



**Riding for the
Disabled
Association of
Australia Limited**

Rules for Competitions 2022



RDA STATE/TERRITORY OFFICES (to be updated annually)

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PREAMBLE

The following Rules for Competition have been adopted by RDAA Limited and must be followed by **all bodies conducting events for that association**.

They follow, as closely as practicable, the rules adopted of the Federation Equestrian International Para- equestrian (FEI PE) and the Equestrian Australia (EA), Dressage, Showjumping Rules, Mounted Games and Groundwork Games.

The generic rules have been, from time to time, adjusted to allow Australian riders with disabilities to integrate into mainstream competition. Should problems arise which are not covered by these rules, the RDAA should be consulted.

Clearly, all potential situations cannot be predicted; therefore, in any unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, it is the duty of the Ground Jury to decide, **in a sporting spirit**, whilst adhering as closely as possible to the intent of these rules.

Glossary of Abbreviations

APC	Australian Paralympic Committee
EA	Equestrian Australia (National Federation)
FEI	Federation Equestrian International
PE	Para-equestrian
RDA	Riding for the Disabled Association (State Offices and Centers)
RDAA	Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Limited (National Office)
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
SPORTAUS	Sport Australia.
SO	Special Olympics
VIRTUS Sport	Elite sport for Athletes with an intellectual impairment.

Web Sites

www.rda.org.au	Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia
www.fei.org	Federation Equestrian International
www.equestrian.org.au	Equestrian Federation of Australia
www.specialolympics.org	Special Olympics
www.virtus.sport	Virtus

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PART 1 – GENERAL RULES FOR COMPETITION

1.1 Objective

RDAA resolves to provide competition opportunities for equestrian athletes with disabilities to achieve their personal best performance in their chosen discipline.

The object of riding in competition is to improve balance, control, mobility, general fitness, memory and freedom.

The objective for the horse is to develop physique and ability harmoniously, making the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the rider

The horse thus gives the impression of doing, of his own accord, what is required of him, confident and attentive.

1.2 Code of Conduct

The Horse

- The well-being of the horse shall be above the demands of the breeders, trainers, riders, owners, dealers, organisers, sponsors or officials.
- All handling and veterinary treatment must ensure the health and welfare of the horse.
- The highest standards of nutrition, health and sanitation and safety should be encouraged.
- Adequate provision must be made for ventilation, feeding, watering and maintaining a healthy environment during transport.
- In the interest of the horse, the fitness and competence of the rider shall be regarded as essential.
- All riding and training must consider the horse as a living entity and must not include any technique considered by the FEI PE or RDAA as abusive.
- State officials should establish adequate controls in order that all persons and bodies under their jurisdiction respect the welfare of the horse.
- The National and International Rules and Regulations in equestrian sport regarding the health and welfare of the horse must be adhered to not only during national events but also in training. Rules and Regulations shall be continually reviewed to ensure such welfare.

Code of Conduct

The Rider

- The following is a code of conduct that is expected of all riders and persons involved in RDA Competition under the auspices of RDAA.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all people involved in equestrian (including all participants, officials and administrators) regardless of gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, cultural background or religion
- Riders must not have used or administered any substance that, if it had been detected as being present in the rider's body tissue or fluids, would have constituted doping as defined in the Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Ltd NATIONAL INTEGRITY FRAMEWORK Improper Use of Drugs and Medicine Policy.
- Riders should, at all times, act in such a manner so as to not bring the athlete, the sport of equestrian or RDAA into public disrepute or censure.
- Organisers, Carers, Coaches and persons supporting a rider must ensure they do not breach their duty of care. Safety of such rider and all those involved with the competition is paramount.
- Riders are expected to act within the word and intent of these rules, showing good sportsmanship at all time
- Riders are expected to treat the horses they ride, whether their own or borrowed from others, with consideration, respect and to the best of their ability. FEI Code of Conduct for Welfare of the Horse.
- Riders are expected to be good ambassadors for RDAA, Equestrian sport and for themselves.
- Riders are expected to follow the directions of their Coaches and Chef d'Equipe (Team Managers) with good grace and in a timely and respectful manner.

Riders, Carers, Coaches should complete all paperwork, entries and payment of fees before the due date.

1.3 Definitions

Dressage Event - is composed of one or more competitions between individual mounted competitors, performing specified Dressage tests.

Freestyle Dressage - is dressage set to music. Riders must perform pre-determined movements that can be choreographed in any order

Working Trails – is an obstacle course which will be judged out of 10 for performance at each obstacle and measured against the clock.

Barrel Race- is a Novelty event in which a rider and their horse attempt to complete a cloverleaf pattern around preset barrels in the fastest time.

Bending Race- is a Novelty event with five poles placed 5.5meters apart, competitors start on the left side of the first pole and bend right and left alternatively through the pegs then turn right at the end pole and bend back, if a pole is broken or knocked down elimination will occur, the fastest time wins.

Show Jumping - Is an event graded over show Jumps as per EA rules.

Novelty Riders Competition- includes Barrel racing and Bending races.

Groundwork games- Is an unmounted event where competitors lead their mounts through and around a series of obstacles.

Bell - includes any device used by the Chief Judge to signal to a competitor, e.g., car horn or whistle to start or stop.

Organising Committee - refers to an organisation, group, Organising Committee or body which is responsible for the management of an event.

State - refers to State, Territory or visiting Nation.

Associate members- refers to paid up members of RDAA.

Warm Up and Training Area - refers to the area designated for warm-up or training; each discipline will have a specific warm up area.

Chief Judge - refers to the dressage judge positioned at "C". in Dressage.

Show Jump Judge - is the person who scores the rider at each obstacle.

Gymkhana Judge- is the person who oversees the start and finish of each competitor in each Novelty event.

Technical Delegate (TD) - is the senior steward responsible for the technical detail.

Chief Steward (CS) - works to ensure compliance and the smooth running of the competition.

Gear Check Steward - work with the CS.

Chef d'equipe - Team manager responsible for team organisation and liaising with OC.

1.4 RDAA Official Competitions

To obtain the details related to a particular competition the appropriate Organising Committee should be consulted.

Note: Competition rules change periodically and it is the responsibility of competitors, judges and organisers to ensure that they are using the correct, current rules.

Who may conduct Competition Events?

Any organisation that includes competitions for people with disabilities, in consultation with RDAA.

Conditions of Entry

Riders or their authorised representative must have completed the official entry form, provided all details requested and complied with entry conditions. The riders (or their authorised representatives) signature on the entry form indicates that they will abide by the relevant rules and any additional conditions of entry shown on the entry form.

Hors Concours riders are not eligible for any prize.

1.5 Riding in Competition, Warm Up and Training Areas

In consultation with the Organising Committee, a horse, either ridden or led, may enter any arena prior to the start of the class.

1.6 Competition per Day

Horses may compete in a maximum of 4 individual events per day.

Horses that are ridden by two riders cannot compete in the same class.

1.7 Schooling of Horses

- In the interest of safety, Horses may be ridden and schooled for up to twenty minutes per day by the trainer/coach or another rider designated by the competing rider's coach. The total time allowed for the above training will be carefully observed and regulated by Stewards. Horses may not be schooled by the above designated rider unless an Official Steward is present.
- Horses may be lunged without a rider by the trainer/coach or their designated representative for twenty minutes twice a day in a dedicated area. Permission from the TD is necessary if more time is required. Horses must not be lunged during the fifteen minutes before entering the competition arena. Only single separate direct side reins are allowed when the horse is lunged without a rider i.e., no reins between the legs etc.
- No side reins of any kind may be used when the rider is lunged on the horse.
- All horses may be ridden in and around the competition arena at a time designated by the ORGANISING COMMITTEE in consultation with the Technical Delegate or Chief Steward.
- No horse may be schooled outside the designated schooling areas at any time after the horse has

arrived at the venue.

- Horses may be turned out in a suitable area, if available, with the permission of the Stable Manager.
- Riders are reminded that The FEI Code of Conduct pertaining to riding and schooling will be enforced. If riders or their coaches are found to contravene this rule, they may be eliminated from the Event.

Competition rules are in force from a day and time specified by the ORGANISING COMMITTEE.

1.8 Doping

Riding for the Disabled Association Australia (RDAA) is committed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of Relevant Persons and to providing a safe and clean environment for Participants in Riding for the Disabled, including by ensuring that science and medicine services are provided to athletes by appropriately qualified and supervised staff that are subject to the National Integrity Framework.

Reference document regarding Improper Use of Drugs and Medicine, Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Ltd NATIONAL INTEGRITY FRAMEWORK Improper Use of Drugs and Medicine Policy (Commencement date: 27 June, 2022), can be found here: [RDA - NIF Improper Use of Drugs and Medicine Policy MAY 2022.pdf](#)

Riders may not take part in any competition while under the influence of any banned substance that may enhance performance. GLOBALDRO has information on most drugs also Sport Integrity website has information in regard to this matter, including lists of Banned Substances and Therapeutic Usage Exemptions <https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/what-we-do/anti-doping>.

RDAA has adopted the equine doping policy of the FEI/EA. (Refer to the EA and FEI Equine Doping and Medication Control rules). See www.equestrian.org.au or www.fei.org

1.9 Lameness

In the case of marked lameness, the Chief Judge immediately informs the rider that they are eliminated. There is no appeal against this decision.

The horse will not be eligible for any further competitions for the rest of the day.

1.10 Abuse of the Horse

Abuse can be defined as intentionally acting in a way that may cause pain or unnecessary discomfort to a horse. As examples, an act of abuse can be any of the following:

- To whip a horse excessively or to beat a horse;
- To use spurs or to jab the horse in the mouth, excessively or persistently;
- To compete using an obviously exhausted, lame or injured horse;
- To abnormally sensitise any part of a horse;
- To leave a horse without adequate food, drink or exercise;
- Use of any equipment that adversely affects the welfare or well-being of the horse;
- Excessive weight of rider and saddle for weight carrying capacity of the horse.

Any abuse or cruelty should be reported immediately to a member of the Ground Jury or the organisers.

1.11 Resistance

Resistance that may endanger rider, horse, judges or the public may incur elimination, for safety reasons. At the discretion of the judge.

1.12 Judges

- RDAA maintains a list of RDA and EA National judges and this may be obtained from the RDAA National Office.
- Each judge must be provided with a pencil.

1.13 Eligibility of Horse

- The gender of the horse must be provided on the entry form.
- Riders wishing to enter a stallion must apply to RDAA (prior to the closing date for entries) for consideration by RDAA in consultation with the Organising committee.
- **No rig may be used.**
- Horses must be a minimum of 6 years of age (calculated from the 1st August).

1.14 Liability

Liability will vary according to event. RDAA to advise liability upon registration of event and submission of event risk assessment form.

1.15 Gear Steward

- It is the responsibility of the Organising Committee to provide a Gear Steward. It is the ultimate responsibility of the competitor to comply with the rules relating to gear.
- If a rider does not have their gear checked by the appointed Gear Check Steward, they may incur elimination at the discretion of the Ground Jury, Appeal Committee or TD, if appointed.
- The gear steward should NOT alter any gear; should any gear be too loose or incorrectly fitted, the rider or their agent, should make the necessary adjustments.
- Competitors are required to report to the Gear Steward 15 minutes prior to their starting time.
- Should any equipment, other than that mentioned in Part 2, be used, this must be specified on the entry form and approved prior to use in the competition arena.

1.16 Protests

At competitions other than a National Championship where protests may only be lodged by the relevant State/Territory Chef d'Equipe, only the rider, coach of a rider or a representative of that rider may lodge a protest. Protests must be made to the Secretary of the event, in writing and accompanied by a deposit of \$50, not later than half an hour after the posting of the results for that competition. In the case of the qualifications of a competitor, the protest must be lodged not later than 30 minutes before the start of the competition. The deposit is forfeited unless the protest is upheld or it is decided that there were good and reasonable grounds for the lodging of a protest.

1.17 Exemptions for equipment

Any special equipment used by riders must be previously registered with the RDAA Adaptive Equipment Register. (Can be found on the Coaches Portal). Any special equipment used should be stated on the Entry Form.

PART 2 – DRESS, SADDLERY AND ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT AND COMPENSATING AIDS

2.1. General

A Gear Steward, appointed by the Organising Committee, shall check the saddlery, special and adaptive equipment of each horse and rider.

2.2 Dress

All riders, when mounted, must be neatly and correctly dressed at all times.

1. An approved riding helmet must be always worn, whilst mounted. It must comply with current Standards for Helmets in RDA policy and have a well-fitting chinstrap and a three- or four-point harness. Chinstraps must be always fastened when mounted. This rule applies to **ALL** riders, when mounted (including grooms, coaches / trainers, assessors, owners).

<https://www.rda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021Sept-Standards-for-Helmets-in-RDA-V3.pdf>

2. Black or brown boots (short or long) or stout riding shoes with heels must be worn. Black or brown half-chaps or leggings/gaiters may be used. If a rider's disability does not allow boots / shoes with heels to be worn toe stoppers must be used on the stirrup irons.
3. For competitions, a shirt and tie or stock, light coloured (cream, beige or white) jodhpurs, breeches or riding pants should be worn, with a dark-coloured short jacket (black, dark brown or dark blue) unless otherwise specified. In the event of extreme conditions, the Organising Committee, in conjunction with the President of the Ground Jury, may declare jackets as optional.
4. Gloves shall be worn if practicable.
5. Stud or small earrings are permitted but must be covered; large earrings or sleepers are not permitted.

2.3 Spurs and Whips

Spurs are optional. Spurs must be made of metal or hard plastic (see EA Dressage Rule 5.5.) The shank must be either curved or straight pointing directly back and down from the centre of the spur when fastened on the rider's boot.

https://www.equestrian.org.au/sites/default/files/CLEAN_NATIONAL_DRESSAGE_RULES_1_JANUARY_2022_3.pdf

Riders abusing the horse, whether intentionally or not, may be asked to remove spurs by the TD, Chief Steward or OC.

Whips

One whip may be carried unless an exemption is granted for the use of 2 whips. Whip lengths will be according to the relevant EA discipline rules.

2.4 Saddlery

1. A well-fitted, well-maintained saddle of any type, appropriate to the horse and rider should be used.
2. A sheepskin and surcingle may be used.
3. When Western or Oxbow stirrup irons are used, they must fit the size of the rider's boots or be fitted with toe stoppers.
4. Numnahs and seat covers may be used.
5. Breast plates, neck straps, handholds and cruppers are permitted. Note that the use of a handhold, not more than 30cm wide, to assist the rider to balance, may be attached to the front of the saddle, in front of or above the pommel. Such a handhold may not be more than 10cm above the pommel when held.
6. **Blinkers, side, balancing, running, bearing and similar reins are not permitted. Any rein adaptation that produces a similar effect to these forbidden reins is not permitted.**
7. Running martingales, boots and bandages may be used except in dressage classes.
8. If any adapted reins are used that require the running of the reins through rings that are attached to the front of the saddle by leather straps, then these rings must not be in a fixed position but shall be loose.
9. Hoof boots may be used in dressage in place of a shoe or shoes as long as they do not protect the soft structures of the hoof, such as the heel bulbs and the coronet band.

2.5 Bits and Bridles in Line with FEI Approved Bits.

1. In dressage riders must use snaffle or double bridles
2. Double bridles must have a cavesson noseband, a bridoon and curb bit with a curb chain. The cavesson noseband may never be so tightly fixed so as to harm the nose. Lip-strap and rubber or leather covers for the curb chain are optional. Riders abusing the horse, whether intentionally or not, will be asked, by the OC to make changes.
3. **Hackamores and other bitless bridles are not permitted.**
4. Every horse shall compete with a bit in its mouth.
5. It is permitted to use two reins with a snaffle bit.
6. An FEI approved noseband shall be used with a snaffle bridle (cavesson, dropped or flash/Hanoverian).
7. A cavesson noseband shall be used with a simple double bridle.
8. A horse may be equipped with no more than one noseband.
9. Reins may not be attached to the rider in any manner that could prevent the rider from falling free of the horse.
10. When a rider is being led the lead rope should be attached by a ring under the jaw of a cavesson noseband.

2.6 Presentation of Horse

11. Plaiting of the horse's mane and tail is permitted. Plaiting of the mane is encouraged for dressage. Any decoration of the horse with unnatural items, such as ribbons or flowers, may be used for special classes.
12. False tails are permitted.

2.8 Assistance for Riders

Callers for dressage and course direction assistants for jumping and activities are allowed.

Dressage callers may only read the printed text or extracts thereof. No other form of assistance is given. The caller may read each movement once or twice only. Failure to observe this rule may entail elimination.

Course direction assistants for jumping and other activities may only indicate direction. No verbal coaching is permitted.

Riders with vision impairment (in addition to their Commander) may have living markers (callers/beepers) at the letters. Such living markers are classified as special equipment and must be supplied by the rider. One living marker may be inside the arena to call X.

Riders who are deaf or hearing impaired may use sign language or radio communication.

Any outside assistance including coaching may result in elimination at the discretion of the Judge at C. Helpers may be placed in corners outside the arena for safety reasons. In an emergency, they may give physical assistance. Penalties will be at the discretion of the Judge at C.

Horse leaders and side walkers must wear enclosed shoes or boots. Leaders are required to keep a slight loop in the lead rope to allow the rider to display riding skills. The lead rein to be held in the hand furthest from the horse. They remain on the inside track and change sides by coming in front of the horse without interfering with the horse's movement. They may not carry a whip or stick. Leaders must request assistance if the safety of the rider is jeopardised.

PART 3 – National, State and Territory Competitions.

3.1 Conditions of Entry

COMPETITIONS WILL BE RUN UNDER CURRENT RDAA RULES, WHERE APPLICABLE, EA RULES WILL APPLY.

3.2 Rider Eligibility

There is no age restriction for RDA competitions.

To be eligible to ride at an RDA National Championships each rider must be approved by their State or Territory as having competencies up to required level and to have competed at least twice in the respective discipline. (This can be made up of competing in a video or live competition).

Hors Concours entries will be accepted at the discretion of the Organising committee.

3.3 Chef d'Equipe/Team Manager

Each State/Nation must nominate a Chef d'Equipe. This must be done at the time of entry so the OC have a point of contact.

A meeting will be held each day, starting the day before the competition.

3.4 Coach

Riders currently riding with an RDA Centre must have at least one RDA Level One or above coach accompany the team.

Riders may utilize their own coach who holds a current RDAA, EA or PCAA qualification and must advise their Chef d'Equipe prior to arriving at the venue.

3.5 Draw

The timed draw will be available the day before competition.

3.6 Withdrawals

Withdrawals prior to or during the Event must be lodged, in writing, with the Event Secretary. Entry fees will not be refunded after the final closing date for entries.

3.7 Awards / Presentations

1. Equal marks – Except in Freestyles. In the event of equality of percentages, then the placings are equal, e.g., 1st, equal 2nd (2 competitors with equal %), no 3rd placing. The next placing would be 4th.
2. All placegetters in correct riding attire (helmets optional) will be required for an **unmounted** presentation at the conclusion of each day.

3.8 Individual Champions.

1. Conditions of Championships will be set out in the schedule and entry form. The teams consist of a maximum of four and a minimum of three competitors. When four riders are nominated the highest place three competitors will count.
2. Further, there may be an unofficial team competition with teams made up with competitors from different States and Territories. and the same or different Grades: for example, three competitors- all to count.
3. Teams must be nominated to the OC prior to the start of the competition.
4. The rider with the highest total percentage shall be deemed the Discipline Section Champion.
5. In the case of equality of percentages, equal champions shall be declared.

3.9 Team Conditions

Teams and individual riders are required to provide their own necessary personal support staff in order for them to compete. The OC is not responsible for providing staff, helpers, grooms or horses for competitors.

State and Open Teams

- A horse rider combination may only represent one team.
- Composite teams may be formed.
- No more than two riders from any one level are allowed per team
- The teams consist of a maximum of four and a minimum of three competitors.
- When four riders are nominated the highest place three competitors will count.
- Teams must be nominated to the OC prior to the start of the competition.

3.10 Competition Horses

A horse owned by the rider; **OR**

A horse privately supplied to a rider and brought to the competition venue; **OR**

A horse from an RDA Centre.

See Code of Conduct for Horse suitability Part 1.2