



Director Reports

2025

Judges



Peter Storr
Judges Director

Judges

Over the last 12 months we have delivered over 150 training sessions across HQ & regional delivery. Training and continued professional development is always a high priority.

It is increasingly important that our coaches and officials work closely together and are aligned when it comes to equine welfare. To reflect this, the Judges' Committee has expanded to take on all Officials, with steward link representatives appointed to two committees - Rules & Fixtures and Training.

2025 also marked the introduction of the new FEI Noseband Measuring Device, which we trialled in BD competition at this year's National Championships. Stewards across the country have been upskilled in the use of the device and have been provided with one following attendance at a training session.



BD Learning Hub

This year we've been focused on bringing a wider range of training activities to judges online and on demand. The BD Learning Hub, our on demand online training platform, is now open to all judges; this includes the pathway requirement tasks for judges upgrading, as well as play back sessions from the Principles of Dressage.

Principles of Dressage 2025

The Principles of Dressage was delivered in a new format this year, including coaches and stewards. The programme aimed to demonstrate how officials can help riders to take part in the sport in a way that follows every aspect of BD's Charter for the Horse, whilst educating and supporting their development. The weekend was attended by 444 people with exceptionally positive feedback. As a result, we will be heading back to Hartpury on 21 and 22 March 2026 with the same format, with presenters to be confirmed soon.



Training



Harry Payne
Training Director

Training

The Training Committee now works more closely than ever with the Officials Committee to continue the co-delivery of the 'Principles of Dressage' Seminar. Coaches now participate in breakout groups alongside judges for enriched face-to-face learning. This has encouraged greater consistency among BD Officials and Coaches, to ensure that riders received the same messaging regarding equine welfare and best practice. It also provided a great networking opportunity for likeminded dressage enthusiasts to get together and learn from each other in interactive sessions.

BD Presents

In 2024 we rebranded the National Convention and delivered a more relatable, member friendly event headlined by Becky Moody and Sophie Wells. With excellent feedback, this autumn we will be taking BD Presents on the road, with a North and South event aimed at delivering top class training and improving accessibility for members across the country.

Behind the scenes we have also further expanded our Quality Assurance Strategy and the more enhanced format covers all BD qualifications to ensure a consistent, high-quality learner experience. We will also be co-hosting an educational workforce development day with other member bodies for the first time, bringing together education workforce across all qualification programmes across the industry to share best practice. We have also further developed the qualified mentor team, with 20 mentors currently available to support members in their development.

2026 Preview

Looking ahead, we will be carrying out a periodic review of the coaching qualifications. This is something we do every three years as routine; however, we will be taking the opportunity to make updates to ensure that the qualification remain modern and future proof. We will also be identifying ways to work even more closely with other member bodies to support coaches in their professional development.

We will also be looking to roll out a rider progression initiative, helping identify development routes and aid decision making when progressing through the levels. This will be coupled with expanding the offering on the BD Learning Hub.



Youth



Hannah Moody
Youth Director

Youth

Over the past year, BD Youth has continued to grow with a strong focus on education, welfare, and opportunity. A key achievement has been the Horse Care Programme and regional assessment days; introducing young members to welfare, teaching them to be responsible horse owners. Although we're still in the early stages of development, this reflects years of planning and marks a step forward in embedding welfare education. Coach CPD has also been enhanced to better support youth riders with high quality educators.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand access, deepen education and extend the Horse Care Programme across the wider BD community. In addition, we aim to continue the growth of our Apprenticeship Programme; this will provide career pathways, whilst high-performing youth riders will be supported into professional roles as future role models.

We also aim to improve inclusion by involving younger riders and ponies, develop Urban Entry and regional opportunities, and integrating young Para Dressage athletes. Environmental awareness will also be encouraged. With ongoing investment in education, opportunity and inclusion, BD Youth is well placed to shape a compassionate and forward-thinking equestrian community.



Supporting bright futures

We've secured Sport England funding for the next cycle, which will support the National Academy and help riders bridge the gap to Juniors and Young Riders. This investment underlines the importance of structured development and the value of BD Youth in nurturing talent.

The mentoring scheme has been trialled to support young riders in their personal development, particularly those transitioning into senior participation or professional careers. These initiatives reflect our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable environment where young people can grow, not only as riders but as individuals developing life skills and lasting friendships.

Para



Tracy Ormrod
Para Director

Para

Para Equestrian continues to thrive, with increased numbers coming forward to championships across all sections and grades. Fixtures still remain a challenge in some areas, however, amendments to FEI PYO classes have allowed Silver and Gold riders more opportunities to compete locally.

Educational webinars have been hosted for members and non-members over the past 12 months, including para equestrian introductions, classification and general rules which have all proved popular.

We continue to expand the Para workforce, with 20 new coaches and three Para judges now fully compliant having completed the training. The National Para Academies continue to prove popular, with positions filled quickly and reserve lists in place.

The Para Championships across the year have been well supported with increased numbers participating. We've introduced Virtus classes within our Winter Championships, whilst the classes continue to be a popular element at the Summer Championships.

FEI Para Dressage European Championships

Grade 1 Individual & Freestyle Bronze - Mari Durward-Akhurst
Grade 2 Individual & Freestyle Bronze – Jemima Green
Grade 4 Individual Bronze - Nicola Naylor

The team placed a valiant fourth in high standard competition.



Rule changes for 2026

For 2026, we have made some significant rule changes to Gold sections and FEI Classification. From 1 January, members will be able to compete in the Gold section with a National classification and no longer require FEI classification. It was recognised that as Para Equestrian evolves, many Silver riders can't progress into Gold without having to compete at a CPEDI. Whereas, in non-disabled competition members are able to move in and out of the sections in line with their eligibility. Discussions are ongoing with British Equestrian to reduce the National classification age from 14 to 12. The aim is to allow younger riders to be able to compete in National BD competition and BD Youth. Riders would still need to be classified again at 14 to be able to compete internationally, however, we hope to open up more opportunities for introduction into the sport.

FEI Para Forum

We hosted over 100 participants at the FEI Para Forum held at The Belfry Hotel in January, the largest one ever held with some insightful discussions and exciting projects discussed for the future.

International



Judy Harvey
International Director

International

2025 presented challenges as the loss of several international shows limited the opportunity for riders to qualify, gain MERS and gain valuable experience. The international team at BDHQ and our respective support teams, rose to the challenge of navigating competitions in order to maximise the opportunities. Their efforts were rewarded.

We're very pleased to see a full international calendar in 2026, with more structure and balance to the timings of events, with a welcome return of international and Premier League competition at Hickstead.

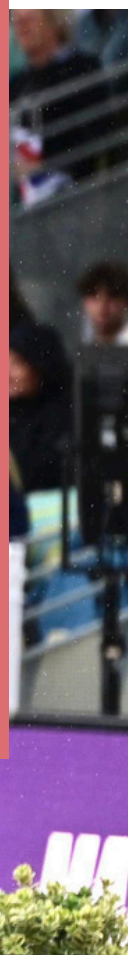
Senior Europeans

The Senior team went to the European Championships as joint favourites for Gold with Germany. Outstanding performances made for an exciting competition pushing the Germans all the way, but in the end, we had to be happy with Silver. Yet again our riders were complimented for their harmonious riding. With three GB riders in the top 10 of the FEI rankings we have much to look forward to.

Youth Europeans

The Junior and U25 teams both secured outstanding bronze medals, whilst the Young Riders were just pipped to a podium place and came fourth. For the first time British Dressage sent a Children on Horses team to the Europeans; the quartet did a solid job to earn seventh place overall and a lot was learned about the requirements to be competitive at this level. Several personal bests were achieved across all age categories, demonstrating the strength of our up and coming riders, along with the commitment of them and their support teams.

As the end of the season nears, further training events and educational evenings are being planned for our U21 & U25 riders, including camps and test riding days to prepare for the 2026 season. The selection policies are also having their annual review, plans are being made – the wheels keep turning.



Sport



Derek Pullem
Sport Operations Director

Sport Operations

In the last 12 months the Sport Operations Committee has reverted back to its original title of Rules & Fixtures committee to reflect the specific work undertaken and its relationship with the new Sport Development Committee.

Silver eligibility rules were amended from Preliminary to Advanced Medium to remove the impact of a high score at Regionals on the eligibility of combinations and replace it with competing at the Winters / Nationals. This was to encourage members to have a go at regionals for the first time without worrying about impacting the eligibility of that combination.

Participation in Hors Concours (HC) tests are now visible on a horses record but not the scores to allow transparency when reviewing a horse's record. Additional clarifications were provided around the use of electronic devices, tack and equipment and permitted competitor dress at Championships

Horse Welfare

Horse welfare remained one of the main focuses for the sport, with more robust reporting processes and newly introduced thresholds, with the most serious cases subject to disciplinary proceedings and appropriate sanctions. We have an appointed Welfare Officer within the head office team to log and escalate welfare reports and action accordingly within the current rules. Test eliminations are now recorded and monitored to ensure no horses have any recurring soundness issues.

Rules revision

One of the main aims for 2025 was to continue to streamline the rules, making them more consistent when moving between sections and events. From 1 January 2026, the qualification process for Area Festivals and Regionals will be aligned, differing only in the required percentage scores. This will give competitors greater flexibility to plan their season, with the same number of tests counting toward either pathway. As many members compete in both, one consistent process will make this transition easier.

We will continue to review eligibility, especially between Silver and Gold, as well as considering championship schedules and formats, exploring ways to further enhance the competition experience for all members.



Fixtures

As most members have noticed, the participation at local shows has declined throughout 2024 into 2025. The pattern of competition shows peaks at various points in the season which aligns to pre championship outings and securing end of season qualification. The current economic climate has impacted on membership decisions and competition outings are being planned more carefully.

One of our main objectives for 2025 is to review the competition calendar and optimise the number of competitions in some locations where entries have declined to a point where classes are uncompetitive. The aim is to promote larger class sizes and more competitive competition which will also make the events more financially viable for the organisers and keep entry fees as low as possible. Using the data collected from our results database we can liaise with organisers and advise on starter numbers / entries and clashes throughout the year, allowing them to make more informed decisions about how often and at what point in the season they run.

From 1 January 2024 – 30 September 2024 – 2,501 competitions ran (this includes Quest, Para and Championships)

From 1 January 2025 – 30 September 2025 – 2,418 competitions ran (this includes Quest, Para and Championships) i.e. a 3% reduction in events

As the process of optimising the schedule continues we would expect this trend in reducing the number of events to continue into 2026. Our aim is to encourage participation to revert to previous levels in the future allowing us to increase the number of events in 2027 and beyond.



Venues

Organisers are also being asked to become more accountable when running affiliated competitions and ensuring the standards as set out in their affiliation agreement are being achieved. Where these standards are not being met, British Dressage have become more proactive in raising concerns with the venues and where necessary implementing action plans to address the issues raised. Feedback from members to their Development Officers on their experiences at venues, both positive and negative, is essential to allow this to take place.

Membership & commercial



Suzanne Homewood
Business Development
Director

Membership

The British Dressage membership remains strong although 2025 has presented numerous challenges for members across the country, with the cost of living creating the need to be selective, along with the environmental challenges of a long, hot summer.

One of the team's focuses has been to improve the digital experience, and there have been vast improvements made throughout the year to the member portal, BD Online. In line with the start of winter qualification, a new look BD Online was launched to the membership, designed to enhance members' experience by providing a more modern interface, improved functionality and user-friendly navigation.

The team are also in the closing stages of finalising the BD App, which will bring all of the BD Online benefits to your mobile device in early 2026.



Membership in 2026

We aim to increase the visibility of BD to non-members, whilst making sure that existing members understand the range of benefits available to them and how they can be used to support horse ownership. We also aim to continue highlighting additional benefits, such as third party liability insurance, personal accident cover and the extensive range of discounts in place to give members great added value.

Enhanced member benefits

Commercial progress has allowed the BD member benefits package to grow, with new partners on board to contribute expert knowledge and exclusive offers.

- Official Biosecurity Partners Lanxess Biosecurity Solutions offer a discount on their product Virkon S.
- Official Environmental Sustainability Partners ADAS Equine are delivering high quality support on sustainability, as well as an offer on personalised advice.
- Official Safety Partners KASK offer an outstanding member discount on KASK helmets and will support in providing top health and safety information throughout the partnership.



Marketing & communications



Suzanne Homewood
Business Development
Director

Marketing & Communications

The Marketing & Communications department continue to evolve ways of working to bring dressage to all digital platforms, whilst ensuring that every corner of the membership feels represented.

This year, together with publishers Fellows Media, the team delivered a ground-breaking piece of work with two fully digital issues of the BD Magazine shared with the membership and the wider social media audience. The format made use of cutting-edge technology, allowing words, photos and videos to be combined for a spectacular output. The first issue was aimed at winter/spring training, whilst the second issue captured 'championship season' in all its glory, previewing the Senior and Para Europeans, reviewing the Youth Europeans and sharing top quality training for those heading to domestic championships in the autumn.

We believe the digital issues of the BD Magazine to be an industry-first, putting us ahead of the game in utilising digital publishing technology. Next year we aim to expand on progress made in this area, bringing further digital content to members of all levels, ages and abilities.



Nationals support

For 2025, a new LeMieux Nationals website was unveiled, with the Marketing and Communications team utilising in-house skills to produce a website of high-quality with limited cost. The website was a key tool in the Nationals marketing campaign and will be a vital platform in years to come.



Enhanced digital coverage

Throughout the year, the team have expanded on in-house resource and relationships with external providers to develop digital coverage at events. Resources and funds have been carefully allocated to provide coverage from grassroots to elite, with the aim of providing further representation of community level events, regional team competition and day-to-day riding in the future. Coverage highlights included daily reels from the Senior Home Nations - the first time this has been achieved - along with high quality coverage of the Youth, Senior and Para European Championships, achieved remotely.



www.britishdressage.co.uk