



Team Taylor

A New Year, that means the 2014 season will soon be upon us, the clock is ticking, there's lots to do and I can't wait!

MARK FAIRHURST

MY 2013 SEASON came to an end at Pau, which didn't turn out as I had hoped with KBIS Briarlands Matilda tying up at fence five on the cross country. A career in Eventing is certainly character building, as within two weeks of coming home from Pau, British Eventing announced their 2013 rider rankings – I was in fourth place and five of the horses that I had ridden last year were in the top 100 horses for 2013. Vanir Kamira 77th place, KBIS Briarlands Matilda 79th place, Dax Van Ternieuwbeke 83rd place, Thistledown Poposki 85th place and last by no mean least KBIS Starchaser was placed 100th.

I couldn't have imagined at the end of 2012 that 2013 would hold quite so many 'firsts' in my Eventing career. The first was to have been selected to join the Elite Squad with World Class funded by UK Sport Lottery, then selected to join five FEI Nations Cup team Events! On top of that I made my debut as an Individual within a European Championships with Team GBR in Sweden at the HSBC FEI European Championships 2013 with KBIS Briarlands Matilda.

I obtained new sponsors through Zebra Products in Uvex Helmets and Selleria Equipe saddles and tack, I joined the likes of Charlotte Dujardin and Ben Maher as part of the Equipe UK rider team. Dainese Equestrian and Lansdown Country also joined my very loyal and existing sponsors KBIS British Equestrian Insurance and Maxavita during the season! I am so grateful

to those companies that choose to support us, as being a successful Event rider does not happen by chance – it is about creating a winning formula, a successful set up and a winning team. So thank you to all my team at home, owners and sponsors.

The winter for me is a really important time of the year; the horses all had a short holiday and will hopefully come out firing on all cylinders in the spring. It's my time to reflect on the previous season, assess our weaknesses and improve, so this winter's plan has been to raise our game; we need to be more consistent and expect more from our performance. I have had discussions with Performance Manager Yogi Breisner, and in order for the selectors to select the best team for 2014, we as riders need to achieve more. He gave some very good advice: "start and keep winning!"

With that in mind hunting has been a

regular Team Taylor activity as it's great for both rider and horse to learn and improve galloping and jumping fences at speed. We have had and will continue to have dressage and show jump training through the World Class programme, I also use Lyneham Heath Farm for cross country and show jumping practice, as it's great to give them confidence at a different venue.

In between all of this focus and determination, we have had Christmas, which of course my children Lily (who is now aged four) and Freddie (three) absolutely adore – they are fully aware of Father Christmas and the sackfuls of presents that await them! As long as everything is pink, pretty and fit for a princess Lily is happy and Fred is more than happy with wheels!

My Christmas wish and New Year's resolution is to have a more successful 2014, so here's to Team Taylor pulling it off! 🐾

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