

INTERSCHOOL NATIONALS – TOOWOOMBA -Mon,1st Oct Over 300 horses and their riders have arrived from all over Australia at the sunny and welcoming venue of Toowoomba for this years Interschool Nationals. This huge event has been extremely well organised by Equestrian Queensland members who have done a great job to make the event friendly and relaxed. This year we only have 5 riders competing, however we will be represented in each of the disciplines as they are all riding in at least 2 events. Ashton Brown and her family have travelled for the last week with her two horses, Wellbrook Top Deck and Dakota Shan, to arrive safely. Isabel Gibson had her horse , International Covergirl already here. Our other three riders have been very fortunate to have the rides on pool horses. Ashley Cavanagh has a lovely big warmblood X horse (over 17h) called Absolute Royalty ,Ellen Mc Intosh has a young TB called Dusty Girl and Caitlyn Radford has a pretty pony called CP Kointreau which was a last minute change of mount for her. Yesterday (Sunday ) saw the arrival of the horses and riders and some practice times in the arenas, and time to settle in. Today was trot up day and fortunately all horses passed. The riders also had an education session this afternoon which was followed by the opening march-in to a rousing pipe band in the large indoor arena, followed by the welcoming BBQ. Tomorrow is the start of competition with Caitlyn and Ashley competing in the Showman competition. This comprises of a dressage test, a ridden test and an in hand section.

#### TOOWOOMBA INTERSCHOOL NATIONALS

Day 2 – Tuesday was Showman day for Ashley and Caitlyn. Both girls and their horses looked amazing and did wonderful workouts. Unfortunately, due to a scoring mistake and the results being changed, Caitlyn missed out on a ribbon by .02 of a mark finishing in 7th position and Ashley in 10th overall. (Ashley came 3rd in her rider class). The evening was spent with each team getting together – we did it over pizza!

Day 3= Today was a busy day for our girls. The day started off with Ashton and Isabel doing their dressage tests for the Eventing. Unfortunately, Ashton was second on in the crater like arena with Top Deck, and was made to warm up away from the competition arena, and only allowed in to the arena to do his test, so with the other horses out of sight ,it led to a very tense test. However, after this, the conditions were changed to allow riders to warm up down one end of the arena with other horses - thus giving them a chance to get used to their surroundings ! Ashton, later did a relaxed and accurate test on Spot in the Pre Novice while Isabel did a lovely relaxed test to be coming equal 6th so far in Intro on her lovely grey mare . Also doing dressage today was Ashley in the Secondary Novice class. Impressive Smurfie looked a picture!

Ashton, Ellen and Isabel also commenced their 90cm jumping classes today. All 3 did lovely equitation rounds, with Ellen the highest place in 10th. Ellen also did two of her 1m classes today, coming 10th in one. This evening is a showjumping information session with David Finch. For our riders ,tomorrow will bring more jumping rounds in the morning and cross country in the afternoon. Also, some more dressage for Ashley, while Caitlin gets another day off from competing .It is forecast to be very hot tomorrow, which could make the xc challenging on the hilly terrain!

#### Toowoomba Day 4

Thursday saw 2 rounds of showjumping for Isabel and Ashton and 3 for Ellen. All did well, but were just out of the placings. Ashley had another dressage test which looked lovely.

In the afternoon, we had the Cross country with both Isabel and Ashton jumping clear in Intro, with Ashton getting some “too fast“ time faults. Ashton jumped well in Pre novice but unfortunately incurred a stop when Spot was surprised at the water!

In the evening we were treated to a lovely roast dinner for the teams, with entertainment provided by some school bands. The setting looked wonderful with all the balloons and decorations and there was even a huge horse statue which was actually made of grass!

Below: Ashley and Smurf, Caitlin and Buttons, Xc jump, 3 showjumpers – Ellen, Isabel and Ashton

## Day 5

Friday began with the Show jumping phase of the Eventing. All 3 horses did lovely rounds to finish the competition. Also the Interschool challenge classes were held. We had Caitlin and Ashley competing in the 2 phase (A rider and led class). Both did wonderful tests on their pool horses to get 1st (Caitlin) and 2nd (Ashley) in the class!

After everything was packed up the closing ceremony was held with our 5 riders looking great marching into the indoor. We finished up with 4 sashes- Isabel with a 5th placing in Introductory eventing, Ashton and Isabel with a 6th in the team eventing, and the Champion and reserve sashes for the Interschool challenge being awarded to Caitlin and Ashley. What a wonderful achievement for such a small team! All of the girls should be very pleased with their results. We are very thankful to the owners of the pool horses which were so generous in allowing us the use of their talented horses.

I would like to commend the team on being such good ambassadors for Tasmania. I received many positive comments from other teams about the Tassie girls – their positive attitudes, friendliness and willingness to help out made my job so much easier. Also a big thankyou to the parents who did more than their fair share of tasks during the week in the running of the event!

I am sure we will remember our time in Toowoomba with much fondness!

Leonie Blackwell – Tas Team manager.



**FIVE HAPPY CAMPERS:** Ashton Brown, Isabel Gibson, Caitlyn Radford, Ashley Cavanagh and Ellen McIntosh.