

Nicolas Touzaint, 44

FRA

French rider Nicolas Touzaint (44) and his ride Absolut Gold HDC are making their Defender Burghley debut this year.

Nicolas is no stranger to five-star level, though – he is the only Frenchman to-date to win Badminton, which he clinched in 2008 with Hildago De L'Île. He also won the first running of Pau's CCI5* in 2007 on the same horse. He was also his partner at the 2012 Olympics, the 2006 World Equestrian Games and the 2005 Europeans, where France won team silver

He is from a family steeped in equestrianism. His father Jean-Yves Touzaint and uncle Thierry Touzaint both represented France at the 1976 Olympics and were team gold medallists at the alternative Olympics – put on because most riders boycotted the Olympics in Moscow – in 1980 in Fontainebleau. Thierry is now the French eventing national coach and team manager.

At the young age of 20, Nicolas participated at his first Olympic Games in Sydney and at 22, he became the youngest European champion in eventing history with Galan De Sauvagère in Punchestown, Ireland in 2003. He repeated this performance on the same horse in 2007 at Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy. He also took the World Cup Final in Malmö, Sweden in 2006 on him. The pair also contributed to France's team gold at the Athens Olympics in 2004, finishing eighth individually.

Absolut Gold HDC and Nicolas won team bronze at the 2021 Olympics and 2023 Europeans, with top-six finishes individually on both occasions.

In 2024, Nicolas rode Diabolo Menthe at the Paris Olympics, winning team silver.

Absolut Gold HDC (Grafenstolz-Belle Meralaise (Verglas)), owned by Haras Des Coudrettes, is a French-bred Selle Français-registered 14-year-old gelding, who was bred by Philippe Patenotte. Absolut Gold is a double championship team bronze medallist and comes to his first five-star with super-strong four-star form, rarely finishing outside the top 10. He won team bronze and finished fifth individually at last year's European Eventing Championships. He was also part of the bronze medal-winning team at the Tokyo Olympics where he finished sixth individually.