



**LEVEL 4
COACHING
CERTIFICATE**

AWARDS CELEBRATION

**FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 2024
LONDON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW**

Schedule

Arrival: 10:45am

Awards celebration: 11:00am

Afternoon performance: 12:25pm

- The FEI Driving World Cup
- The Kennel Club Dog Jumping Grand Prix
- Lorenzo – The Flying Frenchman
- The Defender Shetland Pony Grand National
- The Christmas Tree Speed Stakes

Performance finish: 16:15pm

A note from Nicky

I'm thrilled for each of you on achieving your Level 4 Coaching Certificate. Your achievements are more than just personal success – they're a testament to the power of resilience, passion and hard work. As you celebrate today, know that you're not just recognised, but truly valued for what you bring to equestrian coaching and it's inspiring to witness.

I'm incredibly proud of what you've accomplished. Your commitment to mastering your craft, to constantly learning and to bettering not just yourselves but also the lives of the riders and equines you coach, is admirable. The diversity amongst each of you in finding your unique place in our industry means you bring something distinctive to shape the future of equine coaching. In your own specialist areas, you shine brightly, with each one of you a beacon of excellence. Whether pioneering new approaches or showing genuine and authentic care for those you work with, you set standards that others will look up to. Your expertise and dedication reflect desire to make a lasting difference in this field and, for that, I'm deeply humbled.

Let this be just the beginning of an exciting new chapter, and may you continue to inspire others just as you have inspired me. Congratulations once again and here's to a future filled with even more achievements and impact.

Nicky Fuller

Natasha Andrews

Location: Durham

An investigation into the impact of the Tanni Grey-Thompson report in relation to how coaches interpret their duty of care in British Showjumping.

Abuse in sport can manifest as physical, sexual and emotional harm and neglect and, while safeguarding efforts often focus on children, adults can be vulnerable due to power imbalances in talent pathways.

A 2011 review of over 6,000 adult athletes in the UK highlighted significant rates of emotional abuse, sexual harassment, physical harm, self-harm and sexual abuse. Reports from 2015 indicated limited safeguarding referrals from coaches, with sexual harassment and abuse often under-reported, leading to escalation. A 2017 government review by Tanni Grey-Thompson stressed that safety, welfare and wellbeing must be central to sport and expanded the duty of care to include diversity, inclusion, mental and physical wellbeing, safeguarding and safe practice, recommending continuous professional development (CPD).

Research using semi-structured interviews and reflexive thematic analysis revealed that while coaches prioritise child safeguarding, they need more support for adult safeguarding and have knowledge gaps in diversity and mental health. Coaches also noted difficulties in accessing safeguarding procedures and suggested mandatory, user-friendly online CPD training for better accessibility.



Phil Brown

Location: Lincolnshire

The impact of the 2023 British Eventing regional youth league system in team selection for National Youth Championships

British Eventing oversees a complex equine triathlon comprising dressage, showjumping, and cross-country. Team selection for the sport poses unique challenges due to the interplay of subjective judging, individual athlete-equine dynamics and the changing competition environment. Historically, National Youth Championship teams were selected by regional coaches but, in 2023, British Eventing introduced the Regional Youth League system. This system selects the top 10 riders from each league based on a Power Based Average (PBA), derived from their top three finishing scores.

Research into equestrian team selection is scarce compared to mainstream sports, which highlight the importance of coach input alongside rankings in selection processes. With British Eventing's focus on rider and horse welfare and long-term development, there is a need to balance performance priorities with nurturing potential.

This project analysed the 2023 Regional Youth League system by examining its predictive value for performance at the National Youth Championships and its impact on athletes and parents. Insights from this study aim to inform future selection procedures, ensuring alignment with both competitive and developmental objectives.

Sara Copley

Location: Warwickshire

Challenges faced by the equestrian coach in advocating for the unsound horse

Despite governing bodies stating that coaches have a responsibility regarding horse welfare, including soundness issues, coaches struggle to meet this responsibility. While general equestrian literature can provide potential explanations for the challenges faced by coaches, there is no research into the challenges faced by equestrian coaches when advocating for the unsound horse. The specific reasons for these challenges need further investigation, in order to understand how coaches can be prepared to successfully advocate for the unsound horse and fulfil this aspect of their welfare responsibilities

This research explored the challenges faced by equestrian coaches in advocating for the unsound horse, by exploring their knowledge and opinions towards soundness issues, equestrian attitudes and coaches' experiences when raising concerns with riders.

Participants showed similar levels of knowledge, varying attitudes to stereotypes and soundness issues and experienced similar responses from riders when raising soundness concerns. All coaches attributed challenge in advocating for the unsound horse to a lack of rider knowledge on soundness issues, differing opinions of other professionals and a lack of formal education in soundness issues.



Teresa Edmonds

Location: Cambridgeshire

Exploring coaches' implementation of the 20% recommendation in dressage

Following British Dressage bringing in a 20% weight recommendation in January 2023 and continuing comments from fellow coaches that they were not sure how to proceed with this guideline, there seemed a need to investigate this further. There seemed to be a distinct lack of research in coach welfare, so it established a need for this research in addressing coaches' opinions and experiences on this issue.

An anonymous survey was conducted over a social media platform. Data was collected and transferred into codes, themes and sub-themes using a six-stage thematic analysis model. Three key themes were identified – horse welfare, rider welfare and coach welfare. Coach welfare was then divided into two sub-themes of coach professional welfare and coach mental welfare.

A vast majority of the participants showed a lack of knowledge and confidence in how to address this subject and a gap in the CPD offered by the National Governing Body was noted.



Fiona Harrison

Location: North Yorkshire

Exploration into British Eventing coaches' appreciation of athlete-centred coaching

This study delves into a relatively unexplored area, offering unique insights into the perspectives and appreciation of athlete-centred coaching among British Eventing coaches. Athlete-centred coaching, a methodology that hones in on the individual athlete's needs, goals and development, has gained traction in various sporting contexts worldwide. However, its implementation and reception within the equestrian sport of eventing, particularly in the British Eventing context, remain relatively uncharted.

Through qualitative research methodology, including semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, this study examined how British Eventing coaches perceive and integrate athlete-centred principles into their coaching practices. The findings provided a fresh perspective on the coaches' understanding of athlete autonomy, collaboration, and empowerment within the coaching process. Furthermore, the study explored potential challenges and facilitators influencing the adoption of athlete-centred approaches in the British Eventing coaching community by understanding coaches' perspectives on how athlete-centred coaching enhances coaching effectiveness, athlete satisfaction and overall performance in eventing.



Kathryn Howard

Location: Somerset

An examination of the impact of perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms of the wellbeing of the carriage-driving athlete

The study of the impacts of perimenopause and menopausal symptoms on equestrian athletes is currently limited. The impact extends beyond the activity itself, affecting the athlete's physical, psychological, and emotional wellbeing.

This study's objective was to investigate the influence of specific symptoms on both training and competition performance. This is intended to assist in identifying the requirements for coach education and support systems, as well as designing appropriate training and competition environments to support athletes.

Key themes included symptoms identified, impact on athlete performance and the identification of support requirements. The research data provides evidence for identifying the study requirement and this initial investigation indicates the need for specifically tailored coach education and the management of support systems for athletes, in both training and competition.

Claire Maddison

Location: Durham

What factors impact male riders from competing in amateur showjumping

Showjumping exhibits a gender disparity, with male professionals dominating the elite level and female riders constituting the majority at the amateur level. While quantitative data from the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) and British Showjumping rankings highlight this trend, they do not explain the underlying reasons for this divide. This research investigated barriers preventing male amateur riders from confidently participating in the sport and explores ways to foster inclusivity.

Using semi-structured interviews with four male amateur riders in England, the study employed Braun and Clarke's six-stage reflective thematic analysis. Findings revealed that amateur male riders face gendered stereotyping and perceive showjumping as a feminine sport. These pressures influence how male riders adapt their behaviour and create protective personas to mitigate stereotyping.

The study emphasised the need for further research with a broader participant base to develop strategies for reducing gender bias and enhancing inclusivity in show jumping at all levels.



Steph Price

Location: Powys

Exploring the accessibility challenges encountered by grassroots carriage-driving athletes when entering the competitive sport of horse driving trials

In the past, equines were employed to pull carriages for transportation and agricultural purposes. However, there has been a decline in the involvement of grassroots carriage-driving athletes in training and competitive events. This paper sought to investigate the factors contributing to this decline, analyse the challenges encountered by grassroots carriage-driving athletes and evaluate the implications of these challenges on athletes in training and competition.

Findings showed that athletes involved in grassroots carriage-driving encountered various challenges when competitively entering the sport. These included expenses related to sports-specific equipment, travel costs, competition fees, membership fees and training costs. Additionally, participants found the competition structure complex, which left them feeling overwhelmed and their needs unmet.

This project emphasised the importance of reducing competition fees, lowering membership and training costs, revising competition rules and structure, and introducing a mentor or buddy system to support grassroots carriage-drivers.

Hugh Train

Location: London

An exploration of coaches' perception of their use of questioning during coaching

The use of high-quality questioning during sports coaching is increasingly being encouraged by sporting Governing Bodies because it is believed to improve athlete understanding, autonomy and competency.

This qualitative study aims to explore the perceptions of equestrian coaches regarding their use of questioning in their own practice. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews from four coaches working in different areas in the equestrian industry. Thematic analysis of the interviews was carried out to identify common themes between the participants.

The results suggested that the coaches use a variety of questioning techniques, adapting to both the athlete and the exercise as a means of ensuring athlete improvement. The findings also highlighted the importance of questioning in creating a positive athlete/coach dynamic and more independence in athletes. These insights validate the benefits of a questions-based approach to coaching with further research being necessary to establish how sporting Governing Bodies can best incorporate questioning technique into their training pathways.

Michael Whippet

Location: Aberdeenshire

Analysing the role of the performance coach during the progression of young dressage riders from Junior to Senior level

The transition from Junior to Senior level is one of the most challenging in an athlete's sporting career. While there is a breadth of research into the difficulties of this transition and how coaches support the athletes, there is very little research into this subject within equestrianism. This research project aims to identify and common problems and examine coaches' methods of support in order for the athlete to continue to succeed throughout this transition.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with professional coaches. The interviews were coded using thematic analysis and categorised into themes and sub-themes. Three themes emerged, which consisted of parental support, quality of horse and athlete mindset. Parental support was then split into three sub-themes, which included parental financial support, parental experience and parental pressure.

Although this study did outline some methods of support shown by the coaches, the most influential factor of success is out of the coaches' control.

Congratulations

Congratulations on this remarkable achievement! Your hard work, dedication and passion for coaching have brought you to this prestigious milestone. We know that your coaching expertise will continue to shape the future of equestrian participants across the federation and inspire many more riders, drivers and coaches to follow in your footsteps.

As you continue to elevate the standards of equestrian coaching, we want to wish you the very best of luck in your future endeavours. Your commitment to excellence is truly valued, and we are immensely grateful for the impact you make in our community.

Here's to your continued success and to all the amazing things ahead!

British Equestrian

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