



Keeping up tradition: Izzy Taylor, whose great-aunt won Badminton 55 years ago, has a strong chance on KBIS Briarlands Matilda

Can the British regain Badminton?

There have only been two home victories in the past 10 runnings of the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials, a competition that, despite constant reinvention in the sport, has managed to remain the ultimate quest for the world's best riders. Kate Green assesses the form

Best of British

THE 10th Duke of Beaufort famously started Badminton in 1949 to help British riders prepare better for the Olympics, after a disastrous showing at the 1948 Games. The team's failure to achieve a single clear cross-country round in Rio last year had echoes of that humiliation, leading some commentators to suggest a return to a more ambitious preparation for championships. Here are the riders who should restore home pride at Badminton.

Success came early to **Oliver Townend** when he won Badminton in 2009, at the age of 26; he's now the finished horseman. Hugely competitive and often finding the key to enigmatic horses, he's the Briton

most likely to get in the way of German maestro Michael Jung.

It could be argued that leaving superb horsewoman **Kristina Cook** out of the Rio team was a mistake (she was reserve). Despite a plethora of medals and a European title, Badminton success has eluded her and many hope she can go better than her seventh place in 2016.

Somerset farrier **Alexander Bragg** is an interesting entrant—he took to the sport relatively late, riding his girlfriend's (now wife's) horses and sprang to prominence last year with fifth place at Pau, France's premier event, on the enormous (nearly 18hh) Zagreb, having been second after dressage to no less than Jung.

Stylish hunting lady **Izzy Taylor**, whose great-aunt Anneli Drummond-Hay won in 1962, has had terrible luck, but there's surely a big win in her. Watch out for her pale-blue colours aboard feisty little mare KBIS Briarlands Matilda, owned by Heythrop hunt secretary Guy Avis.

Gemma Tattersall (third last year) and **Kitty King** were members of that ill-fated Rio team, but they both have a great chance to establish their true four-star form and rising stars **Ros Canter** and **Tom McEwen** are expected to be prominent in the final line-up.