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Our Equestrian Expert



British Open Show Jumping Championships.

Hello all, can you believe it's March already, the year is flying by and just around the corner is the start of the Polo season in the UK, more on that in a later issue, but April sees The British Open Show Jumping Championship taking place at the NEC Birmingham, from 7th – 10th April.



The show draws many equestrian lovers from across the globe so strong is its appeal and this year I'm present at the show for an altogether different reason – with the H Factor Final. Who needs Simon Cowell and Cheryl Cole, this event is not about singing, it's about entertaining. The Knights of Middle England will be taking on 'Equestrienne' a stunt show by solely female Gladiators; 'Saffron Walden Musical Ride' which is best described as 'Strictly Come Dressage'; and 'Rockin' Horse', a rock 'n' roll eccentric fast paced stunt show...of course The Knights of Middle England are hoping to be victorious, in fact log on to the site and vote for us as the act you are most looking forward to seeing...please!

As well as trials and equestrian competitions there's a great shopping pavilion selling equestrian and

non-equestrian items. There're products on sale for the whole family, even your pets, from tack to tweeds and winter warmers to wine and handbags – diverse! This year rock band with a difference 'Dakota' are also performing live, they have really strong equestrian links, as Richard Davison's son Tom is the base player in the group whilst show jumper Ben Talbot is the vocals! Richard Davison himself will be present at the show as Dressage Team Captain and the man responsible for training our world class show jumpers for dressage. He will provide the crowds with a lecture and demonstration on the subject on Friday in the International Arena, which promises to be very popular!

It really is an action-packed show that offers something for all the family and I do hope that some of you lovely readers will come along and support yours truly

and The Knights of Middle England in the H Factor. We of course will joust to the bitter end to be victorious!

The British Show Jumping team are already showing that they are a force to be reckoned with, recently winning the Longines Nations Cup in Abu Dhabi. The team, consisting of Ellen Whitaker, Guy Williams, Robert Smith and Ben Maher, chalked up superb first round performances to finish on zero, continuing their form to pip Germany to top honours. Third and fourth places went to The Netherlands and UAE respectively.

The team's delighted Chef d'Equipe, Tim Stockdale, commented: "What a fantastic start to 2010. I knew we had a strong team and a great team spirit. We had a plan right from the start and everything went to plan. All of the horses jumped out of their skins today. It feels great to come away with a win."

The largest tournament in polo history took place this month at the Hand Equestrian Centre near Bristol boasting

108 teams and 400 players. At this annual schools and universities event – SUPA National University Championships – the 108 three-man teams played chukkas back-to-back over four days and the Guinness Book of Records were there to witness the spectacle and award SUPA with a certificate for its achievement.

On a sad note, James Ashton, the interim FIP (Federation of International Polo) President, died this month following a fall from his horse whilst playing polo in Thailand. Ashton was appointed interim President last November and was fully expected to have been officially elected as the next FIP President at the General Assembly at the end of March. He will be sadly missed.

The summer polo seasons kicks off again at the beginning of May throughout the UK, with matches every weekend at local clubs, RLS Polo Club, Southam and Rugby Polo Club. Friday 4th to Sunday 6th June will see the return of Polo in the Park, in the heart of the city of London, an event that

I shall once again be covering this year. Last year's event thrilled over 25,000 spectators and introduced television audiences to a new format in this high-octane polo competition. The 2010 tournament promises to deliver all the excitement, action and drama with a unique theatrical show in the centre of London.

In a similar way to how Twenty20 is changing cricket, so the World Polo Series™ rules have updated polo to make the sport faster and more exciting for TV and event spectators. The changes mean a quicker, more open game – it's faster, harder and grittier! I will bring you more news on this event closer to the time.

Don't forget to text those votes for The Knights of Middle England! We need you!

www.karludemartinez.co.uk

www.knightsofmiddleengland.com/events-promo.htm

www.britishshowjumping.com



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