

COURSE CHAT

■ THERE were only five show jumping clears in the World Cup qualifier. Apart from the first three in the prizes and Marie Ryan, just Clare Chamberlayne and Astronave left all the poles up, for the second year running. Sadly, a glance-off at the brush corner at fence 18 spoilt a fast, fluent cross-country round.

■ IT wasn't Andrew Hoy's day — he was eliminated in the show jumping on Classy Touch for going before the bell. It can happen to anyone, but do the words "Bettina" and "Athens" spark any memories?

■ THE Busker, Val Gingell's grey who won the under-25 championship at Bramham with Phoebe Buckley and finished eighth at Burghley with Jeanette Brakewell, has been retired.

"His tendon flared up after Poplar, and we decided to call it a day," said Phoebe. "He's having a nice time in the field beating up the youngsters and telling them tall stories about his glory days."

■ "GRAND old man" award goes to Over To You. Now 19, and with more than 2,000 British Eventing points to his name, Jeanette Brakewell's unmistakable liver chestnut bounded round the CIC*** with a double clear and 16 time-faults to finish sixth. He is entered for Badminton — it will be his eighth visit.



■ RODNEY Powell had a few dodgy moments at the water on Langarth Darcy, third in the World Cup qualifier. The commentator took the mickey, to the delight of the crowd, but Rodney gave back as good as he got (above).

■ APART from the ubiquitous Oli Townend, Friday's other intermediate section went to Sam York and Skidaddle. Sam works full-time at Nottingham Trent University as an equine lecturer, and rides four horses before and after work.

She said: "I've worked my pants off with Skidaddle because he's very nervous, but I hope to come back to Norfolk for the CCI** at Houghton."

They are also heading for the national winter dressage championships this weekend at elementary level.