

**EQVALAN**  
GOLD

## Rider of the Month

**Megan Jones** was one of the Australian Squad riders who really benefited from her time in the training camp with *Bettina Hoy* – but for Megan the improvement started six weeks before the camp...

“I’ve been having lessons with Lindy Wright for the past six weeks. I don’t know that Jester would have been able to cope in the camp as well as he did without those six weeks. I had lessons with Lindy when I first got Paddy, years ago. I would go to her place and use her indoor, and I sort of forgot that she was a coach, a really good coach, and I could talk to her easily. But in the past six weeks, I didn’t ride on the flat without her being there, and I had three lessons a week from her. Those lessons changed Jester’s whole balance, we got the half halt happening for us.”

*That’s a change from Melbourne when you said you didn’t even try to get him on the bit?*

“He was always in this fake frame, it was awful to ride this horse that could be so fantastic that I just couldn’t ride properly. What has happened now is that he is educated enough to go in a double, and that has helped him a lot.

Then Bettina got on him on the first day. She came in and said ‘Can I hop on?’ I was almost off the horse before she could finish the sentence, like ‘get on, get on, go your hardest, ride him every day, I don’t mind!’ That helped so much. She is so good on the flat, so quick to give. She can give a half halt, she can be quite tough on them and she gives so quickly. With him you just can’t hang on. When I got on he felt great, and the second day he came out a different horse. Everyone just went ‘wow!’. She is just so clever about how you sit on a horse – in the flying changes I kept shoving my new inside leg forward rather than keeping it back. Once I did that, they are clean, bouncy and through, and I’m like, why didn’t I think of that before! Such simple things. And she was so pleased to help us, it made it such fun, and everyone improved so much.”

“Obviously I let the test down in places,

but I went in there feeling that I had hours in there with him, not just, here comes a movement, here comes a movement – to get that much better in such a short time just shows what he is capable of doing. I just need to learn how to ride him properly.”

*And the cross country at Adelaide?*

“The cross country was really nice. Again I cantered around, first minute, second minute, it just felt so easy, it was just so much fun. Then when I got to the Apexes, and I went to turn right, I couldn’t see distance, I couldn’t get there so I hooked left to take the option, and turned right again. Once I got to the end, my neck started to freeze up – I’d done the damage at the water jump. He jumped the water so beautifully, I landed and went ‘that felt so amazing... and now my neck is paralysed’. That was not much fun, I was too scared to move it, I thought it might break. It was just grabbing pain, hideous. The water was 21 and we had to jump 34 fences, a lot. But pain is a state of mind, we coped.”

*The showjumping?*

“I let him down at that fence so badly I can’t believe it. Jamie Coman would have killed me if he’d been here. Jamie has helped us heaps. The horse is a really good jumper and I have just got to learn to ride him well, he wants to just clean. That rail was my fault and the next time hopefully I’ll get it right.”

*What are the plans now?*

“He won’t do an event til early 2006, something like a CCI to try and get picked for the Worlds in Aachen. I’ll just ask the selectors which event they want us to go to, he doesn’t need to run again until then. He goes to showjumping and dressage days.”

*Nice to win it on one you bred?*

“Amazing. And it was so good to see Cammy O’Rourke out there on another one of ours. She actually jumped clear but crossed her line – so Jamie was great too. I was so proud of both of them.”

*Tough to re-group after you lost the big guy – Kirby Park Irish Hallmark?*

“It was but I only had a day and a half to really think about it then I had to get back into lessons and getting ready for the next event. I just decided to concentrate on Festy (Jester) and think about this event – next week, I’ll take a week off and go and do different things, like ride my new motocross motorcycle that my boyfriend bought for my birthday. I felt Paddy was somewhere there, the win was for him too.”



# MEGAN JONES

**EQVALAN**  
GOLD