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**REPORT FROM WORKING GROUP ON  
DRESSAGE STEWARDS GUIDELINES**

**Final Version 8 April 2010**



# Report from Working Group on Stewards Guidelines

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## **Objectives of the Working Group:**

Following many discussions on Hyperflexion, or the so called Rollkur controversy, a Round Table conference consisting of equestrian experts and FEI Officials took place in Lausanne (SUI) on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2010. The meeting concluded with the agreement that a Working Group should be created and given the following brief:

The FEI will establish a Working Group, headed by Dressage Committee Chair, Frank Kemperman, to expand the current guidelines for stewards to facilitate the implementation of the policy that any form of aggressive riding must be sanctioned.

The Round Table Conference decided that measurements should not be used in these guidelines to determine the degree of flexion of head and neck.

The Working Group in addition feels that all unacceptable training methods and techniques must be halted immediately. Already included in the current guidelines for FEI Stewards (esp. annex XII) are instructions covering aggressive riding. A new Annex (XIII) should be added and also include clear instructions on action to be taken if necessary relating to flexion of the horse's neck during pre and post competition training. These guidelines should include examples of neck position and flexion that cause concern and should therefore be grounds for intervention by the stewards. They should also include acceptable variations of neck position and flexion.

Methods and techniques used to obtain these positions should also be included. These guidelines should apply to all FEI Disciplines.

The members of the Working Group in alphabetic order:

Asmyr Trond FEI Dressage Director / Judge

Davison Richard Rider / Trainer

Kemperman Frank Chair Dressage Committee / Organizer



Roche John P. FEI Director Stewarding, FEI Director Jumping  
van Daele Jacques FEI Honorary Dressage Steward General, judge  
Wittig Wolfram Trainer

Dr Gerd Heuschmann and Mr Sjef Janssen were present at the Round Table Conference. They were requested to present their recommendations to the Working Group. Their recommendations were taken into consideration and where appropriate have been included within the guidelines.

Some stakeholder groups questioned the fact that they were not represented in the Working Group. In order to allow the Working Group to work as efficiently as possible it was felt that the presence of the FEI Director Stewarding was adequate as he represented all disciplines in his role as Director of Stewarding. The FEI Jumping Committee discussed the issue of extreme flexion and their input, where appropriate, has been included in the guidelines. The last draft of this report and the guidelines are approved by the FEI Dressage Committee.

### **Way of working:**

The Working Group held a number of telephone conferences and one meeting. The members of the Working Group were chosen as experts in their specific areas. They were not the official representatives of their stakeholder groups but were however free to interact with a view to obtaining feedback from their colleagues. No statement would be given to the press on the content of the paper prior to the paper being discussed by the Bureau on the occasion of its meeting in April.

### **General remarks:**

#### **1. Basic elements of the guidelines:**

- a. The welfare of the horse is paramount
- b. Respect for the horse according to the FEI rules and the Stewards Manual
- c. The responsibility for the Welfare of the Horse rests with the athlete (p.r.)

#### **2. What should be avoided?**

Abuse of the horse in general, but especially:

- a. stressing the horse
- b. aggressive riding
- c. inflicting pain and/or discomfort on the horse

#### **3. How should a steward deal with any form of abuse ?**

This is already described in Annex XII of the Stewards Manual. However, the Working Group recommends that:

- a new sentence be added in Annex XII.2 stating that it is important that the Steward is proactive (prevention can avoid much reaction and negative response)



- a new sentence be added in Annex XII.3 stating that if necessary inform and request a professional opinion from the FEI Veterinary Delegate .

#### **4. What do stewards need in order to intervene?**

##### Horsemanship

- clear guidelines (education)
- the moral courage to act
- knowledge of how to act / communicate (this is also covered in Annex XII.6.):
  - Remain polite
  - Act with respect (responsibility has nothing to do with power)
  - Give a clear communication
  - Be firm
  - Be discrete
  - Treat all athletes/trainers in the same way
- the support of the Ground Jury

#### **5. Respect**

In accordance with the FEI Code of Conduct the welfare of the horse is paramount and consequently respect must be shown for the horse.

Likewise respect must be shown at any time during an event, even during stressful situations, to the FEI officials acting at the event.

The stewards have to be easily identifiable. The Working Group discussed various solutions such as arm bands, cap, jacket/vest etc. As this was considered to be a cost issue the Working Group refrained from taking a decision or making a recommendation.

#### **6. Education, training and assessment of stewards**

The standing and position of stewards as officials needs to be improved. This should be achieved through the formal educational system for stewards and by working closely with the stakeholder groups. The most relevant groups in this regard are the athletes, trainers, organising committees and Ground Juries. It is of utmost importance that these groups show their respect for the position of stewards and support their work and decisions.

The new education and assessment system for stewards will ensure consistency and a high standard of stewarding.

Diagrams defining the head and neck positions need to be provided to the stewards (photographs may only be used during the training of stewards).

The Working Group does realise the time-aspect involved in the training of the stewards. It was therefore considered by the Working Group whether judges should be used as stewards to officiate during pre competition training as an interim solution. However, the Working Group felt that this could create problems relating



to impartiality and objectivity when judging the same riders later. Consequently, this recommendation was not considered as a practical solution. Nevertheless, the introduction of CCTV for selected events is recommended in order to provide a means for monitoring the practice arena.. A new group should be established specifically for the purpose of investigating cases which occur during the course of an event but could not be dealt with, for whatever reason, during the event.

Following approval by the Bureau on the occasion of its meeting in April 2010, the guidelines for stewards will be sent to all NFs with the request that they be duly sent to all their stewards. The Guidelines should be used from May 15, 2010.

## **7. Modifications**

If the necessity arises these guidelines will be modified as required. Such modifications will be initiated by a new group to be established, namely the "Council of Horsemen" as referred to by the FEI President at the round table conference.