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NEWSLETTER - January 2010

The Equestrian World Class Programme

Welcome to the first World Class newsletter of 2010, as you can see our riders wrapped up 2009 in style and are now getting ready for a busy season. Do you think you have what it takes to join our Development Programme? Selection for the 2011 / 2012 programme is now open so check out the criteria to see if you could be featured here next year.

Will Connell, Performance Director

Grooms Look ahead to 2010 & 2012

The World Class Programme recognises that grooms play a vital role in winning medals and so, following on from the inaugural training prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Programme held two days for grooms attached to horses on World Class squads in January.

Nearly 100 grooms attended across the two days, which focused on preparations for the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games 2010 and London 2012. The sessions included, anti-doping and medication control workshops; practical information about HGV Licenses; transporting horses including best practice during transport by road, sea and air; and interactive sessions looking at 'fulfilling your potential, opportunities for learning, looking after me and life after grooming.'

Experienced grooms Jenny Ellis and Jackie Potts shared funny stories and experiences of life as a groom and provided some excellent tips on travelling horses to international shows abroad. Rachel Murray, a vet from the Animal Health Trust, provided an update on FEI drugs & testing methods.

World Class Performance Director, Will Connell said, "The grooms are key to our mission of winning more medals on the International stage. It is only logical that we seek to help the grooms linked to the UK Sport funded World Class Programme develop and aspire to excellence as we do the riders and the horses."

Applications sought from riders with World Class potential

Do you have the exceptional talent and dedication to ride and win at Olympic or Paralympic level? Are you aged between 14 - 30 and eligible to ride for Great Britain & Northern Ireland? If so, the Equestrian World Class Development Programme needs you.

The application process for the World Class Development Programme for 2011 / 2012 is now open. Funded by UK Sport, the Programme is designed to select and support talented riders and combinations that have the ability to deliver medal-winning performances on the world stage for Great Britain in the future. It underpins the World Class Performance Programme, which supports elite preparation and performance at senior international levels.

The Programme incorporates the three Olympic sports of dressage, eventing and show jumping; and the Paralympic sport of para-equestrian dressage. It has been funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, through Exchequer and National Lottery funds, via UK Sport since 1998.

Formal selection to the Programme takes place every two years and the first phase of the process to be considered for the 2011 / 2012 intake is now open. Anyone wishing to apply for the Programme must complete this first phase of the process **before 16th March 2010**.

Age groups and selection criteria are specific to each discipline, a full Policy can be found on the BEF website (www.bef.co.uk). The Policy also includes relevant dates and full details of the selection process; application forms can also be found on the BEF website.



Kit Houghton

Piggy French on her way to clinching a European silver medal in 2009. Piggy was recently promoted to the Performance squad from the Development Programme.



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Could this
be you?

Current Development squad member
Gemma Tattersall

Para-equestrian dressage riders hope new horses will bring success

Three para-equestrian dressage riders on the Development Programme are excited about the prospect of new horses for the 2010 season and hope they will boost their chances of success.

Alex McNamara is hoping his new horse proves to be one in a million. Max, show name Rubinall, is a chestnut ten-year old gelding by Rubenstein, who was chosen to help strengthen Alex's chances of success in the future. Alex has left side hemiplegia which affects his control of the horse and his balance when riding. Despite this Alex regularly competes successfully in able-bodied dressage classes.

"I'm so grateful to my mum, who bought Max for me," said Alex. "We're already forming a good partnership and he's quickly adapting to my way of riding. It's exciting to have another good prospect in the yard and it fills me with real optimism for the future and competing on the world stage."

Alex and Max are already proving to be a winning partnership picking up wins and placings at able bodied dressage competitions – at both Novice and Elementary level. They have qualified for the Winter Regional Championships and are now looking forward to the start of the para-equestrian dressage competition season.

Anna Gill is also looking forward to the start of the new season after the arrival of her new horse Broadstone Central Park, or Kermit.

The bay twelve-year-old Hanoverian gelding has so far competed up to Advanced Medium level with able bodied riders – Anna is his first para-equestrian rider. Kermit is owned by Mrs Sam Page and is currently being kept at South Bucks Riding for the Disabled where Anna rides him twice a week. Anna suffers from cerebral palsy which affects her balance and makes her left side very weak. She rides using one hand and no stirrups.

"I have only been riding Kermit for about two months but already I feel like we've established a good relationship and I've got high hopes for him in the future," said Anna. "Even though he's only been an able bodied ride so far, he responds very well to me and I'm delighted with how everything is going. We are looking to start competing at the end of January and I'm excited about the season ahead."

Fellow para-equestrian dressage rider Natasha Baker hopes her prayers have been answered with the arrival of her new horse JP, competition name Cabral.

The bay seven-year-old Polish bred gelding had previously evented up to Novice level with Christian Landolt, but when he proved not bold enough cross country, looked to start a new career as a dressage horse. He will join Natasha's other two rides, Wald Minor (owned by Jean Scharf) and Lizardo (owned by Natasha).

Natasha suffers from transverse myelitis, a rare condition affecting nerves in her lower spine. She doesn't have sufficient power in her legs, so relies on her voice to control her horses.

"The family all clubbed together to help me buy JP – so I'm really grateful to them," said Natasha. "He's settling in well and getting used to listening to my voice, which is obviously a critical part of his training – he's already a star in my eyes but hopefully he'll be one on the world stage one day!"

Natasha and JP are already proving to be a winning partnership having picked up wins and placings at able bodied dressage competitions – for both Preliminary and Novice tests. They will start para-equestrian dressage competitions early in 2010.



Anna Gill and Kermit



Alex McNamara and Max

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Hard work pays off for young riders

The British Equestrian Federation has announced four rider promotions within its World Class Development squad.

Natalie Povey has been promoted from the start to potential para-equestrian dressage programme; Jessie Drea has moved up from pre-start to start on the show jumping programme; Dani Evans has joined the eventing start programme and Scott Brash has joined the potential show jumping programme.

Natalie has achieved consistently high percentages in the British Dressage Para Open qualifiers together with excellent results at Hartpury CPEDI*** in 2009. These results together with her consistent improvement and meeting of targets and goals set as part of the review process ensured her deserved promotion.

Jessie joined the pre-start programme at the beginning of 2009 and has had a busy and successful year both here and overseas. She was part of the British Junior European show jumping team in Holland who came fourth.

Dani consistently performed throughout 2009, including winning an individual silver medal at the Junior European eventing championships.

Scott is the number one show jumper in Scotland. He has achieved consistently good results over the last 12 months, including qualifying for Horse of the Year Show.

"The promotion of these riders shows the depth of talent we have in this country," commented World Class Performance Director, Will Connell. "This is essential if Great Britain is to win more medals on the International stage at European, World, Olympic and Paralympic level and demonstrates the value of the tiered development approach. The standard of riding on the Programme continues to improve year on year."

Charlie celebrates success at FEI World Cup

Charlie Hutton, member of the dressage Development Programme, triumphed in the B Final of the FEI World Cup for Young Riders in Frankfurt.

Charlie Hutton won the B Final on his horse Merlin Nemorensis on Sunday 20 December against 13 fellow competitors. Charlie came 9th on the first day of the Young Riders team test and 8th on the second day. The top group of competitors go through to the A final, which Charlie missed out on by only 0.5%. He then competed in the B final, performing a freestyle, which he won by just under 3%.

The FEI World Cup is a competition for young riders from around the world, including competitors from Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, Canada, USA, France, Belgium and New Zealand.

Charlie said: 'I'm delighted to have won the B Final. I achieved some great scores in the last two days, which gives me a lot of confidence for the future. I really enjoyed taking part and look forward to further competitions in 2010.'



Matt comes out on top at Olympia

Matt Sampson, a show jumper on the Development squad, won the Accenture Young Show Jumper of the Year class at The London International Horse Show at Olympia, riding Rush On M on Saturday 19 December, beating off competition from sixteen other riders.

It was a closely fought competition with nine riders competing in the jump off. Five went clear but Matt just edged second placed, and fellow Development rider, Joe Clayton by less than three tenths of a second.

Matt said: 'It was such a close class so I'm delighted to have won. The crowd was great and helped to create a brilliant atmosphere which definitely spurred me on. It's been a fantastic year for me so to finish it off with a win is just amazing and makes all the hard work seem worthwhile. I'm hoping to build on my success for next year and compete at a more senior level so this win has given me a real boost.'

Bechtolsheimer shines in Amsterdam CDI-W

World Class Performance dressage rider Laura Bechtolsheimer and Mistral Horjiss kicked off the New Year in impressive style at the 2010 CDI-W Amsterdam where they smashed current British records in the Grand Prix and Kur – coming within just four percent of dynamic Dutch duo Edward Gal and Totilas.

Taking second in the GP on a record 78.04%, Laura and Alf stepped up their game and put the pressure on Gal and Totilas who finished first on 82.17%. 'I was really happy with the (GP) test as he had no mistakes—he was really relaxed and easy to ride,' said Laura. 'The only critique I received from my dad was that our extensions weren't as expressive as they could have been, so I took that feedback into the Freestyle.'

Buoyed by her earlier success, Laura set her sights on yet another British record in the Kur and captured second on a sensational 82.30% – again trailing Gal and Totilas by less than five percent.

'The Freestyle was fantastic,' said Bechtolsheimer. 'I played the music a bit lower as he (Mistral Horjiss) has had issues with the music in the past and I just wanted to build his confidence. My strategy paid off because he stood still in the halts— some great progress!'

Dan's double triumph in Portugal

Development show jumper Daniel Neilson, based with Katrina and Jason Moore in Essex, won two classes at the *Concurso de Saltos Internacional* show in Porto (10-13 December).

He won the 1.35m Speed class and the 1.50m Masters competing against some of the world's best riders. The Speed class saw Dan riding High Zone Z, owned by Graham Butt, alongside 73 other starters all competing for a share of the 5,000 euro first prize. It was a hard fought win with the top four riders separated by just one hundredth of a second.

The 1.50m Masters class was the main event of the evening, with Dan riding Iolanthe owned by L Cook. It was a strong field with Dan jumping clear in the final round. He just edged Ireland's Jessica Kurten to secure the title and, his share of the 15,000 euros first prize.

Dan, who also finished third in the 1.45m class riding Iolanthe, said: 'This was my first CSI 4* show and I've thoroughly enjoyed competing. To come away with two wins and a third place is unbelievable and I'm delighted with my progress. The horses have all performed really well and I'd like to thank my owners who have trusted me with some great rides and I'm really pleased they're now proving themselves at this level.'



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