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TWEET OF THE DAY

*I love the Village so much!
Cause the Village is where
everything comes together. :)*

@chanrara
Clara Chan, Student Reporter



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GALLOP, TROT, TRIP AND TUMBLE

*Most riders at the Singapore Turf Club
yesterday were still getting used to their horses*

BY CANDICE NEO

Equestrians struggled to keep their mounts under rein yesterday at the Jumping Round One team event. Many competitors also incurred penalties as their horses knocked down the fences during the jump.

Kazakhstan's Timur Patarov, 17, even fell off after his horse, Chatham Park Rosie, tripped over a fence. He was disqualified as a result.

There were 12 fences that each pair had to jump over. Knocking down one fence earned the rider a penalty of four points.

For the first time in Olympic history, riders competed on assigned horses as the Games' Organising Committee felt that this would make the competition as fair as possible. Their horses were determined in a draw on August 14.

Athletes had just over three days to train with the Australian thoroughbreds, and many were still trying to keep them under control during the competition.

"It was a rather difficult horse," said 17-year-old Nicola Philippaerts from Belgium. He chalked up a four-point penalty while riding on Gippsland Girl.

For others like Panamanian athlete Alejandra Ortiz, 17, the lack of chemistry between rider and steed was to be expected, given the short practice time.

"I think it was very good," she said, adding that this could be one

of her best performances. Alejandra received a total penalty of 8 points.

Two competitors also had to compete with horses that had been changed just 24 hours before the competition. Chilean Alberto Schwalm's previous mount, Teddy Waffles, was injured while Italian Valentina Isoardi's Noblewood Cinzano was too strong for her to handle.

During the timed competition, equestrians had to guide their horses over obstacles of up to 1.2 metres in height.

As jumps were attempted, the audience as though in unison, held their breaths. Unsuccessful jumps were met with groans of disappointment while triumphs received cheers and shouts of encouragement.

But the home crowd reserved their biggest cheers for local athlete, 18-year-old Caroline Chew. As she rode Gatineau into the arena, the stands erupted with support.

While the Asian team is eight points out of medal contention, Chew believes that the competition is still wide open. "It will be a true test of all the horses' fitness as the competition wears on."

Europe, Australasia and Africa are currently tied in the lead with four penalties.

The equestrians will have another practice session today before the second round of the team event on Friday. Individual competition begins next week.



ABOVE: Marcelo Chirico of Uruguay heaves a sigh of relief after completing his jumping routine without incurring any penalties. In the stands, the South American officials cheer wildly. PHOTO: LAM YARN

LEFT: Patarov Timur of Kazakhstan falling off Chatham Park Rosie when attempting a jump.

PHOTO: XINHUA/SYOGOC-POOL/ DUAN ZHUOLI

"It will be a true test of all the horses' fitness as the competition wears on."

- Caroline Chew, Singaporean Equestrian