

Ruth Edge and Two Thyme were the first of the top 10 dressage finishers to bow out, with a fall at the Hexagon Hedge. Boondoggle (equal ninth), ducked right at the corner in Huntsman's Close, while the relatively innocuous Outlander Bank (18) claimed Kai Ruder and Le Prince Des Bois. There were no other faulters here all day.

Sir Percival III decanted Francis Whittington at the Alterian Staircase (24), Francis ruing holding the contact for a split second too long which caused his mount to trip up the first step.

Neil Spratt's Upleadon skipped right at the corner in Huntsmans Close prompting the Kiwi to pull up.

Seacookie was a non-starter, William feeling that the part-Trakehner was not quite right behind during his warm up.

The cross-country leaderboard, therefore, looked very different from its dressage counterpart, only Comanche and Euroridings Butts Leon remaining from the original line up. New names included German Simone Deitermann and her Bockelo 2009 runner-up Free Easy NRW, plus Spring Along, Lenamore, Rathmoyle King and Hippolyte.

Horseware Bushman was now in the running too, his Irish jockey Sam Watson joining an exclusive club of four — Nicola Wilson (Opposition Buzz), Frenchman Benjamin Massie (Haston D'Elpegere) and Stan Wynne Morris (Just Appeal) — in beating the optimum deadline. Sadly for Stan, Just Appeal was a no show at Monday's final trot-up, where, during a dramatic 30 minutes, the ground jury sent five horses to the holding box. Three of these were not represented — McFly, the ride of Nicola Malcolm, Sara Burdess's Shiver St George and Annabel Wigley's Black Drum — while Little Tiger and Iman Du Golfe were passed on reinspection.

An expensive round

Part-time accountant Simone Dietermann was a significant casualty of the final phase, an expensive three fences down causing her disappearance from the business end.

Mary King's single mistake gave Paul Tapner a little breathing space but he could only afford one dislodged pole.

RADIO quotes:

● **Carl Hester on Miners Frolic's flying change:**
"I thought Tina [Cook]'s leg was a little tight then. But as I'm not between her call and the horse's side I wouldn't really know."

● **Pammy Hutton on the first day of dressage:**
"I have to say that the New

Zealand judge is being a bit cranky. Someone give her a glass of wine at lunchtime."

● **Commentator Steve Wild on Lenamore finishing with only three time penalties after being down on the clock:**
"She must have hired a helicopter to get back."

● **Steve Wild on Emily Galbraith's trot-up outfit:**
"That's a jacket and a half. It

looks like a zebra crossing coming at you."

● **Matt Ryan on Andrew Nicholson:**
"We call him the iron man but usually not to his face. I'm not sure he appreciates it."

● **Matt Ryan on the Irish:**
"I said yesterday about them being a bit rough around the edges in the dressage. I've since heard that a few are looking for me."

With his usual trainer, Ros Morgan (née Bevan), away, her sister Lynne proved an able stand-in, assisting the Aussie in the collecting ring. In the arena proper both of Paul's horses left every fence intact to record two out of the total of 14 clear rounds.

Paul put that achievement down to the Bevans' help — particularly Ros, whom he went to for help last year after Lahmühlen.

"It's made the most amazing difference," said the new Badminton champion. "I went in the ring knowing that I could go clear. This horse is such an old legend. He's been placed in every four-star he's contested, except Kentucky.

"But", continued Paul with a message to Australia's selectors planning its WEG team, "I hope to be able to tick that box at the end of this season."

Alexander battles through the pain

ALEXANDER Peternell piloted Tigers Eye II into 38th place, a result made all the more impressive considering the first timer was nursing a painful torn medial collateral ligament, which is one of four ligaments that stabilise the knee joint.

"I was thrown off a horse at home three weeks ago," explained Alex, the first South African to compete at Badminton. "X-rays showed there was no bone fragment and my pragmatic doctor advised me not to ride here but he realised I probably wasn't going to listen."

Alexander is based in Chippenham with his wife, Alice, a grand prix dressage rider, and their three-year-old son. The 29-year-old has always ridden and admitted that the logistics of having enough good horses to fly to the UK — a trip that takes 11 hours — to compete, as well as raising the funding to do so, is a major handicap for eventers based in his native country.

"Eventing over there is worlds apart from here," added Alexander. He joined the show jumping circuit in Germany and The Netherlands, coming to the UK 10 years ago and turning his hand to eventing in 2004.



Where it all went wrong



HSBC Hexagon Hedge (FENCE 17)

Horse falls: 2
Rider falls: 2

The HSBC Hexagon Hedge (also known as the Vicarage Vee) led to the demise of day one dressage leader Ruth Edge's Two Thyme, who pecked on landing and unseated his jockey.

"Maybe I should have pushed him a bit more and maybe he could have stretched a bit more. It could have gone both ways," said Ruth.

Clifton Lush also left his jockey on the floor at this old Badminton favourite; Italian rider Gianluca Gardini fell from Lion Dancer (left), while Rachel Gough was decanted from Bow House Mandalin (inset) when he veered past the skinny brush.