



NORTHERN IRELAND FESTIVAL RULES

Below are the general Rules and Regulations for Northern Ireland Festival. Specific rules relating to each class is given in the class wording in the schedule. All Exhibitors competing at Northern Ireland Festival or the qualifying shows shall be considered as having read and agreed to the following regulations.

NORTHERN IRELAND FESTIVAL ADMINISTRATION

- 1 ENTRY FEES are NOT refundable even with a Doctor / Veterinary Certificate.
- 2 Nomination entries are NOT permitted.
- 3 The person who signs the declaration on the entry form is deemed to be the owner of that entry. Exhibitors under the age of 18 years must have the declaration signed by an adult.
- 4 All entries must be accompanied by full payment.
- 5 Represented Cheques – any payment that has to be represented to the bank for whatever reason will be subjected to a £15.00 administration fee for each occasion.
- 6 All Exhibitors are bound by the rules as detailed in this rulebook. The Northern Ireland Festival Committee reserves the right to amend these rules as and when required.
- 7 No behaviour of an offensive, abusive or unpleasant manner to any person at Northern Ireland Festival will be tolerated. Any act of discourtesy to any Judge, Steward or any Show Official on the part of the competitor groom, rider, driver or agent of an animal, will, at the discretion of such Official disqualify that animal from being judged, in which case entry fees, prizes and charges will be forfeited. Exhibitors are reminded of their responsibility for the actions of others within their party.
- 8 No person shall ill-treat animals at any time whether by misuse/excessive use of a whip, bit or any item of saddlery or in any other way whatsoever.
- 9 Failure to observe any of the rules may result in disqualification of the animal concerned.
- 10 JUDGING TIMES are as accurate as possible at the time of printing, but it is advisable to check with show officials at the Show itself. Judging is in timetable order unless otherwise stated.
- 11 THE JUDGE'S DECISION IS FINAL.
- 12 BEDDING – straw / shavings bedding is available for purchase at the directly from the showground owners.
- 13 MANGERS - exhibitors must bring their own feed and water containers as these are not provided.
- 14 STABLING – is subject to availability and will be issued on a "first come" basis. Horses / ponies must not be left in horse boxes overnight.
- 15 DOGS - For reasons of safety and to prevent nuisance the Committee has decided that dogs can only be permitted on the Showground whilst on a lead. Exhibitors MUST clean up after their dogs. Any person found to dis-regard this rule will be fined. No dogs will be permitted inside any building at the showground with the exception of Assistance Dogs.
- 16 MOTOR BIKES OR QUAD BIKES will not be permitted on the Showground.
- 17 BICYCLES & SCOOTERS will not be allowed on the Showground.
- 18 PRIVATELY OWNED BUGGIES / HIRED BUGGIES – may NOT be driven around the showground – unless an exemption has been granted in writing by the Northern Ireland Festival Committee. Only exhibitors with a medical disability will be granted dispensation. All persons must have a valid, full UK Driving License to drive any buggy or other motorised vehicle on the showground.
- 19 MEASUREMENTS - The Northern Ireland Festival Show Committee reserves the right to measure any type of class by their official Veterinary Surgeon on the Showground unless exhibitors are able to produce a valid Height Certificate to the Veterinary Surgeon and / or Steward in charge on the day. When an animal has more than one height certificate which includes a JMB (Joint Measuring Board) certificate, the JMB measurement will be used.
- 20 CANCELLATION OF / OR ALTERATION TO CLASSES - The Northern Ireland Festival Show Committee reserves the right to cancel, divide or amalgamate or otherwise change any class or to limit entries in any class or section from any entrant. For safety reasons, all Concours / Pairs / Costume classes will be limited to a maximum of 30 entries per class.
- 21 CONTAGIOUS DISEASE - All exhibitors are asked to be aware of animals on the Showground and ensure that all exhibits are fit and well. If any exhibitor has reason to believe that an animal is unfit, please report this to the Show Office.
- 22 INSURANCE: (a) It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to insure all property and livestock on the Showground or elsewhere which is his own, or for which he is responsible. (b) The Society requires exhibitors to effect Employers Liability insurance where this is required by statute. (c) The Society also requires to effect Public Liability and Products Liability insurance with a minimum indemnity of £1,000,000 to protect their liability.
- 23 NORTHERN IRELAND FESTIVAL CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSES – All entries for the Northern Ireland Festival Working Hunter Final classes must be accompanied by the correct remittance with details of when they qualified. This will then be verified.
- 24 STALLIONS – in the interest of safety, stallions may only be ridden / driven / handled by persons over the age of 14 years – with the exception of Small Breeds Mountain & Moorland stallions, where the rider / handler must have attained their 12th birthday by the 1st January in the current year. Stallions are not permitted in any Young Handler, Equitation, Junior Ridden M&M, Lead Rein or First Ridden classes. Drivers of stallions must have an active, responsible adult with them at all times.
- 25 The Northern Ireland Festival Committee retains as its absolute discretion the right to decline or exclude or remove any person or animal from the show or future shows or return any entry fee without being required to assign reason or being liable for any compensation.

GENERAL RULES

- 1 All ridden animals must be four years old and over. The age of an animal shall be calculated from the 1st January in the year of its birth.
- 2 An animal must be shown in the name under which it was originally registered with the AHS, BMS, BSHA, BSPA, BSPS, CHAPS, IPS, NPS, Native Breed Stud Books, SHB (GB), BS or any other recognised passport issuing society.
- 3 Mountain and Moorland ponies must be registered in the main body of their respective Breed Society Stud Books to compete in classes restricted to registered Mountain and Moorland ponies.

- 4 The identification of the animal must be in accordance with their passport at all times, this include all markings and whorls. Removing or addition of features is not permitted.
- 5 Exhibitors are required by DEFRA to carry the passports for their horses/ponies when competing or travelling.
- 6 Exhibitors must comply by the registration requirements as set out in the class rules.
- 7 Mares with a living foal born during the current season may not be shown in any ridden classes.
- 8 No animal or rider may leave the ring without permission of the Judge or Ring Steward.
- 9 No rider may ride more than one animal in a class except for the jumping classes where they may ride two.
- 10 Once a class has commenced there shall be no change of rider, except in a championship if a rider has more than one exhibit eligible to compete. The substitute rider must be eligible for the class and the Ring Steward informed of the change of rider.
- 11 A fall of animal or rider whilst mounted in any class will result in disqualification and they MUST leave the ring DIS-MOUNTED.
- 12 Animals displaying continued disobedience or leaving the ring whether mounted or dismounted will be disqualified.

CLOTHING & TACK

1. HATS: It is the sole responsibility of riders to ensure that at all times whilst on horseback, they wear correctly fitting, 3-point protective headgear which complies with the latest British Standard. The Society accepts no responsibility for any injury arising from a failure to comply with this regulation. Top Hats / Bowlers may be worn by riders aged 16 years old and over during the Evening Performances at the rider's own risk. Handlers of horses/ponies in the In Hand classes who are under 14 years old on the day of the show must wear properly secured hats to the current British Standard.
2. Correct dress should be worn in all classes. Gaiters may be worn however Chaps are not permitted in any class.
3. Body protectors may be worn and are recommended whilst competing in WHP classes.
4. Earrings and / or body studs must not be worn.
5. Mobile telephones, ear pieces and communication devices MUST not be used in the ring.
6. Spurs / Dress Spurs – must not be worn in any Show Pony / Show Hunter Pony / Intermediate Show Riding Type / Intermediate Show Hunter Type / Intermediate Working Hunter / Working Hunter Pony or any ridden Mountain & Moorland class
7. Show canes are not to exceed 75cms (30”) in pony classes. Hunting crops are permissible.
8. In Lead Rein and First Ridden classes, reins must be of a normal length and not knotted or stitched together in a short loop. In Lead Rein classes the reins must not be attached to the saddle.
9. In Lead Rein classes handles on saddles are permitted.
10. Under no circumstances may tack be changed during the judging of a class.
11. If competing in a championship the same tack used in the class must be worn. Whips are not considered tack.
12. All Lead Rein ponies must be shown in a suitable snaffle bridle only.
13. Bit-less bridles and running gags are not permitted unless otherwise stated in the class specific rules.
14. In WH / WHP classes the use of any type of noseband and martingales are permitted.
15. Boots of a plain colour only may be used for the jumping phase of Working Hunter Pony classes. Boots must be removed for the conformation section of the class. Boots are not permitted for any other classes.
16. No bandages or protective pads on any animal's legs or feet are permissible in any class
17. In the interest of safety, long hair should be tidy and appropriately secured.
18. Unless otherwise stated in the class wording, any suitable bit is accepted in all Northern Ireland Festival classes.

JUDGING OF CLASSES

1. In all cases the Judge's decision is final.
2. No person, including exhibitors, handlers or grooms should enter the ring at any time without the Judge's permission.
3. A class is deemed to have commenced when the Judge enters the ring and the exhibits are present.
4. Exhibits will not be allowed into the ring after the ponies/horses have been asked to trot.
5. The class is deemed to be over when the Judge has given permission for the class to leave the ring.
6. If a mistake in the marks is discovered, even after dismissing a class, it MUST be corrected and any qualification/result amended.

JUDGES

1. Judges must not judge any horse/pony at Northern Ireland Festival under the ownership or production of any person for which he/she, his/her partner or business partner has provided or obtained livery or had any other connection (business or otherwise) since 1st January of the current year. Stud fees are exempt.
2. If a Judge has reasonable grounds to believe that any section of the above rulings are being contravened then the Judge must ask the rider to leave the ring and the rider must withdraw. In the event of a change to the published Judge after close of entry, making the exhibit ineligible for the class, a change of entry will be permitted or the entry will be refunded.
3. In the event of a Ride Judge falling from an exhibit, they must not remount that exhibit in that class, the horse must be asked to leave the ring and will not be allowed to compete further in that class. In the event of a Judge falling from an exhibit it is at that Judge's discretion as to whether they feel fit to continue judging - unless this is contrary to medical or the Northern Ireland Festival Committee's opinion. In the event of the Judge not being fit to continue riding, a replacement Judge will be found or the remaining competitors will be asked to do an individual show.
4. Ride Judges in all classes judged under Northern Ireland Festival rules MUST wear a correctly secured British Standard Skull Caps/Riding Hats that meet current Safety Standards.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

Any exhibitor at the Show feeling themselves aggrieved must make their protest in writing within one hour of the completion of the judging of the class and pay a deposit to the Secretary of £50.00. The official NIF complaint form must be used. Objections will not be entertained from any person or organisation not exhibiting in the same class as the animal to which the objection is raised. An Appeals Tribunal will consider objections at a time and place to be fixed by them and the person making the objection must be available to attend or, be represented by his authorised agent at the appointed time and place. The decision of the Appeals Tribunal shall be final, and if the protest is not substantiated the deposit may be forfeited. The animal to which the objection is raised must remain on the showground until permission to leave has been obtained from the Secretary.

DEFINITIONS - PLEASE READ THESE CAREFULLY

IN ALL CLASSES - THE RIDER MUST BE THE CORRECT AGE TO COMPETE AS DETAILED IN THE CLASS SPECIFICS

FESTIVAL WORKING HUNTER -

It is the horse / pony that qualifies so the rider may be different for the final.

Competitors may ride a maximum of two horses / ponies in each working hunter final. However should both animals qualify for the Evening Performance, only one animal will be permitted to participate. The rider must choose which animal goes through.

The horse / pony and rider combination must remain the same in the Evening Performance as that which competed in the final.

For age restricted classes - the rider must be the correct age for the class when they qualify.

HOME PRODUCED CLASSES – These classes are open to horses and ponies that have been stabled at home (without any paid assistance) or kept at livery on a DIY basis since 1st January in the current year. Horses / ponies must not have been shown or trained by a professional Producer or kept at full livery at any time during this period (except for service in the case of Brood Mares). To be owned/kept, produced, ridden/handled by a person who does not derive their main income from working with horses/ponies. It is anticipated that exhibitors will enter in the true spirit of this competition.

RESTRICTED CLASSES – These classes are open to HORSES, PONIES AND RIDERS that have not qualified for the Royal International Horse Show, the Horse of the Year Show or Olympia during the two years prior to the date of Northern Ireland Festival. This includes horses, ponies and riders that have qualified for Search For A Star.

NOVICE CLASSES – These classes are open to horses and ponies that have not won a first prize at any affiliated Show in an open classification on or before the 1st January in the current year. In Novice working hunter classes, the rider and horse / pony may walk the course mounted prior to the commencement of the class.

AFFILIATED SHOWS – For the purpose of this schedule, an Affiliated Show means a show that has been affiliated to any of the following Societies or shows: BSPS, P(UK), NPS, BSHA, SHB(GB), NCPA, IPS, CHAPS, BSPA, VHS, HOYS, Equifest, The Showing Register, AHS, RIHS, LIHS, Northern Ireland Festival, Balmoral, Royal Dublin or any other recognised Breed Society or 'county' level show.

AMATEUR CLASSES – These classes are restricted to exhibitors who do not: a) Engage in breeding, livery, buying, selling or dealing in a commercial capacity. b) Receive remuneration for employment in the connection with horses in racing, showing, livery or riding school. c) Show a horse owned or sponsored by a company or commercial firm. d) On the day when an exhibit is competing in an Amateur class, Professionals are not allowed to ride or work in the relevant animal. No Professional Producers are allowed into the ring to groom/strip the horse.

MOUNTAIN & MOORLAND CLASSES – For the purpose of this schedule, all Mountain & Moorland classes (unless otherwise stated) are restricted to ponies registered with the following pure bred Breed Societies: Connemara, Dales, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Fell, Highland, New Forest, Shetland or the Welsh Pony & Cob Society.

YOUNG HANDLER CLASSES - The maximum age for these classes is 16 on the 1st January in the current year.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Northern Ireland Festival Committee seeks to ensure that all children, young people and vulnerable adults attending Northern Ireland Festival are safe and protected from harm. We believe that all children have a right to be protected from abuse, bullying or exploitation. Wherever possible, the Northern Ireland Festival Committee will ensure that the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected at our events. Any complaint or suspicion of abusive or inappropriate behaviour or practice will be taken seriously by the Northern Ireland Festival Committee. The Complaints Procedure will be evoked and any suspicious or child abuse incident will be referred to the appropriate Local Authority for investigation under the Child Abuse and Protection Procedures.

HEALTH and SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

General:

The Northern Ireland Festival Committee as Organisers, have overall responsibility for Health and Safety.

The event is organised in accordance with Health and Safety Legislation and all who have, to any extent, control of the premises on which the event is held, are responsible for ensuring that:

- Everything reasonably practicable is done to ensure the health, safety and welfare of those attending the event
- They conduct themselves so that they do not put themselves or anyone else at risk
- The access to and egress from the site is safe and unobstructed

Officials:

Stewards and Officials are briefed to conduct themselves so that they do not put themselves or anyone else at risk, and to maintain control of the area around their location.

Spectators:

All reasonable and practical steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of those attending this event.

Competitors:

Competitors are required to conduct themselves, and retain control of their horses, so that they do not put themselves or anyone else at risk. Competitors take part at their own risk and should therefore ensure they have their own insurance cover if deemed necessary.

Contractors:

Contractors at this event are required to observe best working practices, complying with all health and safety legislation relevant to their business, and take all reasonable and practical steps to safeguard the health and safety of their employees and any other person attending the event.

Trade Stands:

Trade stands are responsible for the safety of their own stands and the risks that they may pose to employees and any other persons within the allocated space or immediate surrounding areas.

Horses:

Horses can easily be frightened and can be dangerous. Members of the public are requested to keep clear from horse areas/lanes and to avoid behaviour that might alarm horses.

Dogs:

Dogs should be kept under close control and on a short lead.

Emergencies:

- Emergency services must have access to all parts of the event site at all times and the designated emergency access routes must not be obstructed.
- First aid points are clearly marked. Medical support can be contacted through any Show Official or by contacting the Show Office.
- All accidents or near miss incidents should be reported to the Organiser for appropriate support to be deployed.