
FEI Eventing Risk Management Policy and Action plan

Introduction

Risk criteria can only be developed taking into account the context, values, objectives and resources of the organization.

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

The final decision and the ultimate responsibility for participation must continue to remain with the rider. The rider and no-one else has to decide upon the level of training, ability and limits in performance of his/her horse.

FEI EVENTING RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY - Mission Statement

Taking into account all of the above the Eventing Committee is determined to implement a systematic risk management plan based on the following mission statement:

Eventing Vision Statement (2014 Eventing Rules – Preamble)

Eventing constitutes the most complete combined equestrian Competition, demanding of the Athlete considerable experience in all branches of equitation and a precise knowledge of his Horse's ability, and of the Horse a degree of general competence, resulting from intelligent and progressive training.

The Cross Country Test constitutes the most exciting and challenging all-round test of riding ability and horsemanship where correct principles of training and riding are rewarded. This test focuses on the ability of Athletes and Horses to adapt to different and variable conditions of the Competition (weather, terrain, obstacles, footing, etc.) showing jumping skills, harmony, mutual confidence, and in general "good pictures".

This test requires by all involved special awareness and acceptance of a certain level of risk inherent to the particular challenging and exciting nature of the test.

Every effort must be made to ensure that, at each level, responsible Athletes are participating with progressively trained Horses in order not to be exposed to a higher risk than which is strictly inherent to the nature and level of the Competition.

Principles

1. All risk management actions must be aimed to make sure that horses and riders are not exposed to higher risks than what inevitably inherent to the nature of the competition and defined as acceptable to all stakeholders.
2. Risk management policy must be in line with the overall FEI risk management policy and must be fully endorsed by the overall organization.
3. Risk management must not be a stand-alone activity, but must be an integral part of the responsibilities of the FEI and specifically of the FEI Eventing Committee.

4. Risk management policy must be taken into account in evaluating all decisions and policies related to Eventing.
5. Risk management actions must be based on a proactive long term systematic approach where results are expected to be consistent, comparable and reliable. Unstructured emotional reactions, also if at times understandable, are felt to be detrimental and must, by all means, be avoided.
6. The FEI Eventing Committee, while retaining the final say on risk management actions to be proposed to the FEI Bureau, must take into account feedback from all "experts" and, whenever possible, must base decisions on statistical evidence.
7. The FEI Eventing Committee must always consider the nature of the organization (sport organization) and the nature of the majority of the people involved (volunteers) in determining all risk management actions.
8. All stakeholders (IOC, NFs, riders, owners, media, sponsors, etc.) must be involved and their views taken into account in determining risk criteria and levels of tolerable risk.
9. Risk management must be an ongoing iterative process particularly attentive to internal and external change of contest and sensibilities.
10. The continuous improvement of risk management must be an integral part of the FEI Eventing Mission Statement.
11. National Federations active support and endorsement of the risk management policy is requested and felt to be essential for the success of any of the FEI Eventing risk management actions.

FEI EVENTING RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Preventive measures

- Creating the FEI Eventing risk management policy and structure.
- Finalizing and making full use of the potential of the FEI Safety Database.
- Improving riders and horses training and education (specifically XC training).
- Improving officials education training assessment and qualification.
- Creating a framework that encourages more experience to be built and knowledge to be consolidated for riders and horses (new vision for more effective qualifications rules).
- Encouraging lower risk responsible riding through constant review of best practices of Cross Country design.
- Discouraging higher risk reckless riding through effective disciplinary procedures.
- Riders medical coverage (preventive measures).
- Horses veterinary coverage (preventive measures).

This category of actions, that are aimed to lower the risk of accidents happening, is felt by the FEI Eventing Committee as the area where the most effective risk treatment option could be found and where the benefits derived can be maximized against the cost and effort of implementation.

Protective measures

- Riders protection (helmets and body protectors).
- Riders medical coverage (treating facilities, medical records).
- Horse Veterinary coverage (treating facilities).
- Cross Country fences - frangible and deformable structures.
- Tack and equipment.

This category of actions, that are aimed to minimize the consequences of accidents when they happen, is felt equally important by the Eventing Committee also if the risk treatment options are more limited and the balance of the expected benefits against cost is less favourable.

Rider protection equipment: development in potential to reduce the risks of the consequences of the most serious rotational falls to be monitored.

Standard of medical and veterinary coverage can always be improved, but is felt that the average standard of medical and veterinary care at competitions is adequate and is not causing added secondary risks to riders and horses. However, it is important that such standards must be continuously monitored.

Implementation of frangible and deformable structures appears to have surely the highest potential in the area of secondary risk management and needs to be further studied and developed in conjunction with the prioritized implementation of the primary risk management actions.

Communication plan

The FEI Eventing risk management needs also to take into account the risks for the FEI deriving from an unmanaged communication of any accident that will inevitably produce a bad image for the organization and the sport if not put in the right context of a proactive risk management policy.

Public perception of proactive risk management is as important as the risk management actions performed and an effective risk management communication plan is key for achieving the mission of the organization.

In order to ensure the above:

- A communication strategy for FEI Eventing risk management must be urgently developed. All risk management actions must be made public and actively explained .
- A clear procedure has been established in case of any serious accident to allow correct distribution of information.