

## 2025 Rule Amendment Synopsis

This document outlines the major rule changes in the 2025 British Dressage Members' Handbook to help members identify new and edited rules ahead of the upcoming season. Any altered or new rules are marked in bold in the handbook, which is available to view, search and download on the British Dressage website.

### Equine Welfare

**Ref: Code of Conduct for Horse Welfare (page 15)**

**Summary:** *Inclusion of noseband measuring device and update to sensory hairs rule.*

A new noseband measuring device has been approved by the FEI and will be introduced at international competitions from May 2025. This will be trialled at national competitions during the winter qualification season in the second half of 2025, before a full implementation and roll-out from 1 January 2026 onwards. British Dressage will notify riders in advance of any competition or championship to confirm when this universal measuring tool will be used for trial purposes.

From 1 July 2025, trimming of the hair within the rims of the auricles is no longer permitted. Area of hair that must be clipped or shaven to allow veterinary treatment are exempt from this rule and a veterinary certificate must be sent to the British Dressage Head Office address for verification and approval.

### Tack, Equipment and Riding the Test

[View the Tack & Equipment Guide](#)

### Competitor Dress

**Ref: Rule 78 Coats / jackets / waistcoats / shirts (page 123)**

**Summary:** *Waistcoats permitted at Championships.*

Any single colour tailcoat or jacket or fitted **waistcoat** will be allowed. Tweed jackets and **waistcoats** are permitted but should not have bold patterns.

Accents, such as collars, cuffs or points of a different hue, modest patterns (including pinstripes) or crystal decorations are permitted.

A suitable long or short sleeved shirt of a solid colour is to be worn. **It should be fastened at the neck with a tie, a round collar or a fastened stock.**

Navy jackets with red waistcoat points and red collars with white piping may not be used as this style signifies a British Team rider.

Gilets are not permitted. Plain, waterproof jackets may be worn in wet weather.

**Ref: Rule 86 Spurs (page 125)**

**Summary:** *Restriction on the length and type of spur for FEI Children on Horses and FEI Pony classes.*

There is no restriction on the type of shank and rowels that are permitted provided that they are free to rotate horizontally or vertically. Rowels with points must have rounded ends. **In specific Children on Horses and FEI Pony classes, only blunt metal spurs are allowed. In these classes, the shank may not be longer than 3.5cm, measured from the boot to the tip, and spurs with rowels are not allowed.**

**Ref: Rule 216 & 221. General rules for the British Dressage Young Horse & Pony Championships including qualifiers (page 209)**

Only blunt spurs without rowels may be worn for Young Horse and Pony Classes.

**Ref: Rule 87. Whips (page 126)**

**Summary:** *Maximum length of whip introduced at all competition.*

Riders may carry one whip, para riders with dispensation may carry a whip(s) appropriate to their dispensation certificate in all classes. **Whips may be no longer than 1.20m to include the full length of the handle, shaft, and any flexible tip.**

**For riders on ponies, whips may be no longer than 1.00m to include the full length of the handle, shaft and any flexible tip.**

**Ref: Rule 88. Commanders (page 128)**

**Summary:** *Clarification regarding the use of electronic communication devices in competition and warm up spaces.*

Dispensation must be granted by BD for the use of headsets and will only be permitted when an independent adult stands next to the caller to check that only words from the test are used.

Speaker watches are not permitted. **Hearing aids are exempt from this ruling, but they must not be connected to a communication device.**

**Ref: 89. Headsets / earphones / communication devices (page 129)**

**Summary:** *Clarification regarding the use of electronic communication devices in competition and warm up spaces.*

**Electronic communication devices are permitted during training and warm-up;** however, this must be discussed with the venue prior to warming up as some devices may cause interference and feedback on PA systems. **The organiser has the right to request that the device is not used.**

Communication devices must not be used in the competition arena and such usage is penalised by elimination. **Mobile devices (e.g. Phone / smart watches) may be carried into the competition arena, but they must be on silent and not used for communication purposes. Mobile communication devices carried in the warm-up arena must be used responsibly.**

Unless a formal dispensation has been granted in accordance with rule 90, earphones are prohibited in the competition arena, and such usage is penalised by elimination.

**The use of earphones or similar devices is permitted during training and warm-up but must only be worn in one ear.**

**Hearing aids are exempt from this ruling; however, they must not be connected to a communication device.**

### **Saddlery & Tack**

**Ref: Rule 97 Other additions to tack / equipment and gadgets (page 135)**

Kinesiology Tape is not permitted in the warm-up arena.

At a championship, any not permitted tack and equipment must be removed before the rider enters the space around the competition arena. Failure to do so will result in elimination. Where a rider has failed to remove such tack and equipment as they have entered the arena space, they may continue to ride their test, and judges will continue to mark. However, the elimination will stand and be marked accordingly on the results.

**Ref: Rule 100 Stallions (page 136)**

Stallions are to be identified by the rider wearing a yellow cross band or stallion disc on the bridle. White ribbon may also be worn in the forelock and tail. Non-compliance will result in a two-mark deduction.

### **Para Equestrian Rules**

**Ref: Rule 21 Eligibility for Para Dressage (page 73)**

Non-disabled riders are not permitted to compete in any British Dressage affiliated para competition.

**Ref: Rule 27 Pick your own tests (Para) (page 76)**

At non-disabled competition where there is a scheduled FEI PYO class, Silver and Gold para riders may ride their respective para test and gain points towards relevant qualifications. The same test cannot be ridden twice in a day / class.

## **Ref: Rule 28 Qualification for Para Championships (page 78/79)**

### **Gold Para Summer National Championships and Gold Para Semi Final**

Six of the 12 points required may come from CPEDI 3\*s and/or a Para PYO and/or FEI PYO (Para Grand Prix Test B only), where a class is judged by a non-para judge of List 3 or above.

For a Para PYO and/or FEI PYO (Grand Prix Test B only), where a class is judged by a Para judge, all points gained may be used towards qualification

### **Silver Para Summer and Winter Championships**

Five of the 10 points required may come from CPEDI 2\*s and/or para PYO and/or FEI PYO (Para Intermediate Test A only), where the class is judged by a non-para judge of List 3 or above.

For a Para PYO and/or FEI PYO (Para Intermediate Test A only), where a class is judged by a Para judge. All points gained may be used towards qualification.

## **Eligibility and Rules**

### **Ref: Rule 35, 38, 41, 44, 47 (page 85 – 99)**

**Summary:** *Updates to Silver eligibility from Preliminary – Advanced Medium*

Additional protection for Preliminary up to Elementary when points are gained at Grand Prix by either horse or rider.

Riders who have competed at Grand Prix and scored 65% in the previous four years are also excluded from riding in silver classes at Medium and Advanced Medium.

Combinations who score 65% at a Regional are no longer ineligible to ride in Silver classes at the level below. Instead, combinations who compete at the Winter or National Championships are ineligible to ride in Silver classes at the level below.

To see eligibility tables in full, please [click here](#).

### **Preliminary Silver**

As a rider (on any horse) have you:

- Competed at Advanced Medium or above at Premier League in the last four years (including music)?
- Gained 60% or higher at Grand Prix including premier League or Championships (including PYO and Music)?

Has your horse (with any rider):

- Gained 60% or higher at Grand Prix including Premier League or Championships (including PYO and Music) in the last four years?

As a combination have you:

- Competed at Music / Winter / National Championships at Novice or above?

### **Novice Silver**

As a rider (on any horse) have you:

- Competed at PSG or above at Premier League in the last four years including music?
- Gained 60% or higher at Grand Prix including Premier League or Championships (including PYO and Music)?

Has your horse (with any rider):

- Gained 60% or higher at Grand Prix (including PYO and Music) in the last four years?

As a combination have you:

- Competed at Music / Winter / National Championships at Elementary or above?

### **Elementary Silver**

As a rider (on any horse) have you:

- Competed at PSG or above at Premier League in the last four years including Music?
- Gained 60% or higher at Grand Prix including Premier League or Championships (including PYO and Music)?

Has your horse (with any rider):

- Gained 60% or higher at Grand Prix (including PYO and Music) in the last four years?

As a combination have you:

- Competed at Music / Winter / National Championships at Medium or above?

## **Medium Silver**

As a rider (on any horse) have you:

- Competed at Inter I or above at Premier League in the last four years including music?
- Scored 65% or higher in any Grand prix in the last four years (including PYO and Music)?

Has your horse (with any rider):

- Scored 65% or higher at Grand Prix (including PYO and Music) in the last four years?

As combination have you:

- Competed at Music / Winter / national Championships at Advanced Medium or above?

## **Advanced Medium Silver**

As a rider (on any horse) have you:

- Scored 65% or higher in any Grand Prix in the last four years (including PYO and Music)?

Has your horse (with any rider):

- Scored 65% or higher in any Grand Prix in the last four years (including PYO and Music)?

As a combination have you:

- Competed at Music / Winter / National Championships at PSG or above?

To see eligibility tables in full, please [click here](#).

## **Ref: Rule 49 and 210. Eligibility for Premier Leagues (page 101)**

**Summary:** *Minimum Eligibility Requirements to compete at a Premier League for all class levels scheduled.*

To be eligible to compete in a Premier League, combinations must have achieved a minimum of 63% in a regular competition at that level, not including music, and have met the minimum criteria as per rule 49. Group 2 riders are exempt, up to and including Inter I, and Group 1 are exempt at all levels.

**This does not apply to riders who are competing in the specific U21 FEI age classes (Children on Horses, Pony, Junior and Young Rider) at Premier Leagues.**

## Entries & competitions

### Ref: Rule 61. Hors Concours (HC) (page 109)

**Summary:** *Clarification regarding eligibility when competing HC.*

Riders wishing to compete HC in any class must make this request on their entry form. HC competitors will not be eligible for any prize or prize money, and their scores do not need to be shown on the scoreboard. Horse and rider must be registered with BD and must comply with BD rules in all respects.

- **If a rider competes HC, this will be recorded on their competition record, marked as 'HC', but no score will be visible.**
- **A rider can compete a horse HC without any restriction or impact on eligibility for either horse/rider.**
- **Advanced 1 & 2 tests cannot be ridden HC.**
- **If competing HC at PSG or above, the MER as outlined in rule 49 must have been achieved.**
- Riders competing HC must abide by all the tack rules appropriate for the level at which they are competing, including the warm-up.
- A horse may not be ridden competitively in a class if it has already been ridden HC in the same class by another rider on the same competition day.
- HC tests are not permitted at Regional Championships, Winter/National Championships, **Premier League direct qualifying classes**, Area Festivals and Area Festival Championships, Quest Semi-Finals and Quest Championships, and Associated Championships.

Under no circumstances may a rider declare to be HC after the class commences. Those riding HC will not gain any points. Riders may not compete HC at any championship with the exception of those riders awarded a selectors wildcard/invite.

### Ref: Rule 62 Pick Your Own classes (PYO) (page 109)

**Summary:** *As all tests are now qualifiers, FEI PYO tests can be used towards qualification.*

FEI PYO classes may be used to qualify for Area Festivals and Regional Championships, including Winter Music and Summer Area Festival Music Championships.

**Ref: Rule 205 Qualification requirements for Winter Music Regional Championships (page 200)**

Scores gained in FEI PYO Music classes may be used towards Winter Music Regional qualification. Members must notify the Championship Officer at the BD Office via email if they want results gained from FEI PYO classes to be included in their total.

**National Championships**

**Ref: 213 Intermediate II Gold (page 205)**

Automatic qualification will be allocated to the selected combinations for that years U25 European Championships for those that compete in the U25 Intermediate II class.

**Associated Championships**

**Ref: Rule 137 & 138 (page 160)**

**Summary:** *Allocation of grading points and removal of class tickets for qualification to the Championships and clarification around eligibility during the qualification season.*

- Grading points will be allocated from results obtained at the Associated Championships.
- Members will no longer be able to use a class ticket towards qualification to the Associated Championships.
- Once qualification is achieved a horse/rider/combination may subsequently upgrade and maintain the qualification (unless otherwise stated within the rules).

**Section 5 Annexes**

**Summary:** *Updates and inclusion of new policies from page 224 – 259:*

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures  
Rules Adjudication Procedures  
Members Feedback Procedures  
Whistleblowing Policy  
British Dressage Legal Assist Line  
British Dressage Members Insurance