

2023 Rule Amendment Synopsis

This document outlines the major rule changes in the 2023 Members' Handbook to help members identify new and edited rules ahead of the new season. Any altered or new rules are marked in bold in the handbook.

Equine Welfare

Surgical procedures Ref: 3 Horse Welfare

- A horse is not eligible to compete when a limb or part of a limb, is hyposensitive or hypersensitive (both of which shall constitute 'abnormal' limb sensitivity). Hypersensitive limbs have an excessive or abnormal reaction to palpitation. Hyposensitive limbs include any alternation in sensitivity induced by a neurectomy or chemical desensitisation, for as long as the alternation in sensitivity persists.
- In order to continue participating in British Dressage competition, horses that have previously had these surgical procedures on any limb must be re-examined and certified as fit to compete. The registered owner will need to provide a veterinary certificate, detailing the specific nature of the operation, with written confirmation from the vet that the horse has been passed fit to return to competition. The Welfare Panel will then review the evidence presented and determine whether the procedure contravenes BD rules and regulations on grounds of equine welfare.
- From 1 January 2023, horses that undergo surgical procedures on any limb that may put its welfare or the safety of other horses and/or athletes at risk must have a minimum period of six months' rehabilitation. After this point, the registered owner must provide BD with a veterinary certificate post-rehabilitation, detailing the specific details of the operation, with written confirmation from the vet that the surgery does not contravene BD rules and regulations and that the horse has been passed fit to compete. The Welfare Panel will then review the evidence presented and determine whether the horse can return to competition.

Sensory hairs Ref: Horse Welfare

- Sensory Hairs - Clipped or shaven sensory hairs around the mouth, nose and eyes is not permitted as this may reduce the horse's sensory ability. Areas of hair that must be clipped or shaven to allow veterinary treatment are exempt from this rule and a veterinary certificate will need to be sent to BDHQ.

Equine Influenza Vaccination Ref: 11

A horse will not be permitted to compete unless it has a current vaccination against equine influenza that complies with the following conditions:

- An initial course of two injections for primary vaccination, not less than 21 days and not more than 92 days apart, are required before being eligible to compete.
- Subsequent booster injections must be given at regular intervals of not more than 12 months, commencing after the first booster injection.
- The full course or booster must have been administered at least seven days before arriving at the competition.
- The vaccination record(s) in the horse's passport, must be completed, signed, and stamped line by line, by an appropriate veterinary surgeon who is neither the owner nor the rider of the horse.

In the interests of equine welfare and to maintain optimum protection levels for your horse, it is strongly recommended that the most recent booster injection is given within six calendar months +21 days prior to the horse competing. For those competing under FEI rules, please refer to the FEI vaccination regulations. The responsibility to comply with this rule lies with the competitor, who should consult with their veterinarian.

Equine Carrying Capacity and Fitness Ref: Horse Welfare

British Dressage is committed to upholding the highest standards of welfare, health, and well-being for both horse and rider, and a central tenet of this is promoting a harmonious partnership. To achieve this, the rider should be the correct size for their horse and suitably mounted. The horse and rider partnership must be in balance, and the rider should not exert undue influence on or restrict the horse's natural way of going.

The rider should be proportionate to their horse, with the core stability, suppleness, and fitness necessary to achieve a harmonious way of going. When considering the carrying capacity of an equine, the height and size of the rider, along with the age, type, fitness, and body condition score of the horse should all be taken into account.

As a general guideline, it is recommended that the maximum load of an equine, including tack and equipment, should not exceed 20% of the horse's total body weight, based on a horse with a 'good' condition score. It is the members' responsibility to ensure that they respect these guidelines, in the interests of equine welfare.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that a member's way of riding is effective and sympathetic to their horse, and not a measure to prevent their participation. If any member feels that this may cause issues for their equine partnership, then it is recommended that they consult with their vet or coach for further expert advice. Additional training and education resources are also available on the BD website, including information on general health and fitness.

Lameness Ref: 4g Horse Welfare

If a horse / pony has been eliminated for lameness during a test, they may not present them again on the same day / multiday and or / Championships for a subsequent test.

Weather warnings Ref 63.

- **Yellow:** In the event that the Met Office issues a Yellow weather warning, the competition may still go ahead as planned, but the venue will be required to prepare a mitigation strategy for the weather event and communicate this to those members affected.
- **Amber:** If the Met Office issues an Amber weather warning, the venue will review the situation with British Dressage to determine whether the competition can continue to be run as scheduled. The venue will prepare a mitigation strategy for the weather event, agreed with the BD Sport Operations Manager, and communicated in advance to those members affected. If these mitigations do not allow for the safe running of the competition for members or horses, then the fixture must be cancelled.
- **Red:** In the event that the Met Office issues a Red weather warning, then the competition must be cancelled, unless there are extenuating circumstances and agreed in advance with British Dressage. Weather warnings apply to the location of the competition venue itself, and decisions will not be based on where members reside, or if they are required to travel through an affected area. It is the responsibility of the venue to communicate with those competitors affected.

A decision on cancellation or postponement of the fixture will be taken no later than 48 hours prior to the start of the competition (unless there are exceptional circumstances), to allow for any additional planning or rescheduling required, based on the most recent weather report.

Tack, equipment and riding the test

Following the FEI Tack review in July 2022, some tack and equipment will no longer be permitted for use in BD competitions with effect from 1 January 2023.

Please see the up-to-date approved tack document for further information.

- Bits with a central link are permitted but they must not have the action of a tongue plate
- Weymouth's with rotating arms/mouthpiece, rotating mouthpiece or downward tilted curb are not permitted

Cultural, Religious or Medical Dress Ref: 75

British Dressage is committed to being an inclusive and accessible sport that celebrates diversity and removes barriers to participation.

Where specific clothing items are worn on cultural, religious, or medical grounds that may conflict with the ability to adhere to the rules of British Dressage, we request that members contact head office for further advice regarding suitable dress.

The safety and protection of horses and riders is paramount, and clothing or headgear must remain in line with our competition rules. We can provide support and endorse a suitable solution in advance of competition, while still safeguarding the welfare of all participants.

Para Equestrian Rules

[New FEI Para tests](#) from 1 January 2023

New Silver tests for National Competition

- Grade 1 - Intermediate Test A (old Novice A)
- Grade 2 - Intermediate Test A (old Novice A)
- Grade 3 - Intermediate Test A (old Novice A)
- Grade 4 - Intermediate Test A (old Novice A)
- Grade 5 - Intermediate Test A (old Novice A)

New Gold tests for National Competition

- Grade 1 – Grand Prix Test A (old Team Test)
- Grade 2 – Grand Prix Test A (old Team Test)
- Grade 3 – Grand Prix Test A (old Team Test)
- Grade 4 - Grand Prix Test A (old Team Test)
- Grade 5 - Grand Prix Test A (old Team Test)

- Grade 1 - Grand Prix Test B (old Individual Test)
- Grade 2 - Grand Prix Test B (old Individual Test)
- Grade 3 - Grand Prix Test B (old Individual Test)
- Grade 4 - Grand Prix Test B (old Individual Test)
- Grade 5 – Grand Prix test B (old Individual Test)

New Gold Freestyle tests for National Competition

- Grade 1 – Grand Prix Test Freestyle (old: Freestyle Test)
- Grade 2 – Grand Prix Test Freestyle (old: Freestyle Test)
- Grade 3 – Grand Prix Test Freestyle (old: Freestyle Test)
- Grade 4 – Grand Prix Test Freestyle (old: Freestyle Test)
- Grade 5 – Grand Prix Test Freestyle (old: Freestyle Test)

Classification Ref: 16.

To retain an International Classification regardless of grade status (confirmed, review, review with fixed date, observation assessment) riders are required to compete in a CPEDI at least once every 2 or 4 years depending on grade status.

New Para Bronze Tests Ref: 23

New Para Bronze tests from 1 Jan 2023 for all grades (summer qualification). Introducing additional non qualifying walk trot tests for Grade 4 & 5. All tests available to view on the BD website.

Riders with Hearing difficulties (also applicable to able bodied riders) **Ref: 20**

All riders with hearing difficulties may wear a royal blue armband when warming up and competing in their test.

A support person may raise their hand when the bell is rung to indicate to the deaf rider that the bell has been rung by the judge. The support person must stand outside the boards at the edge of the arena, at least five metres from the arena boards, to ensure no outside assistance is given.

Direct Qualification Winter / Summer Championships Ref: 23

Direct qualification for the Gold Championships (summer and / or winter) applies to selected combinations for the Paralympic Games/ World or European Championships in the preceding year.

New Para Freestyle to Music Championships Ref: 23

- Open to Bronze, Silver, and Gold riders.
- Combinations must gain one score of 63% or above at their respective section to qualify for the Championships,
- Combinations qualify direct to the Para Freestyle to Music Championships.
- Bronze and Silver freestyle tests are available on the BD website.
- Gold freestyle tests are available to download from the FEI website

Eligibility and Rules

- **Ref: 55a** Entries cannot be accepted after times have been published for BD championships.
- **Ref 70:** If a judge dispensation request applying to a qualifying class has been approved, this will automatically revert to a non-qualifying class and competitors are awarded non-qualifying points.
- **Ref: 73** Music may be provided in a number of formats; deliverables include CD or MP3 / electronically. Music is to be provided/transferred as the individual organiser advises.
- **Ref: 112.** In the event of a serious and potentially dangerous resistance, the judge can ring the bell before the 90 seconds is up.
- **Ref: 118.** When dangerous resistance or behaviours are exhibited, in the interests of safety, a judge may ring the bell before the maximum time(s) stated above.
- **Ref: 117.** A horse fall is defined as both the horse's shoulder and its quarters coming into contact with the ground simultaneously.

Quest

Introducing new format for 2023, please see separate communications.

- **Ref: 141** Hors Concours (HC) entries are permitted in MQ competitions (excluding semi-finals and championship).
- **Ref: 147** No two teams competing on the same day can have the same rider composition

Area Festival qualification

- **Ref: 179** Prelim – Advanced Medium – three scores at 63% or above in the relevant section/level.
- **Ref: 179** Prix St George - Inter I – two scores at 60% or above in the relevant section/level.
- **Ref: 179** From 1 July 2023 competitors may only compete at a maximum of two Area Festivals per season, for each level and section, if they have repeated the full qualification. For example, if qualification is achieved for Novice silver and Novice silver music, competitors may compete at two area festivals for each.
- **Ref: 179g** If a rider competes at a Premier League, they will (with immediate effect) not be eligible to compete at an Area Festival at that level or below in current and future years. For U21 riders, combinations who compete at a Premier League will (with immediate effect) not be eligible to compete at an Area Festival at that level or below. This excludes riders who are competing in the specific U21 FEI age classes (Children on Horses, Pony, Junior and Young Rider).
- Removal of Medium U21 Championship classes at the Winter Championships

Winter Championship PSG & Inter I Silver (New for 2023)

PSG & Inter I silver classes will now be included at the Winter Regionals and Winter Championships.

Qualification is gained in the same way as the Gold section, and if eligible and have been competing in the Gold qualifiers classes, please contact the office to change your section.

Winter Prix St Georges and Inter I Freestyle Championships

For the Winter Prix St Georges and Intermediate I Music Gold Championships, combinations eligible and competing at the level may enter direct to Winter PSG and Intermediate I Music Gold Championships.

Priority will be given as stated below: **Ref: 188**

- **First priority:** combinations entered in the equivalent Gold non-music class at the Winter Championships.
- **Second priority:** combinations achieving 65% or more at the Winter Regionals in the equivalent Gold non-music class in the same year.
- **Third priority:** combinations who competed in the relevant Gold music class at the preceding National Championships.

Island Rules Ref: 194

For all levels, half the qualifying points must be achieved at the required percentage and at least half these points must be gained in qualifiers. Where the total points required is an odd number, the number of points needed under these special rules will be rounded up, e.g., Preliminary Silver will require 10 points all from qualifiers and Novice Silver will require 10 points, five from qualifiers.

This rule only applies to members with island postcodes or residents in Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Wight, Isle of Man, and other offshore islands.

Restrictions competing on the mainland have been removed.

Prix St George and Intermediate I Freestyle to music Gold Championships

Ref: 197 The top combinations from the PSG/Intermediate I classes, who have formally declared in advance through the Championship entry system, will go through to the relevant Music Championship class. The number to qualify and means of declaring will be stated in the schedule. Marks from the PSG/Intermediate I will not be carried forward.

U21 National Championship League Ref: 199

European Championship team members and reserves selected for more than one age group can only compete in the National Championships class at one level. The level at which they wish to compete, and the selected horse/pony on which they wish to compete, must be communicated to the International Officer by 14th August 2023.

Middle Tour Championships Ref: 200

Qualifying period: 1 Jan – 31 August 2023. Will be run alongside the Area Festival Championships.

British Dressage Young Horse Championship 7-year-old Classes Ref: 203

New 7-year-old test available for 2023, will be ridden at qualifiers / semi-finals and the National Championships.

Horses will ride the BD National test for 7-year-olds. This class will be judged as a normal BD test by a judge at C, as well as additional judge(s) marking a quality sheet at E or B. Classes will be judged by a BD Trainer judge and a List 3A or above BD judge.

The top two horses of the class with scores over 63%, will qualify to take part in the semi-finals. If either horse of the top two is already qualified, then the qualification will pass down to the next horse provided they have a score of 63% or above.

Dressage Future Elite Championship (HOYS) Ref: 209

To qualify for the Dressage Future Elite Championship, horses need to be between 8 and 10 years of age at the time of qualification.

This championship is open to combinations who have attained the highest average percentage from three Prix St Georges or Intermediate I scores at Premier Leagues, High Profile Shows or any domestic CDIs between 1 October 2022 and 31 August 2023 (including the final High Profile Show at the end of August). Scores from Prix St Georges or Intermediate I freestyle classes may not be used towards qualification.

This championship runs under British Dressage rules.

Whips are not permitted at this championship.

Riders will be notified in September if they have been successful in gaining a place at the Championships

Unsanctioned events Ref: 65

British Dressage (BD) follows the FEI mission to advance the orderly growth of equestrian sport by promoting, administering, and regulating humane and sportsmanlike competition in the traditional equestrian disciplines.

At the core of that mission are the following two fundamental principles:

- The welfare of the horse must always be the paramount consideration. It must never, in any circumstances, be subordinated to competitive or commercial considerations.
- Equestrian sport depends, for its credibility, on public acceptance derived from the integrity of its competitions. Behind this precept lies the premise that the best athletes should win fairly and squarely, having competed under even and equitable conditions and under rules that are themselves fair, realistic, and applied with scrupulous competence and even-handedness. No result can be meaningful or valid if it has not been achieved on a level playing field.

British Dressage can only protect and promote those two principles by putting in place regulations protecting horse welfare and competition integrity, by making acceptance of events into the official calendar conditional upon the organiser adopting those regulations, and by making them binding on all participants in those events.

Only by these means can BD ensure the uniform application of the necessary regulations in all affiliated events and hold all event organisers and participants accountable under those regulations for conducting themselves in a manner that protects the safety and integrity of the sport.

In recent years, equestrian sport has seen an increase in the number of events being promoted by private entrepreneurs who avoid regulation and accountability to BD or the FEI by organising their events outside of the official calendar. Such unsanctioned events undermine our ability to achieve this mission.

The core purpose of the official calendar is to ensure that undue demands are not placed on horses or athletes participating in events. Unsanctioned events circumvent (and so undermine) those protections.

Unsanctioned events are not subject to our rules, and their organisers and participants are not accountable to BD or the FEI for compliance with such regulations. As a result, BD has no way of safeguarding the welfare of horses and athletes participating in such events, or of protecting the integrity of the events.

This presents a potential risk of harm to the sport both directly (through physical harm to horses and athletes participating in unsanctioned events) and indirectly (by undermining public confidence in the ability of BD and the FEI to protect the safety and integrity of the sport).

The public is unlikely to appreciate fully the distinction between sanctioned and unsanctioned events, and so if problems occur in unsanctioned events the image of the entire sport will suffer, and public confidence in the ability of BD and the FEI to maintain the integrity of the sport and to protect the welfare of its participants will be undermined, to the detriment to equestrian sport.

BD recognises the need to be proportionate in its regulation of the sport, and to intervene no further than is necessary to protect the sporting imperatives identified above. The unsanctioned event provisions do not prevent athletes or officials participating in unsanctioned events, or owners entering their horses in unsanctioned events, if they so choose. However, we accept no responsibility for these events that fall outside of the jurisdiction of affiliated competition.

For the avoidance of doubt, events that British Dressage authorise, license, or have no express objection to, such as local unaffiliated competitions that are run outside of the BD structure, but with the knowledge and acceptance of BD as the National Governing Body for dressage, are not classified as unsanctioned events.

British Dressage will continue to allow organisers and venues to use our tests, rule book and judges for unaffiliated competition, subject to correct payments and remuneration, and will consider all those competitions to be sanctioned by BD.

To help us manage the fixture calendar effectively, all unaffiliated competitions where riders can qualify for championships at multiple venues, running under British Dressage rules and / or utilising BD tests, are required write to the Sport Operations Manager at least six months in advance to obtain approval. This will not be unreasonably withheld but will assist both parties in avoiding unnecessary demands being placed on horses and riders and avoid date clashes for shows offering similar opportunities.