



Session 9: FEI Eventing Rules - Full revision

Proposals outlining the modifications to the FEI Eventing Rules that were undergoing full revision in 2022, were discussed during session 9 of the FEI Sports Forum 2022.

FEI Eventing Committee Chair David O'Connor and FEI Eventing and Olympic Director Catrin Norinder presented the main proposals submitted by the Eventing Committee and the main proposals submitted by the National Federations.

I. MAIN TOPICS PROPOSED BY THE EVENTING COMMITTEE:

- **CCI-S Jumping test with a score of 20 penalties or higher to result in elimination - athlete will not be able to participate in the Cross Country test when Jumping takes place before Cross Country**

This concept has been brought from National Safety Officers program where National Federation have already implemented this rule at National competitions. The proposal is to limit the start of the Cross Country test if the athlete incurs 20 penalties or more during the Jumping test. It was clarified that the limit of 20 penalties only take into consideration obstacle penalties and not the time penalties. The limit of 20 penalties was explained by the possibilities of one mistake could result in 12 penalties, i.e. at a triple combination. Should an athlete add multiple mistakes in the Jumping test, they would most probably need more training to compete at this level before starting on Cross Country.

- **Additional MERs for CCI4*/5* to ensure recent results at this level.**

This proposal was a new concept to require additional recent MER to ensure that Horses have competed within the past 13 months at lower level before entering a higher level competition. Catrin Norinder also highlighted that statistics processed with the FEI Eventing Risk Management program clearly showed that there was a significant increase in horse fall risk at 4* and 5* where horses have not competed within the past 18 months.

- **Reduction of Athlete Categories timeframe and adjustment of the number of MERs.**

The Athletes categorisation program is used to set the qualification requirements based on the experience of the Athletes. Further to the request of Athletes and NFs, the Committee is proposing, in order to have more relevant results, to reduce the period of MERs validity from 8 to 4 years and to adjust the number of MERs to be obtained to qualify for a specific category. Catrin Norinder added that this proposal didn't have an important influence in regards to the results obtained according to the statistics. However, it reflected a much more current form of Athletes and Horses which is the aim of qualifications.

- **Requirement of NSOs or their representative to attend annual Eventing safety meeting**

David O'Connor referred to the very valuable NSOs program which has produced great ideas/discussion and take away through the NSOs meetings over the past years. The proposal was to require that NSOs gather the national Eventing statistics and attend the yearly Risk Management Seminar (either online or in person) as important information is shared during these meetings.



- **Course Designers additional responsibility on Cross Country e.g. dangerous riding sanctions**

The proposal was to empower Course Designers to monitor dangerous riding during the cross country test. Course Designers were already required to be present during the Cross Country day and this proposal would allow them to be active in the process of the dangerous riding or stopping a Horse.

Sabrina Ibanez (FEI Secretary General) asked about the point of view of Course Designers about this proposal and David O'Connor confirmed that Course Designers were positive about the concept: he highlighted that Course Designers are the most educated Officials in regards to the Cross Country course and having their expertise in the process is hugely important.

- **Tack and Equipment**

Reference was made to the overall review of Tack and Equipment and the FEI Working group created for all disciplines. Specific proposals raised in the past months by Stewards were in meantime reviewed by the Eventing Committee. One request included clarification on the way to measure the length of lever arm for Cross Country limited to 10 cm.

II. MAIN PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL FEDERATION AND STAKEHOLDERS:

- **Rotation of Course Designers at Events**

The discussion started with the proposal from NFs not to have the same Course Designers for Championships and led to a discussion on the rotation of Course Designers in all events after a 6 years period of time. The reason behind this proposal is to encourage the promotion of new Course Designers around the world.

The representative from POL NF asked about the length of the break for Course Designers after 6 years of officiating as it is difficult to bring new Course Designers in Poland. David O'Connor clarified that this is not the direction wished by this new concept and hoped that there would not be a need to clarify the in-between period.

Catrin Norinder also highlighted that the goal of this proposal is to address the diversity of the courses that athletes have the possibility to ride.

Comments received from:

Andrew Hoy, Eventing Athlete (AUS) proposed a differentiation of number of years depending on the level of events, as for high level events a Course Designer would take more time to integrate their ideas in the design. Concern was also raised in regard to the cost related to change of Course Designer.

Anne Mette Binder (DEN), FEI Eventing Course Director General and Level 3 Judge strongly supported the proposal and commented that in Denmark, they had invited a level 3 Polish Course Designer to encourage the diversity of courses. She highlighted that this proposal would help in the development of the sport and help young Course Designers to have more opportunities to design at international events.

Burghley CCI5* Organiser Martyn Johnson agreed with the concept but commented that caution should be taken for high level events, in particular 5* to ensure that the right



people are appointed for the right reasons. He was also concerned about costs and changing every 6 years: having a new Course Designer at this level will probably induce significant changes in the course which has a cost. He would therefore suggest to have a 7 or 8 years rotation.

Philine Ganders-Meyer (GER) agreed with the idea but also supported Martyn Johnson's view in regards to the costs for Organizers that should be kept in mind.

Simone Perillo (ITA) agreed with the concept of this proposal and asked to clarify if the implementation of this new requirement will be retroactive or only start counting the officiating years as of 2023. David O'Connor clarified that the thought process was only to count starting 2023 and forward.

- **Monthly update of Athlete categorisation:**

Following the request of NFs, a proposal was to update the Athlete category at the end of each month rather than twice a year as per the current rules. David O'Connor clarified that the Athlete categories at the time of the closing dates of entries would be taken into account to determine the Athletes categories and thus the necessary MERs.

It was also highlighted by Catrin Norinder that the main challenge of the proposal to update the Athlete categories on a monthly basis and not after each event was due to the difficulty to receive the results from the events and to integrate them in the database in due time as all results needed to be taken into account for the Athlete's categorisation.

- **Dressage penalties and tiebreaks;**

When a tiebreak is required at the end of the competition, order of priority is currently Cross Country test penalties first followed by the closest to the optimum time during the Cross Country test. The proposal was to include as second level the Athlete with the highest positive Dressage points in order to reduce the impact of rounding up the Dressage decimal to 1 decimal. David O'Connor highlighted that it was important to include this tiebreak level in the procedure but questioned if this should be as second or third stage.

Andrew Hoy (AUS) shared his point of view as an Athlete highlighting that if the Dressage positive points would be included as second level, it would mean that the decision would be based on subjective opinion of the Dressage Judges' scoring. As an Athlete, his proposal was to include the closest to optimum time as second level in order to favour a parameter that the Athlete could influence on.

- **Modernising the dress code**

National Federations submitted proposals to review the Eventing dress for the Jumping and Dressage test. The Eventing Committee agreed to modernize and line up the Eventing dress rules with Dressage and Jumping. Proposals will not concern the Cross Country test. However, one point has to be clarified regarding boots with heels and how to define a heel, which has an influence on safety. This question will be reviewed and a proposal will be included in the Eventing Rules proposals to be submitted to the National Federations in July 2022

- **Measurement of obstacles with a spread;**



National Federations had asked for a clarification on the following concepts: firstly, a clarification on ground lines and if they should be included in the measurement of base spread. By adding a mandatory ground line and some dressing used as ground line such as flowers or mulch, the base spread could be measured out of the permitted dimensions. The recommendation was to consider only the solid fixed ground line as part of the base spread to be measured in the base spread.

The second concept was linked to fences where ground lines are technically already included in the shape of the fence such as triple bar or palisade. On such fences, the bottom rails are technically a ground line and therefore, another ground line was not needed at the front. The proposal was to clarify that any fence with the front leading edge below 50 cm would not need a ground line.

The measurement of fences without a height was also presented, such as a ditch. The proposal was to clarify that a ground line of 60 cm is required at the front of fence without height. This will help the horse to read the fence and see where the edges are.

- **Number of efforts on Cross Country;**

National Federations had raised the question of the number of efforts on the Cross Country courses in relation to distance. The Eventing Committee felt that the use of sunken road or steps has been missed due to the limitation of the number of efforts in the Cross Country course. This rule modification included as of January 2022 clarified that if there is a double steps, it counts as one effort. This adjustment can be made only twice during the course which allows for 2 additional efforts and must be approved by the Technical Delegate and the President of the Ground Jury.

- **Faults at obstacles – activation of frangible device/missing a flag;**

National Federations had made different proposals in relation to the number of penalties for activating a frangible device and for missing a flag. David O'Connor reminded that the penalties in current rules for activating a frangible device was 11 points and missing a flag 15 penalties. He also reminded that discussions took place in the past years in regards to missing a flag and that the current rules were well described to avoid any issues with judging skinny fences.

The proposal received from the National Federation was to decrease the current penalties for missing a flag to 7 penalties and for activating a frangible device to 4 penalties as well as differentiate if the activation was made from the front or hind legs.

Andrew Hoy (AUS) commented that he was in favour to maintain the penalties as there are. He explained that with the current penalties, this could only improve the quality of riding. In his opinion as an Athlete, if these were lowered, this could increase the risk taken by Athletes and could not help improving the quality of riding.

For Philine Ganders-Meyer (GER), the penalties attributed were very hard and therefore, the German Federation proposed to have them reduced. In regards to the frangible devices, she expressed the need to have new technology tested during a first phase of implementation where no penalties should be attributed in case of an activation.



Swedish Athlete Ludwig Svennerstal highlighted that in order to activate a frangible device, the Horse must hit it really hard which is the result of a mistake and should be penalized in the correct manner. In his view, it was very hard to differentiate the activation from front or hind legs and this could be debatable. Having a clear rule as currently included was better.

David O'Connor highlighted that the energy required to touch a jumping poles was 4 to 5 joules whereas the energy required to activate a frangible device was 256 joules for the yellow MIM Clip and 460 joules for activating a red MIM Clip which underlined that activating a frangible device was the consequence of a mistake.

Michel Asseray (FRA) commented that in the first place, the frangible technology was developed to avoid the rotational falls. He highlighted that nowadays, this technology should not become an additional difficulty during the Cross Country courses.

In France, no penalties were given for breaking a frangible device and they have never seen a change in the attitude of the riding. In his point of view, for welfare reason and for the image of the sport, it was important that frangible devices was used and activated from time to time. If penalties were removed, this would probably encourage Course Designers to use them more.

Geoff Sinclair (AUS) (Vice Chair of the Eventing Committee and Chair of the Eventing Risk Management Steering Group) reminded that the frangible technology was in place to reduce horse fall in general and not only rotational fall. As Athletes make mistakes from time to time, the frangible devices are in place to minimize the consequences.

- **Introduction of a remuneration for Officials at all events**

The proposal presented was to include a remuneration of EUR 100 for Officials at events as a recommendation in the Eventing Rules.

Ludwig Svennerstal (SWE) agreed with the proposal and highlighted that it was normal that someone gets paid for its job.

A show Organiser commented that as OCs, they never paid less and was in support with the proposal

III. UPDATES FROM THE EVENTING COMMITTEE

The last point presented was an update on frangible devices. David O'Connor briefly reminded that for the MIM technology, there were 2 different types of clips: the red clip designed for jumping fences straight worked very well, however, the question was for fences jumped at an angle. Breaking a frangible device on an angle takes almost twice as much force in comparison to breaking it while jumping straight.

It had taken some time to ensure the force used for the yellow MIM clip, breaking at 60% of the energy.

The reverse pin developed in the previous years by British Eventing was approved for the back rail of open corners and oxers.

The original frangible technology developed 20 years ago was the front pin, designed to minimize the effect of a rotational fall once the horse was already in the air. The frangible

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technology had progressed to break before the horse gets into the air. Consequently, the decision is to not allow the Front Pin technology any longer.