

Congratulations to Fran Lupoli on her successful selection on to the Talent Pathway Squad 2018

Read Fran's report below and find out how it was done.

Congratulations from us all at Mid Surrey, what an achievement Well Done.

I applied for the Pony Club Talent Pathway after reading an email from Gina in December 2017 which told us all about Talent Pathway. The scheme is for Members who want to develop their ability in Show Jumping, Dressage and Eventing and offers:

Area Training Days for riders to get tips and advice from top class coaches

Regional Selection Days where participants will get training and feedback to help their future development in their chosen sport

National Camp where those riders chosen from the selection day's work with sport-specific coaches, and benefit from both mounted and dismounted sessions

Six Members are then selected to form the Pony Club Talent Pathway Squad 2018 benefitting from support of an experienced mentor, a training bursary plus further training opportunities.

It seemed like an amazing opportunity to get tips and advice from top-level coaches and perhaps progress to National Camp to work with showjumping coaches and benefit from excellent mounted and dismounted training sessions.

At the beginning of March, I received an email to say I had been accepted for a selection day and had a place at Merrist Wood College Arena, on 12th April 2018, with Alison Craig & Ernest Dillon. I was very excited about the selection day and honestly thought that we wouldn't be selected, but would have an amazing learning experience. However, after a brilliant session with Alison and Ernest where I received some great advice and fantastic feedback, I was delighted to discover on 3rd May that I had been selected to attend National Camp from Friday 29th June to Sunday 1st July!

We arrived at camp at Solihull Riding Club after a very hot, five hour journey (most of it spent on the M25 in Friday rush hour traffic!), but the venue was lovely and Ben's stable was beautifully clean and all ready for him and he settled in straight away.

The next morning, we had a lovely breakfast in the café and I was given a Talent Pathway polo shirt and gilet. I then had a dismounted balance session to work on my posture and balance which was really interesting, followed by a goal setting session, showjumping session, flatwork session and finally, a video feedback session. Each session was very informative with brilliant coaches and I learnt so much!

Saturday night was BBQ night and we all (including mums and dads) sat down to a delicious meal followed by hilarious unmounted games in the barn. It was such a fun evening and everyone was very friendly.

Sunday brought a mounted balance session, which was amazing, followed by an individual riding session. I was given so much valuable advice by fantastic coaches!

Coming away from the weekend, I really felt that there were so many amazing riders there that we wouldn't stand a chance of being selected, but I was so happy to have been a part of it and to have experienced and benefited from such a high level of coaching and advice.

Then, just a week after Camp, I received an email to say that I had been selected as one of six for the Pony Club Talent Pathway Squad 2018. I'm so, so happy for Ben and me. It was definitely worth all the hard work and I can't wait to see what the year ahead brings.