

Level 4 Coaching Certificate

Awards celebration

Friday 19 December

London International Horse Show

Schedule

Arriving: 10:45am

Awarding celebration: 11.00am

Afternoon show: 12:10pm

Featuring in the International Arena:

- Dog Agility: Intermediate ABC and Large ABC Stakes – Jumping
- Spirit of the Horses: Heritage from the Hungarian Equestrian Culture powered by Ineos Grenadier
- Shetland Pony Grand National
- The CDI-W FEI Dressage World Cup™ (Freestyle to Music)

Session End: 16.30pm

Please scan the QR code for the full PDF timetable:



A note from Nicky

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

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

Like all learning, it never ends, I hope this is the beginning of an exciting new chapter in which you continue to inspire and lead others in the equine industry. Congratulations once again, and here's to a future filled with even more achievements and impact.

Nicky Fuller

Level 4 Course Director



Amy Blount

Location: Hampshire

Analysing high performance coaching in different equestrian disciplines - What do national governing bodies consider to be high performance coaching in equestrian?

British Equestrian serves as the central body for all national governing bodies (NGBs) in the UK, encompassing 11 sport-specific organisations that deliver coaching qualifications up to Level 3. British Equestrian then oversees the generic Level 4 qualification for high-performing coaches. Although equestrian coaching has evolved, there is limited research examining what constitutes high performance in this context.

This study aimed to explore what NGBs value when developing high-performance coaches through their Level 3 qualifications and whether these values align with academic understandings of high-performance coaching. Using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, the technical elements of the Level 3 coaching syllabuses from the three Olympic disciplines were critically analysed. The framework's three stages—description, interpretation, and explanation—were applied to uncover language use, power structures, and underlying ideologies within the texts.

Findings indicated a strong emphasis on technical and professional knowledge in equestrian coaching, but limited focus on developing interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. This suggests a disconnect between the competencies promoted at Level 3 and those required for progression to Level 4 and high-performance contexts. The study concludes that while NGBs aspire to cultivate high-performing coaches, their educational discourse and qualification structures may inadvertently restrict this development. Greater attention to language, values, and opportunities for holistic skill growth is recommended to ensure consistent high-performance coach development across all equestrian disciplines.

Charley Camp

Location: Berkshire / Dorset

Do national governing bodies offer appropriate and accessible support for coaches who have witnessed accidents or sporting injury?

This study explores the accessibility and appropriateness of support provided by national governing bodies (NGBs) for equestrian coaches who witness accidents or sporting injuries during their professional duties. Equestrian sport is inherently high-risk, and coaches are frequently exposed to traumatic incidents involving their athletes. Despite the potential psychological impact, little is known about the support structures available to these coaches or how they perceive their adequacy.

A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative and qualitative data from 19 experienced equestrian coaches via an online questionnaire. Findings revealed that while all respondents had witnessed multiple accidents, a significant number felt unprepared to manage traumatic events and unaware of available mental health support. Coaches expressed a desire for better access to counselling, peer support networks, and clearer signposting of resources. The study highlights a critical gap in NGB provision and calls for structured, trauma-informed support systems to protect coach wellbeing and maintain high standards of care in equestrian sport.

Sarah Gairdner

Location: Oxfordshire

Investigating the heart rate changes in amateur riders and their horses immediately before entering a dressage test

Competition related anxiety is a common experience among equestrian riders, potentially impacting performance and welfare. This study aimed to quantify changes in heart rate of amateur riders and their horses immediately before entering a dressage competition, serving as an objective physiological marker of anxiety. Heart rate (HR) data was collected between the steward sending the combinations to the dressage arena and entering the competition arena from a sample of amateur rider horse pairs ($N = 7$).

A quantitative, within-subject design employing paired t-tests was used to assess differences in HR across these two time points. Results indicated a significant increase in rider HR prior to entering the competition arena, consistent with heightened anticipatory anxiety, while horse HR showed less of a significant change.

These findings highlight the rider's psychological response during pre-competition moments and suggest implications for coaching strategies to manage anxiety. Future research should consider integrating qualitative methods to capture subjective anxiety experiences of horse and rider, providing a more comprehensive understanding of competition related stress in equestrian sport.

Emma Slater

Location: Gloucestershire

Experience versus expertise – Do British Showjumping silver league riders, when looking for a coach, value one over the other?

This study investigates British Showjumping Silver League riders' coaching preferences, focusing on how they evaluate experience versus expertise when selecting a coach. Positioned between grassroots and elite levels, Silver League riders play a critical role in the development of future athletes, horses, and potentially as coaches themselves.

Adopting a constructivist-interpretivist framework, the research employed a mono-method qualitative case study design. Semi-structured interviews with five female riders (aged 21–64) were analysed using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis. Three themes were generated, two of which are explored in depth: *Collaborative Journey* and *Achievement-Oriented Learning*. Participants valued coaches who demonstrated competitive credibility (riding or coaching at 1.40m level or above), offered empathetic support, and provided autonomy-supportive, change-oriented feedback. While experience was clearly recognised and trusted, uncertainty remained around the relevance and application of formal coaching qualifications. Findings suggest that Silver League riders seek coaching relationships that balance technical skill with personal investment, autonomy, and tailored goal setting.

This study highlights the importance of refining coach development pathways to better meet the needs of intermediate riders and suggests further research into how qualifications can influence coaching effectiveness and communication.



Sophie Starr

Location: Dorset

How does feedback provided by different equestrian assessing bodies impact candidates in practical coaching assessments?

This research investigates how feedback following practical coaching assessments impacts candidates in the equestrian industry. This is an area with limited existing evidence.

Five coaches were interviewed about their experiences of feedback following assessment. With assessments influencing both career progression and confidence/emotional wellbeing, the study draws on insights from other professional fields to explore themes of fairness, timeliness of feedback, and developmental value, including the concept of "feedforward." It highlights the importance of the assessor as coach, the importance of formative feedback and candidate experience, offering recommendations to improve feedback practices and support coach retention and development within the industry.

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 riders across the federation and inspire many more riders 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!

The team at British Equestrian



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