

RDA



GROUP AND COMPETITION RULEBOOK

2024



YOUR GO TO GUIDE FOR ALL THINGS RDA COMPETITIONS



WANTED!

MORE HORSEPOWER

Our equines benefit the lives of over 20,000 disabled children and adults. To keep providing this life-changing support we need more horsepower...

- Horses and ponies of all heights and types
- Must be healthy, sound, fit, reliable, alert and versatile
- Potential to compete at our National Championships in a range of disciplines from Dressage to Carriage Driving
- Must be able to pass a minimum of stage 2 vetting



If you have an equine that fits the profile, contact National Office on info@rda.org.uk



RDA can offer your equine...

A 5* home, training, experience and knowledge.

A varied lifestyle, an abundance of policies to protect our equines.

A team of RDA Vets, Equine Advisors, and lots of love..



Welcome to the 2024 Group and Competition Rulebook, in RDA's 55th anniversary year. We look forward to a fun journey of therapy, fitness, skills development and achievement.

Riding for the Disabled Association UK (RDA UK)

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This document is intended to be used in conjunction with other RDA UK procedures, publications and instructions to create an overall structure for managing RDA activities and events.

All sections of this document have been edited and updated for 2024. Please ensure you read each section thoroughly to familiarise yourself with new processes.

Rule changes within the General Rules, Group Rules and Competition Rules Sections are highlighted in bold format.

Any queries relating to these rules can be directed to the Events Team at GroupSupport@rda.org.uk.

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SECTION 1 – KEY POLICIES

1.1 Working Together Code of Conduct

The role of all volunteers and staff, whether from an RDA Group or RDA UK, is to ensure all our participants, staff and volunteers have an excellent experience with RDA.

RDA UK consists of the RDA Board; National Office staff; National, Regional and County Representatives; Coach Developers; National Trainers and Assessors.

RDA'S CORE VALUES

1. RDA is a community of people who believe that it's what you can do that counts and who enable participants and volunteers to achieve their goals.
2. RDA values the input of all people who are involved – participants, volunteers and paid staff.
3. RDA ensures that development and achievement is recognised and celebrated across the organisation.
4. RDA aims to deliver an excellent service and experience for all participants and volunteers.
5. RDA recognises the central part that horses and ponies play in everything we do.

Expected Behaviours When Working Together within RDA

The standard of behaviour expected when working together, for the ultimate benefit of our participants, is outlined below. Everyone is expected to act honestly, reasonably, conscientiously and in good faith at all times; this includes anyone within RDA Groups and all RDA UK representatives.

At all times we expect volunteers, staff and participants to:

Treat everyone equally, with respect and dignity

- Comply with lawful and/or reasonable direction, instructions and policies
- Place the safety and welfare of everyone involved as the highest priority
- Always act to ensure a very high standard of equine welfare

- Create a safe and enjoyable environment for participants, volunteers and staff
- Maintain the confidentiality of any information obtained whilst working/volunteering for RDA and only use the information for the purposes for which it was intended

Volunteers, participants and staff will not:

- Allow inappropriate language or behaviour to go unchallenged
- Embarrass, humiliate or undermine individuals
- Act in any way that may bring RDA into disrepute
- Form a relationship with a child, young person or adult at risk, that is an abuse of trust
- Abuse their privileged position of power or trust

When something goes wrong

We would always hope that any disagreements could be settled amicably between the individuals involved. However, we accept that at times this may not be possible and help may be needed to resolve the situation.

If anyone has behaved in a way that makes you feel they have breached our values and expected behaviours, firstly try to talk to the person involved and resolve it if you can.

If you need to escalate your concerns, follow the table on the next page and contact the relevant person.

If you do not know who the relevant person is to speak to, or do not have their contact details, contact National Office on 01926 492915 and one of the team will be able to provide you with details.

When a concern has been received in writing (via email or by post), you can expect to receive a confirmation of receipt within two working days, outlining what will happen with timescales.

Concern about the behaviour of a group volunteer, participant or staff	Concern about the behaviour of a County or Regional Representative	Concern about the behaviour of a Board, National Office or National Representative
Telephone or write with concerns to the Group Chair	Telephone or write with concerns to the Regional Chair	Telephone or write with concerns to the Director of Operations at RDA National Office
If not resolved, or the matter relates to the Group Chair, escalate in writing to the County/Regional Chair	If not resolved, or the matter relates to the Regional Chair, escalate in writing to the Director of Operations at RDA National Office	If not resolved, or the matter relates to the Director of Operations, escalate in writing to the RDA CEO at RDA National Office
Should a complainant wish to appeal the outcome of their escalated complaint they may do so as follows:		
If not resolved, appeal in writing to the Director of Operations at RDA National Office	If not resolved appeal in writing to the RDA CEO at RDA National Office	If not resolved, or the matter relates to the CEO, the matter will be investigated by the RDA UK Chair and Board

You will receive a full written response, which will hopefully resolve the situation but if not, the response will include details on how to escalate the matter further.

Complainants have the chance to appeal a decision once and this will be to the next level of RDA UK. Appeals must be made within 30 days from receiving the written outcome of the initial escalated complaint, outlining the premise of the appeal.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, anonymous concerns will not be acted upon.

1.2 Safeguarding Procedures for Competitors, their Carers and Supporters

RDA UK is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of everyone involved and wants to ensure a positive and enjoyable experience for all. When attending competitions, everyone is expected to abide by the following code of conduct:

- All participants and/or their carers must take responsibility for ensuring they are up to date with the rules, understand and adhere to them.
- All participants, carers and supporters should recognise the valuable contribution made by all officials, who are usually volunteers. They give their time and resources to enable the event to happen.
- All participants, carers and supporters must respect officials and their decisions.
- All officials must treat everyone equally and with dignity.
- All those attending the event should treat others with the same level of respect that they would expect to be shown to themselves.
- Everyone must respect the rights, dignity and worth of all, regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- Everyone must ensure that inappropriate language or behaviour is challenged.

What to do if you have a concern before, during or after the event:

If anyone has a concern leading up to the event, either refer to the RDA Group Safeguarding Officer or contact RDA UK's Safeguarding Team: Stef Brazier on 01926 476302 / Marisa Bretherton-Mackay on 01926 405973.

Any concerns during the event should be reported to the Event Safeguarding Lead - their details will be clearly displayed in the Secretary's Office, Arena 4, Hartpury College.

Event Welfare Officers will be present on site at all times and will be clearly identifiable by the distinct tabards they will be wearing.

All concerns raised will be carefully considered and appropriate action will be taken, including, where necessary, removing individual(s) from the venue.

Note that processes will be in place for swift action in the event of missing or found individuals at the event, including the immediate emergency lockdown of the site, if required. Assembly points for lost/found persons will be clearly identified during the event.

Safeguarding Concern Reporting

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, if a complaint or allegation is made (regarding poor practice or suspected abuse), or if somebody makes a disclosure, it is your duty to report this. You do not need to establish whether abuse is taking place or to find evidence to support this.

If an individual is in immediate danger, you must contact the emergency services. Following this, you should then inform the Group Safeguarding Officer or Event Safeguarding Lead.

If a child or adult at risk has disclosed that they are being abused, you must:

- Allow the individual to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- If possible, write down what is said, using the actual words spoken to you. This includes the date and time, and then sign the document.
- Explain that you cannot keep the information secret and must pass it on. If the disclosure is made by an adult, you must ask their consent to pass the information on. If the adult refuses but you feel there is a real risk of abuse, or the adult does not have capacity to consent, you should still pass the information on.
- Inform the Event Safeguarding Lead immediately and pass on any notes you have taken. Disclosures are confidential and should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Should the Event Safeguarding Lead not be available, the person who received the disclosure should contact the Event Secretary.

If you are concerned about the welfare of an RDA participant or volunteer, or you have concerns about the conduct/poor practice of an adult involved in RDA, including yourself, you must:

- Inform your Group Safeguarding Officer or the Event Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- If possible, write down what you have witnessed. Include the date, time and sign the document
- Pass any notes you have made to the Group Safeguarding Officer and Event Safeguarding Lead

If you need further support or are not sure what you should do, you can contact:

- RDA UK's Safeguarding Team: Stef Brazier on 01926 476302 / Marisa Bretherton-Mackay on 01926 405973
- RDA National Office: 01926 492915
- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000 (this helpline is not open 24 hours)

Things all volunteers, staff, participants and supporters should consider before, during and after the event:

- Always make sure consent has been obtained before tagging someone in photographs or film on social media (using individuals' names and/or details of their Group or location)
- When travelling to and staying at the event (where applicable), always make sure that appropriate safeguarding supervision ratios of volunteers/staff to participants are maintained, at all times, including: in vehicles, outside competition hours and in accommodation or social areas.

Full Safeguarding Policies and Resources can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Safeguarding](#).

Useful link to external organisations offering support and guidance on mental wellbeing can found on the MyRDA website, under [Supporting Our People](#).

1.3 Equality & Diversity

RDA Equality and Diversity Statement

RDA UK is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff, volunteers and participants. We aim to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for everyone. We want to challenge all forms discrimination and will ensure that we do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their protected characteristics, i.e. religion or belief, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or on any other basis. We aim to design and deliver our activities and services in a way which will encourage and support participation from everyone.

Furthermore, RDA UK recognises the value that diversity can bring to our organisation and strives to reflect this among our trustees, employees, volunteers and participants. We believe that greater diversity provides diversity of perspective, leading to a broader range of opinions being involved in decision making and creating a better and more open environment for achieving our objectives.

Policy Statement

RDA UK endorses the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in riding, carriage driving and horse care whether as participants, volunteers, coaches, or those within the RDA UK:

- has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their religion or belief, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or on any other basis. (Referred to as 'Protected Characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010); and
- can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal Obligations

RDA UK is committed to avoiding and eliminating unfair discrimination of any kind, and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to harassment.

Positive Action

The principle of Equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It entails taking positive steps to counteract the effects of physical or cultural barriers – whether real or perceived – that restrict the opportunity for all sections of the community to participate equally and fully.

RDA UK will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to RDA and participation in associated activities by people from any group that is under- represented in the sport or has difficulty accessing it.

Implementation

The following steps will be taken to publicise this policy and promote equality in RDA UK:

- A copy of this document will be published on the RDA UK website and the MyRDA website, under [Policies](#).
- The RDA UK Chair will take overall responsibility for ensuring that the Policy is observed.
- The Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the RDA UK.
- RDA UK will collaborate fully with any surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in RDA UK and will take account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance equality in RDA UK.
- RDA UK will provide access to training for all of its Board Members to raise awareness of both collective and individual responsibilities. All RDA UK volunteers will receive training in equality and diversity.
- It will be a condition of membership of RDA UK that all Member Groups:
 - formally adopt this policy, or produce their own equality and diversity

- policy in terms that are consistent with it; and
- take steps to ensure that their Trustees, members, volunteers and participants behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Group's constitution; and
 - ensure that access to membership is open and inclusive
 - support such measures and initiatives that RDA UK may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy.

The Board will review all RDA UK activities and initiatives against the aims of the Policy on an annual basis, and the Chair will report formally on this issue in the annual report.

The Board, or where appropriate a designated Project Leader, will review any measures or initiatives that RDA UK may institute or take part in to promote and enhance equality and will report findings in the annual report.

The Board will review the Policy itself at intervals of no more than three years (or when necessary due to changes in legislation) and update as necessary.

Complaints and Compliance

RDA UK regards all of the forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in Appendix A as unacceptable, and is committed to ensuring that individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, member or volunteer who violates the RDA UK Equality Policy.

Any person who believes that they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy, should follow the process set out in RDA UK's complaints process, which can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Policies](#).

1.4 Health & Safety

The Organiser of any event must take reasonable precautions to ensure the Health and Safety of everyone present. For these measures to be effective everyone must take all reasonable precautions to avoid and prevent accidents occurring and must obey the instructions of the Organisers, Officials and Stewards. **Full risk assessments must be completed, reviewed and updated as necessary.**

HSE guidance for getting started can be found, here: [Event safety - Getting started](#).

Liability

Neither the Organiser nor any person acting on their behalf accepts any liability for any loss, damage, accident, injury or illness to horses, competitors and spectators or any other persons or property whatsoever.

Cancellation/Abandonment

There may be circumstances where events have to be postponed, cancelled, abandoned or curtailed as a result of circumstances beyond the control of the Organisers. Contingency plans should be made for such an occurrence including consideration of entry fees, contractors payments etc.

Rider Falls

Warm Up - If a competitor falls from the horse during warm up they must not be allowed to re mount until they have been assessed by the First Aider/Paramedic on site. Only when they have been passed to continue can they then remount.

Whilst Competing - If a rider falls during competition, they will retire immediately from that class and must then be assessed by the onsite First Aider/Paramedic before being allowed to continue in any other classes.

Multiple Falls - If a rider falls more than once throughout the event they must be assessed by the following before being allowed to continue: First Aider/Paramedic, coach and Ground Jury (consisting of the Championships Chair, Championships Secretary and relevant discipline National Lead).

Riding hats after a fall:

Riding hats should always be replaced in the event of a fall, or a drop from height, in which the hat has sustained an impact. Even if the hat is not visibly cracked or broken, if it suffers any kind of impact, no matter how small, its protective qualities will be compromised.

Refer to Section 5 – Guidance for further concussion guidance.

1.5 First Aid Requirements

It is the Organiser's responsibility to have the appropriate cover for the type of event, taking into consideration the number of participants and spectators. A written risk assessment must be carried out.

Definitions

Appointed Person

Someone appointed to take sole charge of communications in the event of an accident.

Trained First Aider

A person who holds either:

- Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) qualification, *or*,
- BHS Equine Specific First Aid (ESFAC)

First Aid Point

A designated area, such as a tent, caravan or horsebox, where first aid can be administered in privacy.

Qualified First Aider

A person who holds:

- First Aid at Work (FAW) qualification
- A nurse registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council may also be suitable.

Emergency Medical Technician

A person whose training and skills include those of an Ambulance Aid (patient handling, medical gases and ambulance equipment) with a higher knowledge of clinical skills in patient handling, patient monitoring and who is able to prime a 'giving set' for a Doctor or Paramedic.

Paramedic

A person whose initial training has been accredited through the NHS i.e. holders of NHSTA or IHCD Paramedic qualification or military training.

Doctor/GP

It is recommended that the appointed Doctor/GP has been trained in pre-hospital emergency care.

Ambulance

A designated vehicle that is appropriately marked, identifiable and conforms to current regulations for the transportation of injured or seriously ill patients. It must contain necessary resuscitation, immobilisation and transportation equipment.

At the very minimum every event must have all the following:

- An Appointed Person
- A Trained First Aider (EFAW or ESFAC)
- First Aid Point
- A mobile phone or other means of communication with the emergency services

The grid reference, what3words (<https://what3words.com>) or postcode should be available to aid the emergency services. This should be included in the risk assessment.

At a Showjumping competition, the Trained First Aider (EFAW or ESFAC) should be replaced by a Qualified First Aider (FAW)

If there are more than 50 competitors, the event should have the following in attendance:

- An Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and,
- An Ambulance

For larger events of 100 or more competitors, we suggest a paramedic or doctor is present.

1.6 RDA Insurance at Events

Considerations before, during and after the event

RDA Insurance covers activity at RDA competitions. It is a requirement of RDA Groups when attending events and competitions (including RDA Regional Qualifiers and National Championships) that you must always take practical steps to adhere to current policies and procedures which cover the competition itself, planning and preparations of attendance, actual attendance and the journey to and from the event.

RDA Insurance does not cover horses, riders or volunteers at non-RDA competitions.

Risk Assessments

Groups are responsible for ensuring thorough risk assessments have been completed before any RDA activity, including attending competitions and other similar events. These risk assessments should also include considerations for Safeguarding and First Aid.

Risk assessments must be periodically reviewed, annually as a minimum, to ensure nothing has changed or that no new hazards have been identified. RDA will always ensure that sufficient risk assessments are in place for the RDA National Championships however, it is for RDA Groups to ensure that appropriate risk assessment provision is made for their own transport to and from that event and the Regional Qualifiers.

Risk assessment templates are available on the MyRDA website, under [Health & Safety](#).

Transport of Equines to the Competition

This sits outside of RDA Insurance Policy. Groups and individuals involved in transporting equines to and from events must always ensure that vehicular policies are current and cover the activity to the extent needed.

Insurance and Exercising of RDA Equines by RDA Volunteers

For non-disabled coaches, volunteers or staff exercising/warming up equines in advance of competition classes (AB Warmup), Groups must first submit an Insurance & Exercising of RDA Equines form in advance of the event. This form does not ask for specific names, it is for the Group Trustees to define the most appropriate person(s).

Policy available to view, here: [Insurance & Exercising Of RDA Horses And Ponies](#)

Coaches Attending RDA Competitions

Coaches with an in-date RDA Coach Certificate or above are covered by RDA Insurance to attend RDA competitions in a coaching capacity.

Where an RDA Coach is unavailable, a Group Coach must first receive dispensation from their Regional Team to attend competitions where they will be supervising and coaching riders from their Group.

It is recommended that back-up arrangements are in place to cover unexpected circumstances impacting on designated Coaches availability e.g. illness. For queries on this matter contact the Coaching Team at RDA National Office coaching@rda.org.uk.

You can find the External Event Certificate of Competence, here: [External Event Certificate of Competence](#)

1.7 Equine Welfare

1. RDA Weight Chart

Before entering any competition, ensure that you consult the [RDA Weight Chart](#) to ensure that your equine/rider/driver combination is suitable. This applies to both riding and carriage driving and will be monitored at the Championships. Note, this applies to non-disabled riders in the warm-up as well as competitors.

RDA UK has created an excel calculator to help groups work out the maximum carrying weight. Further information is available on the MyRDA website, under [Equines in RDA - Health and Welfare](#). Carriage Driving weight guidelines can be found on the MyRDA website, on the right-hand side of the Carriage Driving page. The weight chart should be used for any rider/driver whether a participant, volunteer or coach.

RDA UK reserves the right to check any combination considered not to comply with the limits set out on the weight chart, available on the MyRDA website, under [Equines in RDA - Health and Welfare](#).

2. Passports & Vaccinations

All horses travelling to the Championships must have a valid passport from which the horse's identification and vaccination record will be verified. The passport must contain all vaccination details which must be up to date, complete and clearly recorded, signed and stamped by a veterinary surgeon, who must not be the owner of the animal. Passports with missing, altered, unclear or incomplete vaccine records will not be accepted and entry to the event may be refused.

Before unloading your horse at Hartpury you must report to the Stable Manager and have your horse's identification and vaccination record checked by a vet.

The horse must receive a primary course of two injections against Equine Influenza. For horses that start their vaccination course before 2024, vaccines need to have been given no less than 21 days and no more than 92 days apart (only these first two injections need to be given before the horse may compete). For horses that

started a course of vaccinations in 2024, the interval between these two vaccines is required to be no less than 21 days and no more than 60 days.

In addition, a third vaccination to be given. For horses that started their vaccination course before 2024, the third vaccination must be given between 150 and 215 days after the date of the second injection. For horses that started a vaccination course in 2024, the third vaccination must be given no less than 120 days and no more than 180 days after the second injection of the primary course.

Any horse that has previously had a compliant primary course of vaccines, and compliant subsequent boosters **does not** need to re-start the vaccination process. **Any horse that has had the first and second vaccinations in 2023, and is due the second or third vaccination in 2024, either the old or new date range can be used for subsequent injections in the primary course.**

Subsequent booster injections must be given at intervals of not more than one calendar year apart, commencing after the first booster injection. **Those horses attending the RDA National Championships must have received a subsequent vaccination in the preceding 6 months of the event.**

None of these injections can be given within the seven days before the day of the competition or entry into competition stables, whichever is sooner.

If your horse has not been vaccinated against Equine Influenza in accordance with the above requirements, it will not be permitted entry to Hartpury College.

Any questions regarding vaccinations, contact the RDA Vet at vet.rda@gmail.com

3. Prohibited Substances

The use of any herbal, natural or chemical product to affect the performance of an equine in a calming (tranquillising) manner is strictly forbidden under RDA rules. The use of such products during competition has safety and welfare consequences.

RDA UK aligns to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) and British Equestrian (BEF) with respect to the medication of horses used in competition. A full list of banned substances can be found on the FEI's Clean Sport website.

RDA UK does make certain, specific exceptions to the FEI's list of controlled and banned substances with respect to the population of horses engaging in RDA activities. Some of these medications need to be declared before National Championships to be permitted. You will need to fill in a National Championships Medication Declaration Form is available on the MyRDA website, under [Equines in RDA](#). Once completed, this needs to be sent to the Championships Secretary before the event begins.

Medication Control Testing may be carried out at the National Championships. If a horse tests positive for a banned or undeclared substance the horse will be disqualified and the cost of the test will be passed onto the RDA Group/Competitor at a cost of approximately £500 + VAT.

It is strongly recommended that you familiarise yourself with the Prohibited Substances Policy under the National Championships section of the RDA website.

4. Equine Welfare in Competition

All equines must be five years old or over. In the case of lameness, the judge will inform the rider/driver that they are eliminated. There is no appeal against the decision. The judge may ask for a Veterinary opinion before allowing the competitor's score to go forward for judging. Refusal to allow this inspection to take place will result in elimination. If the equine appears to be fatigued or distressed the judge can ask the competitor to retire.

If the judge/steward suspects fresh blood anywhere on the equine during the competition, they will carry out further checks alongside an RDA Vet. If the equine shows fresh blood in the mouth or area of the spurs, it will be eliminated. If the judge/Vet clarifies that the equine has no fresh blood and is fit to continue, the equine may resume and finish the competition. The judge's decision is final.

SECTION 2 – GENERAL RULES

2.1 Headwear

Protective headwear must be worn at all times when mounted at any RDA event whether competing or not. Harnesses/**straps** must be correctly adjusted and fastened at all times. **At RDA National Championships and Regional Qualifiers, all hats must undertake a check by an Official to make sure that it is one of the accepted standards and tagged with an RDA hat tag.**

Protective headwear constitutes a hat which meets one of the following standards:

- **British PAS 015: 2011** – with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark
- **European VG1** - with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark
- **(BS) EN 1384:2023** - with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark
- **American ASTM F1163 2015 and 2023** – with the SEI Mark. Note: 2004a or 04a has been withdrawn from 31 December 2023 and is no longer acceptable.
- **SNELL E2016 and E2021** with the official Snell label and number

Participants are strongly advised to check their hats regularly and to replace them immediately if damaged or following a fall. It is recommended that hats are replaced every 3 to 5 years, depending on usage.

<https://www.beta-uk.org/pages/safety-equipment/hats.php>

In some cases, where a standard hat is not suitable, alternative headwear can be worn, provided RDA's alternative hat wear rules are followed as detailed below:

Non-standard hats (including specially made, by a reputable manufacturer, riding hats, other kite marked helmets e.g. ski, cycle, skateboard) may be assessed by a Regional or County Coach, or someone who has been approved by the Regional Coach. In the case of RDA Carriage Driving Groups, alternative hat assessment may be carried out by the Regional Driving Representative, Carriage Driving Assessor, or a suitable person appointed by them to assess hats.

Anyone assessing hat suitability MUST have taken part in a BETA hat fitting workshop.

A signature of consent must be provided on the “Alternative Hat Assessment Form” by the Participant/Parent/Guardian/Carer, confirming they understand that it is a non-standard hat.

Participants and hats are to be re-assessed annually. The hat must not be used by another participant without an assessment.

No person should be in a carriage during an RDA Carriage Driving activity (with or without participants) without wearing an approved riding hat. The only exceptions are Sikh turban wearers and those with alternative protective headwear, approved through the Alternative Hat Form.

Religious head wear (hijabs, yarmulkes etc) may be worn providing they will not come undone, are not fixed to the head by a hard object e.g. brooch, or if they could present a danger to the participant.

Hat Checks and Tagging (at Regional Qualifiers and National Championships)

RDA UK will appoint Officials, who are familiar with the RDA UK hat rule, to carry out hat checks and tag each hat that complies with the requirements set out in the hat rule with an RDA hat tag. Hats fitted with a RDA hat tag will not need to be checked on subsequent occasions. However, RDA UK reserves the right to randomly spot check any hat regardless of whether it is already tagged.

Tagging is an external verification of the internal label and indicates that a hat meets the accepted standards. The tag does NOT imply any check of the fit and condition of the hat has been undertaken. It is considered the responsibility of the participant and/or their parent/guardian, and the Group/Coach to ensure that the hat complies with the required standard. Also, they are responsible for ensuring the manufacturer’s guidelines with regard to fit and replacement are followed.

For further information on hat standards, testing and fitting, refer to the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) website: beta-uk.org

Hats for Volunteers and Coaches

Although it is not currently mandatory for volunteers to wear hats, if an RDA Volunteer chooses to do so, the hat must comply with the current standards listed above. **All coaches/volunteers must wear a hat when mounted.**

2.2 Body Protectors

A body protector is strongly recommended in Showjumping competitions.

For further information on hat standards, testing and fitting, refer to the BETA website: [BETA - Safety and your Head \(beta-uk.org\)](https://beta-uk.org)

2.3 Footwear

- The footwear of all participants must be checked before they are allowed to take part.
- Only recognised riding boots or other sturdy smooth soled footwear with a heel must be worn.
- Shoes or boots without heels, or lighter types of footwear are not acceptable for riding, unless toe caps are used.
- For Vaulting footwear, refer to discipline specific rules.
- All Coaches/Volunteers or staff should wear sturdy shoes or boots

2.4 Special Equipment

Variations on tack rules from British Dressage and British ShowJumping can be seen at RDA competitions. Additional Special Equipment may be used to aid a participant. Strict rules regarding condition, fit and suppleness must apply.

Reins: Reins are a common form of special equipment used by RDA competitors and must be attached to a bit. These may be:

- **Rainbow Reins** - Covered with rubber in various colours to help riders to obtain correct and even length of reins. Available in most good saddlers and by mail order.
- **Left/Right Reins** - One rein covered in red rubber, the other in yellow, to help riders (and helpers) distinguish between left and right.
- **No Knots** - Intended for able bodied riders but can be very useful for RDA riders.
- **Ladder Reins** - There are quite a few variations on this theme available now. They provide the rider with a grasp area which will not slip through hands with poor strength. They can also be controlled with the wrist or elbow joint if hand grasp is non-functional.
- **Looped Reins** - Have several loops sewn to the inside of plain leather reins. The loops are large enough for the whole hand to slip in and out easily. Reining can be done with wrist, back of hand or elbow.
- **Bar Rein** - Provides a means for one handed riders to have improved contact with the horse.
- **Knobs** - Wooden door knobs or dowels attached to a wide plain or plaited reins, provide a large and specific 'handle' for a weak hand to grasp.
- **Padded Rein** - For riders with limited grip, or arthritis of the hand and fingers.
- **Elastic Reins** - Specially produced for RDA by Carl Hester. Hand stitched leather with elasticity to help maintain still hands and take tension away from shoulders.

Running Martingales: are allowed on a Countryside Challenge course.

Magnetic Stirrups: may be used with the correct Magnetic Footwear.

Dress: Variations may be seen in disciplines within RDA. This can include wearing RDA sweatshirts, no gloves and different styles of hat. Refer to Section 2 for hat standards.

Orthopaedic Footwear: Should a rider have to wear orthopaedic boots they will be allowed providing they are safe or used with Toestoppers stirrups.

Special Equipment: Additional Special Equipment may be used to aid a participant. The same rules regarding condition, fit and suppleness must apply. If you have any queries about Special Equipment, contact Sue Mack, the RDA Special Equipment Advisor, on suemackrda@gmail.com.

SECTION 3 – GROUP RULES

3.1 Tack And Equipment For RDA Groups

These rules shall apply to all RDA riding activities that take place during RDA Group sessions. Discipline-specific and competition rules can be found separately.

Horses: Bridles, saddlery and other equipment used must be supple, in good condition, fit the horse and be thoroughly checked on a regular basis.

Bridles:

- Headcollars should not be used in isolation, a correctly fitted bridle without a noseband should be worn.
- When using head collars under a bridle, the noseband of the bridle must be removed.
- All reins must be attached to a bit or a head collar.
- When a coupling is used, it must be correctly and safely fitted to the bit and short enough so that it doesn't move up and over the horse's chin. Couplings should be fitted below a rider's rein to prevent interference.
- Any rein from any bit in the horse's mouth must be in direct contact with the participant. If there are circumstances where a participant is not using reins, they must be twisted and tied up into the throatlash.
- Only one set of reins should be attached to a bit
- If a participant is unable to use two reins with a Pelham bit they may use Pelham roundings.
- Non-Standard Bridles should not be used. This includes any form of bitless bridle (including hackamores). In exceptional circumstances, their use and fitting must be approved by the Regional or County Coach or Regional Equine Advisor
- If a double bridle is used, its use and fitting must be approved by the Regional Coach or Regional Equine Advisor, or a representative who has been deemed suitable by them.
- If a double bridle is used each bit must have its own rein attached on each side.

Grass/Daisy Reins: Correctly fitted grass/daisy reins are permitted when riding on grass only. Correctly fitted grass reins should be clipped to the bit with the clip facing outwards then should run up through the browband loop, then back down the horse's neck and attach to the D rings on the saddle.

There should be slack in the reins to allow the horse to bend and lower the neck slightly to stretch.

Daisy reins must be fitted to allow the horse to move and stretch its neck. It must not be fitted too tight where it affects the horse's natural movement.

Neck Straps: Neck straps not attached by a breastplate or similar are not permitted.

Nosebands: Only one noseband may be worn.

Permitted Bits: Great care must be used when fitting any bits, for the welfare of our horses. As well as ensuring the bits are correctly fitted, the group must also consider the skills of the rider in each session. If anyone is unsure or needs advice, groups can contact their Regional or County Coach, or Regional Equine Advisor. If groups intend to compete, they **MUST** refer to the competition and discipline-specific rules to ensure they have got an acceptable bit for their competition.

Curb Chains: A curb chain must be fitted correctly. Curb chain covers are permitted. A lip strap does need to be worn.

Saddles:

- Saddles should be worn; English, western and side saddles can be used.
- Where it is of benefit to a participant, and related to their medical or physical condition, a back pad may be used instead of a saddle. The pad must be secured by a wide webbing surcingle with a buckle fastening. A roller with a handle may also be used to secure the pad. Consideration must be given to the size and shape of the horse being used and the goals of each participant.
- Vaulting rollers are used in approved vaulting groups only.
- Seat savers may be used.

Stirrups:

- A stirrup iron should be a minimum of one inch wider than the width of the participant's foot. When the foot is in place, there should be a minimum of between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of space on either side of the foot.
- Velcro stirrup straps are permitted.
- Elastic bands may be used where appropriate but must be able to snap easily.
- Peacock Stirrups are permitted, however as an incomplete stirrup it has an inherent structural weakness. Whilst there is no specific weight limit, great care must be taken not to overload the stirrup and a participant's weight, balance and ability should all be taken into account when considering their suitability to use the stirrups. Only the correct peacock leather fitting and rubber strap can be used; if they break they must be replaced by the correct straps and not any improvised alternatives.
- Riders cannot ride with just 1 stirrup unless they are riding side saddle or when a user of prosthesis (leg) has opted not to wear it whilst riding.
- Participants may ride without stirrups except when Showjumping or Endurance riding when stirrups MUST be worn.

Suitable Clothing:

- Participants and helpers should wear comfortable and suitable clothing (long trousers and long sleeved tops are recommended).
- Jackets and body warmers, if worn, must be fastened.
- It is recommended that any jewellery (including piercings) are removed and that long hair should be tied back.
- Gloves are recommended.

Headwear, Body Protectors and Footwear: see Section 2 – General Rules.

Whips: One whip, or two if necessary, may be carried. Refer to Discipline rules for any length restrictions.

Spurs:

- Spurs may only be worn by participants who are able to control their leg movements

- 2 matching spurs must be worn unless the participant is riding side saddle or riding with a prosthesis
- Spurs should be made of metal & the band around the heel must be smooth
- Spurs with a smooth rotating rubber, metal or plastic ball on the shank are permitted
- Swan-neck & 'comb' spurs are not permitted
- Any shank on the back of the heel must point towards the rear and the end must be clearly horizontal to the ground or pointing downwards
- No spur shall extend more than 2.5cm from the rear of the boot
- Dummy spurs are permitted

Excessive use of whips or spurs is forbidden - It is the responsibility of the Coach to ensure that, if whips or spurs are carried/worn, that they must not be used to the detriment of the horse.

Handling belts: Their use must be restricted to mounting and dismounting only.

3.2 Age of Coaches

Coaches who are expected to work on their own initiative, holding a position of trust with sole charge of a session, must be aged 18 years or older at the time of qualification/certification.

An RDA Coach in Training may be 16 years old, however those who go on to train and then become assessed to become a Group Coach or Coach, which enables them to coach without supervision, must be aged 18 years or older.

3.3 Exercising of Equines for RDA use by volunteers:

To keep equines fit and healthy for RDA work, including competitions, it is recognised that they need exercising beyond the normal RDA usage. The full policy for exercising equines can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Policies](#).

Policy available to view, here: [Insurance & Exercising Of RDA Horses And Ponies](#)

3.4 Insurance and Ridden/Driven Training for RDA Sessions

To deliver safe and interesting sessions of a suitable standard, it is recognised that equines, volunteers and staff should receive regular training. The full policy for training outside of normal RDA work can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Policies](#).

The policy is available to view, here: [Insurance & Training for RDA Sessions](#)

3.5 Horse and Rider Combination Calculator & Guidance

Horse and rider combination is something RDA groups must carefully monitor on a regular basis. In line with our Weight Chart Guidelines, we have a Weight Calculator to help our RDA Groups work out the maximum weight a horse could carry. This includes tack and is before taking into consideration, the conformation, age, health and fitness of the horse. Groups must be aware that although heavier horses are deemed to be able to carry more weight when using the figures from the weight chart, this does not include horses that are overweight. If a horse is overweight in itself, then carrying more weight will increase the risk of lameness and poor health. Groups must be mindful of adjusting weight carrying capacity in these situations and work towards reducing the equines body weight.

This is purely to ensure that participants and horses are correctly paired. The information is completely confidential.

If you are unsure about the weight of the Equines within your group, TopSpec offer group visits to advise on diet plans and nutrition. They also bring along their weighbridge so you can have your horses, ponies and tack weighed. For your nearest TopSpec Equine Advisor, contact charlotte@topspec.com

3.6 Rider Weights & Horse/Rider Combinations:

The Horse/Rider Combinations Assessment Form can be found on the MyRDA website, on the right-hand side of the [Equines in RDA](#).

SECTION 4 – RDA COMPETITIONS RULES

4.1 Regional Qualifiers

- a) All Regional competitions with classes which qualify riders to compete at the RDA National Championships must take place at least two weeks prior to the closing date for entries to the National Championships.
- b) The form these competitions take is the prerogative of the Regional Chairman and Regional Qualifier Organiser.
- c) Classes qualifying for the National Championships may take place on grass, an all-weather arena or an indoor school.
- d) All qualifying Dressage classes at Regional competitions must use the current National Championships tests. All grades must be offered regardless of how many entries are received.
- e) All Championship Dressage tests, Countryside Challenge map, Carriage Driving Dressage test and Showjumping course plans will be available to download on the [MyRDA website](#).
- f) Other non-qualifying classes may be offered including Level 1 Showjumping, Led Dressage tests and Freestyle tests with or without music.
- g) The Events Team at National Office must be advised of the Regional Qualifier competition date and the number of qualifying rosettes required in January.

Entries

- a) Entries and any fees that the Region wish to set should be submitted by the Group Organiser on the required form and by the required dates.
- b) Groups withdrawing competitors from the competition must inform the Organiser as soon as possible.

Qualification for the National Championships

- a) When entering a Regional Qualifier, it should be the rider/drivers intention to attend and compete at the RDA National Championships. It is important that arrangements have been made to enable this to happen. If there is no intention to attend the National Championships, make this known on your entry form.
- b) Riders and drivers qualify to take part in the National Championships at their Regional Qualifier. In order to qualify:
- In Dressage and Showjumping, riders must achieve at least 60% and be placed 1st or 2nd.
 - In Countryside Challenge, riders must achieve 65% or more in their class and be placed 1st or 2nd.
 - Carriage Drivers must be placed 1st or 2nd.

Refer to each individual discipline for specific criteria.

- c) For those riders wishing to enter the graded classes (grades 1-5) these riders must be classified prior to the Championships. Riders who are not classified can only ride in the Grade 6, 7 or Led classes.
- d) **New addition** - For those riders with a Visual Impairment and classified through British Blind Sport they can now enter the class relevant to their grade. E.g. B1, B2, B3, B4 & B5.
- e) Ridden qualifying classes will be split into Junior, Senior and Open Sections.
- f) **New addition** - The Open Class will also have a Junior and Senior Section.
- g) **New addition** - The top two riders in the Junior and Senior Section will qualify subject to the relevant criteria and the winner of the Junior and Senior Section of the Open Class will qualify subject to the relevant criteria.

h) New addition - If the qualifying riders are unable to attend the National Championships the next eligible participant(s) may do so subject to the discipline specific qualifying criteria.

i) Riders may compete more than once in each discipline. For Showjumping, riders may compete at more than one consecutive level or at the same level on a different horse.

Dressage riders may enter more than one qualifying class appropriate for their grade. For example, Grade 6 walk and Grade 7 walk. They must state which class they are qualifying in at the time of entry into their regional qualifier as only one class can be entered at National Championships.

j) Riders may only compete once in each discipline on one horse at National Championships.

k) Riders should qualify at their own Regional Qualifier. If a rider is unable to compete within their own Region, they may ask to attend one other Regional Qualifier. They shall not take a qualifying place from that Region but should send their score sheet to the Competitions Department at RDA National Office for consideration.

l) All riders who are unclassified (Grade 6 or Grade 7) and who have qualified and competed in the same class at the RDA National Championships for three years consecutively, must then move up and compete in the open class.

m) When entering a Regional Qualifier, the rider/driver should intend to compete the Horse in which they qualified on. If this cannot happen the rider/Group should notify the Events Team as soon as possible.

4.2 Virtual Competing at National Championships

The following rules are guidance around competing for the Virtual Championships. Make sure you have also read through the Schedule for the Virtual National Championships and refer to the discipline specific rules for the different disciplines.

Videoing

- a)** Videos of tests must not be entered if they have already been judged in another competition.
- b)** Videos must be taken in landscape format (turn the phone sideways).
- c)** Any video which is suspected of having been filmed during another competition will not be accepted. As per face to face competing all discipline rules in the Competition Rulebook must be adhered to.
- d)** For Dressage competitions (including Carriage Driving Dressage) the person filming must stand behind C (so far as it is possible). The rider/driver enters the arena at the far end at A coming towards the camera, the judge's viewpoint.
- e)** For Showjumping competitions, the person videoing may stand in the most appropriate and safe position to be able to see the whole course.
- f)** For Countryside Challenge competitions, the person videoing may follow the competitor around the course to video each obstacle as long as it is safe to do so.
- g)** For Vaulting competitions, the person videoing may stand outside the lunging circle where the judge would normally be.
- h)** For Showing competitions the person videoing may stand in the centre of the arena where the judge would normally be.

- i)** All competitors must introduce or have introduced, their name, horse, class and date at the start of their video entry. This can be given verbally or written on a board and placed in front of the camera before they start their competition entry. Failure to do this will result in a minus two mark for all disciplines.
- j)** Showjumping – make sure you follow all course plans for the different levels, clearly showing a start and a finish.
- k)** Tack and dress guidelines for appropriate discipline must be followed. Incorrect tack or dress may result in elimination.
- l)** Video hints, tips and instructions for uploading onto YouTube can be found on the MyRDA website, on the right-hand side of the [National Championships](#) page.
- m)** General Data Protection Rules (GDPR) must be followed when dealing with video footage. The GDPR guidelines are included in the GDPR Policy and can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Policies](#). Groups must adopt a Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy Notice. As per the six GDPR principles listed in our policy, data must not be held on to for longer than necessary. Once uploaded to Horse Monkey video data should be deleted.
- n)** Copyright laws must be adhered to when submitting any video footage or photographs or printed material. RDA will not be liable for any costs incurred as a result of infringement of copyright laws by any competitor or 3rd party.
- o)** The Judge's decision is final.

4.3 DISCIPLINES

These sections should be read in conjunction with Section 2 - Groups Rules.

4.3 (a) Carriage Driving (CD)

Dress

- All drivers when seated in the carriage must be correctly dressed in a jacket or Group colours. Group colours should be worn by those in the carriage and those on the ground.
- Gloves should be worn if possible.
- The whip should be carried by the Driver or Coach.
- All hats must conform to RDA Hat Standards

Permitted Bits

All of the following bits can be used with either straight, mullen or arched mouthpieces: Butterfly, Liverpool, Military or Elbow, or Kimblewick bit. Snaffles, Wilson snaffles and other jointed bits can be used in certain circumstances as agreed by a CD Assessor.

General Rules

- All equines, carriages, harness and CD Coaches must have been assessed by an approved CD Assessor.
- All 4-wheel vehicles must have a turntable or an alternative method of articulation and, where possible, axles should be set at 138/140cms. If the track width is different then do ensure that the actual width is stated on the entry form.
- The driver's reins must be attached to the bit or headcollar.
- Bright ribbons must be attached to the second set of reins held by the CD Coach, and tied onto these reins between the pad and the CD Coach's hands.
- In all phases and in all classes the CD Coaches will be penalised for using the second set of reins unless on safety grounds
- Saluting the Judge - At the end of the test, the driver salutes. This can be done in the traditional way of raising the whip or it can be a wave, nod or smile,

whichever suits the driver. On this occasion, the CD Coach is acting as a groom and therefore does not salute.

Driver Categories

a) Novice

- Any driver who drives with dual reins and has never competed at any previous RDA National Championships. They may remain in the Novice class until they win the Novice class at the National Championships.
- Any driver who drives with dual reins and has not won the novice class at the National Championships.
- The winner of the Novice class, at any previous National Championships, will move up to the Intermediate class for future competitions.

b) Intermediate

- Any driver who drives with dual reins and has not won the Intermediate class at the National Championships.
- The winner of the Intermediate class at any previous National Championships will move up to the Open class for future competitions.

c) Open

- Any driver who drives with dual reins and has progressed from the Intermediate class at previous National Championships.
- Any driver who has been assessed to drive with single reins accompanied by a CD Coach.

Competition

A National Championships Carriage Driving competition consists of the Driven Dressage Test (**to be advised**) and a Cones & Obstacle course, which will be a cones course interspersed with two or more obstacles. It will be judged and scored as two phases: Phase 1 – Dressage, and Phase 2 – Cones & Obstacle course (based on overall time, not individual elements).

- The Cones & Obstacle course must be driven at walk and trot only. Penalties will be awarded for cantering any steps.

- The width of the cones will be 25cm wider than the standard axle i.e. set at 165cm. Any carriages of non-standard width will have the cones adjusted for them, but you may have to drive at the end of the competition after the standard width carriages have all taken part, so that the arena party do not have to set and re-set the cones more than necessary.

Dressage Arena

The arena size for the dressage test will be 60m x 30m. The markers down the long side are laid out with equal spacing.

Scoring and Penalties

All tests may be driven from memory or commanded. No penalty for a Commander, as per Ridden Dressage Tests at all levels at the RDA National Championships. Commanders may only recite from the text, twice if necessary but no more, using letters and/or colours/objects that appear on RDA dressage diagrams and may indicate left and right.

Dressage - Drivers will be awarded marks out of 10 for each movement. These marks are converted into penalty points.

Scale of Marks – Half marks may also be given.

10	Excellent	6	Satisfactory	2	Bad
9	Very Good	5	Sufficient	1	Very Bad
8	Good	4	Insufficient	0	Not Performed
7	Fairly Good	3	Fairly Bad		

Dressage Transgression	Penalties
Not entering arena within 1 minute of steward's call	1 for every 5 seconds late
Error of Course (no maximum of errors)	5 per error
Turnout leaving the arena	20
CD Coach taking up contact on reins	3 per occurrence

Cones & Obstacles Course – the driver's overall time taken will be converted to penalty points.

Cones & Obstacles Transgression	Penalties
Dislodged ball	3
Error of course	5 per occurrence
Stop / refusal / disobedience	5
CD Coach taking up contact on reins	3 per occurrence
Omitting to drive a set of cones	20
Break to canter (none is permitted)	10 each break

The winner of each class is the lowest combined penalties from the Dressage and Cones & Obstacles phases.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- All drivers and turnouts must be a member of a registered RDA Carriage Driving Group.
- If you have drivers sharing a turnout, ensure that this is stated on the competition entry form along with which driver they wish to go first.
- The organisers reserve the right to transfer drivers to a different class if felt appropriate.

Qualification at a Regional Qualifier.

The first 2 drivers from each qualifying class (Novice, Intermediate, and Open) will qualify for the National Championships. If qualified drivers are unable to travel then the qualifying place may be passed down the class. Where Regions do not run a qualifier, contact the CD Lead on cdlead@rda.org.uk for guidance regarding direct entry.

4.3(b) Countryside Challenge

Dress

All riders should be dressed in correct riding wear, as far as possible with riders, Leaders and Sidewalkers dressed alike. **Leaders should always wear gloves and a riding hat.** A body protector may be worn, provided it is correctly fitted and of the current standard. Riding hats should be tagged and of the correct standard, this includes Leaders and Sidewalkers. Refer to Section 2 – General Rules for approved hat and body protector rules.

Tack

RDA approved special equipment is permitted. Refer to Section 2 – General Rules for approved special equipment. **Magnetic stirrups may be used with the correct magnetic footwear.**

Rider Categories

The countryside challenge classes are divided into Junior, Senior and Open.

- a) Junior Riders – May compete as a Junior until the end of the year in which they reach the age of 16.
- b) Senior Riders – Riders over the age of 16.
- c) Open Riders - Riders who have been Overall Class Champion in the same class for 2 consecutive years at the RDA National Championships or who are an Independent Rider.

Visually Impaired Riders

- All visually impaired riders must be classified by British Blind Sport as either B1, B2, B3, B4 or B5.
- Riders who compete in the classes at regional level have automatic qualification for the National Championships providing they achieve 65% or over.
- Riders may have a Leader/Sidewalker but they must not instruct the rider. They can also have Commanders on the course.
- Riders must provide and wear a white armband at all times to alert the judge, steward and other riders that they are visually impaired.

Hearing Impaired Riders

- Riders must provide and wear a blue armband at all times to alert the judge, steward and other riders that they are hearing impaired and that signing may be used.
- The commander may stand in different positions around the course to enable the rider to interpret the sign language.

Classes with Leaders & Sidewalkers

In the led classes, where riders are physically unable to organise their reins into one hand to complete a task with the other, they may lay the reins down neatly on the horse's neck, with the buckle/join in the middle. Leaders do not have to change sides when the rein is changed. Leaders must lead at the 3rd stage of leading.

In classes with sidewalkers a lead rein must be carried.

Commanders

In the unled classes, Commanders should stand in a central or roving central position and must carry a leadrope. In the led classes, the Leader or Sidewalker may act as Commander, but should be careful to limit instructions to the text given on the course details. Sidewalkers will be allowed to give clearer and more detailed instruction to visually impaired riders.

The Competition

All classes are open to riders with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities. The walk only option is available in all classes.

Classes are split into the following categories:

- Led with 1 Sidewalker
- Led or 1 Sidewalker
- Visually Impaired led with 1 Sidewalker
- Visually Impaired led or 1 Sidewalker
- Independent
- Visually Impaired independent

Sidewalkers must not be in contact with the rider unless in an emergency.

The Course & Obstacles

It is important that all Leaders & Sidewalkers are fully informed and know the permitted instructions as detailed below. They must not bring any paperwork into the arena with them. Riders, Leaders & Sidewalkers are strongly advised to walk the course prior to competing. Times for course walks will be advertised.

Led Classes

Leaders must lead at the 3rd stage of leading – Leaders do not need to change sides when the rein is changed.

Scoring & Penalties

Marks out of 10 will be awarded for the performance of horses/ponies as part of every obstacle. Riders will be marked on effort as well as performance and Leaders/Sidewalkers are urged to give their riders the time and opportunity to do their own riding as far as is possible. Additional marks are awarded for the general impression of the team, obedience of pony/horse and riders effort and performance. For led classes Leaders/Sidewalkers will be marked on their leading/side walking skills.

A running commentary of instructions to the rider is not acceptable and will be penalised by a deduction of marks.

A Horse Course Walk will be available - Horses may only be LED in hand in the designated time slots and Leaders should be wearing hats and gloves.

Scale of Marks – Half marks are permitted.

10	Excellent	6	Satisfactory	2	Bad
9	Very Good	5	Sufficient	1	Very Bad
8	Good	4	Insufficient	0	Not Executed
7	Fairly Good	3	Fairly Bad		

In the event of a tie, the collective marks shall be added together and the competitor with the highest total declared the winner. If the collectives are equal, the rider with the higher rider collective mark is declared the winner. If the rider collectives are

identical then the submission mark will decide. If the marks are still identical, the results shall be a tie.

Qualification for National Championships

Qualifying for the National Championships will be up to the Region to choose either:

- a)** Through the Regional Qualifier where the first 2 in the line-up for each section, who are able to attend, will be accepted. (Therefore at the Regional Qualifiers, if the 1st and 2nd cannot go forward, only those placed 3rd or 4th may do so). In sections of 10 or more the first 5 will qualify. All riders must achieve 65% or over to qualify.
- b)** If a qualifier is not held, a Region may nominate up to 2 seniors and 2 juniors for each class, who are considered up to standard. The standard required for a regionally nominated competitor must be judged by a person conversant with the standard required for the National Championships (i.e. not less than 65%).
- c)** All Countryside Challenge judges at Regional Qualifiers and National Championships must have completed a recent judge training course. A list of up-to-date judges can be obtained from Sue Mack or National Office.

4.3(c) Dressage

For all tack and dress rules (with exception to special equipment – Refer to Section 2 – General Rules), RDA UK follows British Dressage (BD). The BD Handbook is available on the [British Dressage website](#).

Rider Categories

Dressage classes are divided into Junior, Senior and Open.

- a) Junior Riders – may compete as Juniors until the end of the year when they reach the age of 16.
- b) Senior Riders – riders over the age of 16 who are not an Open Rider.
- c) **Open Riders – for any participants and equines who have been RDA Class Champion for two years; or compete in FEI, BD Para at Silver Level or above; or are an independent rider. The Open Class will also include Junior and Senior Sections.**

Visually Impaired Riders

- All visually impaired riders must be classified by British Blind Sport. **Classes have been separated into the following categories: B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5.**
- Riders who compete in the visually impaired classes must qualify at their Regional Qualifier prior to entry in National Championships.
- Riders who compete in Grade 4 or 5 classes must qualify at their Regional Qualifying competition.
- Riders may ride a circuit inside the arena on both reins, including a change of rein, prior to starting the test. When the signal to commence the test is given riders may start the test from inside or outside the arena.
- Riders may have eight callers outside the arena and one inside. **The caller inside may only call the letters X, D or G, unless they are the only caller which means they can call all letters.** The inside caller may neither walk alongside the rider nor “instruct” them.
- Riders are also allowed a commander in addition to the above.
- Riders must provide and wear a white armband at all times to alert the judge, steward and other riders that they are visually impaired.

Hearing Impaired Riders

- Riders must wear a blue armband at all times to alert the judge, steward and other riders that they are hearing impaired.
- A commander is allowed to relay instructions to the rider from the judge during the competition by sign language. An FM wireless hearing aid system (radio aid) can be used during warm up and competition. A steward must be present at the time of competition.

Grade 7 Callers

Grade 7 callers may give participants extra help if required in terms of direction but must not 'coach' the rider. Direction should be limited as much as possible.

Commanders (see above for VI, Hearing Impaired and Grade 7)

Commanders may only read from the text, twice if necessary but no more, using letters and/or colours/objects that appear on RDA dressage diagrams and may indicate left and right. Any deviation from the above must be agreed with the judge before the test starts. On a signal being given for an error of course, the competitor must proceed immediately to the judge(s) to receive instructions. The commander may interpret the instructions.

Commanders may be used in all National Championships Dressage tests. In all arenas, commanders must stand at E where possible. You must check you are able to do this with arena set up, before your test begins, if this is how you have learnt/practiced test.

No wireless personal coaching systems are to be worn in competition but are permitted in warm up.

Leaders in Led Tests

The Leader should lead from the inside, changing sides where necessary. In a led test where the rider is visually impaired, they may have callers as above, this must be declared at time of entry.

Assistance in Unled Tests

In an unled test, riders are allowed a Commander and one other assistant to stand outside the arena in case of an emergency.

Competition

- When the steward asks the competitor to proceed to the arena they may ride around the outside of the arena (or inside if this is not possible). When the judge sounds the bell/horn to signal that the rider may commence the test they should begin without delay. Failure to enter the arena within 60 seconds may lead to elimination. The commander may relay the signal to start to the competitor.
- All tests may be ridden from memory or commanded.
- Movements must follow in the order laid down in the test. Tests should be ridden with both hands if possible. Transitions may be progressive unless stated otherwise on the test sheet.
- Where riders have been issued a dispensation card they should be made available if requested by the Judge.

Leaving the Arena

The test begins when the horse enters at A and finishes when it leaves the arena at A or where appropriate after completing the test. A fall of horse/rider after the final salute may not be penalised, this is at the judge's discretion. After a fall of horse/rider during competition the combination will be eliminated.

No marks shall be given for a movement when the horse places all four feet outside the arena (only applicable if continuous boards). Where the arena is marked by a line only or intermittent boards, it is left to the discretion of the judge as to the marks deducted. In exceptional circumstances if an unusual occurrence takes place which has a dramatic effect on the horse, the rider may at the judge's discretion restart the test from an appropriate place.

Freestyle to Music

- All competitors must provide their own music on CD/USB. A steward shall be appointed to play the music, but each competitor will be allowed to have their own representative to advise as necessary.
- Music must have the rider's name, group, class and when to start music clearly marked on the CDs.
- Riders or their representatives must deliver their music to the music steward in time for instructions to be given. Competitors are responsible for collecting their music at the end of the class.
- Freestyle to Music rules as per BD Handbook.

Error(s) of Course & Penalties - As per BD handbook

Riding the Wrong Test

A rider who starts the wrong test for the class may be allowed to restart the test at the judge's discretion so long as they can do so immediately. They will be penalised for a first error of course.

Ties in Scoring

In the event of a tie the collective marks shall be added together and the competitor with the highest total declared the winner. If the collectives are equal, the rider with the highest rider collective marks added together is the winner. If the rider collectives are identical, then the rider effect mark will decide. If the marks are still equal the submission mark will decide. If the marks are still identical the results shall be a tie.

Time Allowed for Test

The time given on the test sheet is for guidance only. There are no penalties for exceeding it, except in freestyle tests.

Qualification for National Championships

In order to qualify for the National Championships riders must achieve at least 60% in their class at their Regional Qualifier. Qualifying classes will be split into Junior, Senior and Open Sections. The Open Section riders will compete in the Open Class.

The top two riders in the Junior and Senior Section achieving 60% or above will qualify for the National Championships. The winner in the Junior Open and Senior Open Sections achieving 60% or above will qualify for the National Championships. If the 1st and 2nd placed riders are unable to go, only the 3rd and 4th placed riders may be nominated to go subject to the conditions above.

Each Region can put forward two participants that gain the qualifying percentage for a Wildcard to compete at National Championships. These names are to be included on their Regional Qualifier results. If you have any participants that cannot attend a Regional Qualifier and that wishes to use one of the Region's Wildcards, then contact National Championships Event Manager.

National Championships & Virtual Championships Dressage Tests

- All dressage tests will be included in the Championships Schedule for the current year, including the costume freestyle.
- **Classified riders must ride in the graded classes according to their designated classification, with the exception of point C below. For example, if you have been classified as Grade 1 you must ride a Grade 1 test.**
- **Note that Grade 4 and 5 riders, who do not wish to canter, may ride in the Grade 6 (non-graded) walk & trot Championship classes but may not do both.**
- Riders may also ride a Freestyle to Music test that corresponds with their Championship class i.e. Grade 3 riders must ride the Grade 3 freestyle and Grade 7 canter test riders must ride the Grade 7 canter freestyle test.
- All freestyle tests are to music.
- Riders with learning disabilities must compete within Grade 7 unless a physical disability allows them to compete in the non-graded classes or classified classes (grades 1-5) if classified.
- **A Class Champion rosette will be presented to: the overall winner in the Junior and Senior Sections, and, the overall winner of the Open Class.**

Arena Layout

- The arena should be set out to the dimensions and criteria described in the British Dressage handbook.

- The arena boards should be solid for visually impaired classes at regional qualifiers and both national and virtual championships.
- All horses must wear a bridle for arena walks.
- **If horses are being led for arena walks, a riding hat and gloves must be worn.**
- Arena walks are to be stewarded for health and safety reasons.

Rule Differences between BD, FEI & RDA

Rule	BD Para	RDA
Warm up before test	Grades I-III anyone for 30 mins per competition	Anyone can ride until 20mins prior to test. Rider only may ride in the 20mins prior to test
Time allowed entering arena	45 sec	60 sec
Salute	1 hand on reins	Either hand or nod
Commander	Yes (except at Championships) unless given exemption	Yes (read twice)
Use of voice	No unless given exemption	Yes
Resistance	20 sec	60 sec
Companion horse	Grade I, II & III only	Yes
Spurs	Yes	Yes (if legs under control, assessed by Coach)
Rising trot	At discretion of rider	At discretion of rider
Bridle	Snaffle or double, all grades	Snaffle; Double if approved by Regional Coach
Whips	Yes - two whips with dispensation	Yes two whips allowed if approved by riders Coach
Errors of course	3 rd eliminates	4 th eliminates

4.3(d) Endurance

Dress

- All hats and body protectors must conform to RDA Standards and hats must be tagged. Refer to Section 2 – General Rules for hat and body protector rules.
- Hi-Viz should be worn on horse, rider and any Leaders Or Sidewalkers when leaving RDA venue.
- When competing, riders must wear a number/bib with number on whilst completing the course and during the vet check point/s.
- Hearing and visually impaired riders to wear appropriate colour arm band.

Tack

All tack used in group sessions may be used for Endurance. In line with Endurance GB rules, all tack must be safe and fit correctly and whips must not exceed 75cm unless permission is applied for in advance. **Toe stoppers or other caged stirrups are essential where non-standard riding footwear is worn.**

Rider Categories

- At National Championships RDA Endurance is split into distance classes. **A non-disabled mounted escort is allowed at all levels. In unled classes an unmounted escort is allowed. In led classes both Leaders and Sidewalkers are allowed.**
- The distances available in RDA currently are: 1km, 2km, 3km and 5km.
- Distances 1km, 2km and 3km will be split into Led and Unled Sections at Championships.
- Distances 5km, 10km and 15km will be scored as unled riders. 5km. Distances of 10km and 15km are not yet available at Championship level.
- **All horses/ponies (including escort horses/ponies) will have their heart rates measured before and after their event and will also be asked to trot up for soundness assessment.**

Leaders

All Leaders must be correctly trained with green cards.

Endurance League

To take part in the League, Groups need to be registered as an Endurance Group. Participants can enter the league ridden, on a mechanical horse and Carriage Driving. Riding and driving can take place in an arena or out on a hack. **1km is the preferred maximum distance for rides which take place entirely in an arena.** Endurances rides can now be accompanied by a ridden Coach and also be ridden on quiet roads where off-road riding is not possible. A risk assessment must be completed before these activities take place. Risk assessment templates are available on the MyRDA website, under [Health & Safety](#).

Endurance time cards need to be filled in with details of distance and horses heart rate before and after exercise, and sent to the Coaching Team at National Office, on coaching@rda.org.uk. Time cards can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Endurance](#). You can also find videos showing you how to take horses heart rate. Contact your Regional Vet if you would like more guidance on this.

Ride Speeds

Calculating ride speeds.

- i. To work out ride speeds, use the formula below:

$$\text{Speed} = \text{distance} \div \text{time}$$

Example:

A 2km ride takes 20 minutes. First change the 20 minutes to decimal, which is 0.33hr (20 divided by 60 = 0.33), then take the 2 and divide by 0.33 which gives you 6km per hr.

- ii. Alternatively use the table on the following page.

Speed (Km per Hour)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Distance (Km)	1	01:00	00:30	00:20	00:15	00:12	00:10	00:08	00:07	00:06	00:05	00:05	
	2	02:00	01:00	00:40	00:30	00:24	00:20	00:17	00:13	00:12	00:10	00:10	
	3	03:00	01:30	01:00	00:45	00:36	00:30	00:26	00:22	00:20	00:18	00:15	
	5	05:00	02:30	01:40	01:15	01:00	00:50	00:43	00:37	00:33	00:30	00:25	
	6	06:00	03:00	02:00	01:30	01:12	01:00	00:43	00:45	00:40	00:36	00:32	00:30
	7	07:00	03:30	02:20	01:45	01:24	01:10	01:00	00:52	00:46	00:42	00:38	00:35
	8	08:00	04:00	02:40	02:00	01:36	01:20	01:09	01:00	00:53	00:48	00:43	00:40
	9	09:00	04:30	03:00	02:15	01:48	01:30	01:17	01:07	01:00	00:54	00:49	00:45
	10	10:00	05:00	03:20	02:30	02:00	01:40	01:26	01:15	01:06	01:00	00:54	00:50
	11	11:00	05:30	03:40	02:45	02:12	01:50	01:34	01:22	01:13	01:06	01:00	00:55
	12	12:00	06:00	04:00	03:00	02:24	02:00	01:42	01:30	01:20	01:12	01:05	01:00
	13	13:00	06:00	04:20	03:15	02:36	02:10	01:51	01:37	01:26	01:18	01:10	01:05
	14	14:00	06:30	04:40	03:30	02:48	02:20	02:00	01:45	01:33	01:24	01:16	01:10
	15	15:00	07:30	05:00	03:45	03:00	02:30	02:05	01:52	01:40	01:30	01:21	01:15

The Course

- Rides/drives can take place in an indoor or outdoor arena, fields or tracks.
- Rides/drives that are 3km and above must not take place solely in an arena. Where possible, Groups are encouraged to organise their ride/drive in a field or outdoor track as it will reduce the stress/work for both horse and rider when riding a straight line rather than continually turning in a school.
- You must ensure there is a safe entry and exit to the route/venue for riders, drivers, horses and pedestrians.
- Specific course details, that are relevant to the distance you are wanting to complete, can be found in the guidance notes available on the MyRDA website, under [Endurance](#).

Time Allowed

RDA Endurance can be ridden recreationally and with no minimum speed. However, a benefit of this activity is that it gives riders an ability to aim towards a goal time and look to improve ability and stamina. Therefore, RDA's recognised minimum and maximum speeds are:

- Minimum speed = 2km/h
- Maximum speed = 12km/h

Mounted Escorts and Leading

- Mounted leading is not permitted at any time (mounted leading in Endurance is defined as leading riders, horse to horse)
- Mounted escorting is permitted if required, but the Endurance risk assessment must be completed. This can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Endurance](#).
- Leading on foot is permitted in RDA Endurance for 1-10km (it should be dictated by the pace and fitness level of the Leaders, due to the competitive ride speeds involved). The rider must have control of the horse and be led using the 3rd stage of the RDA guidance, 3 Levels of Leading.

Qualification for RDA National Championships

RDA National Championships are direct entry. No qualification is required.

The Competition

The specific performance formula to use for Championship level and the way it is worked out is:

(Speed x2 - Minimum Speed) x 100 divided by heart rate; speed in kph; heart rate per minute.

The table matrix with all the competition speeds and further full competition details is available on the MyRDA website, under [Endurance](#).

4.3(e) Showing

Individual Competition

Classes are open to individuals, both junior and senior on horses or ponies.

Classes

All classes are ridden:

- Led walk & trot
- Independent walk & trot
- Independent walk, trot & canter

Class Format

Riders will enter in a group at walk and will then be asked to line-up. A short individual show will be performed by each rider who will then return to the line-up. Riders may then be asked to walk round whilst the judges make their final decision. They will then be called in by the Steward in placing order.

Individual Shows

Led Walk & Trot Class: Walk away from the judge and trot back towards them. Show two 20 metre circles with transitions to walk and then trot. Halt and salute requested at the start and finish.

Independent Walk & Trot: Walk away from the judge and trot back towards them. Show a combination of walk and trot with a change of rein.

Both individual shows must be under 1.5 minutes. Halt and salute requested at the start and finish.

Independent Walk, Trot & Canter: Walk away from the judge and trot back towards them. Show a short section of walk, trot and canter. Trot and canter should be performed on both reins. Not to last for more than 2 minutes. Halt and salute requested at the start and finish.

These are guidelines only and individuals may adopt their own show to suit their horse/pony and riding enjoyment/ability.

Class will be judged on:

- Turnout – cleanliness and condition of equine/tack
- Conformation of the equine with the suitability for the rider/job in mind
- Overall impression

RDA horses are not bought nor produced as show horses. An overall impression of the suitability of the horse's conformation and type, for the rider should be taken into account. Conformational issues regarding lumps, bumps and scars should not be a deciding factor.

Clothing for the rider should be neat and tidy. RDA riders may not always have access to the ideal and correct showing equipment. This also applies to the horses tack but tack must fit correctly, be clean and in good condition. Double bridles may be used if previously approved by Regional Coach. Further information on turnout can be supplied by RDA if required prior to judging.

4.3(f) Showjumping

For all tack and dress rules (with exception to special equipment – refer to Section 2 – General Rules for special equipment) RDA UK follows British Showjumping (BS). The BS Handbook is available on the [British Showjumping website](#).

Whips - For BS, approved whips the maximum length is 70 cm and must be no less than 45cm. Whips should be non-marking where possible. One whip, or two, if necessary, may be carried with special dispensation from Regional Coach, Regional Show Jumping Coach, or according to classification. Classified Riders can have extra compensation aids.

Hat & Body Protectors - A correctly fitting hat that meets RDA hat standards must be worn. A body protector may be worn but must meet current RDA standards. Refer to Section 2 – General Rules for hat and body protector rules.

Rider Categories

RDA showjumping classes are split into separate categories and have sub sections within each category as follows:

- Level 1 – poles on the ground, led or unled
- Level 2 – 15-30 cm, led or unled
- Level 3 – 60 cm, unled
- Level 4 – 70 cm, unled
- Level 5 – 80 cm, unled

All classes are split into Junior, Senior And Open sections.

Visually Impaired

Visually impaired riders are allowed a (non-coaching) commander within the arena and one other assistant to stand outside the arena in case of an emergency. Alternatively, visually impaired riders may choose to follow a lead horse. It must be made clear that the commander or lead rider is merely guiding the rider round the course and not instructing them. A safe distance must be maintained between the lead rider and competitor at all times, around the course.

Lead riders may use their voice at a level suitable for the competitor.

Led Classes

Riders in the led classes must be led and if required, Sidewalkers may be present. Sidewalkers are there to support the rider, they may not command during the class and they may not instruct the rider.

Commanders

Commanders may only be used for visually impaired.

The Competition

Level 1 is conducted in walk only, led or unled, the rider is required to complete a course of 4 poles on the ground, paying attention to riding correct lines on the approach and after a fence. The rider should maintain the light seat position and must make every effort to show an attempt to use light rein contact while riding over the poles. This class is not timed.

Level 2 is conducted in trot, led or unled, the rider is required to complete a course of 5 fences including a cross pole and uprights. They should ride correct lines on the approach and after a fence, maintain a balanced jumping position and must make every effort to show an attempt to use light rein contact whilst riding over the jumps. Marks will be deducted if canter is shown outside the shaded area as shown in the Level 2 course plan. Marks will also be deducted if the rider is seen to be creating impulsion i.e. kicking or use of the whip to encourage the horse to canter in the shaded area. If the horse is seen to be in canter from its own forwardness when landing after fence 1 and fence 4, this is permitted. The class is not timed.

Level 3 is conducted in canter, trotting only (if needed) to change leads. The rider is required to complete a course of 5 fences including a cross pole, uprights and 1 spread fence. They should ride correct lines on the approach and after a fence, maintain a balanced jumping position and must demonstrate light rein contact whilst riding over the jumps. This class is also not timed.

Level 4 is conducted in canter. The rider is required to complete a course of 8 fences with a two stride double. They should ride correct lines on the approach and after a fence, maintain a balanced jumping position and must demonstrate a light rein

contact whilst riding over the jumps. This class is not timed and is judged in the same context as levels 1-3, as an equitation class.

Level 5 will run as a two-phase competition, and not a single-phase as originally published. The two-phase class will run as follows:

- **Riders complete the first part of the course, and if they are clear, will continue straight into a timed jump off phase from the approach to fence 8. Jumps in the timed phase of the course may be up to 10cm higher than the upper height limit for the class.**
- **If they incur penalties in the first part of the course, a bell will ring to let them know they have finished their round, and the rider should not continue to jump 8.**

No horse may compete more than once in Level 4 or Level 5 .

Course Plans

Levels 1-4 course details and guidance notes can be found on the MyRDA website, under [Showjumping](#). You must make sure the course plans are followed for both Regional and Virtual Competitions including clearly showing a start and finish. Riders are advised to read all the resources that are available.

For Level 5 plan of the course including details of jump off fences and the distance and time allowed must be displayed in the collecting ring at least 1 hour prior to the start of the competition.

The start and finish line must be a minimum of 6 metres and maximum of 25 metres from the first and last fence. The start and finish lines must each be defined by 2 flags or markers.

The course must be clearly numbered in the sequence in which they are to be jumped. In this context, a double is to be numbered as one obstacle and each obstacle comprising the double must be lettered A and B on the course plan. The second part of the course, to be used for the jump off, must also be clearly numbered.

Walking the Course

Competitors should be permitted to walk the course (unmounted) before the start of the competition. A coach is permitted just inside the arena and is to remain at an appropriate safe point during the competition. They are not permitted to instruct or give outside assistance.

Time Allowed

The time allowed must be stated on the course plan. Level 5 competition will run at 325m/minute. The time limit is twice the time allowed, exceeding this will incur elimination.

Time Faults

- When the bell rings, riders have 45 seconds to go through the start.
- For every commenced period of 1 second in excess of time allowed will be penalised by 1 time penalty.

Scoring & Penalties

Disobedience = Refusal, circling, crossing of tracks.

Level 1 – Riders are scored for each fence, the entrance to the arena/ride through the start and turnout of horse and rider. Collective marks will also be awarded for control, effectiveness, suitability and overall performance. Marks will be given out of 10. The judge may decide to deduct marks if trot is shown on more than one occasion.

Penalties will be awarded as follows:

- First disobedience = 4 faults
- Second disobedience = 4 faults
- Third disobedience = elimination
- Error of course = elimination
- 1 mark will be deducted at any pole where the Leader or Sidewalkers are seen to be giving help. No additional marks will be given if a rider is working independently.
- Failure to ride through the start and finish will result in elimination.

Level 2 – Riders are scored for each fence and the entrance to the arena/ride through the start. Collective marks will also be awarded for control, effectiveness, suitability and overall performance. Marks will be given out of 10. The judge will decide to deduct marks if canter is shown outside the shaded area as shown in the Level 2 course plan. Marks will also be deducted if the rider is seen to be creating impulsion i.e. kicking or use of the whip to encourage the horse to canter in the shaded area. If the horse is seen to be in canter from its own forwardness when landing after fence 1 and fence 4, this is permitted.

Penalties will be awarded as follows:

- Knockdown = 4 faults
- First disobedience = 4 faults
- Second disobedience = 4 faults
- Third disobedience = elimination
- Error of course = elimination
- 1 mark will be deducted at any jump where the Leader is seen to be giving help.
- Failure to ride through the start and finish will result in elimination.

Levels 3 & 4 - Riders are scored for each fence and the entrance to the arena/ride through the start. Collective marks will also be awarded for control, effectiveness, suitability and overall performance. Marks will be given out of 10. The judge may decide to deduct marks if canter is not maintained on the approach to each jump.

Penalties will be awarded as follows:

- Knockdown = 4 faults
- First disobedience = 4 faults
- Second disobedience = 4 faults
- Third disobedience = elimination
- Error of course = elimination
- Failure to ride through the start and finish will result in elimination.

Level 5

- Knockdown = 4 faults
- First disobedience = 4 faults

- Second disobedience = 4 faults
- Elimination will occur at the third disobedience
- Fall of horse or rider = elimination
- Jumping the wrong course = elimination

Scale of Marks

Levels 1 – 4 (equitation classes) will be scored using the scale of marks outlined below. The marks 10 and 0 must be awarded where the performance warrants their use. The term ‘not executed’ means that nothing, that is required, has been performed.

10	Excellent	6	Satisfactory	2	Bad
9	Very Good	5	Sufficient	1	Very Bad
8	Good	4	Insufficient	0	Not Executed
7	Fairly Good	3	Fairly Bad		

Qualification for National Championships

Levels 2 (unled only), 3 and 4 - In order to qualify for the National Championships riders must achieve at least 60% in their class at their Regional Qualifier. Qualifying classes will be split into Junior, Senior and Open Sections. The top two riders in both the Junior and Senior Sections, and the winner of Junior and Senior Sections of the Open Class, achieving 60% or above will qualify for the National Championships. In sections of 10 or more the first 5 will qualify. If the 1st and 2nd placed riders are unable to go, only those placed 3rd and 4th may be nominated subject to the conditions above.

If a level 4 qualifier is not being held within your region then the qualifying process for Level 5 may be used.

Level 5 - Competitors should be nominated by their Regional Showjumping Representative. They can do this by contacting the National Championships Secretary as early as possible with their recommendation and strong evidence of competing at this level. This evidence could be a current proven competition record or video evidence of the combination.

The Showjumping Lead, or suitable representative, will review all applications individually and their decision will be final.

4.3(g) Vaulting

RDA Vaulting follows the rules set by British Equestrian Vaulting (BEV) ([click here for BEV Rules](#)) and the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) ([click here for FEI Vaulting Rules](#)). It is recommended that these are read in conjunction with the following rules for RDA Vaulting.

Dress

Riding hats:

- These must be worn by all vaulters when training or competing on the horse or Barrel.
- Hats must fit the vaulter well, meet RDA hat standards and must not have a fixed peak. Vaulters will not be permitted to compete in a helmet which has a fixed peak, even if it meets the standards required for general RDA hat tagging. Refer to Section 2 – General Rules for current hat standards.
- Standard hat covers with soft, flexible peaks are permitted.

Other items of dress:

- Dress must be formfitting and all articles of clothing, or parts thereof, must remain attached to the vaulter's body at all times.
- Dress must in no way compromise the safety of either vaulter or horse.
- Soft shoes must be worn by all vaulters. Specially made vaulting shoes with rubber grip soles are recommended.
- Lungers should harmonise with the team and it is recommended that gloves and suitable shoes are worn.

Tack – the following tack should be used:

- A snaffle bridle OR a lunge cavesson. A lunge cavesson can be used with or without a bit, but any bit used must be a snaffle bit.
- Vaulting surcingle/roller with under pad (aka sausage pad), girth and back pad. For reasons of equine welfare and vaulter safety, the vaulting surcingle must have a solid tree when used on the horse. Rollers without a tree are permitted on the barrel only.
- A back pad and a sausage pad (under the surcingle)

- Lunge rein
- Side reins
- Lunge whip capable of reaching the horse on a 15m circle

Optional:

- One gel pad under the back pad
- Bandages and boots
- Ear muffs and plugs
- Rubber bit guards

Additional notes

- Whilst the side reins are attached, the lunge rein must be attached to the inner ring of the bit or to the lunge cavesson, not over the head or to the other ring.
- Hanging cheek bits are not permitted. Refer to the FEI Vaulting Rules for a list of permitted bits.

Horses

- Eligibility
 - Horses must be approved by a Vaulting Assessor prior to competition.
 - Vaulting horses must be **seven years old** or above.
 - Trained vaulting horses can be provided upon request (*subject to availability*) but groups may bring their own. Should the participant need to borrow a vaulting horse, the horse provided will be lunged by an experienced lunger nominated by the organiser.
- Welfare
 - A Horse Points System will be in place in competition (see below)
 - When the horse enters the arena, they must trot on the circle for the judge to evaluate soundness, as per FEI and BEV Rules. When the judge is satisfied that the horse may compete, a bell will be rung and the first vaulter can enter the circle. Lungers should expect to perform the trot circle each time the horse enters the ring after running out, unless advised otherwise.

- All RDA Rules regarding equine welfare apply to vaulting horses.
- The running order will be created so as to allow horses to stretch with the side reins unclipped from the bridle between classes.
- Warm up time will be given with the horse in the main arena before competing.

Horse Points System

A Horse Points System will be in place to protect horse welfare. Each vaulting horse may accrue a **maximum** of 8 points per day of competition (8 points is a maximum, not a target, and some horses may need to do less). This applies to virtual/filmed competitions as well as 'live', in-person competition. In all cases, it is the responsibility of the Coach and/or Lunger to ensure that the horse's workload is appropriate.

A horse who has filled all 8 points in the vaulting competition may not compete in another discipline (e.g. dressage) on the same day, but may compete at the same competition (e.g. the National Championships) on a different day.

Points are allocated to **each entry** as follows:

Class	Horse points per entry
Walk Team	2
Walk Pas de Deux	1
Canter Individual	1.5
Trot Individual	1
Walk Individual	0.5

E.g. a horse would be allowed to do one walk team, one canter individual, and 5 walk individual entries.

Competitions

Competitions will be run according to BEV rules for:

- Walk Pairs
- Walk Teams
- Pre-Novice Individuals
- Novice Individuals

- Barrel classes (available based on BEV rules)

It is the responsibility of the Vaulting Coach to ensure that the horse, vaulters and lungers are abiding by RDA rules and relevant BEV and FEI rules.

In all classes, vaulters (and their horse and lunger, where appropriate) should perform, to music, the following:

- Run in and bow to the judge
- Compulsories (if applicable)
- Freestyle routine
- Bow to the judge and run out

The 'run in' and 'run out' should take place in a manner that best suits the vaulters. It is not compulsory to run, and vaulters are encouraged to use walking aids, wheelchairs and/or support from others as appropriate.

Permitted Assistance

- Assistants are allowed in the competition arena to bunk (*give a 'leg up'*), sidewalk, prompt etc. and may give assistance to the vaulters throughout the competition, including explaining and relaying messages between the judge and competitors.
- **All** mounts in halt and walk **must** be assisted. It is optional for mounts in trot and canter to be assisted. There is no deduction for assistance in mounting at any level.

Horse and lunger

- Lungers must be aged at least 18 years and hold the RDA Lungeing Certificate, the BEV Level 1 Coach Certificate and/or similar lungeing experience (e.g. BHS qualifications).
- The horse will be judged throughout and will gain a score in accordance with BEV/FEI rules.

Time Allowed

- There is no time limit for compulsories.
- The **maximum** time allowed for freestyles are:

- Team - 4 minutes
- Pas de Deux – 1 minute and 30 seconds
- Individual – 1 minute

The timer starts from the moment the vaulter touches any part of the horse and/or tack. The judging ends when the vaulter (or last vaulter in a Pas de Deux or Team) touches the ground with their dismount. If any moves are shown after the end of the time allowed (indicated by a bell), a 1-point deduction is made from the Artistic score.

Team Competition

- Teams are made up of 6 vaulters, AND either a barrel horse OR one horse and a lunger.
- The vaulting team may include up to 2 non-disabled vaulters who must be RDA volunteers.
- The vaulters can be of any age, and the classes will be run as open competitions with no age restrictions or age categories.
- On the barrel, up to 3 vaulters may perform at any one time. Vaulters and Coaches are reminded that, where there are 3 vaulters mounted, at least 2 must be in direct contact with the barrel.
- On the horse, up to 2 vaulters may perform at any one time.
- The maximum time allowed for a Team freestyle is 4 minutes, on the barrel and on the horse.
- To give everyone the opportunity to compete, vaulting teams can be made up of vaulters from different RDA Groups. If you need vaulters for your team or have people who would like to join a team, then contact National Championships Event Manager.
- There is no 'compulsories' routine in the Team competition.

Pas de Deux Competition

- This is a class for two vaulters, both of whom must be RDA participants.
- The vaulters can be of any age and the classes will be run as open competitions with no age restrictions or age categories.
- The vaulters may be from any combination of RDA Groups.

- There are two classes for the Pas de Deux:
 - Barrel Freestyle
 - Horse Freestyle in Walk
- There is no 'compulsories' routine in the Pas de Deux competition
- The maximum time allowed is one minute and 30 seconds.

Individual Competition

There are various options in the Individual Competition to offer competitive opportunities to as many RDA participants as possible. There are four levels available for competing on the horse (H1-H4), and three for competing on the barrel (B1-B3). The levels are as follows.

On the horse:

- H1 – **Walk** freestyle only
- H2 – Pre-Novice compulsories in **trot** AND **walk** freestyle
- H3 – Pre-Novice compulsories in **canter** AND **walk** freestyle
- H4 – Novice compulsories in **canter** AND **canter** freestyle

On the barrel:

- B1 – Freestyle only
- B2 – Pre-Novice compulsories and freestyle
- B3 – Novice compulsories and freestyle

Each class is split into:

- Junior (vaulters up to the age of 16)
- Senior (vaulters over the age of 16)
- Open (vaulters who have previously won their class at the RDA National Championships)

Individuals competing in classes H2, H3, H4, B2 and B3 may not include any compulsory moves from their level (Pre-Novice or Novice) in their routine. Individuals competing in classes H1 and B1 are encouraged to avoid compulsory moves where possible but are permitted to include them.

For reference, the compulsory moves at BEV Pre-Novice level are:

- Basic seat with arms down by your sides
- Bench
- Leg lifts to the middle and back, dismount to the inside

The compulsory moves at BEV Novice level are:

- Basic seat with arms out to the sides, fingers at eye height
- Flare leg
- Free kneel
- Leg changes, dismount to the inside

For more details on compulsory move requirements, refer to the BEV Rule Book.

When a vaulter is performing their freestyle immediately after their compulsories, dismounting in between is optional. If the vaulter chooses to remain on the horse, they **must** wait for the judge's signal (via a bell) before starting their freestyle or they may not be scored.

Freestyles will be judged according to the rules for CVI 1* routines. There will be no score for the Degree of Difficulty; Vaulters will be judged on their performance (technical ability) and artistry, in addition to the horse score.

Music

At least one week prior to a 'live' competition, including the National Championships, vaulters and/or their coaches must email their chosen music to the competition organisers as mp3 files.

The file name should be in the format:

"Class number" – "Vaulters name" – "Run in/Compulsories/Freestyle"

e.g. "Class B2 – Frankie Dettori – Compulsories"

The same music can be used for more than one vaulter or more than one element of the competition (e.g. for both run in and compulsories). The files must still be

sent separately, with the name of each individual vaulter and element of competition, so that a reliable playlist can be established.

Music can be edited to suit the vaulter(s) and their routine. All music and lyrics chosen should be appropriate for a family audience.

Competition Running Order

Once the secretary has received all the entries a running order will be drawn up to make the best use of time and save energy of both vaulters and horses. This will be sent to Groups as soon as it is available.

Time will be made available for the horses to stretch without the side reins between classes.

Scoring and Penalties

The vaulters and horse are scored, as per BEV and FEI rules. Coaches and vaulters are advised to consult the BEV Rule Book and the FEI Vaulting Guidelines for more information on judging and scoring.

Freestyle: As per BEV Ltd Rules for Pre-Novice competition

Scale of Marks

10	Excellent	6	Satisfactory	2	Bad
9	Very Good	5	Sufficient	1	Very Bad
8	Good	4	Insufficient	0	Not Executed or as a result of deductions
7	Fairly Good	3	Fairly Bad		

Qualification for National Championships

There is no requirement for vaulters to qualify for the RDA National Championships.

SECTION 5 - GUIDANCE

5.1 Important Concussion Update (from March 2023)

Concussion is becoming an increasingly important issue in the sporting landscape. As part of their commitment to the welfare of participants at all levels of equestrian sport, British Equestrian have produced equestrian-specific advice, developed by their World Class Programme Human Sports Science and Medicine team.

What is concussion?

Concussion is an injury to the brain resulting in a disturbance of brain function. It can be caused by a direct blow to the head but can also occur when a blow to another part of the body results in rapid movement of the head, such as whiplash type injuries. Loss of consciousness does not always occur – in fact, it occurs in less than 10% of concussions. A history of previous concussion increases the risk of further concussions, from which it may also take longer to recover.

What are the symptoms of concussion?

Concussion can present in a variety of ways and will differ from person to person. Signs/symptoms can be physical, cognitive or behavioural, and it's important to remember that they can take hours or sometimes days to appear. For further guidance about how to recognise a concussion, check out our concussion guidance document below.

What should I do if I suspect a concussion?

If you believe someone has suffered a concussion following a fall from a horse, or a blow to the head, face, neck or body, take immediate action. The person must immediately cease all ridden, equestrian-related activity and any potentially strenuous mental or physical activity, then you should follow the four Rs:

- Recognise the signs and symptoms
- Remove the injured person from the scene
- Recover until all symptoms have been resolved
- Return gradually to activity

Further information on the four Rs is available in our concussion guidance document below.

If in doubt, sit them out.

Concussion Guidance

Aimed at participants at all levels of equestrian sport – including riders, vaulters and drivers, parents, coaches, officials, grooms, medical personnel and event organisers – this concussion guidance document provides information on how to manage concussion, from the time of injury through to a safe return to equestrian sport. This includes the stages of recovery following concussion and a standardised ‘return to riding’ programme, both which should be carried out in conjunction with advice from a qualified medical practitioner or healthcare provider.

While this document contains general medical information, it doesn’t constitute medical advice and should not be relied on as such. This guidance is not a substitute for medical advice from a qualified medical practitioner or healthcare provider.

The guidance document can be found, here: [BEF Concussion Guidance](#).

5.2 Supervision Requirements Guidance

Supervision Levels

It is important to ensure that, in planning and running activities for participants, consideration is given to providing an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to participants, at all times.

This should be considered as part of your risk assessment, and will vary depending on the participants' age, gender, behaviour, disability and the abilities within the group. It will also be influenced by the nature and duration of activities, volunteer or staff experience, location, any special medical needs and/or any specialist equipment that might be needed.

Anyone acting in a supervisory capacity must be aged 18 and over.

Supervision Ratios

The below supervision ratios are best practice guidance established by the NSPCC.

Participant Age Range	No of Adults	No of Participants
0-2 years	1	3
2-3 years	1	4
4-8 years	1	6
9-12 years	1	8
13-18 years	1	10

Note: Although ratio guidelines include one adult, it is best practice to ensure there is at least one other adult volunteer or member of staff within sight/sound (nearby), when working with or supervising participants of all ages.

Those in supervisory roles are required to:

- Understand their responsibility to keep participants safe
- Have clear roles and responsibilities
- Meet safer recruitment checks, including disclosure checks and safeguarding training
- Be aware of the codes of conduct outlining expected standards
- Be appropriately qualified for the role and activity

Coaches

Coaches who are expected to work on their own initiative, holding a position of trust with sole charge of a session, must be aged 18 years or older at the time of qualification/certification. An RDA Coach in Training may be 16 years old, however those who go on to train and then become assessed to become a Group Coach or Coach, which enables them to coach without supervision, must be aged 18 years or older.

Supervision when travelling/transporting - refer to the Transportation Guidance in the next section.

5.3 Transportation Guidance

This guidance document outlines factors that should be considered when organising transportation.

Private Arrangements

It is reasonable for Groups to place full responsibility on parents/carers/guardians for ensuring appropriate transport arrangements are made for participants to and from activities. This might include where a parent brings their child in their own car, where parents opt for carpooling or where a school brings a small group of participants on a minibus.

Group Transport Arrangements

Groups might choose to consider booking transport for a planned activity away from the usual venue, e.g. a day trip. Transportation options include: the private use of cars, hiring self-drive transport (such as minibus), or hiring a coach from reputable commercial company.

Safety Measure Considerations

When organising transportation for RDA activities, the Group has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to safeguard participants. RDA UK encourages volunteers/coaches/staff not to take participants on journeys alone in their car.

Safety measures that should be considered, include:

- Ensure you have a transport plan in place (see next section “Transport Plan” for more information)
- Share the transport plan with all parties to ensure everyone is aware of arrangements/expectations
- Ensure participants are aware of and comfortable with transport arrangements – this should be a conversation with someone who is not the designated driver
- Gain consent from parents/carers/guardians before transporting participants
- Establish suitability of driver through Safer Recruitment policy
- Ensure the driver has valid car insurance, MOT and driving license in place

- When using own car, drivers should check appropriate insurance cover is in place, e.g. business travel
- Participants should sit in the back of the car and, where possible, try to ensure there is more than one participant present
- Driver should have point of contact at Group and for each participant they are transporting (including contact details)
- Driver should have mobile phone, fully charged, for emergencies or breakdowns
- Have contact numbers for parents/carers/guardians and, if possible, an alternative contact number provided. Likewise, parents/carers/guardians should have a contact number for the Group contact.

Transport Plan

It is essential to have a plan for transporting before the trip goes ahead. The plan should include:

- Plan for the day
- Venue/destination information
- Clear expectation of drop off and collection times
- Mode of transport, e.g. car, minibus or coach
- Emergency contact details of responsible person
- Late collection policy

Seatbelts

Participants should wear seatbelts at all times when travelling in a car. Passengers on minibuses and coaches must use seatbelts if fitted. Those over 12 years old or 135cm (whichever comes first), should use an adult seatbelt. Children under 12 years old or up to 135cm tall, must use the right type of car seat.



WANTED! VOLUNTEERS

Every year our 13,000 volunteers help 20,000 people with disabilities discover just how much they can achieve. Find out how you can help...

Where can I volunteer?

RDA has over 400 centres across the UK, and many of them need extra support. Visit the RDA website to find your nearest centre.

What can I do?

There are roles from grooming, leading and tacking-up horses; to admin or fundraising. We provide the training and you don't even need to be horsey!

Who can volunteer?

Anyone aged 12 and over, regardless of experience levels.

"There's something for everybody at RDA, no matter where you're from. It brings together people from all walks of life."

SHANE | RDA VOLUNTEER



CONTACT YOUR LOCAL GROUP TODAY

Visit rda.org.uk to find the closest group to you.

RDA
Riding for the Disabled Association
Improving Carriage Driving



**For further queries contact RDA
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