

# Defending champion gets off to fine start



## EQUESTRIANISM

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The second day of the Burnham Market International Horse Trials gave spectators all that it promised, with thrills, spills and excitement as elite riders took on the infamous Sussex Farm cross-country course.

Following on from Thursday, the dressage showdown continued as the best of the international field performed their tests hoping to impress judges and gain as few penalty points as possible at the event, sponsored by Bacon.co.uk.

Overnight leader Pippa Funnell and Billy the Biz in the CIC\*\* continued to be at the top of the leaderboard but last year's winner, Oliver Townend, has returned to Burnham Market in an attempt to defend his title.

After the first phase he stands in a strong position on #9.8, but eventing legends Sir Mark Todd and Mary King are not far behind, both scoring 11.1, and could easily be a threat to his Burnham dream.

In the CIC\*\* Norfolk rider Piggy French and Obos Cooley stormed well ahead of the competition with a score of 33.3 after the dressage.

Zimbabwean rider Camilla Kruger claimed Intermediate Section One on



Defending champion Oliver Townend on Silken Scully, right. William Fox-Pitt at the new water jump (top) and Jeanette Brakewell on Forever Red.



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Biarritz II, who has had a tendency to be spooky and as a result accumulated time faults last season.

Having hunted with the Farmers Bloodhounds all winter, Camilla says: "It's had a very positive effect, he's now up for the gallop and has relaxed into it. He was even too strong last weekend so I had to swap the bit to get more control."

Camilla's ultimate goal is to qual-

ify for the Rio Olympics in 2016.

Cambridge rider Sara Horrell also produced a speedy round cross-country to come sixth in the same section.

Riding Dr Patricia Turner's Trevidden, the pair produced one of the fastest rounds of the class.

"I describe him as a bit blonde, in that he can be very leggy. He's happy to roll on, but needs to wait and listen sometimes, but today he was awesome," says Sara.

Today's action concludes the third and final part of the Bacon.co.uk Burnham Market International Horse Trials.

Riders from around the world will come head to head in the ultimate test of jumping ability, all wanting to win the glory of becoming CIC\*\* and CIC\*\* champions.