

### **France's Kevin Staut goes out with a bang**

France is celebrating their first individual European title for 10 years after Kevin Staut produced two fantastic clear rounds on Kraque Boom Bois Margo to rise to the top of the leaderboard in an exciting and intriguing two-round contest.

Kevin started the afternoon in sixth place and, with eventual silver medallist Carsten-Otto Nagel for Germany on the mare Corradina, produced a double clear round to pressurise the second-round leader, The Netherlands' Albert Zoer on the popular Oki Doki.

There was a gasp when Oki Doki uncharacteristically hit the very first fence, but Albert kept his head and stayed clear, to salvage the bronze medal by just 0.65 from Ireland's unlucky Cameron Hanley on SIEC Livello.

"Even when you hit the first fence, you know you have to go on, and that's what I tried to do," said the sporting Albert.

Britain's hopes had rested on Ben Maher and Robin Hood, who lay second behind Italian hero Natale Chiaudani, but, despite the first round track jumping well and producing 12 clears, both riders plummeted out of the medals with 8 faults apiece.

The new European Champion, France's first since Alexandra Ledermann at Hickstead in 1999, said his gold medal was "a victory for the French team. My week started badly when my horse got stressed in the floodlights in the first competition, but he just got better and better as the week went on.

"I had initially been very happy to settle for the silver medal, but I am obviously very happy that it turned to gold!"

Course-designer Bob Ellis commented that he was particularly pleased with the standard of the team competition, which he described as being as good a nations cup as he'd seen. "Today, the course was very big but with these guys (the riders) it has to be. The second round was the biggest I've ever built and there was some fantastic jumping."

David Holmes, Director of Sport at the FEI, said: "Simon Brooks-Ward and his Horsepower team has done a terrific job in producing these championships and we've seen some great sport, some great riding and some particularly good course-building."