

## **Pony Club of Australia Nationals Competition July 2009**

For the Olympic disciplines of Dressage, Showjumping and Eventing a Queensland team of 26 riders, their horses and support crews travelled to the Sydney International Equestrian Centre [SIEC] where the 2000 Equestrian Olympic events were held, for the Pony Club of Australia National Championships. Seventeen Pony Clubs Riders from throughout the State were represented with riders from Alligator Creek, Pioneer River Valley, Moondarga, as well as Central and South East Queensland, the Darling Downs and from as far west as Chinchilla.

Mounted Games also formed part of the competition and 10 Queensland riders arrived on the Wednesday of the competition to compete in their Senior and Junior competitions respectively.

All of the Queensland Team bar two riders at competitions gathered together at Southport for two days for a training camp 'touch up' under the watchful eyes of very experienced coaches including Shane Davidson (Dressage), Guy Creighton and Billy Raymont (Showjumping) and Kevin McNab (Eventing). All riders appreciated this extra tuition. The lack of rain at Southport was noticeable. Thank you to Southport Pony Club for your hospitality.

The entourage left on the Friday morning to pass through the Tick Gates at Coolangatta with all arriving as scheduled to camp overnight with horses at the Taree showgrounds in moderate comfort. Successful decamp Saturday morning and arrival thereafter at SIEC around lunchtime. The M7 is a great way to travel around Sydney.

SIEC is an impressive venue and very comfortable for horse, riders and support staff (ie strappers etc – parents). Grounds were wet initially though dried out sufficiently by the time we packed up to go home!

All horses were required to pass a 'Trot Up' inspection on the Sunday with Warm Up competitions for Dressage and Showjumping commencing on the Monday. These warm up competitions were included to help settle the nerves of the Riders their horses and the parents.

Formal Competition commenced on the Tuesday through to Wednesday for the Dressage and Showjumping with the Eventing Cross Country on Thursday. Interspersed with this were the Junior Mounted Games on Thursday afternoon and the Senior Games on Saturday morning. Final Dressage tests, Eventing show jumping and the Grand Prix Show jumping were completed on the Friday.

Some tricky scheduling for the Team Managers with a large number of riders competing in two disciplines.

As expected competition was tough in all disciplines though the cross country course left a little to be desired. None the less, the showjumping component of the eventing made up for this. The formal showjumping in the indoor arena provided a great spectacle for all supporters and I am sure a real buzz for the riders. An excellent venue.

The final day of competition included the Par de Deux dressage. It attracted a huge audience and delighted the crowd. Rachael Bell and Mikhaila Brand were the nominated Queensland team. They had only worked together in Sydney when Mikhaila was asked to join Rachael due to a scratching. Their routine was fantastic and obviously pleased the judges as they won the event.

Under the PCA rules, Team Managers were required to nominate teams for each discipline on the Monday before the competition commenced. This was extremely difficult as all riders and their families had put in a mammoth effort just to get to these Championships. It was explained to all the

riders that they were in fact part of the Queensland team, whether or not they were actually on the nominated team of four for their competition. Naturally some of the riders were disappointed at missing selection though their challenge was to then prove their ability by 'upstaging' the team riders. Team Managers are to be congratulated for the time they took to help all riders, especially those who experienced rough patches at times.

#### Queensland Teams Results:

Associates Eventing Champion Team [Kirstie Fossett, Emma Howard, Soigne Jackson, John Thomson]

Associates Dressage Reserve Champion Team [John Thomson, Emma Howard, Kirstie Fossett, Tamara Bondfield]

Associates Showjumping Reserve Champion Team [Sandra Harris, Rochelle Aikenhead, Katie Maxwell, Lisa Harris]

Junior Dressage 3<sup>rd</sup> [Rachael Bell, Mikhaila Brand, Poppy Ellis-Southwell, Courtney West]

Junior Showjumping 3<sup>rd</sup> [Niesje Lovell, Jenny Henderson, Jessie Cearns, Mallory Cabassi]

Junior Eventing 4<sup>th</sup> [Poppy Ellis-Southwell, Olivia McIntyre, Enya Heath, Haidee Psaltis]

Riders not mentioned in results are to be thanked for representing Queensland and taking part in the competition include Luke Harmer [Associate Dressage and Eventing], Selina Bartley [Associate Dressage], Kendal Pascoe & Morgan Cox [Junior Eventing], Elisha & Jessica Hodgson [Junior Showjumping]

I have not included Mounted Games results in this report which I leave to the Team Manager Russell Duncan to complete. Congratulations to the Mounted Games teams on their performances.

New South Wales took out the overall State Championship, followed closely by Queensland. We will get them next time!!

I would like to thank all Queensland riders and their families for their support and input throughout the week and in particular the Team managers. They had the tough job of supporting all riders as well as making the recommendations for the Teams. Sue and Jenny also did a great job sleeping in the 16 bunk 'Dongas' to assist the girls to manage their sleep patterns.

Most competitors left on the Saturday after presentation to get a head start for the trip home with the overnight stay at Macksville. The only noticeable event homeward bound was the bogged horse truck (with the great horse painting on the front) which was soon extracted.

Congratulations to all on your representation, your efforts and your Team support.

I have also included a schedule of the Riders individual results as these are also worthy of praise and congratulations.

Looking forward to two years time and competition in Melbourne. Go Queensland.

Team managers

Dressage – Sue Bondfield

Showjumping Jodie Marr (Associate Team) and Jenny Murphey (Junior Team)

Eventing Graham Fossett (Associate Team) and Rod Howard (Junior Team)

Geoff Thomson

Queensland Team Manager