

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE BUILDER

INTRODUCTION

Considering that some developing countries organising this event do not have enough course building experience, it has been decided to issue these guidelines with the aim of providing useful information to organisers and their course builders to help them in reading the course plans and in building them properly with a minimum of effort.

CROSS COUNTRY & DERBY COURSE

THE ARENA

The arena used for "Derby" in Category C should be a Polo type field (minimum recommended overall surface 15'000 m² - grass and/or sand), **which can be used as well as part of the Cross Country course in Categories A and B** if no existing Cross Country track is available or if it is not long enough (see example on page 4).

OBSTACLE MATERIAL

From a practical point of view, it is impossible to build exactly identical courses in the different countries organising the Challenge due to different types of fencing material available in each country.

Therefore, those organisers who have difficulty in preparing new and modern type fences should bear in mind that they can use simple materials without changing the degree of difficulty of the fences.

The organisers, after receiving the plans, have to prepare a complete list of all the material they need according to the description of the fences.

HOW TO BUILD THE COURSE

Guidelines about the metres per effort (mpe)

Start and Finish:

The first & last obstacle of Cross Country shall be not less than 20 metres no more than 50 metres from the starting and/or finishing line.

It is strongly recommended when possible to place the start and finish on the same visual line, in order to have one official in charge of timing who can easily start and stop the stop watch without having to move (especially if the OC does not have a professional timing device). This is also from a logistical perspective a way to save one additional fence judge if the same person is in charge of checking the start and finish.

Distance between fences:

In general there should not be more than an average of one jumping effort per commenced 100m over the entire length of the course. Taking into consideration the terrain (turns, slopes, etc.), this distance may need to be slightly adjusted to make sure fences are positioned in such a way that it is safe for the horses to jump them. Any adjustments need to be discussed and agreed on by the TD and CD.



For Category C, the format of the course is a "Derby" and therefore the distance between fences is reduced to every 40-60m.

Anchoring or Securing of Portable Fences

The importance of this cannot be overemphasised and it is not acceptable to assume that, because a fence is heavy, it will not move if hit at speed by a Horse. Course designers, builders and TD's should must make every effort to ensure that each and every portable fence is 'anchored' in a way that will prevent movement as fences that do move significantly increase the chance of a fall.

All portable fences must be anchored at the front or on the sides at the front. There are various recognised ways of securing portables, with the most traditional being the use of posts and, more recently, the Spirafix Ground Anchor system which is both popular and efficient (see below for more information). There are other methods and, as long as the principle is adhered to, they can also be accepted. In certain situations, like lined water jumps or all weather arenas, it is not possible to use anything that can pierce the lining/membrane in which case great care should be taken to ensure the fences are secured in another way.

Securing narrow fences/skinnies Experience has shown that skinny's, eg fences with less than 2.4m jumpable width, can move if fewer than 4 ground anchors are used. For these fences it is very important to have ground anchors at the front and at the back. All brackets for ground anchors must be secured to the main structural frame of the fence rather than the cladding of the fence and ground anchors at the front of narrow fences must be set back 15-20cms from the front to reduce the chance of a horse being injured should it run out at the fence.

It is very important to only use tried and tested ground anchors and brackets. Beware of cheap imitations!

Spirafix System 50mm "C" type Ground Anchors:

This is a very efficient & reliable system but some things should be considered:

- The anchors should be at the front of the fence rather than at the back, or at the front AND back. At least two should be used.
- Where fences with small base spreads are being fixed extra anchors may be required at the front of the fence.
- There are two lengths of anchors available – 460mm. and 620mm. – and the correct ones should be used depending on the ground conditions, i.e. the longer ones in sandy soil.
- It is worth noting that there is a significant change in the security of the fence when the longer ground anchors are used, they give much more security to the fence
- The anchor brackets should be securely fixed to the frame of the fence so that the fence cannot break away from the brackets.
- When locating the brackets on the fences it is essential that they are not in a position to injure a horse if it horse runs out at the fence; all officials must examine the fences to ensure that the tops of the spirafixes are protected or positioned such that they cannot injure a horse if it runs out; the same applies for the practise fences.





Posts:

These should be substantial (min diameter 125 mm.) and dug (or knocked) deep enough into the ground. A minimum depth of 0.75m. is required but in soft conditions this might need to be increased.

- Posts should be at the back of the fence but, if set below half way up the highest part of the fence, should also be put at the front or side as well to stop the front lifting on impact.
- Try not to use posts with lots of knots as they weaken the post.
- Using a combination of posts and anchors can work very well. Posts not at the back of the fence should be secured to the fence using bolt, coach screw, rope or wire.

Fences "Readability"

Profiles of Fences/Lower Rails:

The profiles of every fence must be such that it helps the horses 'read the shape of the fence' and understand the "question".

It is therefore essential for Officials to understand how the profile of a fence affects how a horse will jump it. Where there is a fence with a top rail and a lower rail on the front face (e.g. an oxer or an upright post & rails) the lower rail needs to be not less than half way up the fence, and that in these situations there should be some sort of ground line also. Alternatively, if a top rail and a ground line are used there needs to be some dressing (e.g. a shrub/tree/bush) to ensure that there is a good profile to the front of the fence and not just a gap between the top rail and the ground line.

Dressing fences:

CDs and officials need to be mindful of what may be positioned on either side of the front of a fence to help the horses 'read' it. It is believed that setting dressing eg trees, pillars, etc back from the front of a fence can be misleading to horses. It is recognised that as the horses gets closer to the fence it draws more and more information from the side.

Consequently decorations and fillings have an important impact on the readability of fences and must be chosen carefully and only used if it will improve the horses' understanding of the fence and the effort they will have to provide to go over it successfully.

Ground Lines

CDs and all officials need to assist and encourage horses to take off at a good point. There are several ways to do this: one of which is to help horses with their depth perception. There are 3 key reference points which it is believed will assist horses with this: one on either side of the fence and one in the centre.

Research has shown that in order to get over a fence without catching a leg on the leading edge, a horse must be no closer at the point of take off than:

- 1.8m when travelling at 600m/min
- 1.35m when travelling at 450m/min
- 0.9m when travelling at 300m/min

The point of take-off is not the same as the ground line when measuring Base Spread.

With this information it is possible to consider ground lines in a fresh light.

- Ground lines are intended to help horses read the fence and identify the leading edge.
- Ground lines should be used to improve the profile of fences and to help prevent horses getting too 'deep' to a fence.
- The height of the dressing in front of a fence is equally as important as how far in front of the fence a ground line may be.



- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, ground lines should always be used on fences at all levels.
- An additional ground line is not compulsory for fences with a front leading edge of 50 cm or less.
- It is expected for there to be a discussion between the TD and CD as to the type of ground line to use.
- Ground lines can be rails, flowers/plants mulch/woodchip, it can be offcuts or anything suitable that will help or further improve the profile of a fence. It need not necessarily extend all the way along the front of the fence, but must remain consistent throughout the day.
- Ground lines should be used on steps out of water.
- A single rail must never be used without a ground line.
- False groundlines are not acceptable under any circumstances.
- Groundlines should stay consistent through the entire competition.
- Solid groundlines need to be set but not fixed if there is any chance that they may cause a leg trap.
- Solid ground line is part of the base spread measurement.
- Soft ground lines (such as mulch or flower) is not included in the in the base spread. They are put in front of a fence to help it to jump better.

What are the benefits of ground lines?

The sport has an objective and a responsibility to do what it can to reduce rotational falls. Part of this relates to fence profiles which should help the horse read the question and help the shape of its jump.

Experience has shown that fences generally jump better if there is a ground line. It is believed that the height of ground line (to give an improved profile to the fence) is perhaps more important than how far out in front of the fence it is. There is a balance to be found between helping the horse and encouraging riders to go too fast.

In assessing a fence the horse has to process a lot of information in a short timeframe. We know that the closer the horses gets to the fence the more it draws information from the sides, therefore decoration on the sides of the fence helps keep the horse away from the leading edge, while it is believed the ground line in the middle of the fence helps the horse identify the question from distance.

Rather than ask the question “why would you put a ground line in?”, it is better to ask “why wouldn’t you use one?”

Size of the Arena and/or Field or Track

The size of the arena is not mandatory per say but is recommended. What is however mandatory in order for the results to be considered are all the technical requirements which include the total length of the course, the fences (profiles/type, height, order, etc.), the speed, etc. Consequently it will be the responsibility of the CD to create a course following the technical requirements as set in the guidelines for each Category.

After the competition, the Foreign FEI TD will have to submit along with his report a copy of all the courses that were built and these will be the point of reference to make sure conditions were met. In case of doubt, NFs may send their course plans ahead of time to confirm validation. This is very important in cases where some adjustments might be requested for the course to fit with existing fixed obstacles (eg water), but a tentative course plan must be sent with clear information on constraints and justifications.

Whenever possible, the field used for the Category C Derby should be part of the Category A & B Cross Country course, in order to avoid having to move fences from one location to another (or to limit the distances for them to be moved in order to gain time and efforts).

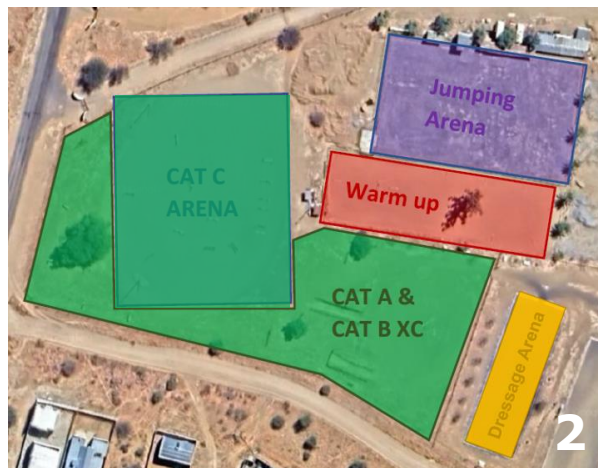


Consequently the first part of the course (start) can be built in the Derby field/arena, then the course spreads out into the Category A & B Cross Country field/track. Depending on the available space and course designer's plans, the last fences of Categories A and/or B can be placed in the Derby field/arena making the athletes come back into it for the finish (take into consideration the location of the finish line between Categories and in comparison to the start line for placement of time cells and fence judge).

Here is an example of a set up that works well in order to combine all three Categories in one location during a one day event:



1) Polo field type arena/field used for Category C



2) Category C field then included as part of Cat A & B surface

Fences Size and Height

As mentioned previously, the FEI Eventing World Challenge runs on the condition that every country organising it will follow the same requirements in term of fence type, size, profile, order, number and course length and speed.

If the OC does not have fences available at the exact required sizes and heights, and it is too costly to build new ones, there are simple means to adapt fences in order to have them meet the requirements and make them eligible. For example if the OC only has 3m long fences (front view), by adding "wings" on either side of the fence using bushes or hay stacks as long as these are safe the CD can increase the width to 4m.

Concerning the heights of the jumps, here too there is the possibility to adapt them easily by adding or removing elements (eg. wooden planks) that will be used to elevate or lower the fences.

These elements must not interfere with the fences safety (for example sticking out) and must allow for the fences to be anchored. Using such elements is also a good way for organisers to be able to organise more than one category during the same show and not needing duplicates of the fences as they can simply adapt the height of the jump from one category to the next (following the corresponding courses of course).



SHOW JUMPING COURSE – CATEGORY A & B

THE ARENA

The competition arena must be enclosed (FEI Rules for Jumping Event, Article 201 and Memorandum for Jumping Event, Section 3). Before building the course, make sure that the size of the arena mentioned in the rules of the FEI Jumping World Challenge Cat. A, B and C, i.e. 65 x 45 m, is either marked out on the ground or railed off.

In order to do this, different countries may use different materials such as wooden fences, wooden rails, plastic ropes, straw bales, dressage fencing or any other material bearing in mind safety requirements. It is better to avoid using metal as a material.

After fencing off the arena, the sand footing or any surface including grass should be prepared by leveling and making it as smooth and flat as possible.

An opening such as a gate should be made for entering and exiting.

OBSTACLE MATERIAL

From a practical point of view, it is impossible to build exactly identical courses in the different countries organising the Challenge due to different types of fencing material available in each country.

Therefore, those organisers who have difficulty in preparing new and modern type fences should bear in mind that they can use simple materials without changing the degree of difficulty of the fences.

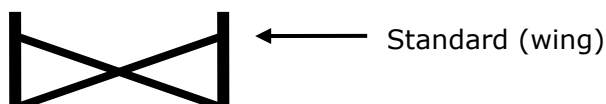
The organisers, after receiving the plans, have to prepare a complete list of all the material they need according to the description of the fences.

1. Poles

There is no substitute for wooden poles yet. The poles can be 3.5 to 4.0 meters in length.

2. Cross poles – Practice Obstacles

FEI Jumping Rules, art. 201.4.3 - Exercise and schooling areas and practice obstacles – Practice Obstacles: If crossed poles are used as the top part of an obstacle, they must be able to fall individually. The top end of the poles must be in a cup. There can be a horizontal top pole behind the crossed poles, which must be at least 20 cm higher than the height of the place where the poles cross each other.



3. Planks

Planks are made in different shapes, types and dimensions and should have the same length as poles.

Planks can be waved or straight, they can be solid or they can have different shapes cut out. Also ladders or panels can be used instead, when standard planks are not available.



4. Gates

Normally, gates should hang on their own cups (Flat Cups) and they exist in a wide variety. In case gates hanging on cups are not available, organizers may use gates having their own support on the ground. These can be used on the ground when you have to use them as fillers under the poles.

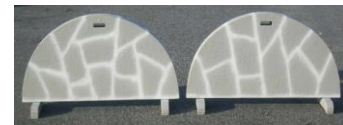
5. Flower Islands

Flower islands are decoration elements, which are also used as turning points. A flower island can be made of some flowerpots. The flower island should be visible and respected by the riders/horses.

6. Fillers

Fillers are small decoration elements under a fence. Small walls, rainbows, flowers, etc. can also be used. If such material is not available, use your imagination and be creative with what you have at your disposal.

For example:



7. Liverpool

The Liverpool (or water ditch) should be approximately 3m x 1m. The Liverpool should be made out of blue material and filled with water. The frame of the Liverpool should be of a soft and elastic material in order to avoid injuries.

If a Liverpool has a different colour e.g. black it is recommended to dye the water.



8. Use FEI-certified safety cups in all oxers, also on the warm-up arena.



HOW TO READ THE COURSE PLAN

The course plans are drawn to scale, and accordingly, the course builders can find the exact place of each obstacle on the ground.

On these plans you can see the following:

- Fence types: verticals, oxers, liverpools
- Number of fences
- The number of each fence
- Distance between combinations
- Start and finishing lines
- Course length, time allowed, time limit and speed for the competition.

Some course designers show the position of entrance/exit gate and some not, so in the latter case the organisers may choose the place of entrance/exit gate.