

BADMINTON (GBR) BEST EVENT

EVENTING



Sam Griffiths smiled as if he will never stop again. In May 2014 he won his first Badminton title. "When I was a little boy I used to wait for the tapes of Badminton to arrive in Australia so that I could sit down and watch them. I used to dream about riding here, so to come and win is the culmination of that dream." After the dressage, the 42-year-old Australian and his horse Paulank Brockagh were far away from the title, placed 25th. The cross country course was a "real four star course," as second-placed Oliver Townend called it. And that is what Badminton is known for. After the cross country day Griffiths already had climbed up the steps to fifth place. The thrilling finale in the jumping, with no horse jumping a clear round, brought the close decision to an end: Griffiths grabbed the victory.

It was the 10th Duke of Beaufort whose idea it was to hold an event in his Gloucestershire park in order to allow British riders to train for future international events. He suggested that an annual competition should be organised on his estate, to give riders experience and assist in the training and selection of an Olympic team. The Badminton Estate has been in the possession of the Beaufort family since 1608. The first event was held in Badminton in 1949. When Golden Willow won the first Badminton competition, there were 22 starters from two countries: Britain and Ireland. In 1959 it was decided to run the Trials in two sections, the Great and Little Badminton, although both sections jumped the same course. This was due to the number of entries. In 2014, some 65 years after the premiere, 85 horses were on the starting list, some more were hoping to get a start place on the waiting list. Only 32 pairs could finish the course in 2014. No question – Badminton is one of the most challenging courses of the world. The very first European Championships were staged at Badminton in 1953. Badminton House is nowadays the family home of the 11th Duke of Beaufort. He is President of the Horse Trials and was himself a very successful rider in the sport, being placed second here in 1959.

For the first ten years, the dressage and show-jumping arenas were sited on the old cricket ground in front of Badminton House. Torrential rain in 1959 turned the park into a sea of mud and the arenas and trade stands were moved to the present site. In 1956, the steeplechase course was moved from the Didmarton point-to-point course to the site at the Slaits, where it stayed until 2006. Since then the Trials have been 'short format' without the steeplechase. The start and finish were moved into the main arena in 2003 to make it even more attractive for the spectators. The Trials were first televised in 1956. In 2011 there were 15 cameras covering the event.

Final Standings

1. CCI Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials	63%
2. CCI Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials	24%
3. CCI/CIC Luhmühlen	6%