear round in a time of 35.95 seconds, Andrew Mizon, who is on the World Class Start Show Jumping programme took the runner up spot, with Stephanie Ward taking third place.

Besides training vouchers and prize money on offer, there was also a John Whitaker Bridle, supplied by David Dyer of Frogpool Manor as the prize for the 'Style and Performance' award, which Markus Fuchs the top Swiss Olympic rider judged and whose comments were well received by the appreciative audience. Mark Bunting from Warwickshire won the award.

On Friday there was a warm up class that decided the order of jumping for the U23 Classic Final, which was won by Gemma Paternoster.

News

Eventing

The start riders participated in a squad/training session that consisted of dressage test riding with FEI judge Nick Burton, show jumping with Peter Murphy and a veterinary session with Jenny Hall.

A squad/training session was held for the Potential riders at the Unicorn Centre, which consisted of dressage riding with Tracie Robinson, show jumping with Kenneth Clawson and simulated cross-country training with Yogi Breisner. All horses had a veterinary assessment with Jenny Hall.

Ruth Edge enjoyed a confidence-building pre-Badminton win in the special advanced section at Belton, while Oliver Townend won an advanced section on his Badminton bound Topping, and at South of England won the OI section riding Woodhouse Ben.

At Weston Park, Nick Gauntlett took third and fourth places in an advanced section with his Badminton bound horses, Arthur's Word and Calibre, and in another advanced section, Lucy Wiegiersma was second on Beckli, whom she has plans to take to Bramham.

Meanwhile, Laura Collet won and was placed fourth in the U21 OI section.

Piggy French was the best of the British competitors at Compiègne CCI**, finishing in 9th place and at Burnham Market won the advanced class riding Boherdeel Champion.

Show Jumping

This month the show jumping riders have participated in a flatwork training session with Richard Davison.

Robert Whitaker won the Blue Chip Grand Prix on a new ride, La Croix at the Blue Chip Winter Championships.

Ben Maher showed good form at 's-Hertogenbosh, Holland where he came 4th in the World Cup qualifier and produced good performances in every class he rode in. Derek Ricketts, Show Jumping Performance Manager said, "Ben's a really good and promising young rider, and he's benefited from top-class training".

Paul Barker won a Grand Prix in Portugal and James Davenport was 3rd in a Grand Prix in Italy.

James Payne, who is on the peripheral programme, was in the winning Great Britain team in the section B Nations Cup held at Unex Towerlands Inter-Nations Cup show.

Dressage

At the Horse and Hound Winter Dressage Championships, Andrew Gould riding Numero Uno won the NAF Prix St George Freestyle and the Grange Hotels Intermediare I Freestyle. Darryl Thickett riding Rex won the Albion Medium Freestyle.

Before the championships, Andrew was one of the riders who worked with judges Stephen Clarke, Linda Zang and Jennie Loriston-Clarke at the National Judges Seminar.

At Merrist Wood, Emily Cousins won the advanced medium, and Andrew Gould won the medium open.

Para Dressage

A second 6-month review for the Start & Potential riders on the main programme was held at The Unicorn Trust. After the two days of assessment and target setting and review of targets set at the last review, two riders; Natasha Baker and Sophie Wells; were moved up to Potential level from Start. Although both these riders are still only sixteen years old, they have shown outstanding development and results and both have horses capable of competing at World Class level. All the riders also had input from the Para Dressage physiotherapist, Joyce Sherriff, as well as training from the World Class Coaches Nina Venables and Angela Weiss. Each rider had individual nutrition advice for their horses from Isabel Stewart from Spillers and she gave a presentation to the whole group on feeding horses when traveling.

Start & Potential rider's have performed well at competitions during March and early April, with Sophie Wells competing at the able bodied Horse & Hound Winter Championships. At the Para Dressage Winter Finals Sophie Wells won the Grade Four Open, Natasha Baker and Daniel Manning both came second in the Open Section of their grade and the other riders that competed finished in the top three of their sections. At the Para Selection trials held at Hartpury College, Grade III rider, Toby Pawson won two classes, earning 71%.