

Gould back on international stage

Dressage

RISING Billingshurst dressage rider Andrew Gould admits his call up to the Great Britain squad may have come too late to earn a shot at Olympic glory.

Gould had a double celebration last week, as after a dominant weekend at the Addington Premier League, he was selected to ride for Great Britain in France next month, following a three year absence from the international stage.

On Natasha Mitchell's Santorini Hit, Gould was first and second in two Prix St George classes and on Mandy Crouch's Wild Angel, he achieved two second place finishes in her Prix St George classes.

And although Gould is looking ahead to competing at the highest level, believes he has missed his chance to get into the London 2012 reckoning.

He said: "It would be too early for this horse (Santorini Hit) because he is nine, and it is 11 or 12 year old horses that go to the Olympics.

"I would need to try and get another horse which is ten years old now, and that would be a new combination.

"You would need to be going out to international competition throughout the year and scoring very high results and

then start next year winning.

"To get into the team now would be very hard, there are a lot of combinations which have been successful this year and the team is already made up.

"But I have events such as the European Championships to aim for.

"I did not expect to do as well as I did at Addington.

"I haven't competed internationally since losing my horses Numero Uno and Cadre Noir three years ago, so I am really happy to be back at this level again. I have some really good horses now coming through

that I have been working with for some time and I think they have an exciting future."

Santorini Hit is a new horse to Andrew, which made his performance, in a discipline which man and horse have to combine perfectly, even more impressive. He commented: "You have to consider the horse's character and how it moves.

"The horses have to have natural quality to start with, and this horse has a lot of natural energy and it's a case of putting those two together:

"He has the right qualities you need."

