

Focus
on

In 2018 Rider magazine will be following Event Rider Caroline Harris. Caroline will take us through the horses she rides and produces and will give her top tips and advice for a successful competition season

Galpolio

BACKGROUND

I purchased Galpolio (Leo), a 16.1hh grey gelding, as a four-year-old who had only been ridden a few times. I liked the way he was put together, and the way he moved. As with all my young horses I worked on building him up slowly. I like to take my time in all my young horses' educations, allowing them to develop physically and mentally in their own time. I don't believe in rushing young horses.

TEACHING THE BASICS

As a four-year-old we worked on teaching Leo the basics – the first of which was getting him 'forward' and 'straight'. I don't jump my young horses until they are confident with this first step.

I like to do plenty of hacking as this gets them into the habit of thinking forward and being brave in their environment. To get a young horse in front of the aids I teach them that 'leg means go'. It's important not to use the rein until they understand going forward, otherwise you risk sending mixed signals.

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mini bio

Caroline Harris

For the past five seasons, 27-year-old Caroline Harris, has been based with Australian Olympic medalist Sam Griffiths in Dorset. She has already achieved notable successes, bringing young horses up through the eventing ranks and achieving highly consistent results at international level.

Aboard Billy Bumble, Caroline was never out of the top 10 in international events in 2016 - which included a third in Bicton's CIC2* and 7th in Blenheim's 8/9 year old CIC3*

At any one time, she has around 10 horses in the yard, making a deliberate choice to focus on a small group of horses at any one time to ensure each gets the individual attention it deserves.

Caroline is among the Top 100 ranked event riders in North West Europe and is on the World Class Equine Pathway Programme.



Topshots photography

It's good to work young horses off the track so they don't use the wall of the arena to lean towards. By working on the three quarter line you can really see how straight they are.

ESTABLISHING CONFIDENCE

Leo didn't start eventing until 2016 when he was five. He did a season at BE100, having done one BE90 to start his eventing career in a confident way. He picked up many top ten finishes, but I never pushed him as he was very weak as a five-year-old. We deliberately took our time to build up his confidence. We also stabled him at night, but with turnout all day, as he wasn't super sharp and we found that kept him a little fresher.

All told, he had 10 runs at five, producing consistently good dressage scores averaging in the mid-20s and always going clear cross-country. His best result that year was qualifying for the Five-Year-Old Championships but sadly he couldn't compete at the finals as he has no registered breeding. His career highlight, as a six-year-old, was jumping beautifully around Chatsworth CIC* having only completed three novices previously.

SPOTTED AT SIX

I'm a strong believer in giving my horses a holiday after each event season, so Leo had a couple of months off before coming back for training as a six-year-old. He came back much stronger so we were able to push him a little more to see what he was made of and he stepped up to Novice and 1* level with ease.

Yet again, I wanted to allow him the time to build his confidence at this level – a tactic which paid off. He finished in the top ten (in all bar one Novice class) and felt very confident at this level.

Leo's consistent results did not go un-noticed by a junior rider looking for a new ride who made us an offer. We sold him on knowing he was confident in himself and his job and having assessed that his new rider would be a good match for him. I am a strong believer in making sure the partnership is right so they can go on to achieve great results.

The decision to sell was a tough one as he is a very talented horse who we felt had the ability to achieve some wonderful results. However, we were approached by a wonderful family who would give him a fantastic home and I can't think of anything more rewarding than seeing him go on and achieve fantastic results with his new jockey and hopefully represent the country at junior levels.

Leo's owners had a year and a half of enjoyment watching him progress but we all decided that this home was too good to turn down and have since invested in another horse to continue their involvement.

The horse's new owners are looking forward to competing this stunning looking, well-schooled grey at BE100 level with the main aim of progressing up to junior level. I'm very much looking forward to following their progress. ▶

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