

German rider takes centre stage on exciting day at Houghton

EQUESTRIANISM

Vanessa Britton

Houghton International Horse Trials got into full swing yesterday when the first set of competitors took off on Alec Lochore's daunting cross-country course.

After holding the joint lead in the dressage with Willa Newton, Essex rider Claire Fielding was keen to capitalise on a fantastic score on cross-country day. Sadly it wasn't to be, and the pair were unfortunately eliminated on the course.

Taking the lead was German rider Dirk Schrade, who produced a quick and clear round

to stay on his dressage score of 38.8 on Call Me Honey.

Competitors in the CCI** and CICO*** classes, otherwise known as the Nations Cup competition, also completed their dressage tests.

In the CICO*** Luc Chateau snatched the lead from British team rider Pippa Funnell, to score 37.5. With Pippa in second, German rider Andreas Ostholt and So is Et is close behind, with only 0.6 penalties separating the two competitors. Home rider Francis Whittington also holds a strong position, going into the weekend lying in sixth.

In the CCI** popular German rider Berttina Hoy took the lead

on Seigneur Medicott with a score of 37.5, overtaking overnight leader Dirk Schrade.

Young riders were out to impress the selectors in the Askham Bryan U25 National Championships.

They hope to be considered for the European Young Rider championships later this year, making this one of the most competitive classes of the weekend. Making a strong start was Sophie How who lies in first and second on Bojangles HRS and Pebbly Aga Khan.

Aside from the international competition, the unaffiliated classes got under way, giving the young or less experienced rider

an opportunity to compete in a world-class environment. Abby Clark on her pony Neebro Bridesmaid showed the professionals how it's done, taking home glory in both the 70cm and 80cm show jumping classes.

With over 70 competitors in the 80cm and 33 in the 70cm, the competition was extremely tough, but Abby kept a cool head to perform a foot perfect round in the quickest time.

With the dressage out of the way, the weekend boasts a full schedule of jumping competition, where event riders will display their skills of courage, strength and agility over Lochore's impressive championship track.