

Another classic year for William?

Last year was one of the most successful of William Fox-Pitt's career. We catch up with him as he prepares for the first HSBC FEI Classics™ event of this year to find out about 2011, 2012 and whether even the best get nervous



Raising the trophy for the HSBC FEI Classics™ was a proud moment for William last year and a great end to the season



William Fox-Pitt and Macchiato at Badminton

AFTER winning the HSBC FEI Classics™ for the second time at a gripping final in November 2010, William Fox-Pitt had just a few weeks off before he began getting ready for the 2011 HSBC series.

In January, William was already thinking about the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials.

"It's a four-month job getting the horses fit and prepared. It wouldn't be different for any other four-star — the horses need to be in work that far out so that they are absolutely prepared."

So how does he go about getting those horses ready? In an average day William will spend eight hours in the saddle riding between eight and 10 horses.

A truly talented sportsperson makes their sport look easy and that is exactly what William will probably do this weekend as he takes on one of the most

challenging courses of the HSBC FEI Classics™.

However despite his superhuman talent we can prove he is normal, as he confirms: "I do get nervous — every rider does. What I have done is learnt how to deal with nerves by turning the reaction into good energy. They differ too according to the event, what I'm doing, where I am living and so on. You just have to remind yourself that everybody is nervous, and you wouldn't be normal if you weren't."

William has a plan for what he would like 2011 to look like. However, this year he is thinking a year on already: "Everyone is thinking about 2012. The Olympics is the highlight to any athlete's career, it is what everyone dreams of. That said, if you don't win a medal at the Olympics but win Badminton you've still had a good year."

By supporting events and riders at all levels, HSBC is working to raise the profile of eventing, giving the riders the recognition they deserve.

William says: "It is just fantastic having a brand with the size and profile of HSBC involved in our

sport. The exposure it can give through the HSBC FEI Classics™ series is invaluable and is certainly pushing the sport in the right direction."

A couple more questions:

Q. Proudest moment of 2010?

A. I had a great season so there are lots of reasons to feel proud but the win in Kentucky was a great start and put Cool Mountain on the map. At Burghley, Seacookie had a fantastic result

(second). Then in Pau it was great to have Navigator back to his best and putting in such a top performance to secure the HSBC FEI Classics™ title for me. It was

such a close and tense final that it was a huge relief to win it.

Q. Aims for this year?

A. Winning the HSBC FEI Classics™ would be top of my list again, but other than that I hope that the horses stay fit and will give me a fair chance to have a crack at another great season.

“If you don't win a medal at the Olympics but win Badminton you've still had a good year”

What is the HSBC FEI Classics™?

First introduced in 2008, the HSBC FEI Classics™ is the pinnacle of international eventing. It is an ongoing international series that includes five four-star three-day events that take place in the UK, USA, Germany and France throughout the season:

- 22-25 APRIL**
MITSUBISHI MOTORS BADMINTON HORSE TRIALS (GBR)
- 28 APRIL - 1 MAY**
ROLEX KENTUCKY THREE DAY EVENT (USA)
- 16-19 JUNE**
LUHMÜHLEN CC**** (GER)
- 1-4 SEPTEMBER**
THE LAND ROVER BURGHLEY HORSE TRIALS (GBR)
- 12-16 OCTOBER**
LES ETOILES DE PAU (FRA)

Riders gain points at each event. The rider with the highest number of points at the end of the season is the champion

► Download the free Badminton iPhone App produced in association with HSBC. It will give you all event details live and straight to the palm of your hand.



William at Badminton last year with his two sons, Thomas (left) and Oliver

