

Five-Star

Chance or concern at the top level?

Recent trends

Five-star is an outlier level of the sport in recent years. Not only is there is an obvious lack of progress compared to the rest of the sport, but there is a real risk that things are getting worse rather than better. The table below shows that 2021 was the worst season on record regarding horse-falls at five-star. 2022 hasn't started any better. Neither year by themselves show a statistically significant deviation from the overall average (5.5%) for this level, but figures are far from the *target* rate of 4%.

CC15*-L Annual Trends 2013 to June 2022										
Year	XC_Starts	Avg HFI	XCJ Clear Rate	Sig	Total Falls	Rate	Sig	Horse Falls	Rate	Sig
2013	330	1.4	62%	↗ 2.6	34	10.3%	-1.0	15	4.5%	-0.8
2014	375	1.4	46%	↘ -3.2	60	16.0%	2.3	23	6.1%	0.5
2015	328	1.4	60%	↗ 2.2	34	10.4%	-0.9	17	5.2%	-0.3
2016	357	1.4	52%	→ -0.9	37	10.4%	-1.0	20	5.6%	0.1
2017	327	1.4	50%	→ -1.7	45	13.8%	0.9	21	6.4%	0.7
2018	316	1.4	52%	→ -1.0	36	11.4%	-0.4	15	4.7%	-0.6
2019	272	1.4	53%	→ -0.6	33	12.1%	0.0	12	4.4%	-0.8
2020	45	1.4	71%	↗ 2.2	0	0.0%	-2.5	0	0.0%	-1.6
2021	203	1.4	58%	→ 1.1	27	13.3%	0.5	16	7.9%	1.5
2022	158	1.5	61%	→ 1.6	21	13.3%	0.5	11	7.0%	0.8
Grand Total	2711	1.4	54%		327	12.1%		150	5.5%	

Trouble at the top

Category A athletes are struggling far more than usual and also more than any other category of rider at the top level. There does not appear to be a quick-fix in terms of athlete competency or horse experience. The horse-fall rate exceeding 10% is likely to gravitate back towards the mean over time, but this is also not a guarantee. The figure is alarmingly high and compared to the overall five-star average of 5.5% (2013 to 2022), the rate of 10.6% for 141 starters is significant.

Five-Star in 2021 & 2022 (up to June 22nd) by Athlete Category							
Athlete Category	XC_Starts	Avg HFI	XCJ Clear Rate	Total Falls	Rate	Horse Falls	Rate
A	141	1.6	63%	23	16.3%	15	10.6%
B	137	1.4	58%	18	13.1%	7	5.1%
C	79	1.2	56%	7	8.9%	5	6.3%
Grand Total	357	1.5	59%	48	13.4%	27	7.6%

Despite other measures

In 2019, five-star level recorded its lowest horse-fall rate of 4.4% (excluding 2020 which ran only one competition). 2019 was also the year which recorded the highest rate of frangible pin penalties (7.7%). The 2021 five-star statistics exclude the Tokyo Olympics as the cross-country is not classified as five-

star. However, in 2021, there was still a very high 'pin rate' of 5.4% *in addition to* the highest ever horse-fall rate of 7.9%.

<i>Trends regarding frangible pin penalties at five-star</i>							
Year	XC_Starts	Pins	Pin Rate	Total Falls	Rate	Horse Falls	Rate
2013	330	0	0.0%	34	10.3%	15	4.5%
2014	375	4	1.1%	60	16.0%	23	6.1%
2015	328	3	0.9%	34	10.4%	17	5.2%
2016	357	9	2.5%	37	10.4%	20	5.6%
2017	327	4	1.2%	45	13.8%	21	6.4%
2018	316	11	3.5%	36	11.4%	15	4.7%
2019	272	21	7.7%	33	12.1%	12	4.4%
2020	45	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2021	203	11	5.4%	27	13.3%	16	7.9%
2022	158	3	1.9%	21	13.3%	11	7.0%
Grand Total	2,711	67	2.5%	327	12.1%	150	5.5%
<i>*A Pin refers to any record score containing 11, 21, 26, 31, 41, 51, 71 or 22 (two activations)</i>							

Summary

There is sufficient evidence to raise concern and serious conversation around five-star trends. It is not just a concern over slower progress than other levels of the sport with regards to reducing risk. It appears that risk at five-star level *could* be starting to increase. Further exploration as to why this could be the case will be an ongoing matter.