



National Amateur Committee
ShowjumpingIreland
Newsletter
April 2026 Edition

Dear Amateurs,

Welcome back to the Showjumping Ireland amateur newsletter for 2026! We are excited to share the latest updates, upcoming events and important announcements with you.

 **2026 National Amateur Committee**

- Chairperson – Máire Cosgrove
- Connaught Representative – Karen Boylan
- Leinster Representative – Aileen McDermott
- Munster Representative – Gary Flynn
- Ulster Representative – Paddy Ward

We're here to help! Please [reach out to us](#) with any questions or concerns throughout the year.

 **Upcoming Events**

- RDS Amateur Qualifier – May 4th – Killossery Equestrian Centre
- RUAS Balmoral Amateur Championship – May 16th – Balmoral Show
- RDS Amateur Qualifier – May 23rd – Kernan's Equestrian Centre

- RDS Amateur Qualifier – June 6th – Galway Equestrian Centre
- SJI Leinster Amateur Show – June 13th – Emerald Equestrian Centre
- RDS Amateur Qualifier – June 20th – Tipperary Equestrian Centre

Refer to the [SJI Calendar](#) for additional upcoming events.

Farmer’s Journal ‘A’ Qualifier, Circulo/NAPS National Amateur League and SM All-Ireland Qualifier dates are currently being selected and will soon be available on the [SJI Amateurs page](#).

Competition Highlights

- Balmoral Qualified Riders – Cavan – Colm Fitzpatrick (Bluestone Diamond Fly), Grace Carlisle (Something Smart), Nicole Fox (Bluestones Ludo), Caitriona Cody (Shanroe Socialite), Tara Patton (Castlerocke Pretty Woman)

- Balmoral Qualified Riders – Kernan’s – Luke Barton (Coloo Colin), Vanessa Sweeney (Woodbank Clover), Kevin O’Reilly (Cranny West), Kate Murray (Crynoisk Feisty Blue), Naomi McCavana (Ferro Charm)

- Balmoral Qualified Riders – Meadows – Ava Stubbs (Tullyhill Lucy Diamond), Amanda-Jayne Comyn (Erian Gatsby), Jennifer McCurry (LGS My Echo), Emma Canmore (Chalatenango), Egle Zakaraite (Talbot Sis)

- Emerald Amateur Show – Emerald

-  Two Phase – Patricia Woods (Crissaun Just Joey)


-  Power & Speed – Colm Fitzpatrick (Bluestone Diamond Fly)


-  Grand Prix – Colm Fitzpatrick (Moretto Flight)

- Balmoral qualified riders – Mullingar – Rachel Shaw (Leestone Vitaire), Nicole Lynch (My Velvet Lady), Brian Cassidy (Pharos Hazy Cove), Louise Craig (Toberdanes Floras Motion), Tara Brandon (BEC Phoenix)

- Ingrid Kane Amateur Memorial – Barnadown

Saturday

-  Welcome Stakes – Kay Bowe (Buberry)

-  Two Phase – Colm Fitzpatrick (Moretto Flight)

🏆 Grand Prix – Colm Fitzpatrick (Bluestone Diamond Fly)

Sunday

🏆 Welcome Stakes – Jimme Quirke (Dancing with the Devil)

🏆 Power & Speed – Laura Walshe (Ballinaguilkey Heritage)

🏆 Grand Prix – Amanda-Jayne Comyn (Erian Gatsby)

- JAG Amateur Show – JAG

🏆 Welcome Stakes – Selina Osborne (RTS Lisa)

🏆 FJ Two Phase – Lauren Kavanagh (Baxters Miss Taison)

🏆 Two Phase – Stuart O’Neill (Tullineaskey Diamond Mate)

🏆 Grand Prix – Lauren Kavanagh (Baxters Miss Taison)

- Connaught Amateur Spring Show – Duffy’s

🏆 Welcome Stakes – Naiomh O’Gorman Grealish (Ankaras)

🏆 Power & Speed – Caroline Devine (Captain Devine)

🏆 Grand Prix – Joanna Hyland (Queen Lu)

Congratulations to all!

🌟 Amateur Spotlight

Fitzpatrick Family Spotlight – 30 Years on the Amateur Circuit

Thirty years on the amateur circuit, four family members and countless miles travelled in pursuit of the sport they love - for this month's Spotlight, the Fitzpatricks share their story of commitment, competition and family.

Where It All Began

Johnnie is from a well-known showjumping family with his parents Leslie and Barbara competing up to international level. Leslie having featured on many Nations Cup teams. Johnnie competed regularly on the pony circuit, with many of his ponies being purchased from Kernan’s. He competed at the Spring Show and Grade D horse classes at Dublin horse show before joining the amateurs.

For Clodagh, it was a case of the horse mad kid in a non-horsey family who persuaded her father to buy some hunting ponies to follow the Ward Union Hunt while never giving up on the idea of going showjumping.

When It All Clicked

In 1996, Clodagh purchased the Cruising mare, Lady Cruise from the Fagan family, meeting Johnnie some weeks later while both were competing in the amateurs at Millstreet Indoor Show. This was the start of the family life that was to come and what is now 30 years on the amateur circuit.

A Family Affair

The family grew to four with the arrival of Colm and Robyn, who would go on to share the family interest in showjumping from an early age, competing their ponies in Dublin in both working hunter and lead rein classes. One of their previous ponies, Inishannon – now 38 – still lives at home in the family yard.

In the early days, it was not unusual for a child and a horse to be swapped over at the back of a ramp allowing both Johnnie and Clodagh to continue to compete in the amateurs. Many of the amateurs would still recall a certain red buggy! This then led to years of bouncing between the pony circuit and the amateur circuit.



All Hands on Deck

With all four family members now competing horses on the amateur circuit, weekend logistics are busy, especially when combined with full time work, final year college and the leaving cert! Entries and schedules tend to fall to Clodagh, whereas Johnnie would look after the transport.

Swapping around horses, managing who owns what tack and different horses drawn to jump at the same time in different rings are all part of the challenge every weekend, together with getting everyone out the door somewhat on time!

Sport, however, can keep families together and the greatest part of the weekend for all four family members is heading off to compete.

Rivalry Meets Teamwork

In the early days, there was much rivalry between Johnnie and Clodagh in the ring but the rivalry has shifted to Johnnie and Colm in recent years. In the end, they all want the best for each other and a good day out with their horses and friends.

Each can be seen building fences, tacking up and recording videos for the other, along with some well-meaning words of advice. Speedy jump offs, qualifiers, and fresh horses can make it an anxious time when one of the family is in the ring, so they like to make sure their horses are fit and ready for the class ahead often getting up in the very early hours to feed and groom horses before a show.

Early Mornings, Late Nights

Training takes place at home near Fairyhouse where daily turnout is a massive part of the routine and COVID provided an opportune time for an arena extension to accommodate four riders. Like most amateurs, early mornings and late evenings are required to accommodate the working day, college and school.

Results That Matter



Over the years there has been success with horses like Lady Cruise winning the Farmers Journal and qualifying 3 times for Dublin for Clodagh and Johnnie winning multiple amateur classes over 15 years with the ever-reliable Saunders Beach Ball Cruise, who was the first horse to compete in the Jumping in the City events.

Robyn having moved on from the exceptional pony Tullow Star now rides the exciting black mare CES Simba Girl. Clodagh competes now on her long-established partner Oxendene Rozie.

The Next Generation Steps Up

After leaving ponies in 2018, Colm moved on to horses when the family purchased the then 6-year-old Maretto Flight from the Maloney family. Together they have enjoyed great success, including wins in the RDS Amateur Championship Final, the Cavan Derby and Autumn Series Final, the Ingrid Kane Grand Prix and the Amateur National Championships.

A new mare joined the team in 2025, initially purchased for Johnnie. Colm accidentally took up the ride and has now partnered Bluestone Diamond Fly to numerous wins, including the Balamoral Amateur Qualifier for the second year in a row.

Breakthrough Moments

While Colm winning the Amateur championship in Dublin in 2024, Johnnie winning the Dingos final, Clodagh winning the Farmers Journal and Robyn winning a class at the National Pony Championships were very proud family moments, there was a 15-year consecutive period where the family competed in every RDS qualifier with no success.

It was a memorable day in 2018 in Ennis when the elusive qualification came for Johnnie. It did indeed take 28 years and three different riders to finally gain the Dublin amateur win for the Fitzpatrick family in 2024!



More Than Just a Sport

There are ups and downs with every sport and with horses, it has to be a way of life. The long hours in work are all for the purpose of having free time to spend with the horses. As a family, the Fitzpatricks are always trying to improve their knowledge and skills and enjoy travelling as spectators to international shows when time allows.

The Craic & The Community

As a family sport and a place to make lifelong friends, amateur showjumping ticks all the boxes for the Fitzpatrick family. There is a genuine interest in how others are doing and outside of the ring there is great fun to be had over a few drinks at the overnight shows with often late nights in Cavan or back for drinks in the truck.

The morning requires everyone up, dressed and out early – each with a job to do. The evening debrief on the way home in the lorry which can be good or bad depending on the day! The horses come first when the truck arrives back in the gate, usually leading to very late dinner on a Sunday evening!

When It Pays Off

Prizes are a bonus and Colm as National Amateur Champion in 2025 won a voucher kindly sponsored by Nadine from the travel counsellors. The family went to Lisbon for New Year with the voucher – finally, a reward for all the years of hard work! The amateurs are always very grateful to the very generous sponsors of the sport.

Not Done Yet

For 2026 the plans are to enjoy the season ahead with horses and friends and to follow up on recent success in the Balmoral qualifier. A win for Colm in the Ingrid Kane Grand Prix this year means both father and son now have their names on the same trophy, Johnnie having won it in 2014.



After 30 years there are no plans yet for any of the family to hang up their boots!

Know a fellow amateur or sports member who deserves to be featured in a future edition? Send your spotlight nominations to us via anna.smith@sjai.ie!

Save the Date

◆ Amateur & Sports Member National Championships – September 12th & 13th – Mullingar Equestrian Centre

Please note, the National Championships will now run on September 12th & 13th to accommodate the Cavan Autumn Amateur show on September 19th & 20th. Stay tuned for schedule and sponsorship announcements in future editions!

Committee Announcements

◆ Did you know? – The Circulo/NAPS National Amateur League table is live! To view the up-to-date league rankings on **SJI Live** throughout the season, **click the trophy icon**, find the **Circulo/NAPS League 2026** in the **Series Rankings** list, and **click ‘Combination’**.

◆ 2026 RDS Qualifiers – Please ensure you have met the six-class quota per Rule 254N.C.1.3.1 **before entering each RDS qualifier**. Any rider failing to meet the quota will be ineligible for RDS Dublin Horse Show qualification, regardless of qualifier placing.

◆ SJI Live Upgrade – SJI Live has been upgraded to confirm eligibility for RDS qualifiers prior to entry. The system will automatically check eligibility and will not permit entry if the criteria are not met. **Please do not leave your RDS qualifier entries until the last minute in case of any issues with the new entry system.** Please contact the SJI office if you require support.

◆ Reminder – Height classes incorporating amateurs are **not** considered amateur classes; therefore, height classes incorporating amateurs competed in after **January 1st, 2025** may not be counted toward the six-class quota, per Rule 254N.C.1.3.2.

Get Involved

We welcome all members to contribute to our amateur community! Send your ideas, feedback, and Amateur Spotlight nominations to us via anna.smith@sjai.ie.

We look forward to seeing you out jumping!

**Best of luck,
♥ The National Amateur Committee
Showjumping Ireland**