

Knotts Young Event Horse Qualifier for Balmoral.

The first of four qualifiers for the Young Event Horse Competition which takes place at Balmoral Park on Thursday and Friday 11th and 12th May, was hosted at The Meadows Equestrian Centre on Tuesday 4th April.

The facilities were excellent and Aaron McCusker built a flowing course for the young horses first attempt at this type of track.

The 21 four year olds were first to go. They performed a very simple dressage test in front of Angeline Nicholson who scored the horses' quality in walk, trot and canter, taking into consideration the suppleness, rhythm, natural balance, submission, trainability and finally suitability and potential. The competitors moved directly to an in hand phase where Paddy Trainer examined the horses' conformation, movement and in hand training, giving marks out of 30 for Type, front and hind limbs and feet, movement in walk and trot and finally the suitability and potential mark.

Heather Coyle and Eamon Rice judged the final phase of the competition, the jumping, which was performed around a course of 14 jumps, the first 6 were coloured show jumps and the remainder a mix of rustics and portable cross country fences.

Their guidelines were to assess the horses' movement in canter, the jumping technique, application to the task, athleticism, balance and finally the gallop, with a suitability and potential mark to conclude the judging.

After all 21 horses had completed all 3 phases the scores were tallied by Ivor and June Mitchell and the top ten scores were as follows with the top 5 qualifying for Balmoral.

1st Glenkeeran Dance in the Deep ridden by Clare Abbott – 74.75.

2nd Van the Man ridden by Colin Halliday – 73.92.

3rd Ferros Aim ridden by Colin Halliday – 66.50.

4th Premier Charlie ridden by Gwen Scott – 65.33.

5th Hot Bo Bo ridden by Rachel McKimmon – 64.75.

6th Lisnaffy ridden by Jonny Mulligan – 63.50.

7th Master Fuerst ridden by Emma Jackson – 62.92.

8th Slaneyside Aldatus Flight ridden by Aoife Quigley – 61.50.

9th Rock Storm ridden by Sarah Sproule – 61.50.

10th Bannview Voltaire ridden by Emma Jackson – 61.25.

In the 5 year old class there were 31 competitors including some quality horses that had qualified and competed in the final last year plus lots of new comers, some of whom had no experience of the competition what so ever.

28 of the field completed all three phases and the top 10 were as follows again with the top 5 qualifying.

1st Carra Lux Quality ridden by Emma Jackson – 74.75.

2nd Hamada ridden by Clare Abbott – 73.92.

3rd Carrick Diamond Showman ridden by Jonny Mulligan – 66.50.

4th Colacentric ridden by Alyssa O'Neill – 65.33.

5th Randelstown Comando ridden by Jonny Mulligan – 64.70.

6th Smart Boy Jack ridden by Tara Dixon – 63.50.

7th Meranti ridden by Emily Corbett – 62.92.

8th Out At Dark ridden by Trevor Smith – 62.50.

9th Lucidam ridden by Colin Halliday – 61.50.

10th Hawk Eye ridden by Stacey Watling – 61.25.

The next qualifier is at Gransha Equestrian Centre on Tuesday 11th April. Entries are online to www.granshaequestrian.co.uk/events and close on Sunday 9th April.