

## World Champion takes centre stage at The Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials

Zara Phillips (GBR), the reigning World Champion, will take centre stage at this weekend's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials (May 7-10), the second leg of the HSBC FEI Classics™, her cross-country performance on her gold medal partner Toytown eagerly awaited by the traditionally huge crowd at Badminton.

Toytown, now 16, performed the Dressage phase at Badminton in 2007, but was withdrawn before Cross-Country. The occasionally accident-prone 2005 European Champion missed the Olympics last year due to a freak injury at home, but is on song for Badminton, having had a perfect warm-up with a pillar-to-post win in a national advanced section three weeks before. Phillips described the run as "spot-on".

If Phillips, who also rides Ardfield Magic Star, an experienced horse, 19<sup>th</sup> last year and having his 5th 4-star win, she will beat her mother The Princess Royal's Badminton record. Her best result was 4<sup>th</sup> on Goodwill in 1974. However, her father, Captain Mark Phillips, is one of Badminton's all-time greats, with four wins.

Some 85 horses are expected to trot up in front of the Ground Jury – Angela Tucker (GBR), Eric Smiley (IRL) – both former Badminton competitors – and Michel Assuray (FRA) – at the first horse inspection on Wednesday, May 6. Guiseppe della Chiesa (ITA) is Technical Delegate for the second year.

### **Competition statistics**

- Badminton, which was started in 1949 by the 10<sup>th</sup> Duke of Beaufort, is the oldest horse trials in the world
- 13 nations are represented: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and USA
- 3 former winners are in the field: Rodney Powell (1991); Mary King (1992 & 2000); William Fox-Pitt (2004)
- 2 other 4-star winners, Ruth Edge (GBR, Luhmühlen 2007) and Clayton Fredericks (AUS, Kentucky 2007)
- 5 medallists from the 2008 Olympics: Clayton Fredericks (AUS), team silver; Daisy Dick, William Fox-Pitt, Sharon Hunt, Mary King (GBR), team bronze
- All of the 2007 European gold medal team: Zara Phillips, Daisy Dick, Mary King, Oliver Townend (GBR), plus 2 of the bronze medal team: Susanna Bordone & Vittoria Panizzon (ITA)
- Bruno Bouvier (FRA) is the oldest rider (56)
- Georgie Spence (GBR) is the youngest rider (20)
- Andrew Nicholson (NZL), who rides the Spanish-bred Armada, holds the record for the most Badminton completions – 26 – he first rode at Badminton in 1984
- Mary King, the oldest female rider at 47, first rode at Badminton in 1985
- Lucinda Green (GBR) holds the record for Badminton wins – 6, all on different horses
- Sheila Willcox (GBR) is the only rider to have scored a Badminton hat-trick (3 successive wins, 1957-59) – she is Badminton's guest of honour this year
- Badminton's host is the 11<sup>th</sup> Duke of Beaufort, who was 2<sup>nd</sup> on The Queen's Countryman in 1959
- Badminton offers the richest first prize for an event in the world (GBP £60,000)
- Cross-country day at Badminton is one of the largest day's sport in the world in terms of attendance

## **HSBC points gathering**

William Fox-Pitt (GBR), Lucy Wiegiersma (GBR) and Oliver Townend (GBR) have already earned HSBC FEI Classics™ points, following the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event a fortnight ago and all have chances to consolidate their positions in the standings.

Fox-Pitt rides the Argentine-bred thoroughbred Macchiato, already a 4-star winner, at Luhmühlen, presented by E.ON Avacon Vertrieb, last year, plus the exciting French-bred chestnut Ildago, a classy cross-country horse. Wiegiersma has last year's runner-up, Shaabrak, and Townend has the experienced grey Flint Curtis, 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2006.

## **Cross-country accuracy challenge**

Hugh Thomas, Badminton's Event Director and Course-Designer for 20 years, has, as is traditional each year, reversed the direction of the Cross-Country course so that this time it runs in a right-handed direction.

The first big test is the new Alterian Hillside at 6, near the site of the old Beaufort Staircase. This is a big log pile with a drop onto a downhill slope, followed by a narrow fence. It is followed by another new fence which requires accurate steering, the John Whitaker International Coral, two oxer spreads on a turn which breaks up the usual long gallop to the Puffa Shooting Butt, a big fly-fence facing Badminton House.

Then follows the most intense stretch of the course, from the Shogun Hollow (rails, ditch, corner) at fence 9, via the Outlander Bank, Countryside Turn, and the famous Vicarage Ditch line of fences, which include two narrow, angled brush fences at the HSBC Hexagon Hedges plus the water at the Colt Pond.

Even after that, there is still the HSBC FEI Classics™ Sunken Lane, the always imposing Lake, surrounded by massive crowds, the Irish Sport Horse Studbook Huntsman's Close and the Mitsubishi Quarry. The course ends up where it started, in the main arena, at fence 28, the Mitsubishi Garden.

## **2009 HSBC FEI CLASSICS™ Standings (after 1 of 5 events):**

- 1 Lucinda Fredericks/Headley Britannia (AUS) 32.3 – 15 points
- 2 Bettina Hoy/Ringwood Cockatoo (GER) 38.4 – 12 points
- 3 Buck Davidson/My Boy Bobby (USA) 40.2 – 10 points
- 4 Nicolas Touzaint/Hildago de l'Ile (FRA) 44.3 – 8 points
- 5 Lucy Wiegiersma/Woodfalls Inigo Jones (GBR) 44.4 – 6 points
- 6 William Fox-Pitt/Seacookie (GBR) 45.9 – 5 points
- 7 Phillip Dutton/Connaught (USA) 47.0 – 4 points
- 8 Oliver Townend/Carousel (GBR) 49.2 – 3 points
- 9 Tim Lips/Concrex Oncarlos (NED) 50.0 – 2 points
- 10 Stephen Bradley/Brandenburg's Joshua (USA) – 1 point

## **HSBC FEI CLASSICS™ CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009**

1. 22-26 April [Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event \(USA\)](#)
2. 7-10 May [Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials \(GBR\)](#)
3. 11-14 June [Luhmuhlen CCI\\*\\*\\*\\* presented by E.ON Avacon Vertrieb \(GER\)](#)
4. 3-6 September [The Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials \(GBR\)](#)
5. 21-25 October [Les Etoiles de Pau \(FRA\)](#)

### **Notes to editors:**

The HSBC FEI Classics™, established last year, unites the top end of the international eventing circuit, namely the five 4-Star Eventing competitions currently on the calendar. The Top Ten placed riders at each event receive points; the five riders with the highest number of points at the end of the season are awarded prize money.

### **PRIZE MONEY**

HSBC is contributing US\$ 1million to the series over three years. This represents the **biggest** prize pot on offer in the sport of Eventing on an annual basis. At the end of each season, the five riders with the greatest number of points will be awarded PRIZE-MONEY as follows:

- 1st - US\$ 150,000 (Series Champion)
- 2nd - US\$ 75,000
- 3rd - US\$ 50,000
- 4th - US\$ 33,000
- 5th - US\$ 25,000

### **POINTS SYSTEM**

Points will be awarded to the Top Ten riders at each event as follows:

Riders can only win points with their best horse/performance at one event and if the combination has obtained a qualifying result. In case of equality of points, the best placed rider is the competitor with the lowest total of penalty points at the specific event (=differentiating score).

- 1st: 15 points
- 2nd: 12 points
- 3rd: 10 points
- 4th: 8 points
- 5th: 6 points
- 6th: 5 points
- 7th: 4 points
- 8th: 3 points
- 9th: 2 points
- 10th: 1 point

### **2008 WINNERS**

- |                           |      |          |
|---------------------------|------|----------|
| 1. William Fox-Pitt (GBR) | US\$ | 150,000; |
| 2. Nicolas Touzaint (FRA) | US\$ | 75,000;  |
| 3. Frank Ostholt (GER)    | US\$ | 50,000;  |
| 4. Phillip Dutton (USA)   | US\$ | 33,000;  |
| 5. Bettina Hoy (GER)      | US\$ | 25,000   |

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### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

#### **Photographs:**

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**For a full entry list at The Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials and cross-country course details, visit [www.badminton-horse.co.uk](http://www.badminton-horse.co.uk)**

