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# The Equestrian World Class Programme

NEWSLETTER - January 2009

Welcome to the World Class newsletter which as you can see has had a complete revamp, both in style and content. We wanted to bring you a better flavour of what was going on across the whole programme and give you some insights into how we train and support all our World Class athletes (equine and human). 2009 promises to be an exciting year and preparations with all of our World Class squads are underway already. We are, as always, focused on our key mission, which is to; *identify talent, maximise potential and deliver success.*

*Will Connell, Performance Director*

## Equine Pathway continues to develop

The Equine Pathway, introduced in 2007 is now developing well in all disciplines. Over the last three months the criteria across all disciplines has been reviewed to ensure that the pathway remains focused on the overall aim of identifying and supporting World Class horses with the ability to medal on the world stage.

Training is underway across the disciplines, via training sessions and individual advice for owners. The dressage programme is due to hold another viewing trial in March – with a medal winning international rider lined up to assist with selection. More details will be on the British Dressage website as soon as they are available.

The inaugural Jumping Equine Pathway coaching held at Hartpury College earlier this month was hailed a resounding success by all who attended. Pathway horses, riders, owners and grooms were treated to expert advice from Ireland's legendary show jumper and three time Hickstead Derby winner Commandant John Ledingham, both on the flat and over fences. This was coupled with help and guidance from varying World Class support staff, including the team vet, human physiotherapist and a groom's education workshop. John worked with twenty-six Pathway horses over two days emphasising the importance of correct flatwork and its role in the production of young horses. This was also an opportunity to link the Equine Pathway coaching with the BSJA's Evolution Squad, with an additional days coaching for the Squad following the Pathway training. You can read more about this session [here](#).

## Six monthly reviews rolled out to Performance riders

The Performance Programme has now adopted a system of six monthly rider reviews, following the successful use of this system by the Development programme over the last two years.

This system is designed to allow riders to be set specific targets and both the riders' performance and the support provided to them can be reviewed.

## New project to link Pliance, Physiotherapy and coaching launched

Work is underway in the performance and development programmes to develop a united approach between the coach, human physiotherapist and the pliance system of rider analysis.

World Class coaches, Master Saddler Mark Fisher and World Class physiotherapist Andy Thomas are developing this system. The pliance system uses pressure sensors under the saddle which feeds back information to a computer while the rider goes through a variety of exercises, which can include jumping. These results can then be analysed using the combined knowledge and insight of Mark, Andy and the rider's coach.

## World Class to sponsor British Open Show Jumping Class

The World Class jumping development programme is once again sponsoring the young riders Championship at the British Open Show Jumping Championships, held at the NEC in Birmingham in April. There are six qualifying classes that are held throughout the country which are also sponsored by the programme.

The top twenty horse/rider combinations, scoring the highest amount of points (based on their four best results) throughout the qualifying series will travel to the Championships to contest the final.

Ellen Whitaker, who is keen to qualify for the final, won the first qualifier, held at South View Equestrian Centre, riding Kanselier



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## Squad sessions and training

Squad sessions and home visits continue to form the basis of training provision for all the World Class squads and the programme continues to search out top class coaches to assist with the development of our riders at all levels. With 12 squads in total the style, content and format of all training is tailored for each.

The top class coaching skills of Dutch show jumper Henk Nooren have been utilised across the programme. This month he hosted a two-day session for the development show jumping squad, where the riders, working in pairs, concentrated on correct flatwork and attention to detail in the rideability of the horses and correct balance and position of the riders, taking this theory through to their jumping. Henk also coached the performance eventing squad who met recently for their first squad session of the year.

This month the development eventing squads have focused on dressage training with Nick Burton, Gill Watson and Angela Tucker. The first training session for the development dressage riders commences at the beginning of February, where Dutch Olympic trainer, Francis Verbeek will be working with the riders on an individual basis, followed by discussions and assessments with World Class coach, Erik Theilgaard.

All the programmes utilise a range of support services across their squad sessions, and the development team have been busy providing advice and support to make sure everyone is on track for the coming year. The various sessions have included input from Mark Fisher with the Pliance Saddle System; core strength and stability with Carys Jackson from the EIS; dietary and nutritional advice with Liz Purcell; performance mindset with sports psychologist Jennie Killilea; physiotherapy with Andy Thomas; medical advice from doctors Sally Nicholson and Peter Whitehead; video coverage of ridden sessions by Russell Guire; equine management with 2008 FEI International Groom of the Year, Jenny Ellis and equine assessments with vet Jenny Hall and farrier Haydn Price.

David Gadsby from World Class supporter, Atticus Risk attended a session with the eventing start riders and gave a presentation that focused on security when travelling and competing abroad, it included a short demonstration with equipment that is useful as an anti-theft deterrent.

Also for the development eventers, well-known equestrian TV presenter, Steven Wilde attended a session, where he spoke about the value of self-promotion through television and how to use media opportunities to raise your profile and bring out your personality, along with TV and media interview techniques.

## Development Rider Successes

The development riders continue to impress on the national and international stage.

Congratulations to William Whitaker who re-captured the puissance at this year's Olympia. Riding his winning partner from last year, Leonardo, he easily cleared the 7ft 2" wall, cousin Ellen also cleared the wall at that height and they decided to split the first prize.

William followed his puissance win with a victory in the speed stakes on It's Super Girl, a ride he shares with his uncle and mentor, Michael.

Michael Eilberg, who was recently selected to join the dressage potential squad, scored a three-horse hat trick at Hartpury College. He took the medium qualifier riding Woodlander Dornröschen, the advanced medium with the day's highest percentage (70.88%) on Torino, a horse that Michael previously show jumped, and the Prix St George on Janeiro VI.

Another recent addition to the dressage programme, Gemma Green won both the medium and advanced regional classes at Oldencraig, Surrey riding Fine Time. Gemma's aim was to qualify him as early as possible for the summer regional finals, in order to target Fine Time at small tour in 2009.

Lara Griffith won the Prix St. George qualifier at the 2-day Addington High Profile show, riding relatively new horse Dawning Hopes, with a score of 69.73%. Henry Boswell also found success in the advanced medium at the same show finishing second with 67.94%. In the Grand Prix Sarah-Jane Elmslie riding Wellington Masterplan was 3<sup>rd</sup> with 66%.

In the Young Rider Team test, Keri Bates riding Donna Parrina came 2<sup>nd</sup> with 65.78%, closely followed by Lara Griffith, riding Dawning Hopes, 3<sup>rd</sup> with 65.39%

At the Para-Equestrian Dressage winter qualifier competition, held at Patchetts, a number of the Development Programme riders were in the ribbons:

Emma Kent riding Gentle II took the top spot in the grade III team test, with a score of 72.69%, in their first outing since winning the national grade III Para championship at Stoneleigh.

Erin Orford scored 75.71% in the grade II qualifier riding Nirvana Pure Indulgence; a horse that she has only been riding for five months and who also competes in able-bodied competitions with his owner, Diana Barley.

Emma Sheardown, riding Purdy's Dream, who was competing for the first time in a double bridle, won the grade 1a with 73.52%.

In the grade IV team test, new Programme rider, Rosie Andrews, riding Middle March and Lucaro came 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, with 65.35% and 64.64% respectively.

Anna Gill, riding Tribal Indian came 4<sup>th</sup> in the grade III team test and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the grade III individual with a score of 67.50%.

Stephen Wagland, newly selected onto the Start Programme, won the grade II individual test with a score of 67.77%.

Congratulations to the development riders who were selected to the very successful Australian Youth Olympic Festival teams. More news here.