

SATURDAY 4 AUGUST

OLIVER TOWNEND SET FOR BUMPER DAY

World number one Oliver Townend is set for another great day at the Magic Millions Festival of British Eventing, as he currently holds the lead after dressage in Sunday's showpiece class as well as the Advanced section.

Oliver, who already has ten Festival titles to his name, produced an outstanding dressage test on Sally-Anne Egginton's Cillnabraden Evo to lead the Magic Millions British Open CIC*** on a mark of 19 penalties. The pair, who won this coveted title in 2016, lead Australia's Christopher Burton by 2.4 penalties.

"Burto" has a reputation as one of the fastest riders across country and his mount, Polystar I, is a recent winner at this level. He and Oliver are two of the most competitive riders on the international circuit and tomorrow's competition promises to be a fascinating showdown.

Oliver is also lying fourth on MHS King Joules, another ride he has taken over from New Zealander Andrew Nicholson, and Christopher is 11th on Graf Liberty.

Izzy Taylor, also a brilliant and stylish cross-country rider, is lying third on the lovely Be Touchable, a stunning horse to watch and a winner of four classes at this level, and the master Kiwi, Sir Mark Todd, three times a winner of the title, is in fifth place on NZB Campino.

The show jumping phase for this class starts at 11:00am and riders cannot afford a single mistake if they are to retain their places.

Oliver also leads the British Eventing Trophy for Advanced Horses on his 2017 Burghley winner Ballaghmor Class by just 0.7 of a penalty from Australian Bill Levett on Improvise.

The show jumping for this class starts at 9:00am.

In the Top Spec Challenge for the Corinthian Cup, where amateur riders can fulfil a lifetime's ambition by riding around one of the world's most famous cross-country courses, Jethro Thompson is set for a memorable day after taking the lead with a clear show jumping round on the Irish-bred Seapatrick Hint of Cruise.

The cross-country action starts at 10.30am.

Andrew Downes and Jane Moss's Gold Nugget heads the RoR/NTF Retrained Racehorse Event Championship, a hugely popular and worthwhile addition to The Festival programme, after finishing just one second over the optimum cross-country time.

Brazilian rider Carlos Parro is in second place on his experienced eventer Summon Up The Blood and Tom McEwen is in the prizes again, in third on Dream Big.

On Sunday (at 12.50pm), the top eight combinations show jump in reverse order of merit to decide the title holders.

"We've had two days of fantastic competition at the Magic Millions Festival of British Eventing and look set for a real thriller tomorrow," said Event Director Peter Phillips. "It's been a great atmosphere, with some thoroughly deserved prize-winners, and riders have clearly appreciated the efforts that the course-building team have made to produce such good conditions underfoot."

Full results available on www.bdwp.co.uk/gatcombe and Live Streaming of Cross Country action is available on <https://www.festivalofbritisheventing.com/live-stream/> from 10:30am tomorrow.