



TWO DAY EVENT INFORMATION FOR NOVICE DRIVERS

Our aim is for everyone to have an enjoyable experience at all NEDTL events. To new competitors, it can seem daunting with so many rules and regulations, many of which may seem 'unwritten'. NEDTL Club rules can be accessed on the website, with the full BC rule book being available on the BC website

<https://britishcarriagedriving.co.uk/rules/index.htm>.

Health and Safety Information and Guidelines can also be accessed on the NEDTL website <https://britishcarriagedriving.co.uk/rules/index.htm>

This document is intended to provide some basic guidance and a few pointers to help you enjoy your events with the NEDTL.

Before the Event

Details of events and how to enter are on the calendar section of the website.

<https://www.nedtl.co.uk/events/calendar/>

The dressage tests you need for the event can be found on the Club website

<https://www.nedtl.co.uk/information/dressage-tests/>

Once you have entered you will receive an email, after the closing date, with further information about the event, including the time that you can arrive from. A few days prior to the event, you will receive a further email giving your dressage time. This is a draft time, do check your paperwork that you need to collect from the Event Secretary at the event for any changes.

Arrival at the event

On arrival at the event, please park where the stable manager directs you. Let them know if you intend to use electric fencing as this may affect where you are asked to park. If you are able to arrive on the Friday of the event, this will give you time to get your camp set up and to check out where everything is for the following day.

Also you will need to walk the cones course in-preparation for Saturday.

Collect your paperwork from the event secretary. This includes running orders for Saturday's dressage and Sunday's marathon, 3 competitor numbers, a small card number to be displayed on the carriage for dressage and cones, and two larger numbers which worn in a number tabard by the groom for the marathon. Number bibs are widely available from harness and carriage suppliers, tack stores etc. There will also be a competitor detail sheet to complete and leave in the window of your horsebox or car.

Before dressage on Saturday, make sure you find out where the Safety Check area is, check with the event secretary if in doubt. You will need to report to the Safety Check steward **30** minutes before your dressage.

Take time to walk the cones course, your groom can accompany you on this.

Remember the **Red** number is on your right. You should always be able to see the number of the next cone to be driven from the current cone but sometimes the number is at an angle. Driving a cone in the wrong direction or missing one out, is elimination. You can also walk the dressage test in the arena if you wish to get a feel for the markers. If you bring your dog to the event, please don't walk the arenas or obstacles with the dog, please secure safely outside the arena or obstacles.



Dressage and Cones on Saturday

Remember if you have a carriage with extending axles that they will need to be done before you do the cones. Most drivers extend them when they arrive at the event.

The dress for the day is smart and tidy for both driver and groom, see the guide on the website for further details <https://www.nedtl.co.uk/information/getting-started/>.

The groom should be seated for dressage and cones (see club rules for exceptions to this). The person conducting your Safety Check will be very experienced and happy to give you tips and advice. Safety (hard) hats are compulsory for the cones phase for driver and groom. As you will normally proceed straight from dressage to cones, it is perfectly acceptable to wear your hard hat for dressage too.

After your Safety Check, warm up for the dressage, letting the dressage steward at 'A' know that you're there at least 10 minutes before the time you are due to enter the arena. The steward will let you know when it is your turn. As a new driver, if you wish to have your test read to you by your groom for your first few NEDTL events then that is allowed. Let the event secretary know so they can warn the Dressage judges.

Cones

Proceed directly to the cones course after dressage. New drivers who are unable to extend their axles may drive the cones with an axle width of 125cm and it is also permissible for the groom to stand for dressage and cones if your carriage doesn't have a suitable seat for the groom. See NEDTL club rules for further details, please note that this relates to NEDTL events, other clubs may not have these concessions. Please let the Entries Secretary know at the time of entering if you wish to make use of any of these concessions.

The notice board at the event will give you details of the required speeds and cone width for each class.

Marathon

Remember to put your axles back in for the marathon.

The obstacles will be open to be walked by the Technical Delegate (TD) of the event. Walk the obstacles as often as possible to plan your route with your groom, you will find plenty of people are happy to help you find the best route for your turnout, what seems like the shortest route may not be the quickest! At most events it is possible to use a vehicle or ATV to access the obstacles, check with the event secretary however as there may be restrictions. Remember not to park within the obstacle or take a vehicle or bicycle into the obstacle. Be aware of any Compulsory Turning Flags on the course, these must be driven in numerical order to avoid elimination. Please don't walk your dog round the obstacles.

There will be a competitor's briefing on Saturday evening and again, check the notice board on the club trailer for the time/place that this will take place. Your dressage sheets will be available from the event Secretary after the scores for dressage and cones have been pinned on the notice board.

Work out your marathon times for Sunday using the information given on the marathon running list. There are apps available for this, do ask for details e.g. MikeWatts.com [HDT Marathon times](#) .



Competitors often write a list to put on the carriage with section times and the required minimum and maximum kilometre times.

Make sure you know where the **Start** is so that you can allow enough time to get there if this is a little way from the box park, you need to report in at the start 10 minutes ahead of your start time, timings are exact and penalties can mount up if you are late to start.

On Sunday the dress code is Marathon clothes, which are usually comfortable, practical driving clothes and often 'team colours'. Drivers and grooms must wear a securely fitted hard hat and a body/back protector throughout the marathon, grooms wear the marathon bib displaying the competitor number front and back. The groom should know all about your timings and at which time you should be at each kilometre marker, using a stopwatch (or two!).

On arrival at the start, the groom must collect the green card, this shows your recorded start time. It is carried throughout the marathon, with timings marked down at the start and finish of each section. Ensure the timings are correct, ask if you have a query. The groom will be asked to initial the card to confirm that it is correct. The card is handed in to the steward at the finish, it then goes to the scorers. Remember, there are penalties for coming in too soon (below minimum) or too late (over maximum).

The starter will give you a two minute, one minute warning and will count you down from 5 seconds – then the groom can start the stop watch. It is always a standing start. Once you set off just enjoy yourself! Marathons often run through fabulous countryside.

Help and Assistance.

This is not an exhaustive list to answer all your questions, please just ask any of the event officials or the more experienced Open drivers who will be happy to help you. The Club has a mentor scheme where a new or novice driver can be teamed up with a more experienced driver. This works really well, having a 'mentor' to be available to you for any question you may have that needs answering or any help at all that you feel you might need. Simply let us know. Enjoy!

Essential Reading – H & S Guidance for Members and Competitors (2024) on the Club website <https://www.nedtl.co.uk/information/club-documents/>

Additional Reading

NEDTL Rules and Guidance

Presentation and Dress

BC Rules 2024 (on the British Carriagedriving website)