

SUNDAY 5 AUGUST

BURTON HAS THE MAGIC TOUCH

Christopher Burton rode a vintage cross-country round to win the £16,000 first prize in the Magic Millions British Open CIC3* on Trisha Rickards' Polystar I. His performance, the fastest of the day (3.2 time penalties) was a vision of effortless fluency and economy as he took bold turns and saw brilliant strides on the 13-year-old black gelding by Polytraum.

"I find you ride better when you're in that position as leader, but Polystar makes me look good – he's unbelievable," said the Australian rider, who also won back in 2015 on TS Jamaimo.

Izzy Taylor also rode beautifully on Be Touchable but had no hope of catching Chris; she finished in second place and takes home £12,000 and the British Open Trophy for the highest placed British rider. "When I look back, I think Be Touchable will be a horse of a lifetime. I love riding him," she said.

In an international line-up, last year's runner-up, Swedish rider Ludwig Svennerstal, was third on Stinger, Emily King, 22, won the best under-25 and best first-time completion prize for finishing fourth on Dargun and Alexander Bragg, who took ninth place, won the young horse prize on new ride Barrichello, a nine-year-old.

Oliver Townend had the consolation of fifth place on Ulises, but he had a run-out at a narrow brush fence on the 2016 winner Cillnabraden Evo when lying third. Tom McEwen also had a mishap; he was lying in sixth place when he was eliminated for missing out a fence, and Ireland's Elizabeth Power didn't even make it onto the course with Samuel Thomas, who bucked her off in the start box.

Peter Phillips, Event Director of the Magic Millions Festival of British Eventing, summed up the weekend, which appropriately produced an Australian winner for a new Australian title sponsor: "It's been a really good weekend of sport, some fantastic, exciting competitions, and some great, worthy new champions.

"We're particularly pleased that the TopSpec Challenge for The Corinthian Cup was so well supported and I think our first running of the RoR/NTF Retraining of Racehorses Championship was a great success.

"Our plan now for 2019 is to make sure that we spread the word of what great entertainment there is here for spectators at The Festival."

Katie Page-Harvey, President of Magic Millions, the first Australian title sponsor of the Festival of British Eventing, was naturally delighted to see a fellow countryman winning in their first year.

"Congratulations to Christopher Burton for winning the Magic Millions British Open and congratulations to all the competitors. Each of you, in concert with your extraordinary horses, are the heart of this event," she said.

"Magic Millions is an Australian thoroughbred auction house, but, like the Festival of British Eventing, a love of equine sport is what drives us. We have been in awe of the athleticism and skill of both horse and rider throughout the weekend.

"Breeding, coupled with elite training and competition is truly international. The competition line-up, the countries of origin both on and off the stunning Gatcombe Park course, have meant we are delighted to be committed to the Festival of British Eventing now and in the coming years. We need to invest and support a diversity of equine sport to ensure the standard of both horse and rider continues to thrive.

"And thank you to the Cotswolds and Gatcombe Park for the sensational weather. We have felt right at home. This is Queensland, summer weather."

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