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## **2019 FEI Rules revision - Endurance**

### **EEF Endurance Working Group feedback**

This document is the follow up of a large consultation process of European Endurance stakeholders referring to the FEI 2020 Endurance rules proposal prepared by the FEI Endurance Temporary Committee.

It started a founding meeting the 19th of december 2019 ([minutes](#)), followed by several meetings and permanent discussions.

The following NFs have participated : AUT, BEL, BUL, ESP, FRA, GER, IRL, ITA, NED, NOR, SUI, SVK, SWE, UKR with representatives coming from all stakeholders group of endurance : rider, official, chef d'équipe, trainer, discipline manager, timing provider.

These recommendations have been elaborated taking in account the diversity within european continent but also with the awareness of the worldwide challenges, for a sustainable future of this equestrian discipline.



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## B.1 Criteria for test Events

European Equestrian Federation Endurance Working Group position - EEF WG :

In addition to the ETC recommendation, we request that **the test event must be organized one year before the Championship**, at the same period of the year and on the same distance.

Reasoning :

This would allow/force a better preparation from OC, FEI and participants point of view especially referring weather conditions at this time of the year, and course design. It would also give the chance to find an alternative solution in the case of a negative test event.

OC and location endurance background are main criterias.

## B.2 Minimum Rider Weight

EEF WG general statement :

It is a general consensus of the community that the lower the weight is, the fastest the speed can be. There is no objective scientific studies defining the weight (75kg) as a real cause of horse injuries. Insufficient riding competences - alone or combined - with excessive speed, doping and corruptions are the main causes of horse injuries.

We remind also that there are many examples of winning combinations with extra weight or without at the highest level.

Consequently weight control is a crucial lever which must be used.

Please find below our recommendations, having in mind that our main queries are in term of : horse welfare, accessibility to the largest population scope possible even at the highest level of the sport, fair and competitive sport.

It is very important to note that even if it is clear that weight control is a crucial lever in term of horse welfare and also to ensure a fair and competitive sport, rider controls and weight controls keep being cheated too often and easily at events including recent championships.

In addition to the rules evolution it is first of all required to fully implement the rules in all events, for all riders.

### **Minimum rider weight for all Young Riders and Juniors competitions**

EEF WG position : **60 kg as the minimum weight.**

Reasoning :

After reviewing population studies made between 2000 and 2018 for children between 0 and 18 years old, based on 6743 subjects, the EEF Endurance Working Group has seen that the most typical weight for females at 16 to 18 years old is 58kg while for males it is 65 kg at 16 and 71 kg at 18. It is quite common in Endurance to see nowadays more and



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more athletes with much lower weight in this class of competition going as low as 35 kg in some cases, and as such, our proposal is to put a minimum weight of at least 60 kg in YR/Junior competitions which serves as a double function : firstly ensures that speed is lowered for horses, and secondly, it helps protect the health of athletes by ensuring there exists a manageable range where they know that reducing their weight further will have no impact on their performance.

### **Minimum rider weight for all Senior 2\* and 1\* competitions.**

EEF WG position : **70 kg as the minimum weight.**

Reasoning :

This minimum will contribute to a more normal evolution through the different competition levels and will be also positive in terms of speed management.

### **Minimum rider weight for 3\* Championships**

Reasoning : the consensus is not total about 70-75kg but we are mainly supporting to keep the minimum weight as it is for all the reasons listed above, with an evolution for ponies <149cm with a minimum weight of 70kg. Based on the validation and the efficiency of the new general rules proposed for pony measurements, it would give the opportunity to take in account 2 different minimum rider weights for horses (75kg) and ponies (70kg).

## **B.3 - Maximum number of starters**

EEF WG position : **maximum 200 starters per day.**

Reasoning :

400 starters in a single day are always impossible to manage, and any number above 200 per day is not manageable by Stewards and Judges, no matter their number.

## **B.4 - Increase sanctions for removing a horse from the field of play**

EEF WG position : **we do support the FEI ETC proposal**

Reasoning :

We do support proposals to have stronger sanctions for all type of contravention to the rules, especially in case of horse welfare and cheating issues.



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## B.5 - Course design

EEF WG position : **we support most of the proposal but we ask to let the possibility of 5 or + loops for 160km competitions for events usually won under 20km/h.**

Reasoning :

In case of flat tracks and extreme weather conditions 6 loops are required to have a better horse monitoring. On other events where the speed is naturally limited by the lay out of the course, there is no benefit to have 6 loops, it may be even counter productive. So we recommend to keep the current flexibility offered by 5 or 6 loops (taking into account that loops will no longer be lower than 20km), which may helps Organizing Committees and FEI Officials to find the best solution.

In addition with remind our position in favor of **natural tracks, technicals without artificials modifications of the surface**. Depending of the areas courses may be more flat than others but may never be artificially build flat and not using all the natural opportunities as slopes, turns... Without controlling that low level of riding skills from the rider and excessive speeds are encouraged.

## B.6 - Heart rate parameters and presentation times

EEF WG position : **we do support the proposal of presentation times but not the specific proposal concerning “Re inspection HR” for Vet Gates in the 2nd half of the course distance that we would remove.**

Reasoning :

We believe that Presentation Times changes are positives and effectives. It will allow to review the situation over a long period to see its impact and see if further changes are needed.

Moreover being conscious that the current Heart Rate monitors that are mainly used have quite wide error ranges, we believe it is very dangerous to the competition to consider 68 a number upon which to eliminate directly without the chance for a Re-inspection. Before to make any change we would request the guarantee of an higher reliability of the heart rate monitors. At the current stage if there is the willingness to keep a maximum heart rate it may be increased to 72 bpm.

## B.7 - Number of crew

EEF WG position : as there is no full consensus for 3 instead of 5 we may support **4 as a compromise.**



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Reasoning :

We support the reduction of crew members and recommend stricter controls in order to facilitate controls and stop current drifts.

## B.8 - Tack/Equipment & Horse abuse

EEF WG position : **we support the review on tack and equipment, but we do not support that henna and creams are being banned.**

Reasoning :

There is no explanations in the Memo on the reason why henna and creams may be forbidden, but please find below our remarks.

Henna and cream have therapeutical attributes. In endurance it is used especially on the legs to prevent skin cracks and dermatites troubles which can appear quite often as this discipline is a continuous long exercise over an entire day on natural tracks. Type of horse skin, type of footing, heat and dryness/humidity are parameters which have an influence on the use of this protection.

If the reason to propose to forbid it was to not alter the horse identification, we remind that thanks to the chip it is easy to be sure of the horse identification in case of doubt.

If the reason was to prevent a visual barrier to not see an injection we would more recommend an higher vigilance of stewards and judges and of course we are not supporting a perverse or abusive use of these substances as all others.

We remind that we are fully supporting any project of hyposensitivity tests which would tackle abuses without prohibiting the good use of henna and cream by those who use it as a protection and so positive in terms of horse welfare.

## B.9 - The role of the trainer

Reasoning :

**We do support this proposal which is in the best interest of the trainer to know his horses better and can also prevent late changes which may not help to adopt adequate sanctions on the right person in case of need.**

## B.10 - Targeted mandatory out of competition periods

EEF WG position : **we do support the proposal with 1 exception as we suggest to take in account national competitions for the entire rule, elimination, successful ride ... not only for the eliminations.**



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Reasoning :

We note that the amount of consecutive FTQ-GA are being reduced from five to four in order to ban a horse from Endurance for life, taking into account both International and National competitions. However, currently, National competitions are only taken into account when the Horse is eliminated but not when the Horse completes the ride successfully, which seems not fair.

## B.11 - Qualification from CEI 1\* to Championship

**As we already stated at previous steps of the consultation process, we are opposed to the proposed concept : completion rate, cap speed, CEI events qualification.** We do not support it as it is far from the conception of the endurance sport from European and many other stakeholders perspectives.

Endurance may be a real sport like it is practised in most cases, in the only possible way : fair, progressive from the access level to the highest standard (sport value must not be decrease), with a key combination of an educate rider and a well trained horse. The sport must be fair, simple to understand/control, having in mind that the competition may be practiced in most parts of the world.

The proposed system is excessive, complicated, non realistic. Even within the memo and the rules it is complicated to understand, so it would be very difficult/impossible to apply, not respected and so not fair and ineffective.

It would place endurance in a counter productive situation, forcing the ones (large majority) who are currently respecting the rules to change due to incorrect behaviours of the few who are not respecting the rules... Again, to tackle the drifts we may first apply strongly the sport regulation (based on the current one + some updates) and apply stronger sanctions for any case of cheating/doping/corruption.

Any other changes would be useless as the core of the problem may not be reached.

We believe that Endurance is a competition and should remain a competitive sport. Horse discipline with the biggest amount of veterinary controls and in most cases high level of horse caring, which is where focus should be stressed on making sure Officials are properly trained and can work in conditions allowing them to be effective.

The number of kilometers asked for the qualification process of a horse is excessive and counter productive in term of horse welfare. The proposal of 3 CEI1\* after the novice qualification is an example of the weaknesses of the proposal. Please refer to our proposal much more progressive from the novice qualification to the highest levels.

Speed cap concept would be inadequate. It is not taking in account the location, terrain, weather which from one show to another may evolve critically. A same speed may be the winner's speed by one hilly event and really low for a more flat one.



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As it is average speed cap it will not tackle the excessive speeds and horses stopping or walking just before to cross the line in order to decrease their speed datas.

It is also forgetting that with a worldwide approach most of CEI organizers do not have automatic timekeeping systems to help elaborate the result. It would marginalize the practice of Endurance in different areas with a negative effect either on development and on top sport.

Completion rate proposal, cannot be implemented at this stage. It does not differentiate the type of eliminations which would be required in case of potential use of this tool in the future. compulsory. Using athlete examples as Jean Philippe Frances or Alex Luque, any system like this that when applied would limit their participations even if they are respected athletes by their results and behaviors. By consequence we suggest to study more into details in the coming seasons how it could be positive asset, if it can be ...

In order to settle a more progressive competition pathway which is with the correct application of the rules and a stronger sanctions system the only way to build a sustainable future for the discipline of endurance, we recommend to put in place the

		CEN 40 km	CENx2 CEIx1 80 km	2* 120-125 km	4* 160-165 km	Total
Current system	Km	40	80	120	160	
	Nb of rides	2	3	1	1	7
	Km/stage	80	240	120	160	600

		National			FEI				Total
		CEN 40 km	CEN 60 km	CEN 80 km	1* 100 km	2* 120 km	3* 140 km	4* 160 km	
European Equestrian Federation Endurance Working Group proposal 1	Km	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	
	Nb of rides	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	10
	Km/stage	80	120	160	100	120	140	160	880

		National			FEI			Total
		CEN 40 km	CEN 60 km	CEN 80 km	1* 100 km	2* 130 km	3* 160 km	
European Equestrian Federation Endurance Working Group proposal 2	Km	40	60	80	100	120	160	
	Nb of rides	2	2	2	1	1	1	9
	Km/stage	80	120	160	100	120	160	740

following concept : By proposing this we are aware of the need to adjust the qualification system to help the worldwide balance and a sustainable growth of the discipline. It is progressive from the lowest levels to the highest.

By no means the FEI ETC proposal for qualification referring : cap speed, completion rate, competition levels, number of rides... will find our support.

#### Art. 841 Qualification for championships

EEF WG position:

**We support the riders qualification proposal, the combination ride but not the horses qualification proposal.**



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### **New Elite status as extra championships requirement.**

Reasoning :

We are aware that the current elite status may evolve, nevertheless as we discussed from last winter, we would be in favor of modifying it but not to make it honorary.

We suggest to use it as an additional requirement to participate to the championships, for all riders willing to compete in a championship. Taking into account that depending on the part of Europe and of the world, the access to the international competition may be +/- challenging we recommend to decrease from 10 to 5 the number of successful 160km rides.

Horse qualification proposal is inadequate and excessive.

## **B.12 - Officials**

EEF WG position : **we do support the concept and would see some evolution especially regarding the IGA.**

Reasoning :

IGA reports seem to be very ineffective and their true independence limited. We would like to see bigger independence and transparency being applied in the IGA system, by making these reports public so that public scrutiny can be certain they are acted upon and their contents reflect the events that arrive in competitions.

## **B.13 - Visible blood**

EEF WG position: **we do support the FEI ETC proposal.**

Reasoning :

The way of control and decision making process corresponds to what we expect.

## **C.1 - Extension of period for reporting rules violations**

EEF WG position : **we do support FEI ETC recommendation** and so disagree with the FEI Bureau position.

Reasoning :

As explained by the FEI ETC the specificity of the discipline may be taken into account for this point.



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## C.2 - Increase sanctions for horse abuse

EEF WG position : **we do support FEI ETC recommendation** and so disagree with the FEI Bureau position.

Reasoning :

As we consider stronger sanctions system as a key lever to tackle specific drifts of the discipline we do not see the FEI multidisciplinary proposal as sufficiently strong and adequate with endurance situation.

We disagree with the fact that an efficient lever facing the core of the problems would not be fully activated or be postponed, especially when in the meantime some changes not facing it are promoted.



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## Additional comments on 2020 Endurance regulations project :

### **Art 802.6**

National competitions should remain a viable way for O.C.s to fund their events. An O.C. cannot request that a National event to be held 4 days before the competition starts, since most National Federations require their calendars to be in place since the previous year, and competitors must train their horses and plan for these competitions. It is unrealistic for the FEI to propose that a National ride be organized only after definite entries have been declared.

### **841.2.2**

Young Horse Championships requiring five 1\* events to be completed makes it unrealistic that any Horse will be available to compete in this Championship.

### **Timing and heart rate system**

In order to stop discussions and suspicions, we insist that FEI may :

- label and closely control timing and heart rate systems used on international events.
- control itself all championships with an FEI system, totally independent from any involved endurance stakeholders.

At this stage too much datas are approximatives and/or modified which is damageable for the actual sport but also for the future because it is not helping scientific studies and analysis based on these figures to be accurates.

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## Useful additional documents to go more into details

- EEF Working Group meeting minutes, 19th of December 2019 : [click here](#)
- EEF Press release : The European Equestrian Community focuses on Endurance, 20th of February 2019 : [click here](#)
- EEF Press release : EEF shares the European view about endurance worldwide, 14th of June 2019 : [click here](#)
  
- FEI Endurance 2020 rules project, 08th of July 2019 : [click here](#)
- FEI Endurance memo "Proposed modifications to FEI Endurance rules for 2020" : [click here](#)





