

Olympics, I've missed the friendships of the Eventing world and if I could turn up again at Badminton, I would. But I don't regret it. I'm going forward in the racing world, watching horses I've bred going onto the track with some nice successes. The last 12 months have been difficult for the racing industry with the economic downturn, but the industry is very strong, with a lot of good prize money out there. People are finding going to the races is great entertainment.

Your career wasn't all about successes. What were the low points? The Sydney Olympics was a disaster. My horse Chesterfield died of a heart attack before we were to compete – it was a big blow. Welton Envoy broke a bone in his leg, which interrupted the training. The whole New Zealand team had setbacks and you have to get over it – it happens to all teams at times.

How do you see the future of equestrian sport in New Zealand? What I see from experience is that there are young riders who are focused and work hard, just as hard as my generation, while some are spoilt and distracted, wanting the easy road. Hard work usually pays dividends. With any sport, there is a level of talent and natural affinity, but nobody achieves easily without commitment and sacrifices. It's geographically difficult for young competitors looking to international competition, miles away from the world's major events. They have to support themselves overseas. But New Zealand holds its edge internationally as a talented nation and success for our riders will come back. It's not just about throwing money at the sport – it's about the New Zealand way of performing beyond expectations. I was at the Pony Club Championships recently, held on a tip-top course to a huge turnout. The sport is still in good shape with a bright future. ■

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