



Balmoral Show 2026

Performance Irish Draught Qualifiers



Qualifiers are open to Irish Draught Mares & Geldings, registered in the Irish Draught section of the Irish Horse Register or harmonised Irish Draught Studbooks and to Stallions that are classified as Class 1 or Class 2.

To be ridden by riders who have attained their 16th birthday by the 1st January in the current year.

Aim

To demonstrate the ability, temperament and suitability of the Irish Draught horse for the amateur riding market. The Irish Draught is the foundation of the Irish sport horse. It should have good movement, rideability, bravery and be capable of participating competently in all equestrian activities. It should be strong, intelligent, willing, sensible and have a kind disposition. A performance element has been included in these classes to demonstrate and showcase the performance potential of the Irish Draught.

Dress & Tack

- Correctly secured protective headgear conforming to the current safety standards must be worn and properly secured at all times.
- The wearing of a body protector is recommended.
- Horses can be shown in any bridle with a bit. The judge will take into consideration the effectiveness and severity of the bit and bridle.
- Martingales are not permitted.
- Neckstraps and/or breastplates are permitted.
- No saddle cloths, only saddle contoured numnahs are permitted.
- Only blunt metal spurs or ones with rubber rowels < 2.5cms facing downwards are permitted.
- Front boots of a plain colour may be worn during the flatwork and jumping phase.
- No hind boots or bandages permitted.

The same tack must be used in each phase. No tack etc. may be worn that conceals the conformation of the horse.

Flatwork/Conformation Phase:

On completion of this phase competitors should go directly to the jumping phase.

A mark out of 10 for Conformation will be awarded directly after the Ridden Flat Work Phase. The judge will observe the horses for obvious conformation defects.

Movement	Requirements		
Approach the Judge in Working Trot. From X Trot 20m Circle Left	2-time rhythm in correct bend, showing active hind leg engagement		
Working Trot 20m Circle Right	2-time rhythm in correct bend, showing active hind leg engagement		
Working Canter 20m Circle Left	Smooth transition and correct strike off on left lead. 3-time rhythm with correct bend and balance		
2-3 Trot strides Working Canter 20m Circle Right	Smooth transition and correct strike off on right lead. 3-time rhythm with correct bend and balance		
Working Trot 20m Circle Right	Smooth transitions. Well defined trot, maintained contact and balance		
2nd ½ 20m Circle transition to walk. At X Halt	Smooth transition. Well defined walk. Halt straight, square, immobile - for 3 seconds		
		Marks	Judges Marks
Walk	Rhythm, relaxation, activity and ground cover	10	
Trot	Rhythm, looseness, suppleness and swinging back	10	
Canter	Rhythm, looseness, suppleness and natural balance	10	
General impression of cooperation, confidence and harmony. Acceptance of bridle and lightness of forehand		10	
COMMENTS	Total Flatwork out of 40	40	
	Conformation	10	
	FINAL MARK		

Horses are not required to be stripped for conformation assessment

Jumping Phase:

4 and 5 Year olds- < 85cm in height

6 Year old and over - < 1m in height

Exhibitors will be required to jump a course of 9 fences including a double, with natural and derby style fences. Exhibitors are encouraged to show extended canter / gallop at the end of their jumping round. Exhibitors are advised to ensure that their entry is presented by a competent rider.

The rhythm and fluency along with jumping technique and the balance and harmony of the rider will be taken into consideration when judging the jumping phase.

Phase	Points	Total
Flat Work		40
Conformation		10
Jumping Phase:		
9 Fences @ 10 points each (points for each part of double)	100	
Way of Going	10	
Total Jumping Phase		110
Total Marks		160

In the event of a tie, the horse with the highest mark for the jumping phase will be the winner. If there is still a tie the horse with the highest mark in the Flatwork phase will be the winner. If there is still a tie the winner will be at the judge's discretion.

Classes:

IRISH DRAUGHT MARE or GELDING, **4 and 5 years old**, registered in the Irish Draught section of the Irish Horse Register or harmonised Irish Draught studbooks and to STALLION classified as Class 1 and Class 2.

IRISH DRAUGHT MARE or GELDING, **6 years old and over**, registered in the Irish Draught section of the Irish Horse Register or harmonised Irish Draught studbooks and to STALLION classified as Class 1 and Class 2.

QUALIFICATION

Top 4 horse/rider combinations in each class will qualify at each qualifying venue, if any of the top 4 have already qualified placings will go down the line.

A maximum of 3 Stallions may compete in each class in the final and these places will be awarded to the first 3 Stallions that qualify.

2 reserves will also be selected in each class and should any qualified horse withdraw from this class; a reserve horse from the same qualifying venue will be invited to compete at Balmoral Show in the relevant section. Any horse withdrawn from a class after 24th April 2026 will not be replaced.

Riders may ride a maximum of two horses per class in the final. A change of rider will not be permitted under any circumstances. Only the horse/rider combination that qualifies will be allowed to compete at Balmoral Show.

Once qualified entries must be made online at www.balmoralshow.co.uk within 48 hours.