

some noise outside the arena. "Toby was a bit tense, but he managed to keep his concentration," she said. "He's very laid-back at home, but when he gets to a competition he seems to produce his own sparkle."

With Toby qualified for the forthcoming regional finals at elementary and medium level, a quietly confident Vicky is already thinking ahead to advanced medium.

"Toby has big paces and always gets high marks for them," she said. "We're just starting our changes."

PATCHETTS

By Ruth Pearce

ALISON Berman enjoyed a double win at Patchetts, Hertfordshire, on 28 January, taking the novice 25 on Anna and Alex Ross-Davies' Fernando and the novice qualifier with Donald McTaggart's Duchess.

It was the seven-year-old Fernando's first show, with Alison saying: "He got eights for his canter work and trot extensions."

"He's really straightforward and easy to ride and, at 16.1hh, is probably one of the only horses I ride who is the right size for me."

On Duchess, Alison added: "She has won everything she's entered and is the safest young horse to ride. You could go anywhere, in any storm, with her and she'd be fine."

Sarah Williams and Jazz II, who is jumping-bred along Ramiro Z lines, shared top spot in the elementary qualifier with Special and Tahley Reeve-Smith, and Sharon Edwards with My Bonanza.

"I've kept Jazz low-mileage but with lots of gentle exposure," said Sarah, who bought the 17.2hh Oldenburg as a three-year-old. "She's genuine, but can panic and be sharp, and there were times when I first got her that my heart was in my mouth."

"Every day she's a different horse to ride and can be amazing, but I knew she was tricky before I bought her and I like quirky mares — I've got three of them. I'm very patient and give them time — they come right in the end."

Julie Hugo took the advanced medium qualifier with Remington. The Kennedy-bred gelding was a last-minute replacement for her original mount.

"Remington just glides across the arena in half pass and his piaffe and passage is coming on well at home," said Julie.

Tina Atkins led the advanced medium 86 on Ann Plumb's Holme Park Karachi. The Essex-based rider has recently returned to competition after giving birth to Daisy in September, and said: "He was relaxed considering he hasn't been out since last April."

BERKSHIRE

By Helen Triggs

ON her first outing in paradressage competition, 15-year-old Rosie

Top mare takes two



David Rumsey takes two on his KWPN elite graded mare Tessa, whom he hopes to breed from in the future

OLDENCRAIG

By Celia Cadwallader

S CORES of plus-70% in both medium classes on 1 February won red ribbons for David Rumsey and his black 17hh Negro mare, Tessa II, in Surrey. The horse was elite graded by the KWPN last year.

David said: "I will eventually breed from her, but I'm enjoying competing her too much now."

"She came to me for training at the end of 2006 and I got on with her well. I'd always said I didn't want a mare, but now I compete four. Tessa's trainable and, if you get her on your side, she'll do anything for you."

David is based at his Walnut Tree House training yard in Charing, Kent.

"I go to Pammy Hutton for help with all my horses. She got me to let go and allow Tessa to carry herself. It's raised her scores by five points," said David.

Golden Cross event rider Sam Penn took both elementaries with the Slice Of Pie syndicate horse, On

A Par, and was second with Sue Becvar's home-bred six-year-old grey, Colo De Cara.

Sam, who trains with judge Mary Ann Horn, was overall winner of the qualifier on 72.42%.

She said: "If you can compete against pure dressage people and get it right, it stands you in good stead at horse trials."

Sam has evented "Pie", a 15.3hh piebald, for two seasons, and they are aiming for the Somerley CIC**.

She added: "Pie has half the legs and twice the heart of most horses. He will jump anything and is very manoeuvrable. Dressage is his weakest phase because he likes to put in a buck."

Another eventer, Claire Lewis's seven-year-old Astral Freddie, scored a double novice win and the day's highest score, 73.22%, ridden by Mark Ruddock.

"Claire is recovering from a broken leg, so I've been sitting on him once a week," said Mark. "We've just got Freddie going and were loathe to break his training. She can now hack him at walk and canter and lunge him from a revolving office chair."

Andrews won both grade IV tests on her new horse, MiddleMarch IV, at the Berkshire College, Maidenhead (26 January).

"I have palsy in my right shoulder, but it's nothing compared with many other para riders," she said. "MiddleMarch is a fantastic, sweet horse who just gets on with it without bothering."

The horse is on loan from Zoë O'Brian, who visits regularly to ride him. Rosie is trained by her mother, Sally, and was also placed on her younger horse, Just Jaz II.

Paralympian Sophie Christiansen has taken a break since the National championships to concentrate on training and finding the areas that need work.

"Competing shows up what the

judges are looking for. And I rode two horses today to help improve how long I can ride for," said Sophie, who won the grade 1a team test on Martini Maybe with 74.12% — the day's highest score — and came second with Gazel, whom she is focusing on for Beijing 2008 team selection.

"I hope more organisers will think about running para classes as there are new riders coming forward all the time," she added.

Student Erin Orford and Diana Barley's home-bred small tour horse, Nirvana, had only competed together twice but won the grade II team test and were third in the grade III test, which was won by Daniel Manning and John Baptist.

"When I'm at uni I get to ride once

or twice a week," said Erin. "It's the first time we've done two tests at the same show, but we need more ring experience so I'm taking every opportunity I can get. He was great in the test — he loves the medium trots and, in fact, was difficult to get back after it."

Rory Williams won both grade 1b tests on his first attempt at the level, riding Lambrusco III and Monty.

"I've been training hard to build strength and core stability as the 1b tests include trot so I've had to learn to sit to Lambrusco — who has quite a bouncy trot," said Rory. H&H

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