

Five minutes with... Badminton winner



Paul Tapner

Fresh from his Badminton success, the Aussie eventer takes time out from a Mark Todd Collection photoshoot to answer our questions...

What is your earliest horsey memory?

Age seven – going to Samurai Park Riding School where I learnt to ride. It's on the north of Sydney, not far from Palm Beach where 'Home and Away' is filmed. I remember it being dusty – a typical Australian dustbowl.

What made you come to the UK?

The sheer quantity of competitions and riders here. The standard is high in Australia, but the distance between events is immense and we would regularly drive 10 or 12 hours to compete.

What do you do to relax?

I spend time with my children – Madison, who's three, and Joshua, who's six.

That usually means playing trains or tractors with Joshua and dolls or ponies with Madison.

Do they ride?

Joshua rides once a week in a lesson at our own riding school at Wickstead Farm Equestrian Centre. He's a super-natural talent, but couldn't really care less about riding – while Madison, who has just started venturing off the lead rein, is incessant about riding. We are very spoilt with having the riding school, in that we have a great choice of ponies, although the children do have their favourites.



Inonothing's stable name is Mannie. "It started off as Manuel, as in the 'Fawlty Towers' character," says Paul. "He used to say, 'I know nothing!'."

What are your hopes for WEG selection this year and the 2012 Olympics?

If they don't pick me for WEG now, they probably never will! Hopefully a good performance in Kentucky will make a 2012 slot more secure.

Which horse would you take?

Inonothing for WEG this year and all three of my current four-star horses are possible for 2012 – Inonothing, Stormhill Michael and Kilfinnie.

What is Inonothing like as a personality?

He's a grumpy old stress-head.

Which riders do you admire?

Andrew Nicholson, Blyth Tait and Mark Todd, because of their success at the top level of our sport for such a long time. I feel that this is due largely to their ability to adapt as our sport has changed over the years.

Looking back, what advice would you now give yourself if you were starting out?

Keep aiming high.

If you could pick any horse, who would you choose?

Emily Baldwin's Drivetime, because he captivates my attention whenever I see him.

Quick-fire...

BBQ or Sunday Roast? Depends on the weather
Showjumping or dressage? Dressage

Indian or Chinese? Chinese

Beer or wine? Beer

Boots or bandages? Boots

Small plaits or chunky? Small

Beach or sightseeing? With two small children, it has to be the beach

Pop or classical? Neither – Aussie rock!



What is your least favourite horsey chore?

Probably tacking up, as it makes the whole riding process so long-winded. I ride about eight horses a day, so I really just want to get off one and onto the next, perhaps grabbing a coffee as I go.

What do you make sure you have on your lorry?

First would be some good horses! Coca-Cola and Peanut M&M's keep me going at competitions. In terms of kit – a full range of Premier Equine horse boots, all my Gatehouse riding hats, and I'm also fussy about my spurs and gloves.

Thanks to Mark Todd Clothing for their help with this feature. Main photo: Bob Langrish