Golden Brits defy the odds

Great Britain pulls off a sensational team gold for the first time in seven years, while Nicola Wilson lands an emotional first individual medal

SEVEN years after Great Britain's last senior eventing gold medal, a team riding under the Union flag finally climbed back on to the top step of the podium after a spine-tingling week of personal bests, sheer determination and surprising form upsets.

Nicola Wilson (Bulana), Tina Cook (Billy The Red) and Ros Canter (Allstar B) - together with pathfinder Oliver Townend on Cooley SRS - were sensational from beginning to end, led by Nicola, who won her first individual medal, a precious bronze.

Rapturous applause followed her out of the main arena and into the collecting ring, where an endless stream of tearful people flooded to congratulate the British team.

"I'm still pinching myself," smiled Nicola. "This is a dream. Bulana has been a superstar all

The last European gold came

even earlier than that: in 2009 at

Fontainebleau, where Tina also

This time. Britain fielder

championship, an unproven

four horses contesting their first

took individual honours.

week; she's such a good friend to me and I'm honoured to ride her." Team GB hadn't won gold since William Fox-Pitt, Mary King, Tina Cook and Nicola Wilson's World Equestrian Game victory in Kentucky in 2010.

could still take silver.

(Ros) and another, Oliver, who was back on the team after a 10year absence. So sceptics could b forgiven for questioning whether a 23rd European gold would happen in Poland, and so early in team trainer Chris Bartle and chef d'équipe Richard Waygood's

Although the stage lacked nation, whose imperious European team gold run started way back in 2011, not hampions France.

for silver when Bettina Hoy who had set a new individua European record in the first shase - had a cross-country fall

world record collective dressage score, which provided room to count a score with 20 crosscountry jumping faults, so tha Ingrid Klimke (Horseware Hale Bob OLD), Michael Jun-(FischerRocana EST) and Juli Krajewski (Samourai Du Thot

Sara Algotsson Ostholt (Reality 39), Louise Svensson Jähde



the likes of Australia and New Zealand, Britain had to contend with Germany, the defending forgetting the reigning Olympic

Both nations fielded four of their smartest horses and riders. but France bombed in the secon phase and Germany had to settle

They did, though, set a

Sweden claimed bronze, The vere the only nation to finish with four team riders and all four -



Oliver Townend, Nicola Wilson, Ros Canter and Tina Cook win gold

EVENTING EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS The story



Lindbäck (Focus Filiocus) and Ludwig Svennerstål (Paramount Importance) - featured in the

"We came to take a medal," said Swindon-based Ludwig, "It was the goal and we've worked hard for it."

A BRITISH BATTLE

BRITAIN'S female trio each pulled off personal bests in the dressage arena to put the team i the hunt in bronze position at this stage, and from there they

A fierce cross-country course

Tyson's fourth-placed Billy The

and he was Britain's travelling

that after missing out on a place

she'd wondered if she'd ever be on

retirement, but I love representing

my country and getting a young

ahead of him keeps me young,"

said Tina of the 10-year-old, a top-10 finisher at both Badminton

Ros Canter's performance

riding her own and Caroline

Moore's Allstar B was superio

delivered the first British

to that of many of the seasoned

ontenders around her. The pair

fifth and best Brits at Badminton

morning and pulled off a stylisl

"I'm 5ft 2in and he's 17hh so

reserve in Rio, but she confes

"I was thinking maybe

norse on the team who will nopefully have many more year

at the past two cha

a team again.

'It's really exciting, not just for me but everyone on the team and behind the scenes'

ROS CANTER ON GREAT BRITAIN'S TEAM VICTORY Nicola Wilson's shiny individual

demanding grisly determination and quick-thinking reactions to hold their charges on exacting lines moved the team up to gold, before they seized glory with three elegant showjumping clears in the tensest of atmospheres. They won with an emphatic 9.1

we're probably not the perfect

match," said Ros of the 12-year

intermediate. "It's really exciting

old she has produced from

penalties in hand. The week was topped off by

CCI4* runner-up Bulana, an

11-year-old belonging to James and Jo Lambert. Nicola often uses the word feisty to describe Bulana, who

medal after she finished third, hecause she's keen behind Ingrid Klimke and "It's all in her head and we've Michael Jung. worked at slowing things down in She partnered her Luhmühlen

her mind," said Nicola, "She has tons of ability but doesn't act lik a princess. She's getting better in every competition

can appear strong across country

Tina Cook has produced Elisabeth Murdoch and Keitl

[to be in gold], not just for me bu everyone on the team and behind

home Focus Filiocus with only

"It's hard work out there

"Technical and twisty isn't the

favourite for my horse and he had

to work hard. He lost his back legs

When Allstar B galloped away

several times and that knocked

from the start anything less than

a clear round risked scuppering

Britain's hopes for a medal, Ros

admitted a red-faced Niklas

time-faults (8.4) to add.

the air out of him a bit."

Oliver became the discard score when Cooley SRS glanced off two cross-country fences. Angela Hislop's 10-year-old was withdrawn ahead of the final horse inspection due to a minor leg injury, but his fact-finding nission as team pathfinder proved invaluable

"I knew he wasn't established enough to be an individual medal ontender, but hoped to delive useful information back to the team," said Oliver.

GEMMA TATTERSALL and Quicklook V ran as individuals ome questioning why their recent form - they won the Chatsworth

Canter collected the eager horse early for fence four and kept him on his line using every ounce of strength. They pulled off a confident clear round from the to finish with only 1.6 time-faults

Ros was another to go long between 8a and 8b, and she se off with larger studs in than originally planned after watching

"He's always good on his feet and he didn't slip at all," she said "The fences come up on you so fast. It's the sort of course that ca make a horse strong and there were times I had to pull him back but he's got a big galloping stride and can make that time up."

HOY CRASHES OUT SEIGNEUR MEDICOTT left the startbox three horses later and was hampered by a lost shoe earlon. He didn't look confident or the ground and despite Bettins Hoy working hard to keep the



There are exhilarating highs and disappointing lows in the final phase, where Britain maintain their grip on gold

the holding box and spun on

reinspection while lying 11th.

the running for Great Britain.

With Cooley SRS out of

pressure was on the remaining all-

emale trio to secure a final score

for the team - and they couldn't

between them if they wanted to

guarantee gold

afford more than two fences down

Just as she had the previous

day, Ros Canter remained cool

and composed to deliver a perfec-

A SUNNY Sunday began with a degree of anxiousness in the air, which would only become more uffocating as the reverse-order inal phase progressed.

In total, 56 horses came forward to showjump after four were withdrawn overnight and three were lost from Sunday morning's final horse inspection

vas Pawel Spisak's Banderas for Poland, who was sent to

Great Britain

Final standings

Germany

Sweden Sweden

Ingrid Klimke on

Michael Jung on

Nicola Wilson on

Bulana (GBR)

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Horseware Hale Bob OLD

FischerRocana FST(GER

clear aboard Allstar B. Concerned glances were exchanged around the collecting ring when Billy The Red, whom Tina maintains is naturally spook both at home and in competition, became unsettled by a roaring crowd and at first napped away from the entrance. Once inside he relaxed and, other than lightly rubbing five - white rails above a water tray - he executed a foot-

perfect clear So too did Rulana meaning celebrations began in the British camp before the final riders had even jumped. Gold was in the bag.

Sara Algotsson Ostholt, the individual silver medallist in London, who narrowly missed out on gold due to a showiump down. and Reality 39 looked comfortable the individual European title until the three-bar spread at fence with a cricket score. It wasn't

six, where the mare unravelled and went on to hit a further two fences. As a result, they slipped six places to ninth and Nicola Wilson moved up to individual bronze. Gemma Tattersall was visibly

isappointed when Quicklook kicked out fence five and the first part of the treble at 11abc to fall three places to eighth. But there is more to come from this great pairing - and a clear round would have left them just outside the individual medals in fourth.

GERMAN ONE-TWO

YOU wouldn't bet against Michael Jung pulling off a clea and despite seeing a long one and standing off an oxer at seven, FischerRocana FST finished This piled pressure on

Ingrid Klimke, for whom the showjumping has been something of a nemesis in the past. She led Radminton on this

horse this year, but lost the title when Horseware Hale Bob kicked out three showiumps and refused at one to wind up ninth. a galling scene reminiscent of the final phase in Luhmühlen six years earlier where she lost



Composed Ros Canter deliver

a perfect round on Allstar B

All clear: Tina Cook shows how

of the double at 8ab - but it was ffective. When she landed after the last, all 12 fences still in thei rups and her first ever individual title safely in the bag, Ingrid couldn't hold back the tear

"I'm just so, so proud and pleased because Bobby has don wonderful job in all three disciplines," she sobbed, "He's sucl special horse to me and now he has fulfilled my dream"

There were 15 clear rounds is total and 16 horses exceeded the time. Germany remained in silver and the Swedes held on to bronze none of the remaining 10 nations that started getting near their total collective score

And so Great Britain elebrated three magical

Individual scores Horse & rider - * denotes a team ride Horseware Hale Bob OLD (Ingrid Klimke, GER*) 30.3 FischerRocana FST (Michael Jung, GER*) 0.4 Bulana (Nicola Wilson, GBR*) 35.5 Billy The Red (Tina Cook, GBR* 38.2 40.2 Allstar B (Ros Canter GBR* Colani Sunrise (Kai Rüder, GER)

	Team scores		/		AT 2 BEFORE	MINE	STATE OF THE PARTY OF
	Horse & rider	4	STORE OF	NO SON	0500	CHURCH S	CONTRACTOR OF
1	GreatBritain		T		T	T	T
	Bulana (Nicola Wilson)	35.1		0.4	1.		35.5
-		38.2	1.				38.2
_	BillyTheRed (TinaCook) Allstar B (RosCanter)		-	1.6	-		40.2
_	BillyTheRed (TinaCook)	38.2	-		-	-	

'Bettina Hoy was sensational'

Sue Baxter explains how the arena allowed horses to show their best work

standard was higher than I expected. Usually there is a bigger discrepancy between the top nations and the lesse known ones, but the arena here let everyone show their best.

The horses had confidence on the surface and the atmosphere brought out positive energy rather than tension. Competitors felt they could ride boldly, rather than

SOME movements are indicative of correct training.

Many struggle with the walk pirouettes. The test asks riders to move from medium to collected walk, but few manage to collect the energy rather than just slowing down, so the agility and engagement of the hindleg is affected and horses get stuck pivot or swing wide behind.

I gave both Bettina and

Tom Carlile nines here. Others

just managing the situation.

must focus on the pirouette as a Bettina Hoy was in a class of training tool because improving that would teach them about her own - she was sensational flexibility of the hindlegs and and it's good for the sport to taking weight on them. This see that quality of training. Her transitions were seam would make it easier to produc Seigneur Medicott showed selfthe collecting transitions after the extended canter and before carriage and expression, I gave her 10s for extended canter, the expensive flying changes. her final halt and her riding. I had a fantastic view of

> reedom of the shoulder and riders were brave. Some et themselves down in the collecting transition, which marred the serpentine after the first extended canter and the

final halt after the second. I gave Ros Canter nines

the extended canter - we saw

impressive range, stretching

hrough the back and neck,

here - she showed ability

to ride the transitions while

keeping the energy, balance

and throughness. Overall, Ros

courage and confidence at her

first championship and she has

a platform to work towards a

see the extended walk as it's

trot steps rather than going

from canter to walk. Michael

Jung was among those who

stepped back in the transition.

I gave him a mark of five, but

the other judges couldn't see

the steps are too short.

vinning test.

Importance and Sara Algotsson-Ostholt's Reality 35 impressed with their flexibility and range of crossing in the tro half-passes. I put Sara second because you have to reward that self-carriage, lightness an harmony when you see it from I liked their team-mate

him eights. Sweden's Ludwig

Svennerstål's Paramount

Louise Svensson Jähde's Wieloch's Utah Sun too. I was great to see such a good connection on a horse with bi was incredible to ride with such movement, which often results in a loss of balance and the horse getting tight in the neck Louise is training him well.

I was surprised Pietro Sitting at B, it's difficult to Roman did so well (18th with 41). At the Europeans two years ago, I remember Barraduff had straight towards you, but often movement, but lacked natural engagement. He's done a Many were too progressive in the first halt - they showed fantastic job improving that

Gemma Tattersall had very consistent quality in her test and didn't lose any marks. To get a higher score, she now needs to unleash Quicklook V's power, H&H

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