

Valegro, the Arctic Circle and a Five Star winner

Penny Jann has been team manager for Elstead RC for over 20 years, and she has recently been presented with The NAF Five Star Volunteer Award. Here is what she had to say about volunteering as the clubs team manager.



1) Explain what your role is prior to event day?

The role of team manager is very varied, the main role is to encourage members to take part in teams, asking their preferences for tests and heights, and making sure that both the horse and rider are eligible for that class, and then deciding who goes in which team. I also organise all the entries and declaration forms and liaise with the members on things they need to know and remember prior to the competition.

2) Explain what your role is on event day?

For a qualifier the most important role I have is to hand in the declaration forms! However my main duty is to welcome members, and keep checking in to make sure that all is ok and to resolve any issues that may occur. (This can be anything from forgotten passports to missing tack). It is also important for a team manager to oversee how the teams are getting on in the competition and to pick up any remaining salvers, rosettes and test sheets that could not be picked up earlier in the day.

3) What is the best part of your job?

Teams bring club members together and are always great fun and a good way to get to know others.

4) What do you do when you are not volunteering for BRC?



HR management (skills also useful for managing RC teams!). Unfortunately no horse of my own currently but this allows me to have more time for holidays (we went to Svalbard in the Arctic this summer which was amazing) as well as walking my dog and spending time with my 20 month old grand-daughter who will soon need a pony!

5) What equipment do you need for your role?

BRC Handbook, mobile and a membership list.



6) What is your favourite BRC championship?

The Lincoln NAF National Championships – it's such a big event and my club has been lucky enough to qualify for this every year that these championships have been held at Lincoln! We treat it as our end of summer party.

7) How long have you been volunteering for BRC for?

For far too many years to admit to! As well as being a long-standing committee member of the club, I've been Elstead's RC team manager since 1996. I'm also currently the Chair of BRC Area 11.



8) Dream dinner guests, past and present?

Carl Hester who has done so much for the British Dressage teams and is such a brilliant trainer, Charlotte Dujardin for tales of Valegro, Nelson Mandela who did so much for human rights, Marion Mould whose 14.2hh pony Stroller made me think my first horse (also 14.2hh) could jump anything!



9) Do you need previous competition experience for the role?

No, but it helps to talk through the role with other team managers or to ask your BRC Area if they have (or would do) a training session for team managers. Part of the reason I became team manager was that I enjoyed competing in riding club teams so much that I thought the club ought to do more. However it is not that easy being both team manager and a team member at the same time (and on one occasion being team manager left me with insufficient warm up time!) – It's also difficult to know whether or not to put yourself in the team!

Penny Jann's Top Tips!

Enthusiasm, patience, and an ability to keep calm and positive whatever happens are essential. It also helps to:

- Check the rules for the event you are entering! 
- Check whether or not a horse is registered with BE / BS / BD and look up the points yourself so you know if the horse is eligible or not - particularly if it's a new horse and rider combination.
- Keep a list of vehicles (registration number and description) so you can easily find members in the horsebox parking area.
- Stay positive no matter what! 
- Never moan at anyone for a disappointing performance. Teams are fun and it's the taking part that matters, rosettes are just the icing on the cake!