

Vaulting and Riding Hat Guidelines



Competition Rule (From 1st January 2025)

From 1st January 2025, all participants must wear a hat when competing at RDA competitions, on a barrel or an equine. The only exception is if an Advanced Vaulting Coach has completed an assessment and signed a certificate of competence form saying a participant does not need to wear one. This form is available on MyRDA.

Group Sessions

For **Group Vaulting sessions on an equine** all participants must wear a hat unless an Advanced Vaulting Coach has completed an assessment and signed a certificate of competence form saying a participant does not need to wear one.

For **Group Vaulting sessions on a barrel** each Group can decide whether a participant should wear a hat or not. However, they must complete a risk assessment for each participant. This assessment will look at the participant's movement, balance, and control, as well as the difficulty of the moves and how many participants are vaulting together. The Group must update this assessment if anything changes, such as the participant's ability, the equine being used, or the equipment. The criteria that Advanced Vaulting Coaches will be using for their assessments that can be used as part of this risk assessment.

Why Have the Rules Changed?

Vaulting involves performing gymnastic moves on a barrel or a moving equine. It is a team effort between the vaulter, the equine and the lunger, who controls the equine.

Scottish Equestrian Vaulting (SEV), British Equestrian Vaulting (BEV) and Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) do not require a riding hat to be worn. This is because hats can block vision, make balancing harder, and affect a participant's ability to work closely with each other. Some vaulting moves/positions of higher complexity or involving multiple participants vaulting together require head/neck placement by the participant in which wearing a hat could cause a danger, increasing the risk of falling or injury.

The research* available has investigated injuries during Equestrian Vaulting but only with non-disabled vaulters, and vaulters with multiple years of experience. This is not representative of the participants in RDA Vaulting.

This research has shown that leg and orthopaedic injuries are more common in vaulting than head injuries.

*Studies used:

Injuries on vaulting (Raschka, et al. 2017)

Injuries during Equestrian Vaulting (Endruweit et. al. 2016),

Injuries in equestrian vaulting: results of a prospective study (Zarghooni et al 2018)

Severe equestrian injuries: A seven-year review of admissions to a UK major trauma centre' (Gharooni et al 2021)

(May 2025)

Keeping Vaulting Safe

Before each vaulting session, Groups must conduct risk assessments. This should include checking the vaulting area, equipment, volunteers, and the warm-up routine for the participant. If new risks appear during a session, the risk assessment should be updated straight away.

All participants must have a completed Applicant Assessment Form, which must be conducted by a Vaulting/Barrel Vaulting Coach or Physiotherapist:

<https://myrda.org.uk/assets/Applicant-Assessment-Form-COMPLETED-.pdf>

Participants and/or their parents/guardians should have regular check-ins with the Group to discuss any changes to the participant's conditions. If there are any concerns, groups can ask an RDA Regional Physiotherapist for advice.

Equines must be at least seven years old and thoroughly assessed for their suitability. If there are any concerns around an equine, they should be removed from vaulting activities and reassessed by a vaulting coach. The longer and equine partnership must also be assessed together for a session longer than 10 minutes, by an Advanced Vaulting Coach, or BEV Level 2 Coach, before participants can take part.

Training for Safety

Vaulting training includes instructing participants on dismounting safely and Vaulting Coaches are encouraged to teach ways to land and fall safely to reduce the risk of injury.

Summary

Before deciding whether a participant wears a riding hat for **Group Vaulting session on a barrel**, a risk assessment must be completed and kept up to date. Participants should be assessed for their balance, movement, and control. If an equine is used, its behaviour must also be considered as even well-trained equines can act unpredictably.

Groups must communicate their decisions clearly with participants and parents/guardians so that everyone understands how to reduce the risk of injury.

For **Competitions and Group Vaulting Sessions on an equine**, participants must wear a riding hat unless they have been assessed and have a Certificate of Competence signed by an Advanced Vaulting Coach. A copy of this certificate must be returned to the National Office, and another copy must be kept by the group.

If you need help finding an Advanced Vaulting Coach, please contact the RDA National Office.