



BRITISH
EQUESTRIAN
FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER - December 2009

The Equestrian World Class Programme

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the World Class Programme, as you can see it has been a busy few months for us. Our thoughts are very much on the World Equestrian Games next year, but with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games both now less than 1,000 days away we must keep thinking about how we can continue to improve performance and be the best prepared we have ever been.

Will Connell, Performance Director

Erin tipped as 'one to watch' for 2016

A talented World Class Development rider has been nominated by Sport England and SportsAid as one of the Top 16 hopefuls for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Erin Orford has been tipped for her talents in para-equestrian dressage as a great hope for ParalympicsGB in 2016.

Erin, (20), is currently working towards selection for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games in Kentucky. She says: "I am thrilled to be part of the 16 for 2016 and am honoured to have been chosen. It's great to know that there is so much support and confidence in my ability to get to the top in the future and a great boost for morale for the up and coming competition seasons."

Sarah Armstrong, World Class Programme Manager, said: "Erin is really proving herself to be one to watch and is now part of the Potential Squad in the World Class Development Programme. With new dressage horse Nirvana Moondancer, Erin's recent achievements included a creditable second place in the Grade Three Championship at Stoneleigh and a win in the Team Test, along with a second in the Championship Test at a senior international in Belgium. If she continues with the same hard work and determination she can go far."

The '16 for 2016' are all supported by SportsAid, a charity which gives financial assistance to talented youngsters, to help them meet the costs of pursuing their sporting dreams.



www.shootshorses.com



Riders give thumbs up to Greenwich Park

A group of riders from the World Class Programme visited Greenwich Park on 4th November and gave a resounding thumbs up to its use as the equestrian venue for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The group, many of whom saw the Park for the first time, received a briefing on the London 2012 Organising Committee's (LOCOG) plans for the holding of equestrian events in Greenwich Park and were shown round the venue.

Will Connell said: "We are lucky to have such a fantastic and iconic venue. Greenwich is a historic Park and it is exciting to be so close to the core venue, the Olympic Park. This puts equestrian events right back into the heart of the Games. It gives LOCOG the chance to develop new ideas, and combine this with a historic setting. LOCOG has no intention of cutting down trees or closing the Park for a year, and I think that local residents should be proud that such an exciting Olympic sport will be on their doorstep in 2012."

Tim Stockdale, Show Jumper, said: "I am very impressed, I was not aware of the Park's sheer magnificence, tradition and heritage. It is more than suitable, it is fantastic. It will be great to be able to stay in the Olympic Village as well so that the riders can be part of the action."

Nicola Wilson, Eventer, said: "The cross-country course is wonderful, it has undulations and is in a superb setting. It has been a long term dream to go to an Olympics, what could be better than competing at a Games on home soil, and where else can you jump over the Meridian Line?!"

Sophie Christiansen, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider said: "It is an amazing venue, so beautiful and in the centre of London. It highlights what Great Britain can do in terms of innovation. I can't wait to compete here and I hope to win three gold medals this time around!"

World Class Coaching Conference addresses performance

The British Equestrian Federation's World Class Programme held its first coaching conference on 5th November 2009 at the Unicorn Trust in Stow-on-the-Wold. Now set to be an annual event, the aim of the conference was to improve communication between the World Class Programme and World Class riders' own coaches, developing a closer relationship between the two.

All the coaches working within the Programme and all coaches working at home with World Class squad riders were invited to the event, which was designed following consultation with home coaches earlier in the year. It is part of a long-term process to improve links between these two elements.

John Neal, currently Performance Coach at Bath Rugby, talked about a passion for the process of winning which focused on theories of how to think clearly under pressure and make effective decisions in challenging situations. With over 20 years experience, Neal has combined a career working at the top level in sport, business and in the forces, he now works as a Performance Coach throughout the world with teams, individuals and organisations.

David Holmes, FEI Executive Director of Sport gave an update on general developments within the International Equestrian Federation and talked specifically about coaching within the international context.

Professor of Sports Physiology and Body Movement at the University of Luneberg in Germany, Eckart Meyners addressed the conference; the first time he has presented in the UK. Meyners has helped the German Equestrian Federation to develop a curriculum for professional and amateur riders, trainers, instructors and judges through a series of simple, easy movements that address "blockages" in the rider's body. These can interfere with mobility of the horse or impede proper communication between horse and rider, so by addressing these, the balance, seat and performance of the rider are improved. Over the past 4 years Meyners has worked with German dressage rider Heike Kemmer, who won team gold and individual bronze at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Meyners also presented practical sessions where he used World Class Development riders Lara Griffith and Laura Collett to demonstrate his system of training.

"The conference was another step in improving communication between the World Class Programme and riders' home teams," said Performance Director, Will Connell. "We tried to balance informative sessions with looking at innovative coaching methods and approaches, with everything focused on the ultimate aim of improving performance. It was a great success and we will now be looking to hold it as an annual event."

World Class Development riders shine at National Convention

Dressage Development rider, Lara Griffith received two awards at the British Dressage National Convention held in November. She was given awards for the highest placed British rider at the young rider European Championships and most improved young rider. The awards were presented by Jennie Loriston-Clarke, chairman of British Dressage and Desi Dillingham, president of the British Horse Society.

Lara, together with fellow Development rider Amy Stovold, went on to have two demonstration lessons with Jean Bemelmans, renowned German team medallist and trainer for the Spanish dressage team, in front of a packed house.

Lara, who rode Hilary Sawyer and Leonie Porter's Dawning Hopes, said: "It's been such a fantastic weekend. The lessons with Jean Bemelmans were brilliant, it's great to get the chance to have the advice of such a renowned dressage trainer and the two awards were the icing on the cake. I've been working really hard and with the help and support from the World Class Programme I really feel like I am moving in the right direction."

Amy, who rode Julia Jacob and Maggie Stovold's Macbrian, said: "I really enjoyed the lessons and it was a great chance to work with such a well known and respected dressage trainer."

Training is out of this World at Global Academy

Two lucky development dressage riders benefited from 10 days of training with leading dressage rider Imke Schelleken Bartels from Holland.

Nikki Crisp and Gemma Green were both selected onto the Programme at the start of the year and were offered the opportunity to visit Academy Bartels during September as part of their training. They each took two horses, their top ride and one younger horse, and were put up in a cottage near the Academy.

Nikki and Gemma had lessons on most days with Imke, while the horses also benefited from the other facilities such as woodland for hacking and all weather gallops. They were also able to watch Imke and the other Academy members ride - providing valuable insight into the training, as well as helping them to re-iterate what they had learnt in their lessons. Support also included advice from Imke's father, Joep Bartels, who discussed pre-competition preparation in particular.

"I'd met Imke through the World Class selection trials and thought she was fantastic, so to get the opportunity to travel out to train at the Academy was amazing," said Nikki.

"The focus of the training was on obedience of the horse - Imke instilled in us the fact that until you have that then you can't progress. She taught us not to use our hands and legs at the same time - so that you are giving your horse very simple clear messages, which ultimately leads to greater harmony between the two of you.

"I'm already feeling the benefits of the training - in fact people at the National Dressage Championships even commented on how good my horse looks and how controlled it seems. I'm already planning my return visit for a fortnight in November."

Gemma echoed Nikki's thoughts. "Submission was the word of the 10 days! It's really made me think about my way of riding; Imke has given me a toolkit to work from but obviously I'm not going to be able to transform my way of training in that short space of time. But, as I was so impressed, I'm planning to return out there for four months in November.

World Class riders in the spotlight at HOYS

Two dressage riders from the Development Programme were under the spotlight at the Horse of the Year Show back in October, when they took part in a dressage to music demonstration.

Kate Atlee and Amy Stovold were both asked to perform the freestyle to music test as part of the day's programme at the famous horse show at the LG Arena in Birmingham.

Kate who rode Anne Willetts' Corbiere, performed her test to a classical tune with a twist of Oasis and Blur. "It was a fantastic experience and Corbiere behaved impeccably," said Kate. "He's only eight and has never done anything like this before, but he rose to the occasion and coped with the crowds and lapped up the applause!

"I'm so grateful for the opportunity – which wouldn't have been possible without the World Class Programme – it will really have helped build Corbiere's confidence which is crucial for his career."

Amy who rode Julia Jacob and Maggie Stovold's Macbrian, performed her test to a mixture of Queen and Rihanna. "I really enjoyed riding on the big stage - it was a great experience for both myself and Macbrian and the comments we had were very encouraging," said Amy. "He tried really hard and managed to contain some of the tension that he sometimes develops.

"The World Class Programme has been instrumental in my development as a rider so far and I'm sure will continue to play an important role as Macbrian and I look to improve even further."

Development Programme continues support for Britain's young Show Jumpers

The World Class Development Programme continues to show its commitment to Britain's young show jumping riders by sponsoring the World Class Development Programme Championship class and its supporting competition, the World Class Development Programme Pathfinder class being held at The British Open Show Jumping Championships that will take place at Birmingham's LG Arena (7-10th April 2010). The dates of the qualifying competitions have now been announced.

The competition, which is open to riders aged 23 years or under, brings to the fore some of the most talented young riders in the country. The depth of talent that contests the qualifying classes increases year on year, ensuring the qualified riders are some of the best young show jumping riders in Great Britain.

There are six qualifying competitions held across the country, from which the top twenty horse and rider combinations, based on points from that horse and rider combination's best four results, will come forward to jump in the Pathfinder and Championship classes. The first two highest placed, previously unqualified, horse and rider combinations from the Wild Card qualifying competition held at Addington Manor Equestrian Centre in January 2010 will join them.

As part of its sponsorship, the World Class Development Programme is also funding the first place prize money at the

qualifying competitions, as well as training vouchers awarded to the first six prize winning riders currently eligible for British team selection.



Previous winner, William Whitaker

Riders put through their paces by Henk Nooren

Riders from the eventing and show jumping Development programmes have been benefiting from training sessions with renowned Dutch show jumping coach Henk Nooren. This follows on from the successful sessions held last year for the Performance programme.

Tina Goosen, show jumping coordinator for the World Class Development Programme comments: "I'm delighted with how the sessions went and I know that all the riders really benefited from Henk's expertise. It's the ideal chance to get all the riders together and for them to hone their skills under the guidance of a world class show jumping coach as well as receive help and advice on a range of other important elements associated with becoming a top rider."

The British Equestrian Federation World Class Programme aims to provide Britain's elite riders with the best preparation to represent Equestrian Team GBR at International level. Funded by UK Sport, the Programme incorporates the three Olympic sports of dressage, eventing, show jumping and the Paralympic sport of para-equestrian dressage.

Selection to the World Class Programme is based on results combined with potential to contribute to team success at major championships. Performance is continuously assessed and riders are regularly reviewed. The Programme is divided into Development (Start and Potential), and Performance squads across each discipline. It also includes the Equine Pathway.

The Programme has been funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, primarily from the National Lottery, via UK Sport since 1998.



LOTTERY FUNDED

www.bef.co.uk