



Germans prove they are a class above in Nations Cup



■ Cross-country action from the Houghton International Horse Trials at the weekend.
Photos: IAN BURT

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The Germans were unbeatable at the EQ Life Houghton International horse trials this weekend as they dominated the Nations Cup competition, galloping into the lead with a near 15 point advantage over the British.

Only the French rider Luc Chateau seemed to disrupt their winning ways, taking the individual title in the CIC03* on his own stallion, Propriano De L Ebat, which helped the French to third in the team competition.

Leading from the start, Luc credits the stallion's success to his fantastic temperament. "Out on the cross-country he is a very good listener, which for a stallion is incredibly rare. He is a very special horse."

British team riders also produced he goods, coming a close second to the Germans in the team competition.

Best placed British rider went to team member Pippa Funnell and Billy the Biz in third. Phillip Surl, the British chef d'equipe said he was "very pleased" with the result, which puts the Brits in a strong position for the remaining legs of the cup.



■ Kathryn Robinson and Cooley Eclipse take a tumble into the water at Houghton.

"We were lacking in top end horse power, as Tattersalls was on the same weekend, so the team consisted of mainly younger horses. Yet the horses performed very well and have definitely gone away learning plenty."

Away from the Nations Cup, the Germans dominated the top placings in almost all classes. In the CC11* it was a German one, two, three, with Dirk Schrade taking first and third, securing the win on Call Me Honey

staying on their dressage score of 38.8. Described as "pretty cool", Dirk is very excited for the seven-year-old gelding's future.

"He moves, jumps and gallops like hell. He has so much power, he just needs to learn to control it; without a doubt he will go all the way."

Bettina Hoy, also from Germany, proved invincible in the nail-biting show jumping final in the CC12*. Leading from the start on Seigneur

Medicott, Bettina said it was the success of the other German riders which helped motivate her to win. "We've had such a good weekend here, so seeing them do so well inspires me to keep competitive," she said.

In the Askham Bryan National Under 21 CC12*, Sophie How and Bojangles HRS led from start to finish, adding only 0.8 time penalties to their dressage score of 40.4.

