

Lauren Billys, Kelly Pugh & Ruth Bley win their divisions.

Lauren Billys held a 4.6-point lead before the final cross-country phase of the CIC3* at the Woodside International Horse Trials, and she used every bit of the lead she'd built on the first day to eke out a victory over James Alliston on Tivoli.

Billys and Castle Larchfield Purdy added 4.4 time penalties, to win by just .2 penalties (57.5 to 57.7). Alliston also finished third on Parker (60.6).



CWD, Devoucoux and Equine Insurance of California were the Presenting Sponsors of the Woodside International Horse Trials, held Oct. 2-4.

“I thought it was really a forward and galloping course that required you to be on a very forward but accurate step,” said Billys of Ian Stark’s first international course at Woodside. (The former British Olympian had designed the upper-level courses for the Woodside May and August events too, but they weren’t international competitions.)

“I thought it suited my horse really well—he loves to gallop, and he’s a big-strided horse,” she added.

Billys, of Carmel Valley, has only been riding Castle Larchfield Purdy for a little more than a

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year, but she's made that year a productive one. At last year's Woodside International she won the CIC2*, and this year, they led the CCI3* from start to finish.

Billys and the Irish Sporthorse gelding took the lead in dressage, scoring 53.1 penalties, ahead of Alliston on Tivoli (53.7) and Mary Burke on Prince William (55.7).

"Honestly, I'd been at a bit of a plateau with my dressage, and sometimes when you're trying to make something better you have to break down the good things to make them great. I've been doing that every day, and I feel like it's starting to come together with him. I was really pleased with today," said Billys, 27.

The show jumping would shake up the standings—Burke dropped a rail and received 7 time penalties—allowing Alliston's second horse, the veteran Parker, to slide in to third. Tivoli added 4 time penalties, but it didn't affect his placing. Billys put in a picture-perfect, double-clear round to solidify her lead.

"I tried to be patient in my mind but forward in my riding—I tried to just see the jumps and not hesitate between fences. This has been the hardest phase for me. It's our first double-clear at advanced, so I'm really happy," said Billys.

Alliston was circumspect about his time penalties on Tivoli. "I thought they both jumped really well. The drawback to going first is you don't know the speed, I went what I thought it should be, and it was a bit slow. I could have gone a bit more, but you just don't know," he said.



Alliston and Billys are each based in the U.S., but represent foreign countries—Alliston is from Great Britain, and Billys represents Puerto Rico. Both are using this competition as preparation for a run at the Galway Downs CCI3* on Oct. 29-Nov. 1, but Billys has her eye on a longer

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game.

“I’m trying to get enough points to qualify [as an individual] for the Olympics in 2016. If you get enough point to finish in the top 25 percent of all riders from that region you have a chance to go,” she said.

Points from FEI competitions like Woodside are the only points that count toward Olympic qualification.

Of the 10 CIC3* horses that started cross-country, seven completed the course with no jumping penalties, but only three—Alliston with Tivoli and Parker, and Mary Burke with Prince William—finished without time penalties.

“I thought it was really good, very gallopy, which is nice, and a lot of left-hand corners, right-hand corners, skinnies—every question really,” said Alliston. “The last water complex was something different we haven’t seen at Woodside for a while, so something different for the horses.”

“It felt a lot like you were at the end of your reins, pushing on to the narrows. My horse answered all the questions and I’m proud of him,” said Billys. “I knew I had 10 seconds, and I wanted to be fast, but I always get time penalties--it’s something I’m working on. But, he was a good and came in just under, so I got lucky today. I lost this three-star two years ago by .4, so I was really happy that I made it this time.”

Said Alliston, “I thought the time was quite tight. [My first horse] Parker is really fast usually, and he wasn’t way inside the time like he can be, and since Tivoli isn’t as fast as Parker for sure I had to go really fast.”

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