

Oliver Townend, 41
GBR

Oliver Townend, 41, is one of Britain's most successful event riders, with eight CCI5* wins to his name. These include three Defender Burghleys, in 2009 on Carousel Quest and 2017 and 2023 with Ballaghmor Class. He has also won Defender Kentucky four times, most recently in 2024 on Cooley Rosalent, his ride at this year's Burghley, and Badminton in 2009 (Flint Curtis).

Oliver, a member of Britain's gold medal-winning team at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, is based near Ellesmere in Shropshire. This will be his 31st start at Burghley; his first was 20 years ago in 2004 on Weston Justice. It will be his 101st start at CCI5* level. Currently ranked number three in the world on FEI rankings, he has spent considerable periods of time as world number one. He has topped the British Eventing annual rankings multiple times, and has 98 international wins to date. Oliver has won 13 national British Championships titles, most recently the 2024 British Intermediate Championships on Sir John and Victoria Peace's En Taro Des Verniers.

Yorkshire-born Oliver began riding when he was seven years old, inheriting his love of horses from his parents. His father, Alan, was a milkman who evented as an amateur, completing Burghley aboard Black Ace in 1984, while his mother, Eve, showed side-saddle at county level. His first major success came in showjumping at HOYS when he was 11 when he won the junior newcomers title on Cool Mule, and at 13 he represented Britain on the pony eventing team at the European Championships. Oliver quickly moved through the ranks and for three years was stable jockey to the late Kenneth Clawson, the former British team trainer, in Leicestershire before going solo.

Oliver's 12th place at his first Badminton in 2005 with Topping earned them an individual spot on the 2005 European Championships squad at Blenheim and his first senior British cap. With Flint Curtis, Oliver came third at Badminton in 2006 and rode as an individual at the Aachen World Equestrian Games in the same year. In 2007 he won a European team gold in Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy.

In 2009 Oliver joined the elite group of riders who have won back-to-back Badminton and Burghley titles, taking Badminton on Flint Curtis and Burghley on Carousel Quest. That year he also won the HSBC FEI Classics title and at the end of the 2009 season was top of the British Eventing rider rankings for the first time.

In 2014 he represented Britain as an individual at the World Equestrian Games in Normandy, France, riding Black Tie. In 2015 he completed Burghley with three horses and was part of the British squad at the European Championships at Blair Castle on Fenyas Elegance. In 2016 he became National Champion after winning the British Open at Gatcombe and in 2017 was a member of the British gold medal-winning team at the European Championships at Strzegom (Cooley SRS). In 2019 he was a member of the British team to win silver at the European Championships on Cooley Master Class. Oliver made his Olympic debut in 2021, taking team gold and finishing fifth individually on Ballaghmor Class, and in 2022 the pair were part of the British team at the World Championships in Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy.

Cooley Rosalent (Valent-Bellaney Jewel (Roselier)) is a 10-year-old grey Irish Sports Horse mare owned by Paul and Diana Ridgdon. She was bought by Oliver as a four-year-old from Ireland, and has been eye-catchingly successful through the grades. Her first international win came at Burgham in the CCI2*-S in 2020, and she was second in the six-year-old world

championships at Le Lion d'Angers, France that year. She made her CCI4*-L debut as an eight-year-old in 2022, finishing second at Blair Castle, and won the eight- and nine-year-old CCI4*-S at Blenheim in 2023 before taking third place in the Maryland CCI5* later that autumn. In 2024, Cooley Rosalent and Oliver won the Defender Kentucky CCI5* and also took the CCI4*-S class at Burgham as part of their preparation for "Rosie"'s first Burghley.