

PLACINGS AFTER CROSS-COUNTRY

- 1 **Ingrid Klimke**
on Horseware Hale Bob OLD (GER)
- 2 **Michael Jung**
on La Biosthetique-Sam FBW (GER)
- 3 **Andrew Nicholson**
on Nereo (NZL)



A tough, bold test

The cross-country proves influential, but Ingrid Klimke and Michael Jung execute class rounds to seize the top placings

NEW course-designer Eric Winter certainly gained the riders' attention.

"Eric has been very bold and the riders are all focused walking the course, which is a good sign," said Andrew Nicholson.

Mark Todd said the track was "as big as it's ever been, with lots of technicality". His only disappointment was that the three water fences all asked a similar question — a big drop in, then a turn to an accuracy question.

"Lots of first-timers got the shock of their lives, because our prep events are nothing like this," summed up Tina Cook.

Izzy Taylor commented: "There are lots of rider choices.

Eric has handed us responsibility, which is a step in the right direction."

With moderate temperatures and ground that had been prepared and watered during the dry spring, the conditions were excellent.

EARLY INDICATIONS

THE riders' assessment proved correct when only half the first eight completed.

Pathfinder Lauren Kieffer and Landmark's Monte Carlo made a confident start, but the horse chipped in an extra stride and twisted over the second log in the Hildon Water Pond (fence 15abc). The assurance had gone and

two 20 penalties followed in quick succession.

Mark Todd was the first competitor home, finishing with 15.2 time-faults on Leonidas II, which moved him up to ninth. He rode the Hildon Water Pond logs on a controlled four and four strides, which became the preferred option.

"Bits were hairy, but a lot of it was very good," said Mark, who was whacked on the nose in a messy jump into The Lake.

He was followed by Alex Bragg, who had a wonderful debut ride for 12.4 time-faults and a 10-place rise to eighth with Zagreb. He had a dodgy moment at the Mirage Pond, but was neat through the



13ab OUTLANDER BANK

Allstar B pops neatly over the bank for Rosalind Canter during a class round. They finished fifth and best Brits, adding just 9.6 time-faults to their equal 20th dressage score

Rickards, who co-owns him with Tim and Nigella Hall. He is by Catherston Liberator, out of the Catherston Dazzler mare Faerie Dazzler, who competed at Burghley.

"The majority of the time his quirks have got in the way of any attempt at a performance, but he's had three good runs this spring and I'd have been disappointed if he hadn't continued in the same vein," said Tim.

Also for New Zealand, Mark Todd took fourth on New Zealand Bloodstock's NZB Campino and sixth on Diane Brunsten and Peter Cattell's Leonidas II.

CANTER IS THE LEADING BRIT

THE home side challenge was depleted when Pippa Funnell (Billy Beware) and Kitty King (Ceylor LAN) withdrew during the build-up. Gemma Tattersall and Arctic Soul, third last year, were the only British pair picked out as having a serious winning chance in *H&H*'s form guide (4 May). Such a situation is disappointing. But if we accept British eventing is in a rebuilding phase, to have four pairs in the top 12 was promising.

Fifth-placed Rosalind Canter, 31, rode her own and Caroline Moore's 12-year-old Allstar B

beautifully to take home both the Butler Bowl — for the best Brit — and the Laurence Rook Trophy, for the highest-placed home side rider who has not completed before (she withdrew Allstar B after dressage last year).

This big horse and little girl have produced impressive dressage at four-star several times, but failed to nail it across country.

"We've been gearing up for a good result and this was our week," said Ros.

Gemma and the syndicate-owned Arctic Soul were confidently foot-perfect after a tense dressage and rose 60 places to seventh.

Tina Cook had an excellent week on two up-and-coming horses and finished 10th on the 10-year-old Billy The Red, who belongs to Elisabeth Murdoch and Keith Tyson. By Balou Du Rouet out of a mare by Stan The Man, who is the sire of Sam, this chestnut was Britain's travelling reserve for Rio.

Tom McEwen was 11th on the talented Diamant De Semilly 10-year-old Toledo De Kerse, whom he co-owns with his mother Ali and Jane Inns.

"People question whether four-star is the place for very careful horses, but he's starting to prove it is," said Tom.