

TRAILBLAZERS DRESSAGE RULES.

(Effective 1 September 2026)

1. Trailblazers Dressage Competitions

1.1 Dressage competitions are available at the following levels:-

Junior Trailblazers Intro Championship	Senior Trailblazers Intro Championship
Junior Trailblazers Preliminary Championship	Senior Trailblazers Preliminary Championship
Junior Trailblazers Novice Championship	Senior Trailblazers Novice Championship
	Senior Trailblazers Elementary Championship

2. Junior and Senior Age Eligibility for Trailblazers

Juniors

2.1 Juniors riding ponies or horses must not have attained their 17th birthday before the first day (dressage warm up day) of the Trailblazers Championship Finals. In the case of any dispute, birth certificates must be available if requested.

Seniors

2.2 Once a competitor has attained their 17th birthday on or after the first day (dressage warm up day) of the Trailblazers Championship Finals they may only compete in senior competitions. In the case of any dispute, birth certificates must be available if requested.

2.3 Juniors may compete in senior competitions on or after their 12th birthday. In the case of any dispute, birth certificates must be available if requested. Juniors competing at the Championship Finals in senior competitions must compete as a senior in all levels at that year's Championship Final. If still eligible, a rider may revert to the junior competitions for the following year. Any junior wishing to compete at the senior level at the Championship Finals must declare as a senior when entering the second round qualifier.

3. Pony and Horse Eligibility for Trailblazers

BD Points for First Round Qualifiers

3.1 At the discretion of the individual Show Organisers, classes run as First Round Qualifiers may be open to combinations with British Dressage points in excess of the limits for Trailblazers Second Rounds and Trailblazers Championship Finals as shown below. Such combinations will not be eligible for the Second Rounds. The Competitor should contact their local Venue if in doubt regarding First Round Qualifiers. However, Competitors must be aware of the rules regarding BD points for horses / ponies per the current BD Members Handbook.

BD Points for Second Round Qualifiers and Championship Finals

3.2a A horse / pony that is currently registered with British Dressage, or a horse / pony that was registered with British Dressage at any point from the 1 September preceding Trailblazers Championship Finals must not have more than the following British Dressage points to enable the horse / pony to compete at a Trailblazers Second Round Qualifier. A horse / pony which exceeds the points after qualifying at a second round may retain their qualification and compete at the Trailblazers Championship Finals:

3.2b Maximum horse points per level for the Second Rounds.

Intro	50 points at Preliminary and none at any levels above
Preliminary	100 points at Preliminary or above
Novice	100 points at Novice or above

Elementary **75** points at Elementary or above

Points at the level(s) below that at which a horse competes are not taken into account.

3.2c Maximum BD points per level for a rider and horse combination for Second Rounds.

Intro	15 points at Prelim and none at any levels above
Preliminary	15 points at Novice and none at any levels above
Novice	15 points at Elementary and none at any levels above
Elementary	15 points at Medium and none at any levels above

Points earned in Quest competitions are not included above and may be any amount.

3.2d Horses/ponies registered with BD and exceeding the points limits in 3.2b but competing only in Team Quest or My Quest classes, may compete in Trailblazers classes as long as the points limits for the horse/rider combination given in 3.2c above are met. Historical points with other riders will not be counted.

However, if the horse/pony is competed in BD classes other than TQ/MQ by any rider any qualifications gained will immediately be cancelled and the horse/pony will not be eligible to compete in further Trailblazers classes nor the Championships.

3.3 If it is proved that a horse / pony is competing at the Championship Finals under a different name as registered with British Dressage then it shall be eliminated.

Horse / Pony competing at the Trailblazers Championship Finals

3.4 A horse / pony may only compete once in each championship level at the Trailblazers Championship Finals. Therefore, the same horse may not compete with two different riders in the same championship level. For clarification, the same horse may be ridden by different riders at different championship levels.

A combination may only compete at two consecutive levels, eg. Preliminary and Novice. This applies to the combination, a rider may compete different horses at other levels; likewise a horse may be competed at other levels by a different rider.

Other Horse / Pony Restrictions

3.5 No other restrictions on horse / pony eligibility are applied for any Trailblazers dressage competitions.

4. Rider Restrictions

4.1 Any rider required to ride in the Gold section in BD affiliated classes may not compete in Trailblazers at that level or below on any horse. **Riders competing at Intro may not have won points at Novice nor have competed / have any points at the levels above including music.**

5. Warm Up and Practice Arenas

5.1 Riders are to behave with consideration to their fellow competitors whilst working in and must: -

5.1.1 Pass left hand to left hand when meeting another rider coming in the opposite direction unless they are in counter canter, when you should give way by circling. Make tack adjustments outside the warm up / practice arena.

5.1.2 It is the Competitors responsibility to be aware of other competitors at all times whilst in the warm up / practice arena.

5.1.3 Whips may be carried, but ensure the whip is not so long or used so that it could upset a passing horse.

5.1.4 Do not halt or walk on the outside track and always leave room for other riders to pass.

5.1.5 Do not lunge without the permission of the Organiser / Steward. Lunging should only take place in a designated arena or at a designated time.

5.1.6 Lunging a horse / pony in a balancing or running rein is prohibited.

5.1.7 A horse / pony may only be worked in by the person who is due to compete on that horse / pony in competition while attending the event. Breaching this rule may incur elimination from all competitions at that event.

5.1.8 Only riders, trainers and grooms are permitted in the warm up / practice arenas and must confine themselves to pedestrian areas if not mounted on a horse / pony.

5.1.9 If a warm up arena is becoming overcrowded, the Organiser or Steward may ask competitors not competing that day to leave. An Organiser / Steward may impose a limit on the number of horses allowed in the warm up arena, giving priority to those closest to performing their test.

6. Riding the Test

Entering the Dressage Arena

6.1 Competitors must wait until the Judge has signified that they may start before entering the dressage arena.

6.2 Where the construction of the arena makes it impossible for the competitor to ride outside the entire circumference of the arena before the Judge's signal to enter is sounded, they may ride inside the arena.

The Test

6.3 A test begins when the horse enters at A and finishes when it moves off from the final salute. Movements must follow one another in the order laid down in the test. In a movement carried out at a specific point, the movement is executed when the rider's body is level with the marker.

6.4 Trailblazers use tests issued by British Dressage. Copies of individual Tests may be purchased from British Dressage on www.britishdressage.co.uk.

Commanders

6.5 Commanders are permitted at all Trailblazers competitions.

6.6 Competitors are responsible for ensuring that only the words of the printed test are read out and that there is no emphasis on any command. The Judge may eliminate the Competitor if this rule is not met.

6.7 Commanders may not stand inside the dressage competition arena.

Outside assistance

6.8 No form of outside assistance, including the use of radio communication is permitted once the Competitor has entered the arena. A Judge may eliminate a Competitor who is given outside assistance designed to help them improve their performance during a test.

Leaving the Dressage Arena

6.9 Riders are to leave the arena (after the final salute) at walk on a long rein at an appropriate place.

6.10 The Judge will eliminate any horse / pony that leave the dressage arena out of control during a test. At the Judge's discretion, marks will be deducted if a horse / pony places four feet outside a dressage arena.

Dismounting or Fall

6.11 If, after the rider has entered the arena, they dismount without a reason acceptable to the Judge, no marks will be given for the movement.

6.12 If there is a fall of horse and / or rider, the combination will be retired immediately from that class but may ride in further classes on the same horse / pony or the rider may compete on a different horse / pony in that class if the rider declares they are fit to continue.

Resistance

6.13 Any horse failing to enter the arena within 45 seconds of the bell being sounded will have a 2 mark penalty per Judge awarded. Failure to enter after 90 seconds of the signal to start will result in elimination.

6.14 The Judge will eliminate any horse refusing to continue the test for a period of 20 consecutive seconds during a test.

Voice

6.15 The use of the rider's voice is prohibited and is to be penalised by the loss of two marks from the score that would have been awarded for each movement in which it occurred.

Lameness

6.16 In the case of marked lameness, the Judge is to inform the rider that he is eliminated. There is no appeal against the decision. If there are any doubts as to a horse's soundness, the competitor will be allowed to complete the test and any unevenness of pace severely penalised.

Riding the wrong test

6.17 A rider who starts the wrong test for the class may be allowed to restart the test (at the Judge's discretion) as long as they do so immediately. They will be penalised for a first error of course.

Error of Course and Test

6.18 When a rider makes an error of course (takes the wrong turn, omits a movement etc.), the Judge is to ring the bell. If necessary, the Judge will explain the point at which the rider must take up the test again, and the next movement to be executed. However, if sounding of the bell would unnecessarily impede the fluency of the performance it is up to the Judge to decide whether to ring the bell or not. The Judge should ring the bell when a movement is executed at the wrong marker, if there is the possibility of a similar mistake when the movement is repeated on the other rein.

6.19 If a competitor makes an error of the test they are to be penalised as for an error of course. Competitors are not to repeat a movement of the test unless the Judge at C decides on an error of course and sounds the bell. If, however, the rider has started the execution of a movement and tries to do the same movement again, the Judges must consider only the first movement shown and also penalise for an error of course.

Errors

First	Penalised 2 marks
Second	Penalised 4 (more) marks
Third	Elimination and the competitor to leave the arena

Judges Decision

6.20 In all cases the Judge's decision is final and cannot be over-ruled.

7. Competitor Dress

Please refer to current BD rules for dress requirements, which are summarised below.

Hats	Must conform to current safety standards and be worn at all times when mounted.
Long Hair	For the purpose of safety, long hair should be tidy and secured appropriately.
Jewellery	Should jewellery be worn anywhere on the body it can increase the risk of injury and competitors are strongly recommended to remove all jewellery.
Jackets	Any single colour jacket or tailored waistcoat will be allowed. Tweed jackets are permitted but should not have bold patterns. Accents, such as collars, cuffs or points of a different hue, modest patterns (including pinstripes) or crystal decorations are permitted.
Shirts	A long or short sleeved shirt of a solid colour that fastens at the neck with a tie, white round collar or correctly fastened stock must be worn.
Gloves	Must be worn and be in a plain colour. There is a 2 mark penalty if gloves are not worn.
Body Protectors	Optional including the air bag style and may be worn over or under the jacket.
Breeches / Jodhpurs	Breeches or jodhpurs should predominately be of a solid, single colour. Dark-coloured contrast seats are permitted. Striped or bold patterned breeches or jodhpurs are not permitted. Official Services uniform is permitted.
Long Boots	Conventional boots of any colour designed for riding are to be worn by all competitors and grooms whilst mounted. Short riding boots designed for riding may be worn with or without gaiters or half chaps of the same colour as the boots.
Jodhpur Boots	Short riding boots designed for riding may be worn with or without gaiters or half chaps of the same colour as the boots. Fringed gaiters/chaps are not permitted.
Gaiters / Half Chaps	Must be a plain with no fringes and to be worn with matching leather jodhpur boots.
Spurs	Spurs are only to be worn in the traditionally correct manner, with the curve of the neck of the spur directed downwards. Excessive use of spurs is forbidden. Spurs must be made of metal, although spurs with a smooth rotating rubber, metal or plastic ball on the shank are permitted. The band round the heel must be smooth; "comb" spurs are not permitted. Dummy spurs are permitted. There is no restriction on the type of shank and rowels that are permitted provided that they are free to rotate. Rowels with points must have rounded ends.

Whips	A whip may be carried in all Trailblazers dressage competitions. Excessive use of the whip is forbidden. If a Competitor drops their whip during a test it may not be picked up. A Competitor may only ride with one whip in their hands at any time while mounted on a show ground. When saluting, a Competitor must take the reins and whip, if carried, in one hand, to salute with the free hand.
Branding	Company or Private Logos may be worn on pocket badges, saddle cloths, rugs or on upper arm of the rider's competition jacket.

8. Tack and Equipment

Please refer to current BD rules for tack eligibility, which is summarised below.

8.1 No item of saddlery or equipment is to be misused. Dress and tack requirements must be adhered to at all times when a horse / pony is ridden in a show ground.

Saddle	English or Continental style saddles are compulsory. Side saddles and treeless saddles are permitted but riders choosing to ride side saddle must notify the Organiser when entering the competition.
Stirrup Leathers	Stirrup leathers and irons are compulsory and are to be attached to the saddle and used in the conventional way. The rider's boots must not be secured to the stirrup iron; the penalty for breaching this rule is elimination.
Saddle Covers	Saddle covers are not permitted. A gel pad / memory foam seat saver is permitted, provided that it is unobtrusive and matches the colour of the saddle.
Bridle Numbers	If numbers are required within individual show rules Competitors must provide their own numbers which may be attached to either the bridle or saddle cloth. The wearing of two numbers at the Championship Finals is compulsory, there must be one each side of the bridle/saddle cloth and they must be provided by the competitor.
Bridle	Bridle numbers must be worn at the Championship Finals whenever the horse / pony is out of the stable and / or horsebox, including when being grazed or led in a headcollar. A bridle with a bit is compulsory and must be used in the conventionally accepted manner. The loop of the reins must be above the horse's neck with the reins attached to the bit. Intro, Preliminary and Novice levels must wear a snaffle bridle. Elementary may wear a snaffle bridle or double bridle. The Micklem multibridle is permitted as a snaffle bridle but must be used without bit clips. The 'ST Zaum Poll Relief' bridle is also permitted. Bitless bridles and hackamores are not permitted. Bridles must be predominantly black, brown, grey or navy and may not be decorated with tassels or any additions to the normal configuration. Browbands may be coloured or with discreet metal trim. Discreet padding of the bridle at the poll and / or noseband is permitted. Padding of the cheek pieces is not allowed and will result in elimination.

Nosebands	A noseband is obligatory. Either a drop, flash, grackle or cavesson noseband must be used with a snaffle bridle. Double bridles must use a cavesson noseband. Drop nosebands and flash straps must lie in the chin groove. Nosebands must not cause discomfort. Covering the front of the noseband (for example with sheepskin), is not permitted and will result in elimination.
Bits	Trailblazers will follow the bit rules listed in the British Dressage Rule Book, which is published on www.britishdressage.co.uk . Intro, Preliminary and Novice levels must wear a snaffle bridle. Elementary may wear a snaffle bridle or double bridle.
Prohibited Tack	Martingales and bearing, side or running reins of any kind are forbidden. Reins with elasticated inserts are not permitted; neither are any sort of blinkers, tongue straps or bitguards.
Breastplates	Breastplates and breast girths are permitted.
Neck strap	A neck strap or balancing strap (a loop on the front of the saddle) are permitted at all levels.
Boots & Bandages	Boots or Bandages are not permitted for competition. If worn during a test the penalty is elimination. Boots and bandages may be worn in the warm up arena and for prize giving.
Ear Covers/Fly Fringes	Ear covers and fly fringes are permitted during warm up and also for competitions, solely in order to protect the horse from insects. Ear covers fly fringes must be discreet, not brightly coloured and must not cover the horse's eyes. Ear plugs are not permitted, except for prize giving.
Anti-Fly	Impregnated brow bands and fly repellent discs are permitted. Nose nets are permitted, but must be discreetly coloured and cover the nose only, leaving the mouth and bit visible.
Stallions	Stallions are to be identified by a stallion disc on the bridle at all times. White ribbon may also be worn in the forelock and tail.

9. Competitors Conduct & Responsibility

9.1 Riders and owners of competing horses and / or their assistants must, under penalty of elimination, obey any order or direction given to them by any official and they must, in particular, be careful not to do anything liable to upset or hinder the progress of the competition.

9.2 The competitor is responsible for arriving at the appropriate competition arena early enough so that they start their test at the designated time. The competition time allocated to the competitor is the time that they should start their test. Should a Competitor miss their allocated time then, at the discretion of the Judge, they will be eliminated from the competition.

10. Prize money

10.1 Any single prize may not exceed £20. The number of prizes and places given per class is at the individual Show Organisers discretion.

11. First Round Qualification

11.1 The qualifying period for dressage first rounds for each Championship Final is from 1 September the previous year until 2 July in the year of the Championship Final.

11.2 Competitors need a score of 58% or over in a Trailblazer First Round to qualify for the Trailblazers Second Rounds. First round qualification is required at each level to compete at a Second Round at that level.

11.3 Once a Competitor has qualified at a First Round Qualifier, they should then purchase a Dressage Qualification Card from the Venue at which they qualified.

11.4 The Dressage Qualification Card must be completed and returned to the Trailblazers Central Office. The Competitor will be issued with a Second Round Qualification Form for the horse or pony / rider at the level concerned.

Reference to the Trailblazers General Rules

11.5 Also see Points 2 & 3 in “General Rules Covering all Disciplines”.

12. Second Round Qualification

12.1 Second Round Qualifiers will be held in March, April, May or June in the year of the Championship Final.

12.2 Every Show Organiser must run one Second Round Qualifier at their Venue at each level for which they have run First Round Qualifiers.

12.3 There is no restriction on the number of Second Rounds at the level qualified that a competitor may compete at to try to qualify for the Trailblazers Championship Finals.

12.4 Once a Competitor has achieved second round qualification, they must have the Show Secretary at the event sign the Second Round Qualification Form and the competitor must then return the form to the Trailblazers Central Office to finalise their qualification.

Numbers to Qualify

12.5 Numbers to qualify from Second Rounds for the Trailblazers Championship Finals

Number of Entries	Number to Qualify
Up to 25	8
26– 35	9
36 or more	10

Splitting Second Round Qualifiers into two Sections

12.6 Show Organisers that have more than 30 entries in a Second Round Qualifier have the option to split into two sections as it is unfair on the judge if the class is too large. Second Round Qualifiers with fewer than 30 entries may not be split. Competitors must check with the individual Venue as to whether a Second Round Qualifier has been split into two sections.

12.7 Should a Show Organiser split a Second Round Qualifier into two sections then the following numbers to qualify will apply:

Combined total of Competitors across both sections	Number to Qualify from each Section
Up to 61	5
62 or more	6

12.8 Show Organisers must ensure that the sections are evenly split prior to withdrawals. Should there be more withdrawals in one section than the other the balance of entries between the two sections will not be adjusted.

12.9 Splitting a Second Round Qualifier into more than two sections may only be done with prior permission from the Trailblazers Central Office.

Juniors & Senior Second Round Qualifiers that run concurrently

12.10 A Show Organiser may run a Junior and Senior Second Round Qualifier at the same level as a joint competition. However, the result must be split into junior and senior competitors for qualification purposes. The number of senior entries will dictate the number of seniors to qualify and the number of junior entries dictates the number of juniors to qualify.

Reference to the Trailblazers General Rules

12.11 Also see Point 2 & 3 in “General Rules Covering all Disciplines”.

Horse / Pony competing at the Trailblazers Championship Finals

12.12 A horse / pony may only compete once in each championship level at the Trailblazers Championship Finals. Therefore, the same horse may not compete with two different riders in the same championship level. For clarification, the same horse may still be ridden by different riders at different championship levels.

A combination may only compete at two consecutive levels, eg. Preliminary and Novice. This applies to the combination, a rider may compete different horses at other levels; likewise a horse may be competed at other levels by a different rider.

13. British Dressage Rules

13.1 British Dressage rules (published on www.britishdressage.co.uk) will apply to Trailblazers competitions unless superseded by the Trailblazers Rules.