



NOTES FOR GUIDANCE **ELIMINATION OR RETIREMENT ?**

In recent years, with the increase of financial gain from the sale of Endurance Horses, there has been a trend to 'retire horses' rather than have them eliminated by the GJ under advice from the Veterinary Commission during a competition.

The reason being that a horse with only 'retirements' on his record of results is worth far more as a prospective sale than a horse with a number of 'eliminations'.

Further, with the advancement of recorded results and Rider and Horse FEI Registration in 2006, the Endurance Technical Committee will, in 2006, be considering the request of a number of NFs who wish the FEI to impose various obligatory rest periods for horses eliminated from FEI competitions in the future.

The rules for Endurance are not clear in terms of when a horse can be withdrawn (retired) from a competition.

In fact, the word retirement is not used. The word withdrawal is shown under art. 821.4.

However there is guidance from within the rules:

Art. 802 requires the competitor to complete the entire course under penalty of elimination.

Art. 830 makes reference that a horse must be deemed fit to continue during competition and is inspected accordingly from time to time. Failure to be deemed 'fit to continue' results in the elimination of that horse from the competition.

Therefore it is reasonable to accept that a horse, to achieve classification, must complete the entire course whilst always being 'fit to continue'.

In Endurance the 'entire course' is separated into sections or phases – see art. 807.

Art. 802, when dealing with an error of course, applies to each phase of which two or more comprise the 'entire course'.

Additionally, under Art 802, it is established that a failure to complete any phase correctly (as defined) results in elimination.

Therefore it is reasonable to propose that a horse, which is taken out of competition by the PR, during any phase has failed to complete that phase and therefore must be eliminated rather than withdrawn.

When a horse arrives at a vet gate it has a set period of time to present itself to the Veterinary Commission. During this period the recorded time for that phase continues to accumulate. This recorded time is deemed to be 'ride time' for that particular phase.

Therefore any particular phase commences when the horse and rider cross the start line of the phase and finishes when the horse is presented for and successfully passes the vetting.

Therefore, under art. 802, the horse only finishes a phase at the time of successful vetting when the 'clock stops' for that competitor. (Failure to present a horse within the time limit allowed results in its elimination from the competition as being 'out of time', not failing to pass a Vet examination).

After passing the vet examination and having been deemed 'fit to continue' by the Vet Commission, a horse rider enter the 'hold time'.

Should a rider choose to withdraw a horse from the competition during this hold time it would seem to be reasonable to allow this under the rules for the following reasons:

1. The horse has correctly finished the phase or phases up to that point
2. The horse has been passed 'fit to continue'
3. Art. 821 does provide for 'withdrawal of a horse' from competition

Therefore a horse can only be withdrawn (retired) from a competition when it is not in an 'active phase', i.e during a hold time, having been cleared to commence the next section (phase) of the competition.

A simple diagram details this more clearly:

