

Brits take a strong second

STRZEGOM, POLAND
26-29 June

By Catherine Austen

THE German "A" team swept to victory in the latest round of the Nations Cup series, but Britain's considerably less experienced squad put up strong performances to take an honourable second.

And Nicky Roncoroni made the drive from Gloucestershire to Poland doubly worthwhile with a win in the CCI3* on Stonedge.

Michael Jung spearheaded the German team and cruised to an individual CICO3* win on his Olympic, world and European champion La Biosthetique-Sam FBW. They had eight marks in hand after the dressage, scoring 33.8pen, and added 1.6 cross-country time-faults for 35.4.

The German team made up the top four after dressage: Julia Krajewski (London-Return OLD, 40.8), Sandra Auffarth (Opgun Louvo, 41.4) and Dirk Schrade (Hop And Skip, 43.2).

But Britain's Sarah Bullimore and Rosalind Canter filled fifth and sixth on Valentino V and Zenshera, scoring 44.6 and 45. The remaining members of the team lay in 21st (Katy Hurst and Weston IV) and 23rd (Nicky Roncoroni and Watts Burn).

This gave the Brits second over the Netherlands, with Italy third, Denmark fifth and Poland sixth.

Julia Krajewski dropped out of the reckoning with two stops across country at fence 21, a skiny coming out of the water. Dirk was one of three inside the time cross-country and, after showjumping clear, pulled up to second. Sandra finished third with 2.8 time-faults.

Three of the British team



Rosalind Canter, Nicky Roncoroni, Sarah Bullimore and Katy Hurst take second for Britain in the Nations Cup

jumped double clears. Only Nicky Roncoroni, whose Watts Burn was tackling his first CICI3*, had 20pen across country when Nicky lost her steering into a right-handed turn towards the end of the track.

Sarah and the Dutch warmblood Valentino V, the only pair with four-star experience, took fifth. Rosalind Canter and her 10-year-old Zenshera by Quidam finished sixth. Nations Cup debutants Katy Hurst and Weston IV — part of Britain's team at the European CIC2* Championships last year — were eleventh hour additions to the squad, only getting the call-up two days before the event. They really stepped up to the mark to finish eighth.

"I was planning to go to Hopetoun, but luckily I have very understanding owners who didn't want me to miss the opportunity," said Katy.

"In our eyes, we've won," laughed Sarah. "Realistically, we were never going to beat the Germans on their top horses, but



Nicky Roncoroni and the promising 10-year-old Stonedge win the CCI3*

we had a fab team and everyone will have learnt a lot."

Team manager Philip Surl said: "There were solid performances from everyone. It definitely ranks as one of our best Nations Cup performances to date against a very strong German team."

Stonedge tops CCI3*

NICKY was delighted to win the CCI3* with her mother Janey's Stonedge after bypass across country at Chatsworth and Bramham.

"He had 18 months off with injury in 2011 and 2012," she said. "So despite going very well last year, there was a massive chunk of vital education, training and mileage missing. Maybe the cracks were showing at the beginning of this season."

A mark of 54 left them 10th after dressage — Andrew Hoy and Cheeky Calimbo led on 35.2 — but they pulled up to fourth after cross-country. Cheeky Calimbo was retired after stopping at both parts of fence 11 — two angled brushes four "moving" strides

after a log drop — then at fence 14.

"He felt better and better the further we went," said Nicky. "Considering the size of the area they had to work with, the track was brilliant — very technical but fair. The whole event was very atmospheric, with music playing, a big screen next to the water and lots of spectators."

The pair showjumped clear and, when the three ahead of them faulted, victory was theirs. H&H

Results

STRZEGOM

CICO3* — 1. Stonedge (N Roncoroni) 54.9, 6.0=63.6, 2. Noddy Orval (S Forvandt) ITA 52.6, 7.11=71.2, 3. Vacat JP (M Dziak-Gierlicz) POL 63.6, 0.8=71.6. **CICI3*** — 1. La Biosthetique-Sam FBW (M Jung) GER 33.8, 1.6=35.4, 2. Hop And Skip (D Schrade) GER 43.2, 0.0=43.2, 3. Opgun Louvo (S Auffarth) GER 41.2, 2.8=44.2, 4. Valentino V (S Bullimore) GER 44.6, 2.8=47.4, 5. Zenshera (R Canter) GBR 45.3, 2.0=47.2, 7. Weston IV (K Hurst) GBR 58.5, 0.0=63.6. **Nations Cup** — 1. Germany (La Biosthetique-Sam FBW, Hop And Skip, Opgun Louvo, London-Return OLD/J Krajewski) 122.8, 2. Great Britain (Valentino V, Zenshera, Weston IV, Watts Burn/N Roncoroni) 159.2, 3. Netherlands (Undercover/F Pen, Zidane/T Van De Veneld, Annarsch/A Bleekman, Concrex Oncarlos/T Lips) 253.4.

Michael Jung dominates

MICHAEL JUNG won every class he entered at Strzegom. As well as the CICO3* on Sam (right), he took the CIC* with the eight-year-old Stravinsky xx stallion Der Dante, and was first and second in the CIC2* on Fischer Takinou and Leopin FST.

While the 15-year-old Leopin has jumped round a couple of four-stars, Fischer Takinou, a seven-year-old gelding by Jaguar Mail, is a new ride for Michael this season and was doing his first two-star. All three winners finished on scores under 40.

