

It's all cool for Tuffs



'He doesn't have a weakness': Vicky Tufts leads from the start to take the five-year-old crown with the scopey and powerful It's Cooley

KBIS British Eventing Young Horse Championships four- and five-year-old classes, Osberton, Notts

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By Carole Mortimer

TWO riders – Piggy French and Vicky Tufts – claimed the lion's share of the prizes, taking a win each, as well as top-three placings.

Dressage and showjumping were the key phases in the five-year-old championship. The top four after dressage all jumped double clears and it was

Monmouthshire-based Vicky and her dressage leader, It's Cooley, who bagged the win, finishing on their high-scoring test of 24.1.

Acquired in Ireland through Richard Sheane for Vicky's mother Linda Tufts to own, It's Cooley was bred in the Netherlands and is by the proven KWPN jumping sire Indorado, out of a mare by Goodtimes.

"He's mega – so scopey and powerful," said Vicky, who rode round Badminton in 2007 on Tudor Romance. "He simply doesn't have a weakness – I think he is the best I've ever had."

TALKING POINT

British-bred success

SIXTEEN of the 50 (32%) five-year-olds were British-bred, with three in the top six. Both Carsten Of Westoak and Blickfeld (fourth) were British Hanoverians (BHHS), while sixth-placed, Anglo European Studbook-registered My Squire De Reve (Arthur Pottier) was bred by the East Sussex-based Brendon Stud.

Twelve of the 35 four-year-olds (34%) were British-bred, with four in the top 10. The highest-placed was Quite Something by Quarterback out of a mare by Scolari, who came in fourth. Also BHHS, he was bred by Claire White.



Piggy French tops a successful event with a four-year-old win on AKD Corline

Piggy French put in two consistent tests to finish second and third, with the Irish-bred Ballycanu gaining the edge by virtue of finishing 0.1 of a penalty ahead of stablemate Carsten Of Westoak.

Ballycanu, a Goresbridge graduate by the Indoctro sires Tinaranas Inspector, was last year's joint four-year-old winner with Sophie Jenman and was acquired by Piggy's owners, Belinda and David Keir, earlier in the year.

Carsten, the highest-placed British-bred in the class, comes from the Derbyshire-based Westoak Stud. He is by the Britain-based Hanoverian Classic Juan out of a Hanoverian mare by the Lauries Crusador son Londonderry, and has been with Piggy since a three-year-old.

Rebuilding the team

VICKY TUFFS again headed the dressage in the four-year-olds but a pole down with Goldwin, a Dutch-bred by Montender, dropped them to third. A double clear for Piggy French and AKD Corline took them to top spot.

The gelding, also owned by David and Belinda Keir, was bred in Ireland but is by the KWPN sire Corland out of a mare by Lux Z. He was acquired earlier this year from Kilkenny-based showjumper Roddy Dean, who bought him unbroken as a three-year-old.

"We are rebuilding the team, so it's really nice to come here and have them do well," said Piggy. "Corline is a bit special and we've become fond of him – he is a

lovely horse in all ways."

Annie Bellamy from Sleaford managed to break the French-Tuffs monopoly, taking second with her mother's Irish-bred Shannondale Aston, who is by the Darco son Shannondale Sarco St Ghyvan. He was bought out of the Monart sales last year.

"I had a mare by the same sire, which is why I bought him," said Annie, who was back in the saddle after surgery to repair an old shoulder injury. "And I am not disappointed – he has a good brain and is a serious one for the future."

Just eight of the 35 starters finished on their dressage score, with cross-country proving hugely influential in the outcome, possibly for the first time at this event. A double clear meant Grafenstolz Distinction (Sophie Platt), 31st after dressage, moved up to a final ninth place, while four of the top 10 going into cross-country dropped out of contention with faults.

Most problems were at fence eight, a combination with a ditch set in a hollow, which was previously jumped from the opposite direction.

"I thought the four-year-olds' course was quite tough, while the one for the five-year-olds was softer this year," said Piggy.

"A lot of the fences were narrow enough and the sun was bright and low, which did not help." **H&H**

RESULTS

Five-year-olds: 1, It's Cooley (V Tufts) 24.1,0,0=24.1; 2, Ballycanu (P French) 27.3,0,0=27.3; 3, Carsten Of Westoak (P French) 27.4,0,0=27.4; 4, My Squire De Reve (Arthur Pottier) 27.0,0,0=27.0; 5, Shannondale Aston (A Bellamy) 30.1,0,0=30.1; 6, Goldwin (V Tufts) 26.3,4,0=30.3.