

Qatar triumphs in tough race

Despite his impeccable manners, Hadi Nasser Al Ramzani goes first to claim the inaugural 160km



CALEDONIA CHALLENGE, SCOTTISH NATIONAL EC, WEST LOTHIAN

16-17 August

By Kirstie Graham

THE Qatar endurance team dominated the first CEI*** 160km ride held in Scotland, taking the top five spots as the only completers from an initial field of nine.

Hadi Nasser Al Ramzani on Iman Indi De Guelou and Philippe Tomas on Kefraya Jais approached the finish together, some 15min ahead of the rest of the field. There was a delay as each tried to encourage the other to cross the line first — the opposite of a "race to the line".

Eventually, Hadi Nasser Al Ramzani crossed a fraction ahead for first place, with Philippe Tomas taking second.

"They are both crazy to win, but also crazy about each other," crew member Sian Jones explained of the gallant finish. "They are best friends and each wanted the other to win."

This was Scotland's first experience of running an international competition at this level. Heavy rain in the preceding week had taken its toll on some tracks, necessitating last-minute route changes.

The winning speed was 14.25kph.

"This was quite a slow race for us," said Hadi Nasser Al Ramzani. "The track was deep, so we couldn't travel fast. I would say it was a tough track."

The Qatar endurance team have been based at Philippe Tomas' yard near Toulouse, France, for the past four months and had their sights set on the CEI*** in Compiègne on 23-24 August.

The 160km national



Sarah Norris and her fell pony are solo finishers... in the dark

class was won by a fell pony, Southolme Blossom, ridden by Sarah Norris from Nairn in the

Highlands, at 10.49kph. Sarah and her 13.1hh mare were the only finishers from the initial field of three, completing the last two sections of the course solo and, as the dark set in, with a headtorch.

"The vets were amazed with 'Maddie' as the ride progressed — she was so consistent with her presentations, getting A for her trot-up every time," said Sarah.

"When I bought her aged seven she was obese; at 13 years old she has done everything for me — the Golden Horseshoe, the Red Dragon and now 100 miles in a day. I plan to put her in-foal as I have to keep her bloodline going, she is such a phenomenal performance pony."

The 80km endurance ride was won by Tony Comerford from Aberdeenshire on his part-bred Arab gelding, Aratahnes Shantye, at 12.92kph.