

Brilliant Brits claim two golds

YOUNG RIDER EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS, KREUTH, GERMANY
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By Pippa Roome

BRITAIN'S young riders returned from Germany in triumph last week with two gold medals and a bronze.

Emily Llewellyn led the charge with the individual title on her mother Cindy's Pardon Me II, and was ably backed up by bronze medalist Ben Hobday, Dani Cuomo (fifth) and Georgie Spence (14th).

"They were focused and performed at the top of their game," said trainer Gill Watson of the Jump Savings-sponsored squad.

Emily said: "I wanted an individual medal again this

year [after junior bronze in 2007]. I was aiming for the gold — I knew the horse and I were on top form — but I didn't know if I could pull it off. I put myself under pressure this week, but it's an amazing feeling now."

Emily lay second after the dressage, her test only marred by Pardon Me II stepping back in the final halt. The leader was Germany's 2006 junior silver medalist Julia Krajewski (Lost Prophecy), just 0.3 of a mark ahead.

Georgie Spence was tucked in behind Emily in bronze with Christopher Jenkin's Skylight, while Ben Hobday (Uptons Who) and Dani Cuomo (Ballin Willow) were also in the top 15.

In the team standings, Britain were 5.5pen ahead of Germany, with Switzerland in bronze.

Ben Hobday was the pathfinder Brit across country, and when he took three long routes and still made the optimum time, all the riders followed team orders to take the easier way at two tricky combinations. The first of these was a brush on top of a mound, followed by a difficult distance to an offset brush arrowhead, while the second was a sunken road with a bounce to the log out.

"All our riders probably could have jumped the direct ways, but we were there to win, not to prove what fences we could jump," said Gill Watson.

These tactics paid off when all four team members went clear inside the time, with Emily and Georgie retaining silver and bronze positions.

"Ballin Willow gave me the best ride ever," said

expecting her to go clear, but when you think, 'All I've got to do is jump 11 fences and I get an [individual] medal, it's disappointing,'" admitted Georgie.

Dani and Ben both went clear, with Ben moving up to individual bronze.

"I didn't go out there thinking I'd get an individual medal," said Ben, who set up his own yard in Lancashire in March. "I didn't even think of it until I'd jumped the last fence clear. He's a super horse."

Emily Llewellyn also went clear to put the pressure on Julia Krajewski. When the German had one down, Emily had the gold in the bag, with Julia taking silver.

Britain's two individuals both enjoyed a good event too, with Emily Galbraith finishing 11th on Timing and Sarah Stretton 20th on Lazy Acres Skip On, both having jumped clear across country. H&H

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British pathfinder Ben Hobday takes bronze on Uptons Who

Emily Llewellyn adds nothing to her dressage score to claim team and individual gold on Pardon Me II



Emily Llewellyn

KREUTH marked Emily Llewellyn's first international championship win, but she already has a successful record representing Britain, having won pony team gold (2005 on Bally Duff Rusty), junior team silver (2006 on Society Spice) and team gold and individual bronze (2007 on Pardon Me II).

As well as her Kreuth ride, the 11-year-old Pardon Me II, her other top ride is the 13-year-old bay Society Spice. Emily, 19, was under-18 and under-21 national champion with him last year and the pair were fifth in the under-25 section at Bramham this spring. He heads to Boekelo this weekend and may provide Emily's first Badminton ride next year.

Emily is starting her second year studying business and management at Sussex University, but lives nearby at home so she can ride every day.

Dani, a student at Hartpury College who has spent time rebuilding the horse's confidence after he studded himself at Belton in the spring. "There were a lot of questions one after the other and not many let-up fences."

Germany held on to silver, with France moving up into the team bronze position, when two Swiss riders were eliminated across country. But when Maxime Livio's Junior Du Trimbolot HN was spun at the final horse inspection, the French challenge evaporated and the Italians took team bronze in the final reckoning.

Georgie Spence suffered the disappointment of having three show jumps down, dropping from the individual bronze position.

"Show jumping isn't her best phase so I wasn't

I put myself under pressure this week, but it's an amazing feeling now

Emily Llewellyn new young rider European champion for Britain

First Win

Results

Young rider European

Champs—1, Pardon Me II (E Llewellyn), GB 43.8.0.0=43.8; 2, Lost Prophecy (J Krajewski), GER 43.3.0.4=47.5; 3, Uptons Who (B Hobday), GB 49.8.0.0=49.8; 5, Ballin Willow (D Cuomo), GB 51.0.0=51; 11, Timing (E Galbraith), GB 51.0.4.6=57.4; 14, Skylight (G Spence), GB 46.1.0.12=58.1; 20, Lazy Acres Skip On (S Stretton), GB 56.3.1.6.13=70.9. **team**—1, Great Britain 144.6; 2, Germany 157.2; 3, Italy 231.5.