

First mother and daughter duo Rachael Atkinson (51) and Kate Atkinson (22) set to ride for Britain as European Endurance Championship returns to UK after 26 years. The event takes place at Euston Park, Suffolk on 17th August  
Endurance GB has announced that 51-year-old Clitheroe-based rider Rachael Atkinson and her daughter Kate Atkinson (22) will be on the British team who will compete at the FEI CH-EU-E 160km European Championships at Euston Park in Suffolk on 17 August 2019.

In a first for Endurance GB, the duo become the only mother and daughter to have competed on a Senior British Team to date.

Rachel and Kate's team place with their horses Tannasg Psyches Realm and DNS Ronaldo was announced following a final assessment of horses at Warwick International School of Riding on Sunday 4th August.

Endurance GB Chairman Rebecca Kinnarney said: "We would like to congratulate all the riders and wish them and their crews every success at Euston Park – the whole of Endurance GB will be rooting for them."

Commenting on two successful team places for the Atkinsons, Rebecca added: "Endurance is truly a family sport and multi-generational participation by the whole family whether as rider, crew or trainer is common. It is not unusual to see mothers, daughters and sometimes sons

taking part in rides together, often with dads crewing. However, for the Atkinson family to get two human and equine athletes qualified and on top form for a championship event such as the Europeans is an exceptional achievement."

**Rachael Atkinson**, who runs an equine rehabilitation centre using hydrotherapy,



described her and Kate's selection as a dream come true: "To have my best friend alongside me at a home Championship, will be my greatest accomplishment. We have joked about it in the past and now it has become a reality and I could not be prouder of our little team."

**Kate Atkinson**, who is about to begin her fourth year as a veterinary student at



Liverpool University first started in the sport 15 years ago. She said:

“Endurance was something my mum did and it looked fun, so she let me start doing some pleasure rides on my pony when I was seven years old.

“Being short listed for a championship on home soil is a wonderful

feeling, especially as it is my first year on the senior team.

“I am looking forward to competing alongside my mum, it will be incredible if we can both complete the ride together.”

Rachael got involved in endurance riding 22 years ago as she wanted to try something new. She says she was attracted by the sense of freedom she gets in riding over new terrain with her horse as well as the chance to compete around the world. She and Kate train their horses on the gallops to improve stamina and work on core strength and to keep fit herself Rachael runs in her spare time.

On competition day she says ‘porridge’ is key to a good day’s endurance.

Her horse Tannasg Psyches Realm, an 11-year-old chestnut Arab gelding known as Sykes at home, was bred in Scotland. Rachael says: “He is very competitive, doesn’t like to be overtaken. He loves the big stage and always travels well.”

Meanwhile, Kate’s selection is with DNS Ronaldo or Nessie as he is known at home. Kate has owned the 15.1 bay Arab gelding since he was six years old and the pair have been Young Rider National Champions together.

Kate says: “He is a very determined horse and will always strive to please. We work well as a combination just because we know each other so well, we have spent so many hours training and competing together.”

As they normally ‘crew’ for each other at endurance rides, Rachael and Kate have both invited other fellow riders and supporters to join them for the Championships. Rachael’s crew at the Championships will be Andrew Atkinson, Caroline Cowley and Jess Mchugh, Ann Dark and Roger Dark.

Kate’s crew will be; Will Langley, Beth Langley, Cate Langley, Dan Pascoe and Carri Ann Dark.

This is the first FEI European Endurance Championship to be held in the UK since the 1993 Championships at Southwell in Nottinghamshire, where Britain won both team and individual gold medals. The Championship is part of the HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum UK Endurance Festival (15th-19th August 2019). The event, which also features the Pony Club National Championships, and an FEI CEIO2\* 120km Nations Cup competition as well as national rides is

organised by the HPower Group and sponsored by Meydan. The event is expected to attract riders from around 40 countries with more than 600 horses taking part over the four days.

**Annette Masterson**, 49, set to ride for Britain as European Endurance Championship returns to UK after 26 years. Endurance GB has announced that 49-year-old Staffordshire Moorlands-based rider Annette Masterson from Whiston near Cheadle will be on the British team who will compete at the FEI CH-EU-E 160km European Championships at Euston Park in Suffolk on 17 August 2019.



Annette's team place with her horse Shoshana was announced following a final assessment of horses at Warwick International School of Riding on Sunday 4th August.

Commenting on her team place Annette, who runs a caravan sales company, said she was "thrilled" to be on the team. "Euston is a wonderful course through stunning parkland and with great water-crossings. We have a strong group of horses and riders and it will be fantastic for Team GB to get all the horses completing at a good speed and finishing safe and well."

Annette keeps her horses at her training base in Whiston and enjoys training around the local fields and hills of the Churnet Valley.

She got involved in endurance riding in her mid-thirties: "I had a mare that had had a

previous injury and rather than race her at speed on the flat I aimed her for a longer slower endurance race. For me, endurance riding is about the fantastic places I have been able to ride and the partnership you build with your horse. This sport has given me all this plus the chance to meet some great people while keeping us both fit and healthy."

Annette's training regime for this tough and demanding sport involves riding, running and mucking out her horses. She also sticks to a vegetarian diet and avoids alcohol.

Annette describes herself as a positive and focussed competitor and says Shoshana's strength is similarly her determination.

"I would describe her as small, sharp, feisty and determined. She is a great team horse as she loves to lead but also happy to ride in a pack." •

Annette's crew at the Championships will be Paula Lynam, Ann Harrison, Felicity Edmeston, James Dickinson and Katie Bedwin.

Endurance GB has announced that 31-year-old Chepstow-based rider **Sarah Rogerson** will be on the British team who will compete at the FEI CH-EU-E 160km European Championships at Euston Park in Suffolk on 17 August 2019.

Sarah's team place with her horse Warrens Hill Rubyn was announced following a final assessment of horses at Warwick International School of Riding on Sunday 4th August.

Commenting on her team place Sarah Rogerson who works as a data scientist for a water consultancy, said: "I'm proud to be competing at the Europeans for Team GB



and will be aiming to lead by example with dignity and passion for my horse and my sport. I have competed at Euston Park a number of times over the years, I know the course well, which parts of the course to respect and where to pick up the pace."

She said competing at a home-based Championship made selection this year extra special. "The endurance community in this country is pretty amazing, so it will be very nice to share the experience with other riders and supporters of the sport on home soil."

Although based in Chepstow, Sarah keeps her horses at her parents' yard, Woodside Endurance, Woolaston, Gloucestershire and trains in the hills on the Welsh borders and around the Forest of Dean. All the family are involved in the sport of endurance riding and

Sarah's mother Mary Stubbs, father Steve Rogerson and her twin sister Rachael will also be crewing her during the 160km (100-mile) competition.

Sarah has been involved in the sport for more than 20 years.

"I love the challenge of endurance - a tough sport, the freedom and energy of a seriously fit horse, the lifelong memories of the very good days.

"It's very much a family thing. My sister and I started competing when we were younger and I have many happy memories of crewing for my mum with my dad and sister."

Now the tables have turned and Sarah relies on her family for support with competing at the highest level of the sport.

"My mum helps out a lot with the day to day feeding and care which allows me to focus on fitting in training.

“I try to get two decent work outs in a week at the moment, mostly high intensity, hill work or longer canter work. Other than that we do a bit of schooling and short hacks to keep the brain focused. The area we are in is good for hills, but now it's summer it's a bit more challenging to find soft going so a lot of the training sessions are courtesy of local racehorse trainers.

“As well as riding I run two to three times a week and have a session with a personal trainer once a week.”

Rubyn was bred by Lesley Dunn at Warrens Hill Arabians near Monmouth and was given to Sarah and her sister Rachael for their 18th birthday. The athletic 15.2 grey Arab started his international career in 2014 in France and after a year out, Sarah began focussing him on the 2019 Europeans.

“As well as being athletic and strong, I think it's his personality that makes Rubyn stand out. He loves himself and he loves his sport. He has that rare balance of drive and heart, but total (almost) professional attitude. Some days at home I have to take a deep breath before getting on, but at a race he knows exactly what to do.”

Rubyn only has one eye after an accident as a younger but this doesn't detract from his performance.

Sarah explains: “It doesn't seem to bother him, he's just had to learn to trust us that little bit more and doesn't detract too much from his pretty face.

“As a rider I like to think I am calm but confident. I like to ride a tactical race with a solid plan, but I listen to my horse and think and adjust to what's going on. It's important in a championship

that your horse trusts you to make the right decisions, there's a very fine line between perfection and failure.”

Sarah has competed over the course at Euston Park seven times and says: “Rubyn likes a flat fast course. I don't think any 160km is easy, and Euston has it's own challenges with some deceptively tough sections.

“I plan to start slowly and get everything working before I let him go at cruising speed. I'll reassess throughout the day, but my job is to preserve his energy in the first part of the ride and let him dictate more towards the end. The key element will be the additional buzz at the venue which the horses pick up on. I just need to keep a level head and stick to my game plan.

“I genuinely think we have a chance of a team medal. There are some very strong and consistent combinations in the squad.

“A team medal is about being as accurate and precise as possible, we've all done the hard work so it's about avoiding silly mistakes and not having regrets about things that could have been different.”

Sarah's crew at the Championships will be her sister, Rachael Cratchley, mother, Mary Stubbs, father, Steve Rogerson, best friend Rose Yates and fellow rider Nikki Malcolm.

Endurance GB has announced that 48-year-old Norfolk-based rider **Nicola Thorne** from Shipdham will be on the British team who will compete at the FEI CH-EU-E 160km European Championships at Euston Park in Suffolk on 17 August 2019.

Nicola's team place with her horse LM Bolena was announced following a final



assessment of horses at Warwick International School of Riding on Sunday 4th August.

Commenting on her team place Nicola, a former Chair of Endurance GB, whose day job involves working with her husband's shipping business, said: "It is such an honour to have the opportunity to represent

your country in the sport that you love and to do so in partnership with my much-loved and treasured mare Bolena, as well as my fabulous crew and the rest of the team, who are all at the very highest level of the sport. There is really nothing that can top this and I very much hope to achieve a result to make everyone who has put so much faith in us, proud of us."

"I also hope that the European Championships will be a great inspiration to other endurance riders of all ages within the UK and also to promote endurance in general. This will be a real flag ship event, and I am very proud to have the opportunity to be a part of that."

Nicola keeps her horses at her training base in Shipdham near Dereham and enjoys training around Breckland as well as further afield in the county.

She says: "I am very lucky to have excellent facilities on site where my horses have ample turn out space as well as the training facilities that I need.

"In addition, we are close to a large number of forestry locations around the Thetford forest region which offers superb riding, and I also use the beaches at nearby North Norfolk including Holkham beach.

"My horses are kept in a relaxed and natural environment and I have a small but very professional and dedicated team around me, including my husband Andy Thorne, and also Hannah and Greta Verkerk.

"Norfolk and my proximity to Newmarket also mean I have world class equine professionals around me including my vet Dr Fernando Perez de Villar of Baker McVeigh and Clement, Laurence Ridgeway of Motion Horse Farriery, Pippa Windell-Baker equine physio who takes care of our horses on a day to day basis, and also Lee Clark equine physio who assists at competition."

Nicola has been involved in the sport for more than 20 years starting out at grass roots level with some pleasure rides.

She says: “I have always loved riding long distances and enjoying being out with my horse and I saw a local pleasure ride advertised which was run by our local group of EGB and that was it , I was hooked.

“For me, endurance is first and foremost about the horses. I love to be with them and feel privileged to spend so much time with them and combine that with a competitive sport. It’s the opportunity to ride and create a bond through the highs and lows of competition, to travel on a worldwide basis and to compete over vastly varying terrain and weather conditions.

“I love that it is a solo sport where you ride and therefore compete predominantly on your own – just you and your horse, but it is impossible to achieve this without your crew supporting you not just on the day but throughout the training and the days that surround a competition. There is a huge sense of camaraderie and achievement. It is the combination of time where only you and your horse matters, and a team sport, that is incredibly rewarding.

“My horse’s training is very varied and includes a combination of endurance training over distance and speed, and also schooling and flat work. For myself, I enjoy a healthy diet with lots of fresh fruit, vegetables and fish and I predominantly keep fit through riding my horses.”

Nicola’s horse for the Championships is LM Bolena a 14-year-old chestnut Arab mare who was bred in Argentina and who she describes as very tough and determined.

“She can be quirky and is very opinionated and not always an easy ride, but this also makes her the tough determined athlete that she is. She has completed the HH Sheikh Mohammed Cup in Dubai, FEI 3\* 160 kms , with me not once but twice and is an exceptional horse who is very special to me. I have ridden her in Argentina, Dubai and across Europe, and shared so many special occasions with her both competitively in the field of endurance and as a much loved riding horse and companion.”

“As a rider I am always wanting to learn, grow and improve, always aiming for the next challenge and looking to see what’s at the end of the rainbow. I am a very positive person. I absolutely love learning from the horses and working with them to achieve the best that we can.”

Nicola has competed over the course at Euston Park several times and has achieved five top placings in the past. She says: “The venue, close to Thetford and countryside around it is just beautiful and also a proven world class endurance venue, but it is not a course to be underestimated as although on first appearances it looks to be flat and grassy, it is undulating and can be affected by the weather in terms of whether the going is dry and sandy, or deeper, and also in area prone to flints so you have to be careful about your footing. There is a lot of variation from grass tracks and field margins, to sandy tracks, and water crosses with hardly any

road work other than a couple of manned road crossings. It is also a good spectator venue to the openness of the course and the vast amount of room for the vetting and hold areas.

“I always make my final planning based on the weather conditions, going, and how the horse is on the day. You have to be very adaptable in endurance and able to react and adjust according to the conditions.

“The whole team is totally dedicated to doing the absolute best that we can, and I am hoping for an excellent outcome in terms of the results themselves. However, whatever happens on the day in terms of the final placings, I know that the entire team will have put on an excellent display of horsemanship, taking the very best of care of their horses throughout the entire event, and presenting a professional and positive attitude that shows the very best of Endurance.”

Nicola’s crew at the Championships will be her husband Andy Thorne, Hannah Verkerk, Greta Verkerk, Lee Clark and Laurence Ridgeway.

Abergavenny-based vet **Georgina Vaughan** of the Abbey Equine Clinic has joined the Endurance GB International Management Team as British Team Vet for the Championships following in the footsteps of former practice partner Rod Fisher who was Team Vet to the British Endurance Team before moving on to look after the successful British Paralympic dressage team.