

Exciting Times at One Day Event – 20/21 March 2004

The State Eventing Championship Series could not have had a better start for the year than last weekend at the King River Pony Club.

Introducing a whole new format, the dressage phase was conducted in conjunction with the Equitopia official dressage competition at the Albany Equestrian Centre on the sand, grass and indoor arenas. On the Sunday, competition was centred at the King River venue over a cross-country described as 'posing many questions and not to be taken for granted' with all obstacles commanding respect and an imposing and challenging showjumping course.

For perhaps the last time in Western Australia, the Club offered a CNC* (Open Novice) competition sponsored by the Albany Veterinary Hospital. Although few in numbers, there was no doubting the quality of the field with Sonja Johnson riding down & competing on both her experienced four star horse, Ringwould Jaguar and three star horse, Foreign Liaison, and Janelle Madigan on her very talented two star horse, Skywalker.

Very close after the dressage phase, all riders went clear around the challenging and winding cross-country course which was later to prove the nemesis of many other combinations, with only time penalties making the difference. The showjumping phase consisted of many maximum height fences over an extremely tight line, and produced a number of rails and time penalties.

At the end of this class, both Johnson (Foreign Liaison) and Madigan (Skywalker) were equal, with Johnson winning on count back being closer to the optimum time in the cross-country. Johnson also finished third on her other horse, Ringwould Jaguar.

Whereas the riders in the CNC* (Open Novice) class had shown their experience around the cross-country phase, the CNC* riders were not so fortunate with both competitors being eliminated the new arrowhead fence.

The same fence decimated the Albany Stock Feeds Pre Novice class, with only Tara Scott (Broadway), Sonja Johnson (Foreign Exchange) and Dylan Fisher (Regal Heights) escaping the clutches of the arrowhead. Fisher had later problems at the Apex Complex, with Scott and Broadway completing the course without any jumping faults, and Johnson and Foreign Exchange with two early refusals showing all their experience to complete the course without further mishap. Following the showjumping phase, Scott and Broadway proved victorious in easily winning the class.

Marking the occasion of the first regional sitting of the State Parliament, Peter Watson MLA appropriately sponsored the Preliminary class which was quite close after the dressage phase. However, as was the case in the event held some four weeks earlier, the triple bar arrowhead caused problems on the cross country section and two further retirements in the showjumping resulted in only two competitors completing the class. Rosie Outhwaite and Windrush Rhapsody from Kojonup won the class from Amy Mills and Prevail.

Europa Saddleworld provided vouchers to the winners and second place-getters in the Introductory I classes. In the Senior Introductory I class, the experienced combination of Renae Wolfe and Steel Justice gave little else a chance with a splendid double clear around cross-country and only one rail in the showjumping to finish almost on their dressage score, beating the local combination of Cassey Mayfield with Nicole Dark and her new horse, Macarthur a very solid third.

Jackie Sept and Onyx showed the way in the Junior Introductory I class where all three placegetters finished on their dressage scores. With a great score of 43.2 in this phase and no jumping faults at all, Jackie won from Kim Porter and Monty's Cruise (51.6) and Tess Ladner and Harlequin (55.2).

Eliminations and refusals again influenced the overall results of the Introductory II class sponsored by Small Time Dexter Cattle Stud. This time however it was the chevron fence which accounted for a number of refusals and one elimination. In the Senior class honours went to metropolitan based rider in James Berry & Mr Cool winning from Shelley Crabb and Miss Elle in second place.

The Junior section was a much closer battle. Leading after the dressage, Tiarne Pearce and Stirling Silver blazed around the cross country course, only to incur time penalties from going too fast and then taking one rail in the showjumping to win from Sarah Kennedy and Rivington Cinnamon Girl, who had no jumping penalties and only time to add to their dressage score. Third place went to the consistent Chelsea Birbeck and Flaming Fireworks who would have finished a lot closer had they not experienced problems at the water, but incurred no time penalties, and then jumped a clear showjumping round.

The last class of the day was the E-Grade, sponsored by Monty House. Kelsey Atkinson and Windrush Symphony were the only riders not to incur any jumping penalties in either the cross country or the showjumping, and with only a few time penalties broke through for a well deserved win from Samantha Cook and Snow Queen who had experienced a problem at the ditch crossing, but then gave scant respect to the rest of the course, and jumped clear in the showjumping. Third place went to Kojonup rider, George Jannings and Trickery, with Evangeline Beech and Eldorado Carlos in fourth position.