Review FOURWAYS

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Rainer Korber riding Back on Track Clouny 3 clears the last fence in the jump-off which would seal their win of the 2019 South African 1.50m Showjumping Derby. *Photo: Daniella Potter*

No clowning for Clouny

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A clear in the first round and a clear in the jump-off earned Rainer Korber riding Back on Track Clouny 3 top spot on the winner's podium in the 2019 South African 1.50m Showjumping Derby.

The class is renowned as a highlight on the equestrian calendar and, again this year, it played out in front of an enormous audience at Kyalami Equestrian Park's Bob Charter Arena. As is the case every year, the class culminated the South African Derby show and kicked off at 2pm on 6 October.

There were 22 horse-and-rider combinations who qualified for the big class, including last year's winner, Kelly O'Connor on her horse Hera Van De Bien who was the highest qualifier.

Liam Stevens riding Nissan Disa's Wanda kicked off the class on a hugely promising note by riding through the finish flags with a clear round. Number 3 on the programme running order, Korber and Back on Track Clouny 3, then followed in Stevens' footsteps, also securing a clear round. The seventh competitor to tackle the course, Carl Boonzaaier riding Callaho Casparon, was the only other competitor to ride clear.

O'Connor and Hera Van De Bien could not replicate their clear round from last year, incurring an unfortunate four faults.

So it came down to the men in the jump-off round.

Stevens riding Nissan Disa's Wanda was the first competitor to go and set the bar high with a quick pace, but unfortunately, he incurred four faults after knocking a fence. The pressure was on for Korber and Back on Track Clouny 3 to ride clear and set a pace, seeing that Boonzaaier was hot on his heels. Korber did just that, riding clear in 44.75 seconds.

Boonzaaier's task was set. He had to jump clear and in a quicker time than Korber to snitch the win.

But it was not his day: He knocked a pole and had a refusal at the last fence, which meant he would finish third behind Stevens in second place and Korber in first. The three riders who ended the first round on four faults tied in fourth place. They were O'Connor riding Hera Van De Bien, Dominey Alexander riding Athena VI and Ronnie Lawrence riding Avis Gillian Van Orshof.

There was a beaming smile on Korber's face as he entered the arena for the final time on Back on Track Clouny 3 for the prize-giving ceremony. O'Connor and Hera Van De Bien's efforts from throughout the show were rewarded too as this horse-and-rider combination received the Victor Ludorum for the 1.50m showjumping class.

The top-placed riders set off on a lap of honour around the Bob Charter Arena, led by Korber to whoops, cheers and loud applause from the spectators who will surely be back to experience the thrills and spills of this class – and the whole show – next year. Details: kyalamiparkclub.co.za