



OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA SYDNEY CDI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Equine athletes prove their fitness at OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA Sydney CDI3*

Equine athletes prepared for Australia's biggest international dressage event today, with fitness inspections held for CDI competitors ahead of the start of competition in the OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA Sydney CDI3*.

The 'trot-ups' are held for all those horses competing in the CDI 3*, CDI-Y and Under 25 competitions, with the aim of the standardised horse inspection protocol being to ensure each horse is fit to compete.

One rider who knows the importance of horse fitness and well-being is Maree Tomkinson, who travelled her very promising horse Donna Elena up from Victoria to take part in this year's events.

Competing at the forefront of the sport for a number of years, Tomkinson discovered Donna Elena as a four-year-old while competing in Germany in the World Equestrian Games on her previous horse, Diamantina.

"She was an orphaned foal bred by Dorthe M Jepson of DMJ horses and purchased through Johannes Westendarp," Tomkinson explained.

"She flew home with us and then after winning the five-year-old and six-year-old at Dressage With the Stars with the record highest score so far, we went back to Europe for the Rio Olympic campaign with Diamantina and the World Young horse championships with Donna."

Experienced at taking horses around Australia and around the world, Tomkinson said keeping each animal's routine the same was very important for their well-being.

"Some of the most important things to remember when travelling horses is to try and keep their routine the same as much as possible no matter where you may be," she explained.

"Try to feed the same feed they are used to at the same time of day they are used to at home, try to regulate their temperature and not let them get too hot. It is better to be too cool than too hot.

"Try to manage stress levels..... travel with another horse, preferably a friend they already know and try to have people they are used to handling them, not strangers. I always try to travel with my own horses, they trust me and this gives them confidence."

Horses must be fit and healthy prior to any travel, with temperatures taken regularly "so that you know what is normal for them and you will be onto it immediately if anything changes", she said.

"Diamantina was always a very stoic horse and never outwardly shows if she is unwell. Knowing her normal temp is 37.7 can be very helpful," Tomkinson said.

While Diamantina is now retired from the sport, Tomkinson still has six Grand Prix horses currently in work, four of which she rides every day.

Donna Elena is the youngest of the six, and Tomkinson said she has "great hopes" for the horse's future.



"My feeling is that she will be a super horse for the future of the sport," she said. "She really has no weakness, she has super gaits, a wonderful character and outstanding rideability and trainability.

"She is almost nine years old now, so still very young. With more balance and competition experience she will be a force to be reckoned with.

"Already she has had over 72 per cent three times from international judges so we are super excited to see what she will be capable of in a year or so.

"I am very proud that I train all my own horses, having them from babies all the way to GP just adds another level of satisfaction to any success we may be privileged to achieve.

"I believe in Donna like no other horse I have ever trained. She is destined for greatness, a seriously international horse. We are very excited about what the future holds for Donna and looking forward to being part of her amazing journey."

The OTTO SPORT AUSTRALIA Sydney CDI3* takes place from today until Saturday, May 4. Tickets are available from the venue at SIEC.

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