



Futurity Equine Bridge Pilot 2013

The new and exciting initiative from the British Equestrian Federation

With the great successes in British equestrian sport in recent months, the effects of the World Class Equine Pathway have been validated in having supporting horses whose results show high potential for international sport.

Designed to create a greater access, reach and potential for British bred sports horses and ponies, the Futurity Equine Bridge is an extension of the Futurity evaluations which have been running since 2005. This new programme recognises that to have the best chances of reaching the age related levels required by the Pathway, the top Futurity graduates, identified as having high potential, need support, assistance and direction from the very best coaches, judges and selectors in order to be able to reach these required level for further assessment.

The aim of the Equine Bridge is to provide direction and support to riders and trainers and to help owners and breeders realise the best of their horse's ability. In future, we would aim also for this to be a shop window, bringing the best youngsters to the attention of the best riders, producers and trainers to enhance their prospects.

What will we be looking for?

We will be looking at the Futurity graduates which, when started under saddle, retain the potential identified when they were originally evaluated in Futurity, to be international (potential medal winning) horses.

For the 2013 pilot, horses and ponies accepted onto the Equine Bridge for further support and training will, when assessed at the age of four or five, be continuing to demonstrate the early potential identified in Futurity. Following assessment, the outcomes will be that horses are:

- 1) Believed to exhibit international potential and be accepted immediately on to the Equine Bridge for the remainder of their four and five year old years and benefit from the training available

2) Believed to demonstrate possible potential but are in need of a little more time to mature, in their early physical development or starting under saddle. These horses will be invited for assessment again at the next session (Spring 2014 in this case). This does however limit the amount of assistance we will be able to offer a five year old, since Equine Bridge is only available to horses until the end of their fifth year

3) Believed not to demonstrate sufficient potential, as a young horse under saddle, to be accepted on to the Equine Bridge and will not be invited for further training under this programme

We are looking for international potential that would see these high scoring Futurity youngsters able to be working at the level of international competition in their six year old year. That means starting at four years, and with steady, considered preparation, moving up the training scale - whatever the discipline.

This is a major project and, the format will evolve as we work through it with you. At present we do not have all the answers because we do not know all the questions, but your participation will help us to understand your needs and to fine tune the process.

Selection and Entries

Two pilot assessment sessions will be run, details feature below. Horses and ponies in the dressage, eventing and showjumping sections of Futurity, which were foaled in 2008 and 2009 and which achieved a Futurity score of 8.5 or above have been invited. These are the criteria for the pilot and may be subject to modification for the ongoing Equine Bridge process. Some exceptions may be considered upon provision of compelling evidence.

We already have all the information on your horse from your Futurity entry, we will ask you to confirm this through an online system (similar to Futurity) and amend any details. Entry fee will be £60 plus VAT. You will need to remind yourselves of your Futurity login details in order to be able to enter. You will be given times through the online system 7 - 10 days prior to the assessment day.

Ridden Assessment

You will need to prepare your horse for the assessment, although not excessively. All horses will need to walk, trot and canter on both reins and work on a 20m circle. Showjumpers and Eventers will need to be able to be freely and willing and jump a short course not exceeding 85cm (smaller for ponies) with some natural fences and the opportunity to show gallop for eventers. Reasonable consideration will be given to the possibility that this may be the horse's first time out at a public venue, but in order to be properly considered, we will expect horses to go forward in a way that permits full assessment.

Horses are not expected to be polished performers. They will be shown in a snaffle bridle. It is expected that they will be able to move freely forwards in a balanced way in all paces, change the rein, remain straight and show a reasonable level of responsiveness to an empathetic rider.

Veterinary Assessment

Horses will be assessed in hand on a hard surface by a vet. The vet will ask for walk and trot in a straight line and on a 20m circle on a non slip surface. Horses will also rein back and turn in their own length (tight circle).

Horses may also be seen by the vet under saddle in walk, trot (both diagonals) and canter both on a straight line and on a 20m circle for assessment and also to listen for inspiratory sounds.

Any features/issues identified by the vet will be made apparent to the owner pointed out and next steps for treatment recommended.

Dressage Assessment (5 year olds only) – 2 June 2013

Following warm up, ridden assessments will then be carried out indoors in groups of 2. Horses will perform a commanded test (to be supplied) in their groups. Following this test, once the group have returned to the centre of the arena, if more work is required, individual horses will be asked to return to the outside track and perform any movements required by the trainer, whose guidance will be offered to be able to achieve what the assessor is looking for. Each group will take about 30 minutes. Walk, trot and canter will have equal bearing on the assessment. The veterinary section will follow straight after as above.

Assessor: Isobel Wessels

Eventers Assessment (5 year olds only) – 12 June 2013

Following a warm up, horses will be asked into the indoor arena individually to jump the course. Other horses may be in the arena at the same time but will not be jumping at the same time. In the case of eventers, some natural fences will be included and eventers will be asked to show gallop. The veterinary section will follow straight after as above.

Assessor: TBC

Showjumpers Assessment (4 and 5 year olds) – 26 June 2013

Following a warm up, horses will be asked into the indoor arena individually to jump the course. Other horses may be in the arena at the same time but will not be jumping at the same time. The veterinary section will follow straight after as above.

Assessor: Di Lampard

Future Assessment dates: September/October 2013 – Dressage and Eventing 4 year olds

All selection days will take place at Solihull Riding Club, West Midlands. Stabling is available.

What Happens Next?

All applicants will be sent a letter within 10 days after the event outlining if they have been selected for the Futurity Equine Bridge. For horses and ponies which are accepted on to the Futurity Equine Bridge, this is an evolving process which will develop in response to feedback from participants, assessors and other equine experts. Equine Bridge horses will be invited to training days or equivalent, which will be run as discipline-specific clinic groups with discipline experts to develop balance and movement appropriate to the age and stage of development of each horse. These will include classroom and video training sessions. If accepted onto the bridge, the horse or pony will need to demonstrate progress and development within each 6 month period in order to stay on the programme. Training will be offered until the end of the horse's 5th year.

Additional Information

The Equine Bridge pilot 2013 is an opportunity to practically assess how best to structure assistance for talented young horses and ponies. The British Equestrian Federation offers no guarantees of future success. As promised when the Equine Bridge was launched, we will develop this programme in conjunction with you, your feedback is valuable and will all be taken into account.

Futurity Equine Bridge is only available to horses which have previously participated in Futurity and obtained the threshold score of 8.5.

The decision of the assessors is final.

Entries are made online at www.britishbreeding.org

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