



RDA Showjumping

Competition

A handbook for

RDA Show Jumping Groups


To be used in conjunction with the current RDA Competition Rules



Revised Oct 2021



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RDA Showjumping

Competition Guidance Notes

PLEASE NOTE:

This guidance must be used in conjunction with the current RDA Competition Rules handbook.

These notes have been put together so each Group/rider has clear guidance on what is expected of them in the arena.

The criteria included are the beginning of establishing a clear pathway for riders and their Coaches to follow to develop the grassroots of competing at Showjumping within RDA.

By breaking down each part of what is expected of a rider while completing a course of jumps, our riders will develop their riding skills to progress to their full potential. The competition rules are set out the same as if a rider was competing in an Equitation class, where the rider's flat work and jumping ability is judged.

RDA riders will benefit in many ways from being prepared by using the above coaching techniques. For example, riders are expected to follow the rules from the start to the end of a jumping round, with lots of guidance at Level 1. This will prepare them for Level 2, which allows a rider to work with less guidance, showing progression. At Level 3 the rider is expected to work independently, and it is anticipated that the rider at this level has worked their way successfully up through the levels, showing a genuine improvement for them to ride to their full potential, allowing them every opportunity to progress to achieve their goals.

When the rider has achieved Level 1 successfully, they can take the skills they have learned forward to the next level of competition. It is these basic riding skills, set out in the criteria of the Levels, that will give our RDA riders every opportunity to progress to the next level.

Competition Rules

Levels 1-4 will be judged as Equitation Classes

Level 1 can be performed led or unled **at walk only.**

Level 2 can be performed led at the third stage of leading or unled **at trot.**

Horses/Ponies may be warmed up unmounted, by leaders, over the course before the competition starts.

Level 3 & Level 4 unled **at Canter**

Horses/ponies may be warmed up mounted by the rider before the competition starts in a separate warm up arena if available; if a warmup arena is not available the rider may warm up over jump 1.

Visually impaired riders are allowed a (non-coaching) commander within the arena halfway along either long side; 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 always be maintained between the lead rider and competitor around the course. Lead riders may use their voice at a level suitable for the competitor.

Rider attire All riders when mounted should be correctly dressed. Jodhpurs or breeches must be worn at RDA Competitions where possible.

Level 1, 2 & 3 riders may wear group sweatshirts or traditional style jackets at RDA Competitions.

Level 4, 5 and all Graded riders must wear traditional style jackets at RDA Competitions where possible.

Gloves are optional.

Body protectors are optional at all levels. If body protectors are worn the BETA 2009 (purple/white label) and 2018 (blue/black label) Level 3 Body Protector Standard meets all the requirements of the respective European standard (EN 13158).

Whips BSJ approved Maximum length 75 cm, minimum total length 45 cm. 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.

Spurs may only be used with special dispensation from Regional Coach, Regional Show Jumping Coach, or through classification. Please check the current RDA Competition Rulebook [Rule book link](#)

Excessive use* of whips or spurs is forbidden. *Excessive use - 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.

Tack Please check the current RDA **Competition Full Rulebook** [Rule book link](#)

- **Martingales:** Irish, Standing, Running or Bib martingales are permitted. Only one may be worn at any time. Standing Martingales may be attached only to the cavesson part of the noseband fitted above the bit.
- **Market Harboroughs** are not permitted.
- **Bit guards** may be used, only entirely rubber and smooth on both sides are permitted.
- **Boots and bandages** may be worn if required.
- **Neck/balance straps** attached to a martingale breastplate are permitted.
- **Pelhams** must be used with roundings or two reins.
- **Double bridles** are not permitted.
- **Bits permitted** in RDA showjumping classes, please consult the British Showjumping bit rules which can be found under rule 102: Saddlery and Equipment
- [Member Handbook & Rule Amendments -link](#)
- <http://www.britishshowjumping.co.uk/membership/Member-Handbook-And-Rule-Amendments>

Arenas

The recommended arena size:

Level 1&2 sessions is 20m x 40m

Level 3&4 is 30m x 40m or 20m x 60m to accommodate canter strides, at the Coach's discretion and depending on the size of the facilities available.

NB that at the National Championships the approximate arena size for levels 2 & 3 is 30m x 40m. The arena size at the National Championships at Hartpury for level 4 will be the full Arena 30m x 60m.

Course Plans There are set RDA Course plans for level 1-4 see Course Plans Section.

The plan of the course will show where the jumps, cones and start and finish line should be located, so that all riders preparing for Regional or National competitions are aware of the course in preparation for the competition.

Level 1 can be performed led or unled at walk only. The rider must make every effort to show an attempt to use light rein contact when riding over poles. For Jumps number 1-4 poles on ground, cones may be placed to aid rider with correct lines.

Level 2 can be performed led or unled in trot. Riders should be working in a balanced trot jumping position at this level and showing an independent performance with no physical support from the Leader if led. Riders may walk between jumps 2 - 3 and 3 - 4. This may be appropriate if a leader is present and needs time to rest, or if any horse or pony is getting strong, this would be the correct location on course to regain control. Leaders and riders must be aware that as soon as you approach the straight line to the jump the horse/pony must be in trot.

Jumps number 1 and 2: cross poles, jumps 3, 4 and 5: uprights.

Maximum height of jumps, 6" - 12" / 15cm - 30cm at the centre of the jump. Start and Finish lines to be clearly marked but must be positioned so they don't aid the rider with the correct lines around corners.

Level 3

Jump number 1 cross pole, jump 2 upright, 3 spread (cross pole front with straight pole behind) 4 and 5 uprights.

Maximum height of jumps: 2ft / 60cm at the centre of the upright jump. Spread Maximum width and height must not exceed 50cm. Start and Finish lines to be clearly marked but must be position so they don't aid the rider with the correct lines around corners.

Level 4 Riders should be working in canter jumping position at this level and showing an independent performance. Riders will be expected, when necessary, to trot to change lead legs.

Starting the class, a bell will sound as a signal for the rider to start.

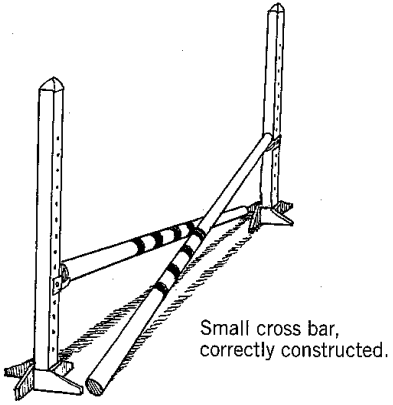
Course to include the following: 5 uprights, 3 spreads, 3 fences with fillers, a two stride double not to exceed 60 cm. One of the uprights should be planks (flat cups must be used for planks)


Safety cups must be used on back rail of spreads.

Uprights Maximum height = 70cm Spread Maximum width and height must not exceed 60cm.

Start and Finish lines to be clearly marked but must be position so they don't aid the rider with the correct lines around corners.

Levels 1-4 will be judged as an equitation class




<p>Cross pole construction: Cross poles should be constructed so that a gap of 3" (min) to 5" (max) is left between the two poles where they cross. This will prevent the front pole from jamming against the back pole should a horse make a mistake and hit the jump solidly. Varying lengths of poles are in use in RDA Groups, therefore care should be taken when building a cross pole to ensure the height of the poles resting on the wings does not exceed 1' (30cms) for level 2 and 2' (60 cms) for level 3, for safety reasons.</p>	
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<p>Upright A show jump fence that consists of poles directly above each other with no spread or width, to jump</p>	
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Spread

A show jump that has two verticals placed reasonably close together to make the jump wider. The furthest pole/back pole is higher than the front and must be on Safety cups. The front element can be crossed poles to help rider and horse focus on the centre of the fence.

 <p style="text-align: center;">No 3 in level 3 course</p>	
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<p>Round cup for poles</p>	<p>Flat cup for Planks & Hanging fillers</p>	<p>Safety Cups for all back rails of Spreads</p>
		

Lightweight Plastic poles should not be used for RDA

Levels 1-4 will be judged as an equitation class

Starting the class, a bell, whistle, or flag lowered will indicate as a signal for the rider to start.

A deaf rider or one with a hearing impairment will need to watch the judge for a signal to start. Riders or their representatives must notify the judge and agree on a method of showing the rider via a flag waving method, alerting them when to start.

ALL levels there will be a Start and Finish line clearly marked which competitors must pass through.

Scoring & Penalties

Marks will be awarded for Quality of pace, preparation, and approach to the start line.

Collective marks will be awarded for control, effectiveness, suitability, and overall performance. Marks will be given out of 10.

Penalties will be awarded as follows:

- Level 1 & 2 - Marks will be deducted at any jump where the leader is seen to be giving help.
- Level 2, 3 & 4 - Marks will be deducted if correct gait is not maintained on the approach to each jump.
- 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.
- Fall of horse or rider = elimination
- Jumping the wrong course = elimination

Level 5

Level 5 classes will run as a single-phase competition where the course is split into two sections. If the rider successfully completes the first section without faults, they can then complete the second section. The second section is in principle a jump-off course which may be increased by up to 10cm from the upper height limit for the class.

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

Penalties will be awarded as follows for Level 5:

- 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.
- Fall of horse or rider = elimination
- Jumping the wrong course = elimination



Riding for the Disabled Association Showjumping Level 1 Course Design

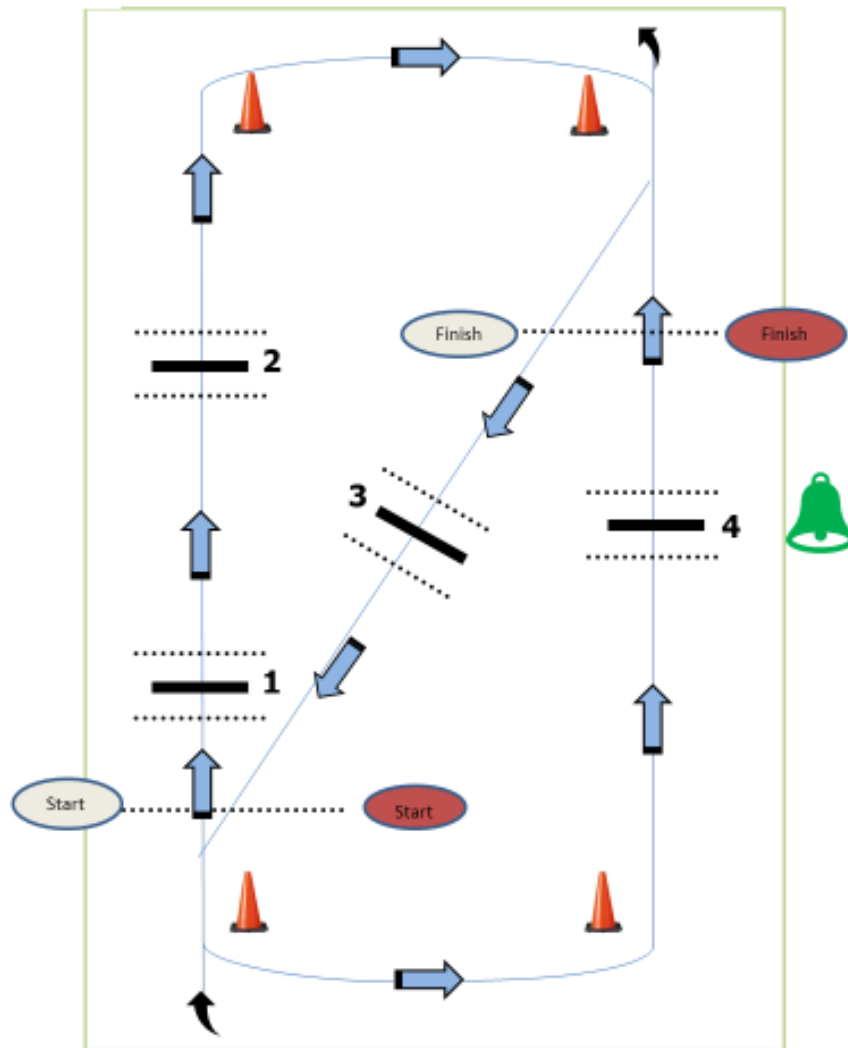


This course is designed to improve the rider's effectiveness to ride correct Showjumping lines. At Level 1 the cones are used to guide the rider onto the jumping line, avoiding cutting corners. This will prepare the rider and horse/pony to ride a correct approach to each jump. This course design will be used at Regional and National competitions so that each Group/rider follows the same criteria at this level. **The cones will be used for Level 1 but removed for Level 2 so that the rider has the opportunity to show progression.** The dots that are shown before and after the fence indicate the area where the rider has to hold the light seat position.

** Judging will commence when the rider is level with fence 4, the start will be signed (bell/Flag)



RDA Level 1 Showjumping Course Plan updated 2021



Level 1, poles on the ground. The cones are used to guide the rider on to the jumping line; avoiding cutting corners. This standard course design will be used at local and regional competitions, to ensure that each RDA rider is able to follow the same criteria. **The dots that are shown before and after the jump indicate the area where the rider must hold the light seat position.**



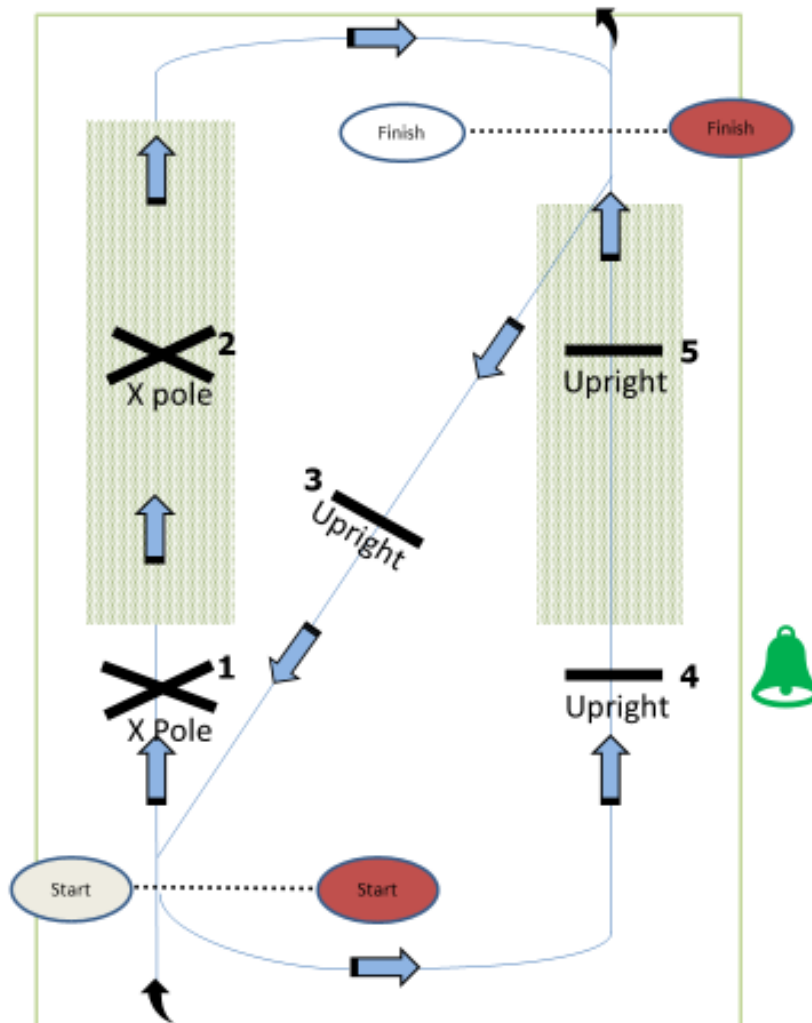
Riding for the Disabled Association Showjumping Level 2 Course Design



This course is set at **30cm** and is designed to improve the rider's effectiveness in riding correct showjumping lines. At Level, 2 **the corner cones have been removed** to allow the rider to ride a correct jumping line with less support. The Start and Finish markers should not aid the rider to ride the correct line so must be placed near the centre line and at this level the rider must be in trot on the approach to each jump. The shaded areas indicate where it is acceptable to canter. ****When the rider is level with fence 4, the start will be signed (bell/Flag).** Judging will then commence. This course design will be used at Regional and National competitions, to ensure that each RDA Group/rider follows the same criteria at this level.



RDA Level 2 Showjumping Course Plan Updated 2021



Level, 2 Jumps number 1 and 2: cross poles, jumps 3, 4 and 5: uprights.
Maximum height of jumps, 6" - 12" / 15cm - 30cm at the centre of the jump.
the corner cones have been removed The Start and Finish markers should not aid the rider to ride the correct line so must be placed near the centre line.



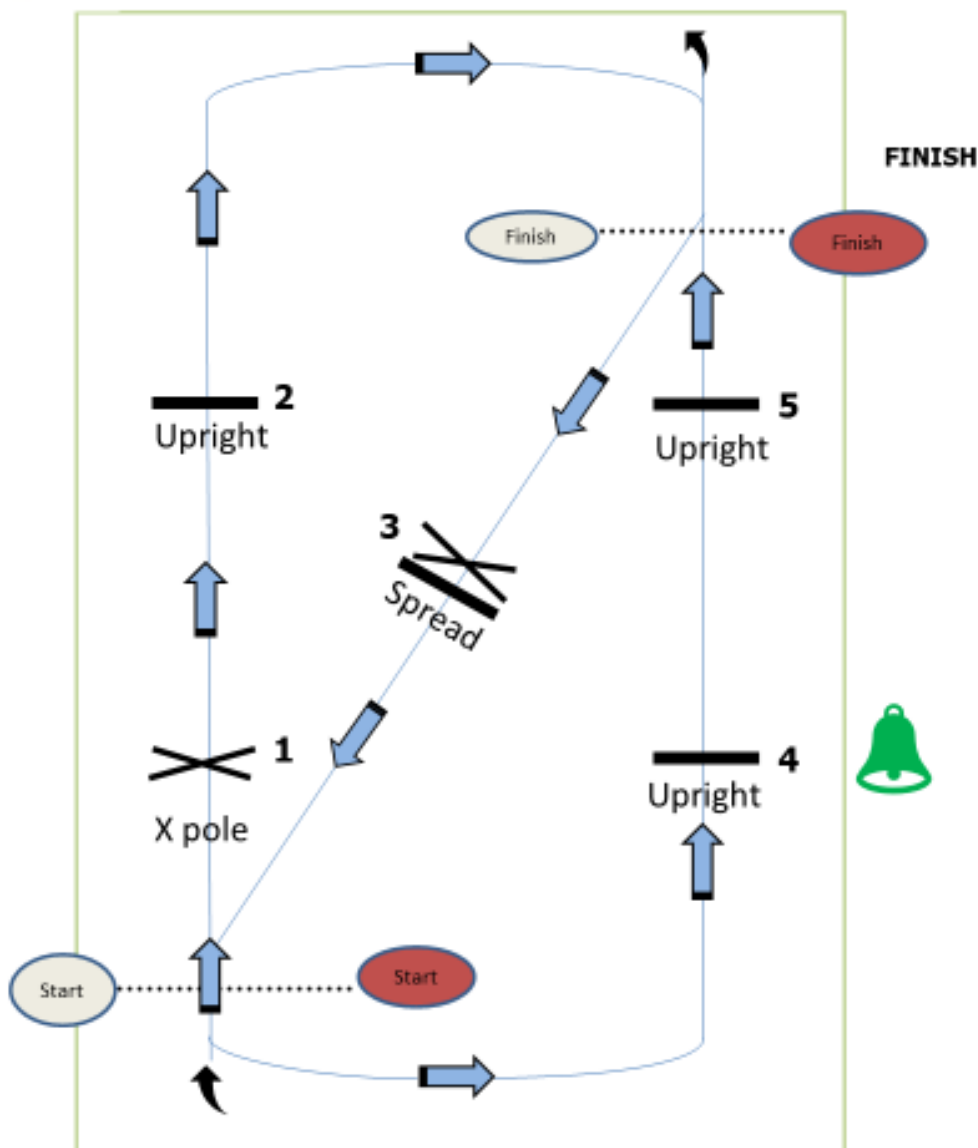
Showjumping Level 3 Course Design

This course is designed to improve the rider's effectiveness to ride correct showjumping lines. At Level 3 the cones have been removed to allow the rider to ride a correct jumping line and at this level the rider must be in canter on the approach to each jump. The dots that are shown before and after the fence indicate the area where the rider has to hold the jumping position.

** When the rider is level with fence 4 the start will be signed (bell/Flag) Judging will commence. This course design will be used at Regional and National competitions, so each Group/rider follows the same criteria at this level.



RDA Level 3 Showjumping Course Plan Updated 2021

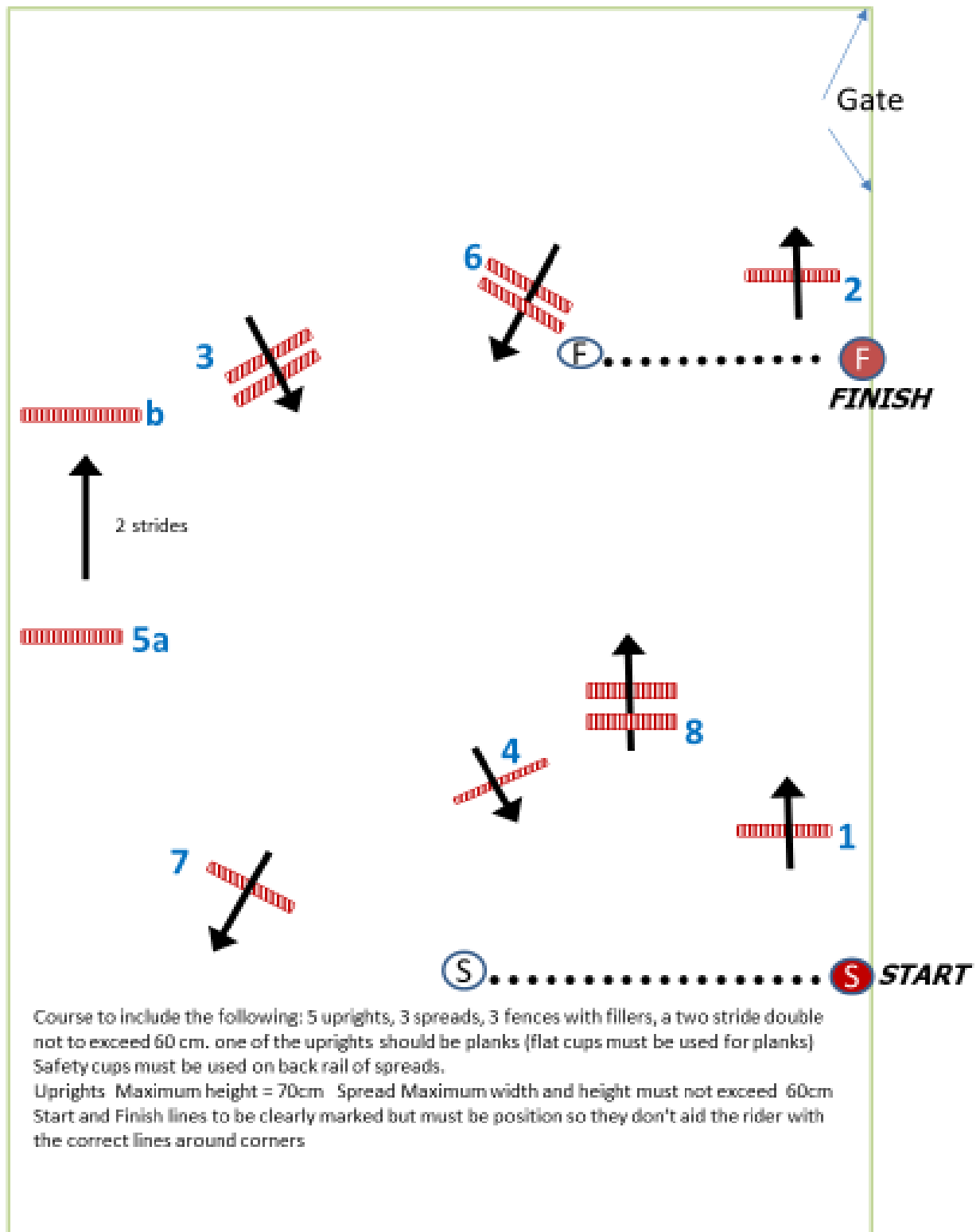


Level 3 Jump 1, cross pole, 2, upright, 3, spread (cross pole front with straight pole behind) 4 and 5 upright.
 Maximum height of jumps: 2ft / 60cm at the centre of the upright jump.
 Spread Maximum width and height must not exceed 50cm. Start and Finish lines to be clearly marked but must be position so they don't aid the rider with the correct lines around corners.



RDA Level 4 Showjumping Course Plan

Updated 2021





Scale of Marks	
10:	<i>Excellent</i>
9:	<i>Very Good</i>
8:	<i>Good</i>
7:	<i>Fairly Good</i>
6:	<i>Satisfactory</i>
5:	<i>Sufficient</i>
4:	<i>Insufficient</i>
3:	<i>Fairly Bad</i>
2:	<i>Bad</i>
1:	<i>Very Bad</i>
0:	<i>Not Executed</i>

RDA Showjumping Level 1 Competition Judging Sheet



No: **Name:** **Date:**

Group: **Venue**

	Max. Mark	Judge's Mark	Penalties	Judge's Comments
Quality of gait and preparation and approach to Start line	10			
Jump 1	10			
Jump 2	10			
Jump 3	10			
Jump 4	10			
General impression of combination (to include Turnout)	10			

Collective Marks	Max. Mark	Judge's Mark	Judge's Comments
Assess the rider's ability to control the horse/pony whilst riding the course, being led/ unled 'in a balanced position' in walk. Ensure the rider rides through the finish.	10		
Assessment of the rider's effectiveness in riding a quality walk independently, with minimum aid from the leader or side walkers.	10		
Assess suitability of rider/equine combination at this level.	10		
Performance: correct lines, rhythm and way of going.	10		

Total Pens			
Total Marks =	/ 100		
Final Score and Percentage			

.....%

Judge's Signature:

Date:



Scale of Marks	
10:	<i>Excellent</i>
9:	<i>Very Good</i>
8:	<i>Good</i>
7:	<i>Fairly Good</i>
6:	<i>Satisfactory</i>
5:	<i>Sufficient</i>
4:	<i>Insufficient</i>
3:	<i>Fairly Bad</i>
2:	<i>Bad</i>
1:	<i>Very Bad</i>
0:	<i>Not Executed</i>

RDA Showjumping Level 2 Competition Judging Sheet



No: **Name:** **Date:**

Group: **Venue:**

	Max. Mark	Judge's Mark	*Penalties	Judge's Comments
Quality of Gait and preparation and approach to Start line	10			
Jump 1	10			
Jump 2	10			
Jump 3	10			
Jump 4	10			
Jump 5	10			

Collective Marks	Max. Mark	Judge's Mark	Judge's Comment
Assess the rider's ability to control the horse/pony whilst riding the course in a balanced position in trot/canter. Ensure the rider rides through the finish	10		
Assessment of the rider's effectiveness in riding a quality canter on the approach to the jump	10		
Assess suitability of rider/equine combination at this level.	10		
Performance: correct lines, rhythm and way of going.	10		

Total Pens			
Subtotal =	/100		
Final Score and Percentage		%

Judge's Signature:

Date:



Scale of Marks	
10:	<i>Excellent</i>
9:	<i>Very Good</i>
8:	<i>Good</i>
7:	<i>Fairly Good</i>
6:	<i>Satisfactory</i>
5:	<i>Sufficient</i>
4:	<i>Insufficient</i>
3:	<i>Fairly Bad</i>
2:	<i>Bad</i>
1:	<i>Very Bad</i>
0:	<i>Not Executed</i>

RDA Showjumping Level 3 Competition Judging Sheet



No:.....Name:

Date:

Group:.....**Venue:**.....

	Max Mark	Judge's Mark	Penalties	Judge's Comments
Quality of gait and preparation and approach to Start line	10			
Jump 1	10			
Jump 2	10			
Jump 3	10			
Jump 4	10			
Jump 5	10			

Collective Marks	Max. Mark	Judge's Mark	Judge's Comment
Assess the rider's ability to control the horse/pony whilst riding the course in a balanced position in trot/ canter. Ensure the rider rides through the finish	10		
Assessment of the rider's effectiveness in riding a quality canter on the approach to the jump	10		
Assess suitability of rider/equine combination at this level.	10		
Performance: correct lines, rhythm and way of going.	10		

Total Pens			
Total Marks =	/		
	100		
Final Score and percentage			

..... %

Judge's Signature:

Date:



Scale of Marks	
10:	<i>Excellent</i>
9:	<i>Very Good</i>
8:	<i>Good</i>
7:	<i>Fairly Good</i>
6:	<i>Satisfactory</i>
5:	<i>Sufficient</i>
4:	<i>Insufficient</i>
3:	<i>Fairly Bad</i>
2:	<i>Bad</i>
1:	<i>Very Bad</i>
0:	<i>Not Executed</i>

RDA Showjumping Level 4 Competition Judging Sheet



No: **Name:** **Date:**

Group: **Venue:**

	Max. Mark	Judge's Mark	*Penalties	Judge's Comments
Quality of gait; preparation and approach to Start line	10			
Jump 1	10			
Jump 2	10			
Jump 3	10			
Jump 4	10			
Jumps 5A/B	20			
Jump 6	10			
Jump 7	10			
Jump 8	10			

Collective Marks	Max. Mark	Judge's Mark	Judge's Comment
Assess the rider's ability to control the horse/pony whilst riding the course in a balanced position in trot/ canter. Ensure the rider rides through the finish	10		
Assessment of the rider's effectiveness in riding a quality canter on the approach to the jump	10		
Assess suitability of rider/equine combination at this level.	10		
Performance: correct lines, rhythm and way of going.	20		

Total Pens

Total Marks	150		
Final Score and percentage			

..... %

Judge's Signature:

Date:



Proficiency Tests for RDA Showjumping



Recognise and reward your Showjumpers' achievements

Proficiency tests syllabuses, certificates and smart pin badges for all RDA Showjumping levels are available to order from RDA National Office, free of charge to RDA Groups, using the Group Order form.

- Further information is available on our website www.rda.org.uk and is also held by the Regional Showjumping Representatives and Showjumping Assessors.



Grade 1

- Riders may be led, and side walkers can be used. Minimum physical and verbal assistance is allowed.
- Establish an active walk with help if necessary, maintaining a balanced flatwork position, showing control when changing the rein, and riding halt transitions.
- Demonstrate holding a balanced light seat position at halt and walk, for a few strides
- Ride over the middle of a single pole in walk showing the light seat position for several strides on the approach, over and for a few strides after the pole. The rider must show or attempt to show light rein contact when riding over the poles.
- Show how to ride correct jumping lines on the approach and after the pole, while riding a course of four poles positioned between low wings. The course should include a change of rein. The rider must show or attempt to show light rein contact when riding over the poles.

Grade 2

Grade 1 must be achieved before attempting Grade 2. Riders may be led. Minimum physical and verbal assistance is allowed.

- Establish an active walk and trot with help if necessary, maintaining a balanced flatwork rising trot position, showing control when changing the rein and riding transitions
- Demonstrate holding a balanced jumping position at walk and trot, for a few strides
- Ride over the middle of a single pole in walk and trot, showing your jumping position for several strides on the approach, over and for a few strides after the pole. The rider must show or attempt to show light rein contact when riding over the poles
- Show how to ride correct jumping lines on the approach and after the jump, whilst riding a course of five jumps. The course should include a change of rein. Control and working in harmony with the horse / pony must be always demonstrated. The rider must show or attempt to show light rein contact when riding over the jumps
- A balanced, rhythmic and effective trot must be shown on the approach to each jump; however it is permitted to show canter on the landing after fences 1 and 3, and on the approach to jumps 2 and 4. The rider must then show trot before reaching the first corner after jump 2, and before riding through the finish gates (see Level 2 course plans for full details)

Heights and type of jumps should be set as per the Level 2 National Championships criteria.

Grade 3

Grade 2 must have been achieved before attempting Grade 3. Minimum verbal assistance is allowed, and the rider should be working independently

- Establish an active trot and canter, maintaining a balanced and effective flatwork position, showing control when changing the rein and riding transitions.
- Demonstrate holding a balanced jumping position at trot and canter for a few strides, with light rein contact
- Ride over the middle of several single poles placed on the ground, in trot and canter, showing your jumping position for several strides on the approach, over and for a few strides after the pole, with a light rein contact when riding over poles
- Show how to ride correct jumping lines on the approach and after the jump, whilst riding a course of five jumps. The course should include a change of rein. Control and working in harmony with the horse or pony at all times must be demonstrated. The rider must demonstrate light rein contact when riding over poles and jumps.
- Balanced, rhythmic, and effective canter must be shown on the approach to each jump; showing the jumping position for several strides on the approach, over and for a few strides after the jump. The rider should try to approach each jump on the correct canter lead. The rider must demonstrate light rein contact when riding over poles and jumps

Heights and types of jumps should be set as per the Level 3 National Championships criteria.

Grade 4

Grade 3 must have been achieved before attempting Grade 4. Minimum verbal assistance is allowed.

- Establish an active, rhythmic, balanced, and effective trot and canter, while performing warm up exercises on the flat and over poles. The rider should maintain a balanced, effective flatwork/jumping position, showing control when changing the rein and when riding transitions. The correct diagonal in trot and the correct lead in canter will need to be seen, with the rider using simple changes when required.
 - Demonstrate a balanced jumping position at trot and canter, while warming up over trotting poles and grid work. Show an active, rhythmic, balanced and effective canter; riding correct jumping lines and showing a balanced effective jumping position while riding over the centre of each element.
 - Demonstrate a balanced jumping position at trot and canter, while warming up over a single upright and spread. Show an active, rhythmic, balanced and effective canter; riding correct jumping lines and showing a balanced and effective jumping position while riding over the centre of each jump (simulating a show warm-up environment).
- Complete a course walk with your assessor and discuss the jumping lines you intend to ride. Walk one and two-stride doubles or related distances, and state how many strides you hope to ride between each element. Highlight where the start and finish is and discuss any areas within the course which may cause issues for you or for your horse. Discuss jump-off options. Ride the Level 4 course, following the course plan (or jumping lines if the arena is too small). Ride a course of jumps which may include a two-stride double. Uprights should include fillers and planks, and spreads should be used, with at least one related distance seen around the course. The height of each jump must be no higher than 70cm, and the spreads no wider, or higher, than 60cm. The rider will need to demonstrate riding through a start and a finish line and be aware of when to start the competition.
- Answer several basic questions relating to current RDA Showjumping competition rules

Grade 5

Level 4 must have been achieved before attempting Level 5. Minimum verbal assistance is allowed. Riders with visual impairment may follow a lead horse. All other riders must ride independently.

- Show knowledge of the correct tack, attire, and additional permitted aids to be used at this level of competition, following both RDA and British Showjumping rules
- Have a basic knowledge of RDA and BS competition rules for Level 5, and be able to confidently answer related questions, regarding qualifying for and competing at the RDA National Championships. The rider's understanding of their own profile / classification will be discussed, if appropriate.
- Complete a course walk, if possible, discussing showjumping lines, distances, and obstacles
- Show effective use of the aids, whilst in walk, trot, and canter in the flatwork position, whilst riding a series of flatwork exercises to improve the horse's way of going. Work in a balanced position, showing that you are always working in harmony with the horse.
- Prepare the horse ready to start jumping, by using pole work
- Show that you are in balance and working in harmony with the horse, whilst jumping a course of fences set no higher than 80cm. Show an effective position; changing diagonals and leads when appropriate, whilst maintaining a balanced, rhythmic, and controlled canter throughout.

Successful candidates will receive a proficiency test certificate and enamel pin badge.



Who can Judge *RDA Competitions*

RDA Competition Level	Regional Showjumping Coach	Level 3 Showjumping Coach	Level 2 Showjumping Coach	Level 1 Showjumping Coach
Level 1	✓	✓	✓	✓
Level 2	✓	✓	✓	
Level 3	✓	✓		
Level 4	✓			
Level 5	With Current SJ judge experiences			

Who can Assess *RDA Proficiency Tests*

RDA Proficiency Test	Regional Showjumping Coach	Level 3 Showjumping Coach	Level 2 Showjumping Coach	Level 1 Showjumping Coach
Level 1	✓	✓	✓	
Level 2	✓	✓	✓	
Level 3	✓	✓		
Level 4	✓			
Level 5	Nominated by Show Jumping Lead			





NOTES

