

LOCAL NEWS

Castleton jouster places third at nationals

PHOTOS BY SUZANNE ATKINSON

Richard Element of Castleton was competing in the Canadian National Heavy Armour Jousting championships in Georgetown over the long weekend. These photos are from Sunday's competition where he finished fourth. The event was to wrap up Monday.

BY SUZANNE ATKINSON
Special to The Colborne Chronicle

GEORGETOWN - Castleton's Richard Element finished third in the Canadian National heavy armour jousting championship over the past weekend. But hes hoping the lessons he learned at the four day tournament will help him fare even better at the world championships in London, Ontario in two weeks.

"When I get knocked back on the saddle, I should just relax. I shouldn't try to get up so fast. I should try to get my balance and let the horse bring me back up," says the 42-year old who regularly gallops down a runway wearing almost 95 pounds of 14-18 gauge steel armour, peering through a

1/4"-slot with the very real aim of knocking his opponent off his horse. Trick is, that's the other gu's goal as well.

"It was for real. It was a pretty good tournament," said Mr. Element who was unhorsed during Saturday's round but came back to claim third in both the heavy armour joust and the games division. It was the first real jousting competition he has finished. Previously he has had to take at least one round off because of injury. Canada's jousters also regularly compete in shows.

Mr. Element, a nuclear engineer who works on Candu reactors, got into real jousting four years ago after he was told he was too old for the show stuff. He is in his third season of

JOUST IN TIME



The moment of contact during jousting match.

professional jousting, second in the heavy armour division and was up against five other competitors at the Canadian championship at Georgetown Fair. He rides an 11-year old Suffolk Punch-Shire cross named Henry.

"Now that I've been doing it for a while I,m starting to know who does what," he said Tuesday from his farm just outside of Castleton. "I watch the video to try to figure out what I did wrong. Usually it's subtle things," said Mr. Element.

The event was won by

perennial champion Shane Adams who holds camps on jousting. Finishing second was Rob Coombes of Durham, Ontario.

"A guy like Shane can collect his seat and keep his lance on target," says Mr. Element.

"The hits are big. They're shocking," says Mr. Element who is now sporting cuts above his eye and a goosegg on his forehead after being unhorsed on Saturday. He landed head first.

"You're trying to collect yourself right before," says Mr. Element. "You know it (the hit) is coming and you're trying to keep your lance on target."

In heavy armour jousting opponents gallop full speed with lances pointed at each other's breastplates. They score one point for a hit, three for a broken tip,

five points for a broken lance and eight points if they "unhorse" their opponent.

"Shane was bang on against me all weekend. It,s exhausting enough when you have to take the big hits. It sucks all the energy right out of you. You get exhausted just staying in the saddle going down the list," says Element. "He (Adams) knows the more he hits you the more likely he is to take you off."

Next stop is the world heavy armour jousting championship at London, Ontario's new Agriplex on June 4-5.

On June 18 they will take part in a show at the Black Prince Winery in Prince Edward County which will be a fundraiser for Northumberland's Victorian Order of Nursing.