

Alex and Paul at Blenheim

Back from Blenheim where our two riders Alex Peternell and Paul Hart flew the flag admirably. Alex's dressage was superb, Paul's was better than we have seen and their cross country rounds were excellent. The course was big, about 5950 metres long and provided space for galloping on at 570/min. Paul opened the throttle more than usual and Harry came home with fewer time penalties and fuel to spare, Alex rode a little faster and AP was a tad tired on finishing. The cool down box was as usual frenetic with grooms (in Harry's case Tamsyn, Cathy and me) hosing and walking. Ice cold water was available with jet sprays and it didn't take long before Harry was given the thumbs up by the vet.

The disappointment of Harry not passing the trot up was evident from the reaction of many, but it was taken with good grace of course, with well known riders saying they were sorry but "it happens". Alex's s/j penalties dropped him from 7th after the cross country to 18th, still a very creditable finish.

SA was mentioned more than once by commentator Mike Tucker often referring to our development and our ongoing success in having two riders at Blenheim even though we did not manage a team. Sue Stewart PJG, Catrin Norinder (Director Eventing FEI), David Evans and of course Patricia and others all welcomed us enthusiastically – they continue to make us feel part of the scene which I guess we now indisputably are!

Japan winning the Team Qualifier was, for them huge, for us, not so good in terms of composite team reality, as now the Aussies will likely take that spot. Suzuki (Japanese Federation and CdE) was excited beyond words on Saturday and asked that we hold thumbs for them – I reminded her that nothing was impossible, after all we beat the Aussies at WEG - we are now firm allies!

Well done again to Alex and Paul – you did us proud at one of the most prestigious events on the International Eventing calendar!



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