

Swans Friends and Woolly Hats

Val Malka is one of BRC most experienced Official Stewards who without many of the area 5 qualifiers would not have taken place. Here is what she has to say about volunteering as an official steward for BRC.

1. Explain what your role is on event day?

As official steward on the day, I am there to provide advice and support to the event organisers. To check all medical and veterinary cover is in place, having previously checked the SJ, XC and dressage arena's and warm up areas are satisfactory, that all stewards, fence judges and officials are briefed on the rules and communications for the day. To check flu vaccinations, tag hats, check back protector standards and resolve any rule queries or objections. Once I checked the results are accurate and thanked the organiser's, the results can be announced and rosettes presented.



2. How long have you been volunteering for BRC for?

I have volunteered at British Riding Club events since my daughters were junior members of Rugby Riding Club, beginning with acting as team manager for their junior and senior teams, then the clubs representative on the area liaison committee. On moving to Stoneleigh RC, I took on the role of SJ and Horse Trials Chef D'Equipe, and trained as an official steward for BRC, often acting as team volunteer at championship events.

4. Any pearls of wisdom for anyone thinking of signing up to be an Official Steward?

Don't be daunted by the responsibility involved in being an official steward, there is a great back up team at BRC headquarters and amongst other area official stewards who are always willing to answer any queries or problems you may have.



5. Do you need previous competition experience for the role?



As long as you have common sense and are reasonably well organised you can soon acquire the necessary skills to act as an official steward. There is a regular training course run by BRC which all official stewards are required to attend on a three yearly basis. Personal competition experience is not required, but a willingness to learn is helpful. There is an excellent support network if you have any queries; someone is always willing to point you in the right direction.

6. Which BRC club are you a member of?

I was originally a member of Rugby Riding Club when my daughters were competing for them as juniors, then moved to Stoneleigh RC when they joined as senior members.



7. Do you volunteer for any other roles?

As well as volunteering as an official steward, I am secretary of our area liaison committee, membership secretary of our riding club, as well as SJ and Horse Trials chef d'equipe for the Stoneleigh teams and editor of the club newsletter. Along with my daughter Tracey we regularly score many of our area points and qualifier competitions. A new addition to my CV this year was to passport check at Trailblazers and the Lemieux dressage championships at Stoneleigh showground, which can only be described as an interesting experience!!

8. What equipment do you need for your role?

My trusty rule book is never far away, along with my roll of hat tags! Clothes to cover all possible elements the weather may throw at me.



9. What key skills do you think makes a good Official Steward?

Being prepared to listen to all sides of the story before making any decisions and having the ability to stay calm and impartial is vital for an official steward. Being an official steward is much like being a swan, serene on the surface, even if you are paddling madly underneath!!



I can honestly say I enjoy my role as an official steward, I have made many new friends both within our area and beyond, so if you are thinking of possibly training, give it a go it's not as daunting as you may think.