

British Riding Clubs Update 13.05.2020

COVID-19 Update

Following guidance for recreational sport and exercise from the [Sport & Recreation Alliance](#) and [Sport England](#), the BHS has issued some further advice for riding schools, facility centres, livery yards and coaches. The full update can be found on the BHS website here: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/coronavirus-covid-19>

In line with this new guidance, BRC can now provide all members, clubs and areas with the following updates, effective from today, 13th May 2020. It should be noted that whilst the government are producing regular updates, these then require careful consideration and interpretation in order to make the guidance relevant to our individual sector. The following updates are BRC's current interpretation of the most recent government guidance and are subject to change, as and when government advice is updated.

As guidance changes and we can start to introduce more BRC organised activities, BRC will support clubs and areas by issuing a Datasheet with considerations for safely resuming activities, along with a template COVID-19 risk assessment. These will be issued once we think the resumption of more activity is likely, so that organisers have time to fully prepare.

England Only

- Riding - In England is now encouraged, as long as social distancing and public health, hygiene and biosecurity requirements are followed. It should also be noted that riders should consider the risk of their activity, and only partake in activities where it is safe to do so, taking into account both the horse and riders' capabilities. Riding includes the following details:
 - Lessons and Training – Latest government guidance states that you may only exercise in groups of no more than two, unless you are exclusively with members of your household. Therefore, coaches are advised to provide lessons to individuals only, not to groups or household groups, and social distancing must apply. Individuals may now organise their own lessons, but no BRC organised training or clinics are currently permitted. Please see the [gov.uk Q&A](#) for further information.
 - Hacking – This may be done with members of your own household, or one other individual from another household, as long as social distancing is observed.
 - Locations – Any exercise taken must currently be outdoors only.
 - Travelling – Traveling both with and without your horse, is now allowed for exercising, training or facility hire. However, travel should not take place across borders into Scotland or Wales, due to their differing travel restrictions. The government do not specify any limits on distance travelled at this time.
 - Facility Hire – From today, many facility centres are now able to open for outdoor facility hire, which you can now use.
- Online Competitions – BRC organised online ridden competitions can now resume. BRC will be re-starting their leagues with Interdressage once again, for current, ridden dressage tests. If members / clubs / areas wish to also organise or partake in online jumping events, this is permitted as long as the appropriate risk assessments have been carried out that deem it to be a safe activity to resume. However, BRC will not be resuming our official jumping leagues at this time.

We are aware that British Dressage do not permit their dressage tests to be used for online activities without a license. BRC have therefore re-published the BRC dressage tests that we have used in the past and these are available for free use, to help with running online competitions. The tests can be found on our website, and the scoresheets are on the BHS Cloud for free download and printing. Please feel free to use these resources as required.

- Other BRC Activities – Apart from the online competitions mentioned above, no other BRC activities are currently permitted.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

- Riding - In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is now encouraged but only individually or exclusively with members of your own household. However, it is recognised that any riding activity should only be carried out in accordance with the specific government guidelines which can be found here for [Scotland](#), [Wales](#), and [Northern Ireland](#). These include:
 - Current travel restrictions
 - No facility hire, which remain closed at this time
 - Only riding if it is deemed safe to do so
- Online competitions – As with the England information above, BRC organised online ridden competitions can now resume. However, this should only be done if possible under the specific government restrictions as already detailed. For example, if your horse is kept at home and you can safely ride and film a dressage test, then you are able to enter online competitions.
- Other BRC Activities – Apart from the online competitions mentioned above, no other BRC activities are currently permitted.

BRC NAF Five Star National Championships

It is with great disappointment that we announce the cancellation of the above event. We had been hopeful to run the qualifiers and championships, but it has become clear that there is no way to do so whilst maintaining social distancing measures. This would therefore put the safety of staff, volunteers, officials, and competitors at risk, which is of course something that we cannot do. The National Championships is a vast event with approximately 2500 people in attendance across the weekend. It would also be highly unlikely that areas would be able to safely run qualifiers for this throughout July when current measures are highly likely to remain in place for some time. The BRC Advisory Committee have explored numerous options but were unable to find a solution that adhered to government restrictions and was also financially viable to run. We are exploring further online options and will share those with you in due course.

NAF Statement: As long term supporters of British Riding Clubs we would like to take this opportunity to share how disappointed we are that we will not be seeing you all at the NAF Five Star National Championships at Lincoln in 2020. We know just how hard each and every one of you work to qualify and how much amazing support your club gives you at both the qualifiers and the championships themselves. We fully support BRC in their decision for the safety of all of their members and are sure 2021 is going to be an amazing 'come back' year, so until then, stay safe, keep in touch, support each other and we will see you in 2021!

BRC TopSpec Dressage to Music Championships

It is still our intention to run this event if at all possible. The Dressage to Music is a relatively small event, with around 250 entries split over three days on site. It can also be run with a small number of key officials. We feel that with changes to current processes e.g. scoreboards and presentations, we would be able to run whilst adhering to any social distancing measures that remain in place. This will of course be subject to areas being able to run qualifiers and enough entries being made to make the event viable. We would also need to re-consider the classes on offer as a pairs class for example, may not be a possibility with the social distancing restrictions that we will have to work to.

It is with regret that the quadrille will not be going ahead this year, even if the Dressage to Music Championship is able to run. The teams would need to practice together in close proximity, and this will not be a possibility with the social distancing measures we are that we are abiding by. The committee have therefore made the decision to cancel this competition for this year.

Festival of the Horse 2021

The Festival of the Horse Championships has been a loss maker for BRC for some time now. The challenge competition incurs quite considerable costs; about as much as a full one-day-event, and entry fees and numbers at qualifier level simply do not cover these costs. We had hoped to run the challenge in a slightly different format for 2020, along with increased entry fees, to see if this would make the competition more viable. Unfortunately with the increased financial risk for this competition, combined with the fact that it is unlikely that qualifiers for the event will be able to run this autumn as usual, a decision has been made to run the event as a Combined Training Championships in 2021. The same combined training classes will take place, but there will be no challenge classes at the event.

We remain a member-driven organisation and are always keen to hear what our members want with regards to competition opportunities, so we welcome feedback on the challenge classes, and their popularity within your clubs and area.

Flu Vaccinations

BRC will continue to enforce the 2020 flu vaccination rules from 1 October 2020, including the six-monthly booster rule. This is to give anyone affected by the Covid-19 lockdown the opportunity to rectify any issues. Anyone competing at a qualifier before 1 October 2020 with an incorrect record will be given a flu vaccination failure form with an instruction to rectify the record. To clarify, if your horse was due its annual booster during the lockdown period when vets were unable to attend, then you will need to restart your vaccinations programme. However, if you had a six-monthly booster since your last annual injection, then you can use this as your new 'annual' vaccination, and so would not have to re-start.

END OF UPDATE