

The International Eventing Safety Committee
The Secretariat, 58 Marmion Road, London, SW11 5PA

**THE INTERNATIONAL EVENTING SAFETY
COMMITTEE REPORT**

April 2000

The Committee wishes to express its utmost gratitude to all those who gave evidence both written and oral, the amount of which indicates to the Committee the great concerns there are over the safety and future direction of the sport of Eventing.

This Committee was formed jointly by the BHTA and the FEI in the wake of five tragic fatalities in the UK during 1999. Each of those fatalities was the subject of an internal BHTA Enquiry and the normal, statutory investigations. This Committee was given, in strict confidence, the BHTA Enquiry papers for each of these accidents. The Committee has not been asked to comment specifically on the accidents and does not do so.

Despite the tragic circumstances that required the establishment of this Committee, we feel that a review of the sport is required. The Committee hopes that its recommendations are received as a positive step in the development of the sport.

We have not considered the financial consequences of our recommendations, as that was not part of our brief, however we do believe that the costs should not be impossibly onerous.

Virtually all the Committee's recommendations are addressed to the FEI as the world governing body. However, it is understood that there are large sections of the sport outside the control of the FEI,(mostly National One Day Events and a few National Three Day Events) which urgently need an overall monitoring system. This has to be addressed and could be part of an audit /report system as part of the affiliation to the FEI. The Committee hopes that National Federations pay careful and urgent attention to these recommendations.

The Committee would like to see the establishment of an FEI Annual Report to cover at least the following subjects:

- a) Medical
- b) Veterinary
- c) Training of Riders and Horses
- d) Cross Country Course Design
- e) Training and Appraisal of Officials
- f) Rules and Tests
- g) Statistics

**The Committee makes the following recommendations to
the FEI & the BHTA:**

*A fundamental conclusion which pervades every detailed recommendation is that everything should be done to **prevent horses from falling**: this single objective should greatly reduce the chances of riders being seriously injured as well as significantly improving the safety of competing horses.*

STATISTICS

The Committee recommends that the FEI set up and run a world wide statistical database. The statistical report should cover information regarding the injuries to riders and horses as well as including the relevant details of the cross-country phase.

It is our Recommendation that the work already initiated on statistical information by the BHTA is completed and offered to the FEI as a possible international standard. The Committee are aware of the work being undertaken by Liverpool University with regard to this.

Statistics to be reviewed, and published annually by the FEI, with necessary action taken from trends shown.

RIDERS, TRAINING and QUALIFICATIONS

The Committee recommends that a mandatory passport system for all Riders should be established and designed by the FEI and issued to all the National Federations. This passport will include medical and disciplinary issue records together with rider qualifications. This should become a worldwide system.

The Committee recommends an in depth look at qualifications for both one and three day events to confirm that sufficient experience as a combination is attained. The qualification of horse and rider should be undertaken as two separate projects.

As an example:

Rider must complete one one star three-day event to qualify to ride at two star level.

Rider must complete two two star three-day events to qualify to ride at three star level.

*Rider must complete two three star three-day events to qualify to ride at four star level.
Horse must complete two two star three day event to qualify for three star level and must complete two three star three day events to qualify for a four star event.
(Complete means finish the cross country with no more than one refusal)
Four star qualifications must be as a combination.
Exceptions to be approved by the FEI Eventing Committee.*

The format of competition structure at both one and three-day events should be such that no one level requires an unnecessarily large increase in ability. Combinations who lose confidence or an inexperienced rider on an experienced schoolmaster should have the opportunity to drop levels to rebuild confidence.

This particularly refers to the British Horse Trials Association but could be relevant to other Federations.

The French one-day event system provides a possible example with two levels of advanced being particularly significant.

The Committee agrees that specific cross-country riding education (rather than just practice) is paramount for the future safety of the sport. It recommends that National Federations promote education of cross country riding.

The Committee recommends that competitors carry medical details visibly on their person at any time whilst jumping any fences on the competition site.

The Committee recommends that two contact names and telephone numbers must be handed to the event organizers, by each competitor prior to the start of the competition, (for cases of emergency).

OFFICIALS

The Committee recommends to the FEI that rules to define reckless riding be produced. Subsequently National bodies will be required to promulgate disciplinary procedures to be enforced by Event officials. To monitor the standard of riding a trained official should be one of the Members of the Jury of Appeal at 3* and 4* level. An extra trained official will be required at 1* and 2* level. This official will work with the Ground Jury on disciplinary and reckless riding issues.

Disciplinary action could include the use of a post event yellow card system and / or an on-course yellow flag system. All disciplinary penalties should be reciprocated between the National Federations. Penalties should be recorded in the Rider's passports. A certain number of offences could result in the rider being stood down from competition for a period of time.

The Committee recommends that the President of the Ground Jury and Technical Delegate are to be appointed and remunerated by the FEI at all 3* and 4* events.

The Committee recommends the establishment on an international basis of a bi-annual, formal, appraisal system for Officials, Ground Juries, Technical Delegates and Course

Designers to be established on an international basis. Annual publication of progress on a country-by-country basis is expected to produce the best results.

The Committee appreciates the crucial importance of Fence Judges to the sport. The Committee recommends that the Federations examine ways in which their contribution and training can be enhanced. We believe that at three-day events all fence judges should have had previous experience.

MEDICAL

The Committee recommends that medical coverage at any Event to be appropriate for on-site management of severe trauma. Medical Officers qualifications to Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support or equivalent to be mandatory in the Rule Book by the start of 2002 season.

The FEI should establish through its Medical Advisor maximum acceptable response times for paramedics to reach any accident on the cross-country course.

The Committee recommends the need for the designated and protected safety route for emergency vehicles to be further highlighted at all FEI events and monitored by the Technical Delegate at all times.

The Committee recommends that random dope testing, and spot check medical examination of riders, should be undertaken by the Chief Medical Officer, at any event. The Committee recommends that the FEI establish threshold levels of prohibited substances for humans.

The Committee recommends counseling services to be offered to parents/partners concerned.

The Committee recommends that an On-site Doctor should confirm riders are fit to compete again before the sign them off in the passport.

The Committee recommends that following a fall, if the Fence Judge has any doubts about injury to horse or rider the combination should be held; the subsequent decision to continue should be made with greatest care by the official vet and or doctor.

The Committee recommends that the FEI asks National Federations to develop an educational programme to include fitness, diet, recovery from injury, use of appropriate medication, drugs and alcohol and care of safety equipment for their riders.

The Committee recommends to the FEI that they have a medical advisory body (like the veterinarians) for all disciplines. ***The appropriate rules for Eventing are urgently required in the Rule Book.***

EQUIPMENT

The Committee recommends that a comprehensive study of Helmets to be urgently undertaken to establish the highest possible international specification for Eventing. This **mandatory** specification is to be coupled with an education / awareness program to ensure that all users and officials understand that to have good equipment in good condition and properly fitted becomes a requirement of taking part in Eventing.

The Committee asks the FEI to require standards and structural integrity of all helmets to be inspected at all FEI Three-Day Events.

The Committee recommends research be undertaken to establish the practicality of improving neck protection for riders.

The Committee asks the FEI to produce and recognise an International Standard for Body Protectors.

FEI to be aware of research being done by other sports globally, such as skiing, ski jumping, motor racing, and horse racing.

The Committee recommends that riders consider the possible danger of using blocking material or padding on the saddle, behind the rider's leg. Research should be undertaken to study the effect of saddle types versus accidents and an appropriate ruling then be made.

VETERINARY

The Committee believes that Homeopathic and Herbal calming substances for horses are contrary to the spirit of the rules and furthermore can have serious safety implications. It believes urgent investigation is necessary.

The Committee recommends that following a fall, the decision to continue should be made with greatest concern by the official vet and or doctor.

CROSS COUNTRY

The Committee agrees with what seems a general view that the courses have become more / perhaps over technical. They recommend the following.

The limiting of 'intensity of effort' should become a function of all officials involved in the inspection of courses. The investigation of a method to measure the intensity of effort, to be undertaken by the FEI.

The Committee recommends urgent research into construction of deformable structures, and their potential impact on the rules of the sport if introduced to be undertaken. FEI to coordinate all current and future research worldwide without preventing local initiatives. (This recommendation was issued to the FEI and BHTA on 27.3.00) The urgent research

into construction of deformable structures called for should be mindful of the recommendation of the enquiry that future course design should aim to minimize the fall of the horse.

The Committee recommend that considerably more focus must be given to the ground conditions by officials at the event, so the Committee recommend that there is a mandatory riders meeting with the Ground Jury on the night before Cross Country. At that riders meeting the best available weather forecast must be issued. When necessary, changes to the optimum time and length of phases should be made in the interest of safety to horses and riders, to maintain the fairness of the competition. **The Committee hopes that this meeting can be instituted at once, ie before Badminton, Fox Hill and Rolex Kentucky.**

The Committee recommends a new, additional 10-minute stop between the 1st and 3rd kilometer markers on Phase C of the Cross Country phase at all International Three-Day Events at 2** level and above. **The Committee hopes that this can be instituted at once, ie before Kentucky, Foxhall and Badminton.**

The Committee recommends the reduction of Phase C to a maximum of 8.8 kilometers

The Committee recommends that Course Designers of 3* and 4* events design for a maximum of four consecutive years at any one event.

The Committee recommends that when it becomes necessary to make a public announcement that a human fatality has occurred the fence involved should be removed from the competition.

The Committee recommends that the National Federations adopt the FEI's maximum speed of 570m per minute immediately.

The Committee recommends that the provision of Closed Circuit Television to be mandatory at all 4* and recommended at 3* events.

The Committee to recommend that the FEI produce documentation on the Do's and Don't's for Course Design, which should be reviewed annually.

In conclusion the Committee has the following comments:

The Sport of Eventing is a great all-round test of horse and rider and a tremendous examination of horsemanship, but it is also, and will remain, a risk sport.

The final decision and the ultimate responsibility for participation must continue to rest absolutely with the rider. The rider alone has to decide upon the limits in performance and the ability of his or her horse.

The Committee believes that the FEI should re-evaluate its own internal and external communications and examine its organizational structures to ensure that our recommendations are examined and if deemed sensible and practical put in place promptly. This Committee expects the FEI to ensure that an internal annual audit is established to continue to monitor the risks inherent in the sport.

The Committee hopes it has had some success in drawing the fine line between recommending changes to reduce risks yet enabling the FEI and National Federations to continue to manage a sport that maintains its distinctive, traditional and thrilling character.

As Chairman of this Committee and as an outsider from the sport I would like to record my boundless admiration for the participants, both equine and human, in this remarkable sport. The selflessness, enthusiasm and sporting attitude shown by all those who wrote and spoke to us was a revelation and I believe it augurs very well for the sport of Eventing.

THIS REPORT HAS THE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF ALL
THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Marquess of Hartington CBE (Chairman)

Mr Christopher Bartle

Mr David O'Connor

Dr Gerit Matthesen

Lt Col Gerry Mullins

Professor Inggar Lereim

Mr Michael Tucker

Mr Jackie Stewart OBE