

Tapner's Indian Mill grinds down the opposition

SOUTH OF ENGLAND (2)

By Amy Bennett

THE Antipodean stranglehold on eventing persisted at Ardingly with Australia's Paul Tapner claiming top honours in the CIC**. He led throughout with his own and Colm and Sally McGinn's eight-year-old Thoroughbred gelding Indian Mill, securing the son of Millkom's first victory of the year.

"It's nice to win on him this season as he was almost unbeatable in 2012," said Paul. "Since going advanced this year, though, he's struggled physically so we've dropped him back to two-star to give him a nice confident run to finish on. I won't take him to Boekelo but I'll aim him at Saumur next year instead."

The pair produced a faultless double clear.

"It was a good, tough cross-country track. It was influential which is always good to see," Paul remarked. "I was annoyed to have two time penalties but I rode rather conservatively. Others seemed to think the time was hard to get so maybe they rode too fast and had problems."

The cross-country did prove to be the most influential phase with



CIC** winner Indian Mill has been dropped back to two-star level by rider Paul Tapner after the gelding 'struggled physically' when going advanced

four of the top five combinations after the dressage – Flora Harris (Bayano), Gordon Murphy (Up To Date), Lizzie Brown (Playtime NZPH) and Jessie Campbell (Amsterdam II) – all falling foul of the course.



Fiona Breach and Drumhowan Black Magic finish fifth in the CIC*

The second water jump (fence 20) caused most of the problems, with a skinny log pile angled on two strides to a roll top dropping into the water followed by an identically angled log pile a strong three strides away at the exit proving tricky for tired horses.

This demanding course saw seven horses eliminated and five retiring, while five combinations picked up 20 penalties to add to their scorecards.

Second-placed Georgie Strang was showing improvement on her 11th placing in the previous weekend's Gatcombe CIC** with Jenny Newton's 16.1hh Cooley Business Time, by Harlequin Du Carel.

"The cross-country was more up to height here and more of a galloping track but because he's quick and a good jumper I hoped

it would work to my advantage," said Georgie who was taking the eight-year-old gelding to Weston Park.

"Having the show jumping so early on after the cross-country is a good test as you don't usually get to do that," noted Georgie. "I didn't know what Business Time was going to be like but he coped with it well."

Ian Wills and Say I Do completed the podium placings by occupying third spot.

A win we presume?

The under-21 open intermediate brought a win for Junior European individual bronze medallist Will Furlong and Livingstone II, a horse produced by Ludwig Svennerstal and subsequently campaigned by Piggy French at the beginning of last year before Will took over the reins.

2 IN THE MONEY

WILLIAM Fox-Pitt (right) scooped the two top spots in the open intermediate with Niki Ryan's Avoca Alibi and Catherine Witt's Bay My Hero respectively even after deciding not to run his dressage leader Gaucho who was heading to Boekelo.

"I'm having a bit of a dressage queen day," he joked after achieving sub-20 first-phase scores on all three horses who were here for autumn three-day prep runs, Avoca Alibi for Boekelo and Bay My Hero for Pau.

