

Introduction

The global COVID pandemic had a significant impact on our sport throughout 2020, with five full months lost across England, Scotland and Wales. The challenges of running activity that ensured the health and safety of all participants were overcome with careful planning, clear protocols and the overwhelming support of members. Across the organisation we were able to salvage a number of competitions, championships and events in the second half of the year, with participation levels on a par with 2019 levels in the summer, all running successfully 'behind closed doors' in accordance with the appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures.

Unfortunately, the autumn and winter months have brought further disruption, with regional restrictions and national lockdowns again preventing BD from running competition and training activity. As case numbers increased and new variants of the virus emerged, the governments in England, Scotland and Wales all issued 'stay at home' orders after the festive period, which enforced the immediate suspension of all BD activity and competition from 4 January 2021.

The UK and Scottish governments have now confirmed their roadmaps for taking England and Scotland out of lockdown, with a series of key indicative dates that have enabled us to plan ahead for the resumption of BD organised competitions and training. Wales remains under lockdown restrictions until 1 April, with further details expected at the next review date, due on 12 March.

Roadmap to recovery

This plan will outline details for the resumption of activity in England and Scotland, in line with the dates provided by the respective governments, with further details for Wales to follow when available. In order to provide full context for the decision making process, the outline timeframes and details from each government are as follows.

England

The Prime Minister outlined a number of steps, with indicative dates set at five week intervals. The lifting of restrictions at each stage will be dependent on meeting a number of tests around infection rates and continued success of the vaccination programme, as well as an assessment of the risks for any new coronavirus variants.

From 8 March

- Two people can meet outdoors to socialise, not just for exercise purposes

Coaches can continue to travel for one-to-one training activity in private facilities or livery yards where horses reside. Members can continue to travel to where their horse resides to look after their welfare, including for exercise. Venue hire is still not permitted during this period.

From 29 March

- Groups of six people or two households can meet outdoors
- Outdoor sports facilities can re-open and organised sport can resume under COVID protocols
- People will no longer be required to stay at home, although still encouraged to stay local

BD organised competition and training activity will resume in England from this date onwards. All equestrian centres and riding schools will be allowed to re-open, with arena hire again permitted.

From 12 April

- Non-essential retail can re-open, including hairdressers, barbers and beauty salons
- Indoor gyms and leisure facilities, libraries, zoos and theme parks can re-open
- Food and drink can be served outdoors in pubs, bars restaurants and cafes
- Self-contained accommodation can re-open and self-catering holidays permitted

From this stage onwards, you will be able to stay away from home in your own facilities or in self-catering accommodation in order to attend multi-day competitions or overnight for training. On-site retail shops and trade stands will be permitted to re-open at venues, while catering outlets will be able to serve food and drinks outside, not just for take away.

From 17 May

- Most social contact restrictions lifted outdoors
- Groups of up to 30 people are permitted outdoors
- Up to six people or two households will be able to meet indoors
- Indoor hospitality, including hotels and B&B's, can re-open.
- Large indoor sporting events will have a maximum capacity of 50% or up to 1,000 people
- Outdoor sporting events will have a maximum capacity of 50% or up to 4,000 people

At this point, we anticipate that spectators will again be allowed to attend competitions and shows although numbers may still be limited depending on size of venue. On-site catering outlets may serve meals indoors. Restrictions on international travel will potentially be lifted from this date, which would allow riders, owners and trainers to attend overseas shows, subject to any local conditions.

From 21 June

- All legal limits on social contact removed
- Restrictions on large events will be lifted

All shows, training and regional camps can resume as normal, although the government will be reviewing social distancing rules, the mandatory use of face masks and other testing provisions, prior to lifting restrictions.

Scotland

Scotland will progressively move from national restrictions back to the regional level system over coming weeks, with reviews taking place every three weeks. Again, certain conditions will need to be met for any restrictions to be removed, so these dates are indicative. While there was no specific reference to the resumption of sporting activity for adults, we would hope and anticipate that organised competition and training activity will be able to restart from 26 April onwards at the latest.

From 15 March

- Next phase of return of children to school
- Non-contact outdoor sports to return for 12-17 year olds
- Four people from two households allowed to mix outdoors

From 5 April

- Stay at home restrictions can be lifted, all schools to return
- Up to six people from two households will be able to meet together
- Easing of restrictions on indoor household gatherings can begin
- All essential retail can re-open, with restrictions on click and collect services lifted

From 26 April

- Scotland will move from Level 4 into Level 3 restrictions
- Phased return of non-essential retail
- Some hospitality, leisure venues and gyms can re-open
- International travel restrictions will remain in place

BD organised training and competition will therefore get back underway in England from 29 March, in line with the COVID protocols previously put in place, while all equestrian venues will be able to re-open for facility hire. In Scotland, we await further detail of activities permitted at each date but anticipate that activity will resume no earlier than late April, when the country moves into Level 3. Wales remains under lockdown restrictions until 1 April, with further details expected at the next review date, due on 12 March.

Impact on the fixture calendar

The national lockdowns in England, Scotland and Wales have had a significant impact on the dressage fixture calendar, resulting in the loss of three months of summer qualification opportunities and the cancellation / postponement of the following competitions in the first half of the year:

Series/Show	Dates	Status
Vale View High Profile	8 – 10 January	Cancelled
Petplan Winter Area Festivals x 12	January – February	Postponed and rescheduled
Winter Regionals x 8	February – March	Postponed and rescheduled
Myerscough Premier League	02 – 07 March	Postponed and rescheduled
Keysoe CDI 3*, CDI U25/Y/J/P	19 – 21 March	Cancelled
Equissage Para Winter Championships at Myerscough	25 – 28 March	Postponed and rescheduled
NAF Winter and Petplan Area Festival Championships	14 – 18 April	Postponed, alternative dates still under review
Para Home International, Keysoe	30 April – 02 May	Cancelled
Senior Inter Regional, Keysoe	01 – 02 May	Cancelled
BD Youth Inter Regional, Keysoe	26 – 27 June	Cancelled
Shearwater Young Horse, BD 7YO, BD Young Pony qualifiers, Myerscough	03 March	Postponed and rescheduled
Ideal Saddles Combined Training Championship Series	January – April	Postponed, dates under review

Key areas for consideration

Over the past two months the BD Board, senior management and sport operations team have been developing contingency plans for key fixtures and competition series that have been affected by lockdown in the first quarter of 2021. The over-riding priority was to protect hard-earned qualifications and ensure that there were still sufficient opportunities in the revised calendar for riders at all levels, so members can still achieve their personal ambitions and goals.

This has been a complex process, involving consultation with various different stakeholder groups and a number of key considerations:

- **Calendar congestion** – rescheduling winter dates into the spring and summer period, when the calendar is already busy takes a large amount of planning and co-ordination.
- **Qualification opportunity** – the summer qualification period will now effectively start from 29 March (in England) and is due to end on 30 June. Competitors must have the chance to qualify alongside any rescheduled winter fixtures, including Area Festivals and Regionals.
- **Venue availability** – many of our venues already have dates in the calendar for existing shows after the resumption of activity. A number of venues are multi-discipline and run a variety of shows, which also has to be taken into account.
- **Competitor numbers** – with summer qualifications (1 December 2019 to 19 March 2020) carried over to the winter period, the numbers eligible to take part in championships are up on previous years. Over 15,000 emails were deployed to qualified combinations, so there is expected to be a high demand for competition places.
- **National restart dates** – we have made as much allowance as possible for members in Scotland and Wales, assuming that competition again resumes later than in England.

In consultation with our organisers and venues, we have endeavoured to bring as much activity back into the calendar as possible, while achieving the right balance overall to ensure that shows remain viable. At this stage, there are still some dates to be confirmed, while we will still need to ensure that the revised fixture calendar works alongside dates in Scotland and Wales, when competition is able to resume in each of the devolved nations.

We are also conscious that not all members will have had the opportunity to continue riding and training their horses during lockdown, so there also needs to be a four week lead in before any major fixtures can take place. This means that there is a truncated window of only two months available to reschedule postponed competition dates.

This resumption plan remains subject to change, depending on the government announcements at each stage, so we appreciate the understanding and flexibility of BD members as the situation continues to evolve over coming weeks.

Resumption of competitions – 2021 calendar revisions

Our first priority has been to enable members to use their qualifications already gained for the Winter Regionals and Petplan Equine Winter Area Festivals – ideally also including a rescheduled date for the NAF Five Star Winter Championships. Careful consideration has also been given to achieve a balance that will also allow qualification for the summer championship season during the same time period.

The proposals outlined below summarise our revisions to the calendar for the remainder of 2021.

Petplan Equine Winter Area Festivals

Existing qualifications will be valid for the following rescheduled dates:

Venue	County	Revised dates
Keysoe	Bedfordshire	30 April – 02 May
Beacons Equestrian	Carmarthenshire	01 – 04 May
Parwood Equestrian Centre	Surrey	06 – 09 May
Vale View Equestrian	Leicestershire	06 – 09 May
Northallerton Equestrian Centre	North Yorkshire	07 – 10 May
Morris Equestrian Centre *	East Ayrshire	12 – 16 May
Speedgate Events	Kent	13 – 16 May
Prestige Equestrian	Gloucestershire	13 – 15 May
Solihull	West Midlands	14 – 18 May
Aintree International Equestrian Centre	Merseyside	27 – 30 May
Gordon Dressage Group at The Cabin *	Aberdeenshire	29 – 30 May
Kingston Maurward College	Dorset	1 – 3 June

Winter Regionals

Seven of the eight Winter Regionals have been rearranged, as detailed below. Sadly, Easton College is unable to host any dates in the available timeframe due to their educational commitments. We are working to secure an alternative venue and date in the region and will issue an update in due course.

Venue	County	Revised dates
Wellington Riding	Hampshire	1 – 4 May
Morris Equestrian Centre *	East Ayrshire	12 – 16 May
Myerscough College	Lancashire	18 – 22 May
Vale View Equestrian	Leicestershire	20 – 23 May
Prestige Equestrian	Gloucestershire	27 – 29 May
Merrist Wood College	Surrey	29 May – 4 June
Bishop Burton College	East Yorkshire	01 – 04 June

* Further clarification will be required for the two Winter Area Festivals and Regional in Scotland, as Level 3 travel restrictions may prevent members from accessing these competitions. Additional contingency plans will be made should restrictions remain in place at this time.

NAF Five Star Winter Championships

The revised dates for the Winter Regionals and Petplan Equine Winter Area Festivals mean that there is now a very narrow window to host the NAF Five Star Championships in late June or early July, as we want to minimise any impact on the winter qualification period which commences on 1 July 2021, as well as the Summer Regional and Summer Area Festival fixtures.

We're are working with the organisers, Show Direct, in consultation with Hartpury College, to secure an alternative date, subject to availability and other existing fixtures in the calendar. The format and timetable of the show will also be dependent on all restrictions being lifted by this date. Members will be updated in due course once all options have been explored and plans are finalised.

Equissage Pulse Para Winter Championships

The Equissage Pulse Para Winter Championships, covering Bronze, Silver and Gold sections, was due to take place later this month, from 25 – 28 March. With competitions not resuming until the end of March, this has now been postponed to 23 – 25 May at the same venue, Myerscough College. An important consideration in rescheduling these championships was the requirement for overnight accommodation for Para riders. With hotels only able to re-open after 17 May, this provided a limited window for alternative dates.

Premier Leagues

The only Premier League fixture adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions was at Myerscough College and we have worked with the organiser to reschedule this important fixture later in the calendar. We are also pleased to announce that, having successfully run a number of High Profile Shows and championships, Vale View has been approved to run a Premier League in June. The full list of dates and venues for the 2021 season are therefore as follows:

Venue	County	Date
Keysoe	Bedfordshire	23 – 25 April
Myerscough College	Lancashire	30 April – 05 May (rescheduled)
Hickstead	West Sussex	21 – 23 May
Somerford Park	Cheshire	28 – 30 May
Wellington Riding	Hampshire	09 – 13 June
Vale View	Leicestershire	16 – 19 June (new fixture)
Hartpury	Gloucestershire	07 – 11 July

International Competitions

The government has confirmed that the current restrictions on international travel will remain in place until at least 17 May, which rules out competing overseas for all bar those riders classified as elite athletes under the criteria issued by DCMS and UK Sport. Elite athletes are currently defined only as those riders campaigning for selection for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo. These athletes may still travel to international competition, subject to any local restrictions, and are eligible for exemptions as per the [government guidance](#).

We appreciate there are many other members with international ambitions, including our U21 riders campaigning for age specific FEI European Championships later this summer. However, based on the current government requirements, these groups are not eligible for exemptions and therefore unable to travel abroad prior to 17 May. Our international team is working closely with our colleagues in World Class and a number of venues to provide alternative competition opportunities to gain experience and qualify for selection, as well as supporting the combinations in contention for Tokyo.

We anticipate that the Premier League season will run largely as planned, including a revised date for Myerscough, which will provide qualification opportunities, alongside any new fixtures and test riding days that we can be scheduled. Further details on these extra dates will be communicated to these riders directly as soon as plans have been finalised. The relevant selection policies will also be updated and reissued before competitions restart, to reflect restrictions on international travel and limited opportunities to compete.

Domestic FEI competitions:

Dates	Venue	Classes
07 – 11 July 2021	Hartpury	CDI3*/CPEDI3*
09 – 13 August	Bishop Burton	CPEDI1/2/3*
05 – 07 October	Keysoe	CPEDI1/2/3*
08 – 10 October	Keysoe	CDI3*/U25/Y/J/P

Summer Regional and Petplan Equine Summer Area Festival Qualifications

With the qualification window shortened to three months, Summer Regionals and Summer Area Festivals will now operate under 'island points' rules. This means that the total points required by the end of the qualification period (up to and including 30 June 2021) has been reduced by half. We anticipate that the resumption dates for Scotland and Wales should still give members in these regions ample opportunity to achieve these revised requirements; however, we will again review and adjust the timescales and/or points criteria if necessary.

Summer Regionals – Revised Points

Level	Revised points needed	Revised points from qualifiers	Minimum % required
Prelim Silver	10	10	66%
Prelim Gold	10	10	66%
Novice Silver	10	5	67%
Novice Gold	10	5	68%
Elementary Silver	8	4	65%
Elementary Gold	9	5	67%
Medium Silver	6	3	64%
Medium Gold	8	4	65%
Advanced Medium Silver	5	3	64%
Advanced Medium Gold	7	4	65%
PSG & Inter I Silver	3	3	64%
PSG & Inter I Gold	3	3	64%

Summer Petplan Equine Area Festivals – Revised Points Requirements

Level	Revised points needed	Level	Revised points needed
Prelim Bronze	4	Medium Bronze	2
Prelim Silver	5	Medium Silver	3
Novice Bronze	4	Advanced Medium Bronze	2
Novice Silver	5	Advanced Medium Silver	3
Elementary Bronze	4	PSG & Inter I Bronze	1
Elementary Silver	5	PSG & Inter I Silver	2

The requirement for one score of 60%+ for each section/level to be gained from a qualifying test (marked with a Q in the schedule) remains for 2021.

Petplan Equine Summer Music Area Festivals – Revised Qualification Requirements

Level	Revised score required	Level	Revised score required
Prelim Bronze	1 x 63% or higher	Medium Bronze	1 x 63% or higher
Prelim Silver	1 x 63% or higher	Medium Silver	1 x 63% or higher
Novice Bronze	1 x 63% or higher	Advanced Medium Bronze	1 x 63% or higher
Novice Silver	1 x 63% or higher	Advanced Medium Silver	1 x 63% or higher
Elementary Bronze	1 x 63% or higher	PSG & Inter I Bronze	1 x 60% or higher
Elementary Silver	1 x 63% or higher	PSG & Inter I Silver	1 x 60% or higher

National Championships and Summer Area Festival Championships

At this stage, we are expecting that both the Le Mieux National Championships and Petplan Equine Summer Area Festivals will be able to go ahead as planned, although this will obviously be subject to ongoing review over the coming months as restrictions are lifted.

Championship	Venue and county	Date
LeMieux National Championships	Somerford Park, Cheshire	16 – 19 September
Petplan Equine Summer Area Festival Championships	Arena UK, Lincolnshire	07 – 10 October

High Profile Shows

We are pleased to announce that Aintree International Equestrian Centre is the latest venue approved to host a High Profile Show. The calendar for the second half of 2021 is now as follows:

Venue	County	Date
Bury Farm	Buckinghamshire	27 – 29 August
Aintree International EC	Merseyside	28 – 31 October
Keysoe	Bedfordshire	02 – 05 December

Shearwater Insurance and BD Young Horse and Young Pony Qualifiers

Only one fixture hosting qualifiers for Young Horse and Young Pony sections has had to be cancelled due to the lockdown, at Myerscough College on 3 March. We can confirm that these classes will be added to the rescheduled Premier League fixture, from 1 – 5 May.

We anticipate that some of the qualifiers scheduled for early April may also need to move to allow more time to prepare young horses for competition. Further updates will be issued in due course.

Equissage Pulse Summer Para Championships

Gold Section

Para Gold riders have a semi-final stage to their championship qualification, which is held on the first day of the Festival of Para Dressage at Wellington Riding, 09 – 11 June.

The qualification period for the Festival of Para Dressage now ends on 25 May 2021 and the criteria has been amended to **one score of 65% or more obtained within the previous 12 months** for each grade, in either the individual or team test. One qualifying score in the individual test provides eligibility for all three days, including the Gold semi-final, the team test applies to days two and three only.

Competition	Score	Gold test required	Classes qualified for
Gold semi-final and Festival of Para Dressage	1 x 65%	Individual	Individual (Gold semi-final), Team and FSM (all three days)
Festival of Para Dressage, Wellington Riding	1 x 65%	Team	Team and FSM (days two and three of the Festival only)

Qualification from the semi-final for the Equissage Pulse Para Gold Championships, incorporated as part of the LeMieux National Championships at Somerford Park in September, remains unchanged, subject to further review if required.

Silver and Bronze Sections

Silver and Bronze para riders aiming for a Summer Championship place will now need to secure half the points detailed in the rule book before 30 June 2021. Silver riders will now require **five points**, while Bronze riders need **two points**. The Equissage Pulse Silver and Bronze Para Championships will again take place at Solihull in the West Midlands, from 4 – 5 September 2021.

Summary of Summer Para Qualification Requirements

Section	Revised qualification requirement	Required by
Gold	1 x score 65%+ from Individual or Team tests (<i>see above</i>)	25 May 2021
Silver	Five points	30 June 2021
Bronze	Two points	30 June 2021

Saracen Horse Feeds Quest Competitions

With the new regional structure due to be implemented when competition restarts, BD has taken this opportunity to review the format and structure for Team Quest and My Quest competitions to determine how the series can best be aligned with the six regions. The main outcomes of this review can be summarised as follows:

- The qualification requirement for a member/team to obtain a minimum of two Quest scores to earn a place on the regional leader boards remains unchanged.
- Members and teams will be able to nominate their chosen regional leader board at the start of the season. This must be done with head office within two months of the rider/team first competing in the 2021 Quest season.
- Six regional leader boards will run and extra Quest Regional Finals will be added to the existing eight shows, geographically mapped throughout the regions to ensure that there is good coverage across the country. Members will be free to choose their nearest regional final.
- The Saracen Horse Feeds Quest Regional Finals 2021 will be split, with venues hosting either the open sections or U21 sections for Team Quest and My Quest.
- With an increase in the number of Regional Finals, we're able to increase the numbers taking part in each class from 15 to 25 in Team Quest and from 20 to 30 in My Quest for each section.

The sport operations team are currently working with venues to confirm dates for the Quest Regional Finals and aim to release a full programme before the resumption of competition.

Qualification period	Regional Finals	Championships
29 March – 31 August 2021	Mid-Sept – early October	Bury Farm, Buckinghamshire 28 – 31 October

Elite Equine Associated Championships

As the qualification period for this series runs for much of the year and the Associated Championship finals are not due to take place until the end of 2021, the qualification criteria will remain unchanged at this stage. Championship venues and dates have now been confirmed.

The introduction of pre-registration for this year enables us to monitor numbers and capture those members that are intending to campaign for these championships, which will help with planning. If you're aiming for any of the 12 championships, please remember to [complete your registration](#).

Qualification period	Championships
29 March – 31 August 2021 Criteria: 3 x 60% + scores in relevant level and section	Vale View, Leicestershire, 14 – 17 October – CHAPS, Retraining of Racehorses, Thoroughbred and Veteran Horse & Rider Bury Farm, Buckinghamshire, 10 – 14 November – Arabs, Natives, Draught, GB PRE, Lusitano and TGCA

Regional Team Competitions

We have taken the difficult decision to cancel the Senior Inter Regionals, Youth Inter Regionals and Para Home International for 2021. This is regrettable, but due to the large volume of fixtures that have had to be rescheduled there is now a congested calendar in the second quarter of 2021 and it was not possible to accommodate these three events. However, we currently anticipate that both the Senior Home International and Youth Home international will run as scheduled later in the year.

Ideal Saddles Combined Training Series

Due to the UK-wide lockdown from 4 January, all qualifiers for the Ideal Saddles Combined Training Series were unable to take place as planned in the first quarter of 2021. We are working on plans to reschedule the series from October with a final towards the end of the year. The dates are interdependent with the Quest Regional Finals and Championships, so once these shows have been confirmed, we can then finalise and release plans for this popular series at the same time.

Countdown to competition

As we have been without competition activity for most of the winter, it is important that you take time to prepare you and your horse before competing in your first show.

- ➔ Make sure you're familiar with the [2021 Members' Handbook](#) – there's also a document which points out the key rule changes.
- ➔ Don't get caught out by any changes to the permitted tack – a new version of the BD Approved Tack will be available online before competition resumes.
- ➔ Make sure your BD memberships and horse registrations are up to date by checking on your member portal online – you need to have the correct type for the competition you want to do.
- ➔ Check your eligibility against the flow charts in the Members' Handbook to make sure you're competing in the right class and section.
- ➔ Check your horse's vaccinations – although there will be an amnesty period to enable you to get your six month booster up to date, you must still have the annual vaccination requirement.
- ➔ Give your competition tack a thorough check – stitching, metal work, keepers.
- ➔ Make sure your [equine transport is ready](#) for the road – check fluid levels, [tyres](#), brakes, flooring, [insurance](#), etc.
- ➔ Does your hat meet the right standard? Remember, no top hats are permitted this year.
- ➔ Get both your own and your horse's competition gear prepared and ready in good time in case any changes, repairs or alterations are needed.
- ➔ [Familiarise yourself with our COVID protocols](#) – we are only able to resume competitions due to the measures we have put in place, so following them is vital for everyone's safety.
- ➔ Check the BD website regularly for news updates, including changes to dates and any calendar/schedule alterations. Plus, there's lots of content on [BD at home](#) with top tips to help you prepare for the coming months.
- ➔ Give yourself and your horse the time needed to return to competition, especially if you've not managed to keep riding during lockdown – there's bound to be some 'ring rustiness'.
- ➔ A full range of 'flexi training' opportunities will be available via the BD website in case you want to book a session to get 'competition ready'.

There will inevitably be further changes over the coming weeks and months ahead, so once again we ask everyone to be flexible and understanding as we adapt our plans to meet these challenges. We want to provide a full competition calendar where possible, to make sure each and every member has an opportunity to ride at their level, with a fair chance of qualification to compete in championships. This will only be possible with your continued co-operation and support.

We all look forward to finally getting our 2021 competition calendar underway. We wish all BD members, whether riders, owners, trainers or officials, the best of luck, enjoyment and success for the rest of the year, as they celebrate achieving their personal goals through taking part in British Dressage competition.

British Dressage

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