

The BHS Riding School National Championships

16 April 2025, Pickering Grange Equestrian Centre

Rule Book 2025

1. **Introduction.** The aim of this competition is to:
 - 1.1 Recognise the importance of correct horsemanship and riding in promoting and maintaining wellbeing and welfare of the horse.
 - 1.2 Offer BHS Approved Riding Schools and their clients, a progressive pathway to participate in a nationally recognised series of inclusive competitions catering for a range of age and experience levels.
 - 1.3 Provide opportunities for riding school clients without their own horses/ponies, to benefit from quality instruction in horse care and equitation.
 - 1.4 Enable a pathway for BHS Approved Riding Centres and their clients to celebrate achievement and success at both local and national levels.
2. **The Competition**
 - 2.1 The National Championship competition is open to riders who have met the eligibility requirements and have been successful in qualifying (within the qualifying period) to compete at the Championship. This competition is managed by and run under the auspices of The British Horse Society. It is the responsibility of individual Centres to liaise with the BHS Approved Centres department upon arrangements related to attendance and competitor entries at the National Championship.
 - 2.2 The Championships will take place on Wednesday 16 April 2025 at Pickering Grange Equestrian Centre, Ellistown Terrace Road, Ellistown, Leicestershire, LE67 1EZ.
 - 2.3 The competition will be run across differing ability groups, as opposed to age groups

Class 1	All Rounder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk & Trot Equitation 1 (2020) • Showjumping 45cm • Stable Management Quiz
Class 2	All Rounder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prelim Equitation D1 (2020) • Showjumping 60cm • Stable Management Quiz
Class 3	All Rounder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novice Equitation D11 (2021) • Showjumping 70cm • Stable Management Quiz
Class 4	Equitation	<p>Pick a test: competitors can enter either of the below tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk & Trot Equitation 1 (2020) • Intro to Canter Equitation RSC ITC1 (2024)
Class 5	Equitation	<p>Pick a test: competitors can enter either of the below tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prelim Equitation D1 (2020) • Novice Equitation D11 (2021)
Class 6	In Hand Showing	Best Turned Out, Fancy dress optional
Class 7	Style Show Jumping	<p>Pick a height</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45cm • 60cm • 70cm

2.4 At the National Championship prizes will be in kind and subject to starters, with rosettes being awarded to 10th place in each class.

2.5 At the National Championships, utilising a point based accumulative system for riders placed 1st to 10th in each class, a 'BHS Approved Riding Schools Competition Coach Recognition Award' is awarded to the nominated Coach of the Centre with the most points accrued throughout the day.
Each competitor (Centre) must nominate one centre-based Instructor/Coach on their entry form.

2.6 At the National Championships, utilising a point based accumulative system for riders placed 1st to 10th in each class, a 'BHS Approved Riding Schools Centre Proprietor Recognition Award' is awarded to the Proprietor of the Centre with the most points accrued throughout the day.

- 2.7 A nominated centre representative must be present at the Championships. It is a requirement that a nominated Centre Instructor/Coach should be present at the competition.
- 2.8 Centre/Competitor Entry fees for the National Championship are currently funded by the British Horse Society.
- 2.9 In the unlikely event of cancellation or postponement of either qualifying rounds or the National Championships, the BHS will not be able to refund or reimburse any expenses incurred to competitors, organisers or approved centres.

3. Regional Qualifying Competitions

- 3.1 Regional Qualifying Competitions will only be run at BHS Approved Centres. For the purpose of this schedule, to be referred to as a 'Host Centre'.
- 3.2 All Regional Qualifying Competitions must be held, and results returned to approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk by 7 March 2025.
- 3.3 In each qualifying class, competitors placed 1st to 4th will qualify to participate at the National Championships. In the event of the winner of a qualifier class having already qualified for 2024 (same horse and rider combination) then the next highest placed competitor will be eligible to take part in the National Championship.
- 3.4 The British Horse Society will supply the host centre with:
- Regional Qualifier Entry Forms
 - Rosettes for the qualifying competitors
 - Equitation Test Score Sheets
 - Show Jumping Score Sheets
 - Stable Management Quiz Sheets
 - Competition result sheets (to be returned to approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk within 5 days of date of qualifier, or before close of results, whichever is sooner)

4. Host Centres

- 4.1 Host Centres will need to complete and return a Riding Schools Championship Qualifier Confirmation prior to their agreed competition date.
- 4.2 Host Centres will be responsible for all competition organisation and administration, to include adherence to competition rules and horse/rider eligibility and risk assessment requirements.
- 4.3 Host Centre organisers are responsible for provision of on the day requirements such as appointment of judges, stewards (inc. for working-in/warm up arena), scorers, nominated first aid coverage, safeguarding and person(s) responsible for safety.

- 4.4 Number of accepted competitors' entries are limited at the discretion of the host Centre, to those that can safely be accommodated on the day.
- 4.5 Minimum age requirements for competitors are at the discretion of the host Centre, to those that can safely be accommodated on the day.
- 4.6 The Approved Centre Safeguarding Officer (for the Host Centre) should ideally be in attendance.
- 4.7 Should a rider fall off it is recommended they will not be allowed to until they have been seen and declared fit to continue by the designated first aider.
- 4.8 Host Centre organisers of qualifiers can provide additional rosettes and prizes in kind at their own expense.
- 4.9 Entries must be made on the competition entry form and sent to the host competition organiser. All regional qualifier entry fees are retained by the host centre. Entry fees are set by the host centre and must not exceed £12 per competitor per class. Any BHS supplied qualifying rosettes not awarded must be returned to The British Horse Society.
- 4.10 Entries will close seven calendar days before the date of the competition. Late entries may be taken at the discretion of the organiser.

5. Judging

- 5.1 The decisions of designated judges are final.
- 5.2 Appointment of the judge(s) will be the responsibility of the host Centre. It is a requirement that the judge be qualified to a minimum of BHSAI / Stage 3 Complete Coach and be current on the BHS Accredited Professional Coach register.
- 5.3 At the discretion of the judge, a competitor can be asked to withdraw at any stage of the competition.

6. Scoring

- 6.1 The decisions of the organisers are final.
- 6.2 The horse and rider combination with the Highest Overall Score wins the class
- 6.3 Classes 1 to 3
 - a. Equitation phase movement marks are totalled as an actual mark, e.g. 140 out of 150 would present a provisional score (PS) of 140
 - b. Rider Style and Technique (RST) marks are awarded for the Show Jump round, e.g. 38 out of 50 would present an additional score of 38. Thus, the provisional score would now be (E) 140 + (RST) 38 = provisional score (PS) of 178.
 - c. The total marks gained from the Stable Management Quiz (SMQ) are added to the provisional scores, e.g. PS 174 + (SMQ) 18 = Final Score 192.

In the event of equal placings:

If the final score gives equality of marks to two or more competitors, the classification is decided in the following order:

- the least amount of Show Jumping faults
- the highest marks for the equitation test
- the highest total of collective marks in the equitation test
- the highest Rider Style and Technique marks
- the highest correct responses from the Stable Management Quiz
- the fastest show jumping round (with least faults)

If still equal after the above has been applied, then equal placings should be awarded

6.4 Classes 4 & 5: Pick a Test

- a. A combination of horse and rider can enter either Class 4 or 5, but not both classes
- b. Competitors can only enter for one test at their chosen level, e.g. W&T or ITC
- c. For each class, the Equitation phase movement marks are totalled as an overall percentage for each test with the highest percentage gained across each test providing the leading scores.

In the event of equal placings:

If the final score gives equality of marks to two or more competitors, the classification is decided in the following order:

- the highest total of collective marks in the dressage
- the highest single mark within the collectives
- the highest number of repetitive collective marks at the highest level

6.5 Classes 6:

- a. In Hand Showing phase marks are totalled as an actual mark, e.g. 30 out of 40.

In the event of equal placings:

If the final score gives equality of marks to two or more competitors, the classification is decided in the following order:

- The highest total marks in Handling
- The highest total marks in Harmony
- The highest total marks in Turn out
- The highest total marks in Behaviour

6.6 Class 7:

Competitors will jump around a set course of fences being judged on style and gaining marks for correct and effective riding with points being deducted for refusals or fences being knocked down.

- a. Rider Style and Technique (RST) marks are awarded for the Show Jump round, e.g. 38 out of 50 would present an additional score of 38.

In the event of equal placings:

If the final score gives equality of marks to two or more competitors, the classification is decided in the following order:

- The least amount of jumping faults
- The highest total marks in RST
- The highest individual mark in RST

7. Competitors and Eligibility

7.1 Competitor categories are per class details

- a. Riders must be clients of the BHS Approved Centre at the time of qualifying and be considered a representative of the centre should they qualify for the National Championships.
- b. The competition is only open to riders who are genuine non horse/pony owners. Having a horse/pony on lease/loan excludes competitors from this competition.
- c. A competitor who has competed in any affiliated competition is not eligible to enter.
- d. Combination of horse and rider who have won a Championship class within the last three years (excluding virtual championships) may only compete in a class at the next level up. e.g. if the horse and rider won the Walk & Trot class in 2024, they must move up to compete at Prelim level for 2025. Those who won at Prelim must move up to Novice.
- e. Riders may not enter more than two classes.

7.2 Any horse/pony used in competitions must be on the representative Centre's Local Authority Riding School License.

7.3 It is recommended that a horse/pony does not compete more than three times in one day, but this is at the discretion of the representative Centre Proprietor. Horses may not compete in more than four classes.

7.4 On the day of the competition, no competing horse/pony may be ridden other than by a competitor who is entered for that competition on that horse/pony.

8. Dress Code

8.1 A riding hat to current standards must be worn at all times while mounted. It is the Centres responsibility to ensure that their clients are wearing hats to the correct standard. There are no spare hats available on the day.

8.2 There is no formal dress code. Preferred dress will, however, be jodhpurs, sweatshirt and or shirt and tie. It is recommended that gloves are worn.

8.3 Riding boots, either long or Jodhpur boots must be worn. Half chaps/ gaiters may be worn with jodhpur boots.

8.4 Wearing of body protectors is optional.

8.5 A whip may be carried in both qualifiers and at the National Championships. Permission for carrying a whip is at the discretion of the owner (approved centre) of the horse/pony used in the competition. Misuse of the whip will result in immediate disqualification, and the competitor will not be able to enter another competition in the same year.

8.6 Wearing of spurs is not permitted at either regional qualifiers or National Championships.

9. Tack and Equipment

9.1 For horse comfort and safety reasons, horses and ponies can be ridden in the tack and equipment that they would normally be ridden in when used in the riding school situation *(the equitation judges are to be made aware of this allowance)*

9.2 No additional training gadgets or equipment may be used in either the warmup or competition. Examples would be running/draw reins although martingales are permitted for both phases.

10. The National Championships

10.1 Competitors need not ride the same horse/pony at the final as the one on which they qualified.

10.2 All horses/ponies used in the final should be provided by a BHS Approved Centre (ideally by the centre the riders are representing) and have a valid Equine Passport. Passports will need to be available for checking at the Championships.

10.3 No horses/ponies will be provided by The British Horse Society.

10.4 Overnight stabling is available by contacting Pickering Grange Equestrian directly. Centres are responsible for ensuring they comply with any biosecurity requests such as vaccinations.

10.5 The equitation test will remain the same as those used in the Regional Qualifiers.

10.6 There will be a dismounted prize giving, subject to starters, for competitors placed 1st – 10th in each class.

10.7 Throughout the day an overall accumulative points system will be put in place to recognise the Centre Coaches and Proprietors who have so kindly helped and encouraged their competitors to prepare for and to attend the event. Points will be awarded in each class for each competitor placing, subject to starters, for the first 10 placings, for example, 1st place = 10 points through to 10th place = 1 point. All points gained will be counted towards the below overall awards.

The below 2 awards will be presented at the prizegiving at the close of the championships

- Overall Leading Centre Coach – awarded to the Coach responsible for the highest accumulative scores gained by their competitors
- Overall Leading Centre Proprietor – awarded to the Centre Proprietor responsible for the highest accumulative scores gained by their competitors

There will be an overall BHS Approved Riding School Competition 'Coach Recognition Award' and the 'Centre Proprietor Award'. Points will be awarded to placed

11. Objections

- 11.1 As identified in this schedule, the aim of this competition is to offer riders from our Approved Centres the opportunity to train towards a competition to encourage development of their riding and horsemanship knowledge in a safe, friendly and enjoyable environment.
- 11.2 It is hoped that should reason for dissatisfaction occur throughout any aspect of a competition that such matters can be quietly and tactfully dealt with in the manner to which the purpose of this competition is intended.
- 11.3 Should persons wish to lodge any objection to an organiser, then they must be lodged in writing to the organiser of the competition, supported with a fee of £50, within 30 minutes of the occurrence of the event. Upheld objection fees will be refunded by the organiser.

Training and Judging Guidance

This guidance aims to offer an opportunity to further explain the ethos of this competition. In recognition of the competitors riding Centre provided horses rather than privately owned horses, the equitation tests have been written to support and reward demonstration of correct principals of horsemanship. Below identifies key areas for consideration for both training and judging.

For both flat work and jumping, the level of the horse/pony's experience or schooling will be taken into consideration. Consequently, provision of experienced horses/ponies will not guarantee higher marks as the emphasis for success is upon the skill of the rider in terms of their independence in riding skills, such as preparation and application of correct aids rather than solely upon 'how the horse goes'.

Equitation Tests

The horse/pony does not have to be working "on the bit" but will need to demonstrate obedience to the riders' aids.

Rider Position - The rider should be working towards a correct position that enhances comfort for the horse and effectiveness of the rider aids. Positional security and balance will be considered alongside rider suppleness and straightness. The ability to stay in balance in all paces and demonstrate an appropriate level of independence of the rein contact is important.

Riders Aids – Correct application of the natural aids, including preparation for transitions and accuracy of school movements will be considered. Note will be taken of correct diagonals and correct canter leads; an incorrect strike off may not be penalised, but not correcting it will be.

Influence - The ability to ride the horse/pony in a suitable tempo with sufficient impulsion for the movements to be ridden smoothly will be assessed. Showing empathy with the horse/pony is vital. Demonstrating safe procedures at all times is essential.

Show Jumping

Whilst it is hoped that all competitors gain a clear round in the show jumping to minimise jumping faults reducing a total score, additional grading points are allocated to each rider. These are known as the 'Rider Style and Technique' (RST) grades and are allocated to the rider as per the below guidance.

Rider Position - A balanced seat with a secure lower leg and independent hands are the key factors. Ability to remain in balance with the horse both over and between fences is important.

Aids - An ability to maintain a suitable tempo and rhythm for the jumps to be undertaken must be shown. Excessive driving with the seat is discouraged but correct use of the legs and any artificial aids, when appropriate, will be noted.

Influence - Demonstrate awareness of the importance of the quality of the pace. Show how to ride good lines to the fences. Know how to deal with refusals or unsuitable behaviour of the horse/pony. The maintenance of rhythm is more important than the number of strides to be taken between fences.

Show Jumping Faults

- Knock down – 2 faults
- First refusal – 2 faults
- Second refusal (anywhere on course) – 4 faults (becomes 6 faults)
- Third refusal (anywhere on course) – elimination (but allowed to jump an additional fence)
- Fall (anywhere on course) – elimination
- Rounds are timed for the purposes of splitting results in the event of a tie if needed.
- All other faults as British Show Jumping Handbook

Course Guidelines

- Maximum of 9 fences with a maximum of 10 jumping efforts
- At least one spread fence
- A maximum of one double consisting of one non jumping stride between each element, both efforts to be built as vertical fences.

Stable Management Quiz

At each competition, including the Regional Qualifiers, there will be a Quiz Sheet that covers horse knowledge and stable management questions. These are provided to the centres prior to the competitions.

The topics cover any aspect of stable management up to BHS Progressive Riding Test Level 6/BHS Stage Two to include stable management and horse care, travelling, feeding, safety around the yard etc. and are specific to each group category. Contact approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk for further information.

At the National Championship the format for this section may include practical identification of the many associated items of equipment to be found in a busy stable yard or tack room.

In Hand Showing

The In Hand Showing Classes are a great way for competitors to show off their turnout skills, if they take pride in presenting the horses in a clean and tidy manor and enjoy grooming and bathing the horses this could be the class for them. For this class they will lead the horse in walk around the

arena and line up so the judge can look at how well the horse and rider has been presented. The winner will be the horse and rider combination the judge places highest.

All horses or ponies should be led in a bridle and handlers must wear correctly fitted PPE, such as hat, boots and gloves.

Turn out - Alongside how clean and well-groomed the horse is and how clean any associated tack or equipment in use is, this focuses upon the cleanliness and appropriateness of the attire and PPE of the handler, not on their affordability of any bespoke in-hand showing clothing or attire. The horse can be plaited but this is not mandatory.

Handling – How well the competitor handles the horse and the correctness of the handling.

Behaviour – Horses' behaviour in the arena e.g. walking and halting or changing direction when asked etc.

Harmony – Between horse and handler is the horse listening well to the handler, is the handler and horse looking to be working together well.