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Amanda, Sam eye world games

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AMANDA Ross staked a strong claim for selection for the World Equestrian Games in Kentucky after winning the Camperdown Horse Trials riding Koyuna Tora Bora.

And Cranbourne rider Sam Griffiths, Victoria's leading contender for selection, won the International Three Star CIC at the Belton Horse Trials in England last week.

Ross was second after dressage, behind Megan Jones on Kirby Park Allofasudden, but with a fast clear round across country and a clear showjumping round, Ross and her talented grey mare went on the win.

It was a good start to the season and Tora Bora's first competition since the Adelaide championships last November, where the pair was placed fourth in the Four-Star, the hardest test in Australia.

Ross began training Koyuna Tora Bora nearly three years ago and fell in love with her.

Ross's parents and several of her students combined funds to buy her, with the ultimate goal of her competing at the 2012 Olympics but the strong performances have raised hopes for this year's World Equestrian Games.

The pair head to Sydney for the HSBC FEI World Cup qualifier.

If they make it, there will be many delighted supporters, as Ross was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005, at the age of 31.

She kept competing, even during treatment, and now promotes awareness of the disease and assists in fund-raising activities for the Breast Cancer Network Australia.

Tora Bora usually competes with the Breast Cancer Council's Pink Lady logo stencil on her rump.

Meanwhile, Griffiths, now based in England, rode his top horse Happy Times to victory at Belton.

He scored 45.9 in the dressage phase, added just 3.2 time penalties on the cross country and jumped a super clear round in the jumping to win the event with 49.1 penalties from fellow Australian Paul Tapner riding Stormhill Michael.

Tapner finished on 51.8 penalties, adding 6.4 cross country time penalties to his dressage score of 43.2.

Riding his second horse Inonothing, Tapner finished sixth on 58.1 penalties.

Earlier in the month, he had been placed first and second at the Brunham Market CIC Three Star, confirming that Australian eventing riders are world class.

Tapner will compete at the Badminton Horse Trails in England this weekend.

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Big win: Amanda Ross on Koyuna Tora Bora at Camperdown. Picture: Derek O'Leary



Star role: Sam Griffiths shows his Belton trophies.

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