



PALMER HIGGS



AND THE WINNER IS...

Six riders in the Melbourne International Three Day Event 2009 had extra reason to be nervous as the competition began on Friday 5th June. The six finalists in the Palmer Higgs Marketing Development Award had to face a panel of interviewers consisting of ABC Radio presenter, Libby Price, Horse Deals journalist, Anna Sharpley and owners of Palmer Higgs, Paul and Debbie Higgs. Despite being fearless on cross country courses, the riders admitted to nerves in front of such a panel. However, one of the aims of the process of the Award was to subject younger riders to questioning by media experts and in turn give them a chance to ask how best to handle it. The quality of the written applications submitted in May was taken into account but the scores from the panel had the heaviest influence on the final outcome.

In order to ascertain the winner and runner-up, the judges scored all of the finalists in the following areas;

Written application

Interview – punctuality
Presentation – physical and verbal
Questions and research
Affability

Riding ability/ competition history

From the results in these areas, the judges had a clear winner, Brett Davey. The runner-up was a close call between Emma Scott, Stephanie Bender and Rebecca White with Emma Scott inching ahead thanks to her excellent recent competition results.

Paul Higgs commented of Brett Davey, "As a business person, I was looking for a finalist who gave me the feeling that he or she would be successful in any endeavour they undertook. Brett gave me that impression. He also presented himself well, created rapport easily and had obviously done his research. His questions to the panel were excellent".



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In some ways, the choice of Brett as the “next Eventing superstar” may be a surprise as the majority of his success in the equestrian world has been in the discipline of dressage including several National Junior championships and winner of the prestigious Aachen Challenge in 1999. However, when questioned by the panel regarding his eventing career, Brett replied that “Heath (Ryan) has shown that it is possible to compete at a high level in more than one Olympic discipline but you have to have the right horses”.

To ensure that he continues to have the right horses, Brett has started a breeding program to produce performance horses across the disciplines. Both Brett and Katja Weimann put forward an intelligent outline of their performance horse breeding programmes which shows how emerging riders are tackling the problem of being “one horse wonders” whilst developing a long term equestrian business.

Although the Award was not dependant on the outcome of the competition, many of the finalists had excellent results in the Melbourne Three Day Event including Katja Weimann and Emma Scott who came first and second in the CCI*, 7th for Rebecca White in the CCI* and 3rd for Emma Scott in the CCI***.



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