

SHOW/CIRCUIT: How has this season gone? Are there any achievements that you're especially proud of?

Renee Faulkner: It has been great; we've had quite a few big wins at prestigious events. Obviously, taking out both the 2011 DC Pony Club Eventing Champs was really special. It was a massive field with 32 combinations from across New Zealand taking part. All the best riders were there so it was a real achievement to win.

I have done pretty well in the other disciplines as well. This past season I picked up the North Island Open Dressage Pony of the Year and Reserve Open Dressage Pony of the Year titles. I was also named the Auckland Manukau Dressage Group Level 3 Cushionride Quest winner.

I do a bit of showing as well and have picked up some pleasing results in the Saddle Hunter classes this year.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: Tell us a little bit about the Pony Club Champs. How do you qualify?

Renee Faulkner: It's a two day eventing competition that takes place every year. It's a team event although there are individual placings as well. I was on the Franklin Thames Valley team. We were placed 1st in the dressage, coming a close 3rd overall. A team consists of six riders, eight counting the reserves. Each section whether its DC or A1 has four riders, with one in reserve. The two categories DC and A1 are separated by age. DC is for riders 16yrs and under, and A1 is for riders aged 17 – 21.

I qualified after placing 2nd in the area trails at Springbush earlier this year. I loved being on the team- we even had matching tracksuits and gumboots!!! I have a few more years in the DCs so will hopefully get the opportunity to ride again next year.

It's not the first time my pony Boots and All has won it. He also took it out in 2009 with his previous owner, Chloe Kennedy. It was fantastic that I could help him reclaim the title.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: Is three day eventing your favourite discipline then?

Renee Faulkner: I do some other disciplines, such as round the ring jumping, saddle hunter classes, working hunter and dressage. Showing is fun and it gets them used to a buzzy atmosphere. I prefer jumping more than flatwork though. I recently discovered that eventing is my real passion.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: How long have you owned Boots and All? What do you love so much about him?

Renee Faulkner: I've had my 14 year old 14.2hh pony Boots for almost two years now. He's such a cool pony, he even has his own little fan club that follows our results and cheers us on. He has always been a popular pony so it was a real honour to be offered him. We live quite close to his previous owner Chloe Kennedy and one day her mum, Sharon Kennedy, called us to ask if I would like to try him. We couldn't resist! I had a lesson on him with my instructor Angela Llyod and loved him straight away. He had much bigger movement than my old pony and found it easy to get the collected paces.

It was a massive, quite drawn out decision to buy him as it meant selling my other pony, Miss Attitude, whom I had always planned on doing another Horse of the Year Show with. In the end though, we had to take him home. It's impossible not to fall for him. He is super intelligent and such a personality. He's definitely one of a kind. He has helped some great riders get started, including event rider Lizzie Brown who owned him before Chloe.

I enjoy competing with him so much. He's an amazing jumper, especially across country. He gets into his little mode and you know

Renee Faulkner

WORDS: JENNIFER BOYES

Thirteen year old Renee Faulkner is following in the footsteps of many successful New Zealand riders. She excels in the show ring and the dressage arena but her heart lies in eventing. We caught up with her - fresh from her win at the Pony Club Champs - to find out what's next on the agenda.



that as long as you put him in the right place, he will not stop.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: Do you have a favourite show?

Renee Faulkner: Our favourite show is any that are held at Taupo. Boots just loves the cross country course there. Once you get into the start box, he knows what he's got to do and gets so excited, it's impossible to keep him still! He always jumps well there, he skips around the course and you can tell he's thinking 'I can do this!'

SHOW/CIRCUIT: What are your plans for next year?

Renee Faulkner: I will be moving up to novice level horse trials next year which is really exciting. We will continue to progress with our dressage as well. We had our first elementary start last season and I would like to build on that working at medium level. I plan to compete at the FEI World Dressage Challenge (Elementary) towards the end of the year.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: Do you still train with Angela Llyod? What kinds of things do you work on?

Renee Faulkner: Angela Llyod is my instructor; she helps me with dressage, show jumping and cross country. Whenever we have lessons, we are preparing for my next show. We usually look back at the last event and figure out what needs to be improved, whether the dressage judges have made a comment or there's something I could have done better in the jumping. There is always something to work on.

Angela competes at most events as well, and it's always a huge help to have her there. She'll walk the cross country course with me and give her point of view. I will often walk the course on my own three or more times depending on how nervous I am (I walked the PC Champs course five times!), but that initial walk with Angela is invaluable.

Angela helped the whole team get prepared at Pony Club Champs, starting from two weeks out, right up to the last minute in each discipline. She did an awesome job and definitely had a part to play in our win! She's a great instructor, really easy to get along with and it helps that she knows my pony inside and out. Angela used to teach Chloe so has known Boots for a good long while now.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: It sounds like you get on well with Chloe Kennedy. Does she ever give you advice when you're riding Boots?

Renee Faulkner: I'm good friends with Chloe. We live in the same area and see each other at shows. She knows Boots really well so can give me advice. I'll often ask her opinion on whether I should go for the option in a cross country course or other things I might not be sure about. She still loves him to bits and often comes over to talk to him.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: What do you like to do when you're not competing?

Renee Faulkner: Both Boots and I love going to the beach once a week. His favourite bit is after a ride when he's allowed to roll in the black sand. He rolls and rolls, having a proper scratch and getting absolutely filthy!

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