



BC CLASSES – 2026

This is a guide to all the British Carriagedriving classes that may be offered at BC outdoor events in 2026.

The class levels are designed to allow the natural progression of the equine(s), and drivers through the levels.

For all turnouts – from Gateway to Advanced.

This is a guide to the rules. While we've tried to make it accurate, the rulebook takes precedence if there are any differences.

Qualification for BC National Championships at National Events is as follows unless stated otherwise in the individual class level.

Number of competitors in the class	Qualification Criteria
5 or more	The highest two disregarding those already qualified from the first eight places.
1 to 4	The highest placed disregarding those already qualified.
In addition	Any competitor who has completed two National events in the same class.

CLASS	Gateway Newcomers Singles or Pairs			
Eligibility	Designed for Newcomers to the sport of Competition Carriage Driving with little or no outdoor competition experience or for those moving to outdoor competition. An Introductory Safety and Competence Assessment must be completed prior to attending the first event.			
Safety	Safety check prior to competition to check • Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness • Suitability of equine(s), vehicle, driver and groom • Children. If a driver is aged 6 to 12 inclusive the turnout must be capable of accommodating a competent adult on the carriage. • Grooms may stand throughout. (See guidelines for VSE & SE for smaller equines.) • If a turnout has been unharnessed between any phases of the competition a further safety check must be made.			
Excluded	Vehicles with wire wheels.			
Dressage	Gateways Newcomers test A simple series of movements judged on rhythm, suppleness and contact • Arena size - 80m x 40m or at the discretion of the organiser. • Test can be called by the groom/backstepper			
Cones	Course • Between 10 and 15 pairs of cones • May include a maximum of 2 difficulties – cloverleaf, zig-zag, etc. • Speed – 200 m/min • Gate width – 155 cm			
Obstacles	Maximum 4 obstacles • Gated to D or E • Can be 2 obstacles driven twice			
Progression	Competitors must progress out of Gateway Newcomers after 2 consecutive years. They can either progress into Gateway Allcomers or to full competition at any time subject to their eligibility for the class entered. They must progress to Allcomers after winning the National Championships (if held) or after 2 consecutive years at this level.			

CLASS	Gateway Allcomers				Singles or pairs
Eligibility	The class is designed for • Gateway Newcomers to progress into • Competitors who are bringing on a new single equine or starting a pair • Experienced indoor and inside/out competitors may start in this class or Newcomers as they wish. • Young Horses – a competitor wishing to compete at International Young Horse competitions may use this class to achieve approval to do so.				
Safety	Safety check prior to competition to check • Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness • Suitability of equine(s), vehicle, driver and groom • Children. If a driver is aged 6 to 12 inclusive the turnout must be capable of accommodating a competent adult on the carriage. • Grooms may stand throughout. (See guidelines for VSE & SE for smaller equines if applicable.) • If a turnout has been unharnessed between any phases of the competition a further safety check must be made.				
Dressage	• Gateway Allcomers test • Arena 80m x 40m (or 60m x 40m) • The test may be called by the groom/backstepper				
Cones	Course • Between 10 and 15 pairs of cones • May include a maximum of 2 difficulties – cloverleaf, zig-zag, etc. • Speed – 200 m/min • Gate width – 155 cm				
Obstacles	Maximum 4 obstacles • Gated to D or E • Can be 2 obstacles driven twice				
Progression	Competitors can progress to full competition at any time subject to their eligibility for the class entered. They can continue in the Allcomers class indefinitely.				

CLASS	Pre-Novice Singles			
Eligibility	Pre-Novice is designed for - competitors progressing from Gateway classes - competitors new to the sport who wish to start at this level outdoors - competitors new to outdoor competition having competed at Indoor and inside/out level. New competitors wishing to enter Pre-Novice at National competitions must have a BC competence certificate signed at two club events.			
Classification	Classes will be split by height only – horse and pony.			
Safety/Presentation	Safety check prior to dressage and marathon to check - Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness - Suitability of equine, vehicle, driver and groom/backstepper - Grooms may stand throughout all phases - Carriage Width - 125cm for all phases			
Dressage	- BC Pre-Novice (2025) - Arena 80m x 40m (or 60m x 40m at the discretion of the organiser) - Test can be called by groom on the carriage			
Marathon	- Section B only - Max 6 obstacles. If Obstacle No.1 is less than 1km from the start of Sec B then it will not be driven.			
Cones	Course - Maximum 20 pairs of cones - Speed – 210 m/min - Gate width – 155 cm			
Progression	Progression to Novice Singles - A competitor who has won a National Pre-Novice in which 3 or more competitors started the Event, on two occasions, will progress to Novice at the end of the season. - A competitor may choose to move to Novice after they have completed 2 Pre-Novice National Events without elimination, with a dressage mark of 65 or less. - The competitor may move to Novice during the season if they wish, but if they qualify at Novice for the National Championships the Novice class will be the one contested there. - A turnout (driver and equine) that wins the Pre-Novice National Championships will move to Novice for any competition following the Championships.			

CLASS	Novice Singles			
Eligibility	- Competitors progressing from Gateway or Pre-Novice classes - Competitors new to the sport who wish to start at this level outdoors - Competitors new to outdoor competition having competed at Indoor and inside/out competitions. - A driver, when first progressing into the Novice class, may drive the Novice A or Novice B dressage test. - A competitor from a higher class level may compete in this class with a young or inexperienced equine that has not competed above Novice level. They must return to the Open Class at the end of the season in which they win their first event and will not be eligible to qualify for the National Novice Championship. New competitors wishing to enter this class at a National competition, without first competing Nationally at Pre-Novice, must have a completed BC competence certificate.			
Safety/Presentation	Safety check prior to dressage and marathon to check - Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness - Suitability of equine, vehicle, driver and groom/backstepper			
Classification	Classes will be split by height only – horse and pony.			
Dressage	BC Novice A; BC Novice B			
Marathon	2 sections 6 obstacles			
Cones	Carriage width – 138cm Course - Maximum 20 pairs of cones - Speed – 220 m/min - Gate width - 160 cm			
Progression	Progression to Open - A driver who chooses to drive Novice A may move to Novice B whenever they choose to do so. If a driver chooses to drive Novice B test, they will not be permitted to drive Novice A at any further events or at the National Championships. Drivers MUST move to Novice B at the end of the season if they win the Novice class driving Novice A on two occasions. - A driver who has completed the Novice class without elimination, driving Novice B on at least 2 occasions with a best dressage mark of 65 or less may choose to move to the Open class. - A driver must move to the Open Class if they finished in first place at the National Novice Championship, or - won a National Novice class driving Novice B, in which 3 or more Drivers started the Event, on two occasions although the Novice status is retained until the end of the season. The driver may move to Open in that season if they wish but if they qualify at Open level for the National Championships the Open class will be the one contested there.			

CLASS	Open Singles, Pairs, Tandem & Teams			
Eligibility	- The winner of the Novice National Championship - A competitor who has won a National Novice class, in which 3 or more competitors completed the Event, on two occasions. - A competitor may progress to the Open Class after they have completed 2 Novice National Events without elimination, with a dressage mark of 65 or less. - A driver of a multiple turnout may enter this class following an assessment and having completed a competence card for the turnout.			
Safety/Presentation	Safety check for any competitor competing for the first time at this level prior to dressage and marathon to check - Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness - Suitability of equine(s), vehicle, driver and groom/backstepper			
Presentation	On the move			
Classification	Classes will be split by height, single, pairs and tandems (6 classes) Teams, if competing, will be combined with the tandem classes. Organisers may, at their discretion, combine pairs, tandems and teams.			
Dressage	BC Open Singles A; Singles FEI 2*; BC Open Pairs A; Pairs FEI 2*; BC Tandems; Teams FEI 2*.			
Marathon	2 sections 6 to 8 obstacles - Majority gated to F			
Cones	Course - Maximum 20 pairs of cones - Speed - Horse Tandem – 230 m/min - All other classes – 240 m/min - Gate width - Horse Team – 185 cm - Horse Pair – 170 cm - All other classes – 160 cm			
Progression	A competitor may progress to the Advanced Class after they have completed 2 Open National Events without elimination and with a dressage mark of 65 or less at one of these events. (Singles driving Open B).			

CLASS	Advanced International Level for Singles, Pairs & Teams			
Eligibility	A competitor/athlete may progress to the Advanced Class after they have completed 2 Open National Events without elimination, with a dressage mark of 65 or less at one of these events. (Singles driving Open B).			
Presentation	Judged on the move during dressage			
Dressage	FEI 3* tests			
Marathon	• 2 sections • 6 to 8 obstacles • Majority gated to F			
Cones	Course • Maximum 20 pairs of cones • Speed ○ Horse Single, Horse & Pony Pairs - 250 m/min ○ Pony Single – 260 m/min ○ Horse & Pony Teams – 240 m/min • Gate width ○ Singles & all Pony classes – 160 cm ○ Horse Pair – 170 cm ○ Horse Teams – 185 cm			
Progression	Competitors who have progressed to the Advanced classes may return to the Open Class at any time and still retain their eligibility to return to the Advanced class when they wish, without the need to re-qualify.			
National Championship Qualification.	British Carriagedriving National Championships. • Qualification can be achieved as stated for all classes • In addition Competitors at this level, competing at events overseas, may pay two start fees to BC from two events they complete to enable qualification to the BC National Championships.			

CLASS	Very Small Equine Singles, Pairs, Tandem & Teams			
Eligibility	Any turnout 11hh (112cm) and under. The Organiser will monitor weight of carriage and driver/grooms, being conscious of the welfare of the equine(s) at all times. Guidance can be found on the BC website.			
Safety/Presentation	Safety check prior to dressage and marathon to check • Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness • Suitability of equine, vehicle, driver and groom • Groom on the carriage may stand throughout Carriage Width - 125cm for all phases. Narrower carriage can be accommodated by arrangement. Please inform organiser at time of entry.			
Grooms Note: Driver 6 to 12 years must have a competent adult on the carriage. See BC Rule Book, Article 912	• 2 wheeler. ○ Groom must be in close attendance throughout all phases (including the marathon section) being able to render assistance if required. ▪ May be on foot, sitting alongside or on backstep (if fitted). ▪ May travel on marathon between obstacles on foot, by bike, or quad (if allowed by organiser) ▪ If on backstep, they can stand in all phases. • 4 wheeler single & tandem ○ Groom on back step of carriage. • 4 wheeler pair ○ Groom on backstep of carriage • 4 wheeler Team – 2 grooms ○ One groom can be on foot in close attendance being able to render assistance if required. ○ Minimum one groom to be on carriage in all phases.			
Dressage	• BC Novice Test A or B • Arena size - 80m x 40m or at the discretion of the organiser.			
Marathon	• Part of Section B – max 4 kilometres • 4 obstacles • 10 km/h, 6 minutes per km.			
Cones	Course • Maximum 20 pairs of cones • Speed - 200 m/min • Gate width – 145 cm			
Progression	A competitor may remain indefinitely in VSE or move to Small Equine or other classes for which they are eligible. VSE competitors are not restricted to this class and may enter SE or other classes. If entering eligible classes they will start at Novice level unless previously qualified to a higher level. A driver, when first entering the class, may drive the Novice A or Novice B dressage test (except drivers who have previously competed at a higher level who must drive Novice B).			

	A driver who chooses to drive Novice A may move to Novice B whenever they choose to do so. If a driver chooses to drive Novice B test, they will not be permitted to drive Novice A at any further events or at the National Championships. Drivers MUST move to Novice B at the end of the season if they win the class driving Novice A on two occasions.

CLASS	Small Equine Singles, Pairs, Tandem & Teams			
Eligibility	Any turnout 12.2hh (127cm) and under. The Organiser and Judges will monitor weight of carriage and driver/grooms, being conscious of the welfare of the equine(s) at all times. Guidance can be found on the BC website			
Safety/Presentation	Safety check prior to dressage and marathon to check • Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness • Suitability of equine, vehicle, driver and groom • Carriage Width - 125cm for all phases. • Grooms may stand on the carriage throughout. Note: Driver 6 to 12 years must have a competent adult on the carriage. See BC Rule Book, Article 912			
Grooms	• 2 wheeler. ◦ Groom must be on the carriage throughout all phases ◦ May sit alongside driver or stand on backstep (if fitted). • 4 wheeler single, pairs & tandem ◦ Groom on backstep of carriage. • 4 wheeler team ◦ 2 grooms on carriage			
Dressage	• BC Novice Test A or B • Arena size - 80m x 40m or 60m x 40m at the discretion of the organiser.			
Marathon	• Section B • Max 6 obstacles. If Obstacle No.1 is less than 1km from the start of Sec B then it should not be driven. • 11 km/h, approx. 5m 27sec per km.			
Cones	Course • Maximum 20 pairs of cones • Speed - 220 m/min • Gate width – 145 cm			
Progression	A competitor may remain indefinitely in SE or move to other classes for which they are eligible. SE competitors are not restricted to this class and may enter other classes. If entering eligible classes they will start at Novice level unless previously qualified to a higher level. A driver, when first entering the class, may drive the Novice A or Novice B dressage test (except drivers who have previously competed at a higher level who must drive Novice B). A driver who chooses to drive Novice A may move to Novice B whenever they choose to do so. If a driver chooses to drive Novice B test, they will not be permitted to drive Novice A at any further events or at the National Championships. Drivers MUST move to Novice B at the end of the season if they win the class driving Novice A on two occasions.			

CLASS	Drivers with Disabilities (DwD) Singles & Pairs			
Eligibility	Any driver who has completed the Drivers with Disabilities Protocol and has been classified. Documents can be found on the BC website.			
Safety/Presentation	Safety check may be required depending on experience prior to dressage to check • Fit, safety & cleanliness of vehicle and harness • Suitability of equine, vehicle, driver and groom • Suitability of any safety harness			
See FEI rules	FEI - Driving Rules 2026 Clean			
Grooms	See BC protocol.			
Dressage	To be confirmed			
Marathon	• 2 sections • 6 obstacles • Gates driven to E only			
Cones	Course • Maximum 20 pairs of cones • Speed - 230 m/min • Gate width – 160 cm			
Classes	• DwD may compete in any class for which they are eligible. • If a competition is organising a DwD only class the para driver may choose to compete in that DwD class or not.			

CLASS	Young Drivers encompassing Children, Juniors & Under 25 Single, Pair			
Classes	• Young Drivers may drive in any BC class for which they are eligible. • They will drive the dressage test required by that class. • In addition they may wish to drive their relevant Young Drivers FEI test at the end of the day. • Or drive in a specific YD class if one is available.			
Eligibility	Determined by age of driver. • Children – Single pony – Driver age 12-14 years • Juniors – Single Horse & Pony – 14-18 years • Juniors – Horse Pair – 16-18 years • Under 25 – Singles & Horse Pair – 16-25 years • Under 25 – Horse 4s – 18-25 years			
Grooms	See FEI rules FEI - Driving Rules 2026 Clean			
Dressage	To be confirmed			
Marathon	• 2 sections • Children - 5 obstacles ○ Gated to D • Juniors and Under 25 – 6 obstacles ○ can be gated to F			
Cones	Course • Children – up to 15 pairs of cones ○ Speed 220 m/min ○ Width 20 cm over carriage width • Juniors and Under 25 – up to 20 pairs of cones ○ Speed ▪ 240 m/min ○ Width ▪ Horse Pair – 170 cm ▪ All other classes – 160 cm			