

Francis Whittington, 47
GBR

Francis Whittington, 47, competed and completed here last year with DHI Purple Rain, finishing 19th. He rides the same horse this year.

Francis learnt to ride at his mother's riding school and began competing with the Eridge branch of the Pony Club. Aged 16 he was selected for the British Pony squad with Northdown Nova and represented Great Britain at the 1993 Pony European Championships in Hasselt, Belgium, winning team silver and individual gold. He was later runner-up in the British Young Rider Championships in 1997.

Francis, a British Eventing accredited trainer, left school to pursue a career in horses. He also trained as an equine dentist and after practising for 10 years decided to concentrate on eventing full-time. He now runs his yard in East Sussex. He completed his first CCI5* at Burghley in 2001 and in 2006 completed his first Badminton with Osh Kosh.

A reserve for the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games, two years later in 2014 Francis won his first CCI4*-L at Blenheim riding Easy Target. That same year he became the British Open Champion. In 2015 he was an individual member of the British squad for the 2015 European Championships at Blair Castle, again with Easy Target.

Francis is married to Samantha and the couple has a 15-year-old son, Max, who is a keen showjumper and eventer, and a 10-year-old daughter, Amber. His younger sister Bryony has also competed at four-star level.

DHI Purple Rain (Arthos R- Wynona VWG's (Niveau)) (aka Prince) is a 14-year-old Dutch-bred KWPN gelding. He is by the international showjumper Arthos R out of a mare by Niveau. He was acquired from Ian Woodhead as a five-year-old and has been produced by Francis.