

EVENTING INFO



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**To: Eventing TD, Course Designers
Ground Juries
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<p>FEI Eventing Committee Policy on Cross Country Course Design, Guidelines to Organisers, TDs, Course Designers & Ground Juries</p>

This document sets out the fundamental aims and expectations of the FEI Eventing Committee with regard to the different levels and types of competition in our sport.

At the lower levels the emphasis is very much on the education of horse and rider introducing both parties to a wide variety of fences and simple questions. As the levels progress so the degree of difficulty of the courses should suitably reflect the particular level. At the highest level the balance is more on the examination of the skills of the horse and rider in a sophisticated manner. The 'intensity' of the courses increase as the levels become higher.

It is the Course Designer's responsibility to design courses that produce horses and riders.

Some simple guidelines for all levels: -

1. The aim of the designer is to provide a suitable test for the level of competition
2. Fences and questions should never be above the particular standard of competition or justified by the use of alternatives or options
3. Horses and riders should be encouraged and have their confidence built, not destroyed
4. It must be recognised that our sport is about achieving a standard, not about pushing the standard above what it should be. This includes measuring the length of the courses fairly and reasonably.
5. Any/all questions must be fair. It is not acceptable to try to catch horses out using unfair distances or by trying to be too clever or over complicated.
6. Horses must be able to understand clearly what they are being asked to jump; after all they have to assess the fences in a fraction of a second.
7. CDs have to appreciate and take into consideration the part that inclement weather can play on the severity of a course.
8. CDs have to be their own biggest critics!
9. CDs must understand that courses must prepare horses and riders for the next level of competition and need to be of the correct degree of difficulty.

10. Any horse should be able to jump a straightforward fence of maximum dimensions at any particular level – big does not necessarily equate to difficult!
11. We should be looking to give horses and riders the opportunity to show what they can do and are capable of rather than seeking to find out what they cannot do
12. It is necessary to look after the needs of the more experienced riders whilst at the same time giving the less experienced the opportunity to benefit.
13. All courses must 'flow' and permit a good rhythm
14. All courses should offer a positive experience
15. These criteria are the same for CCIs as for CICs

As a general philosophy the Committee sees the numbers of finishers as an important point, more so than the number of clear rounds. It has to be accepted that the quality of the field and the weather conditions can impact on the statistics and that, particularly at the higher levels, many riders now choose to retire once they are clearly out of contention or are not going to achieve a qualifying result, and that these issues are reflected on the scoreboard with more retirements and less 'cricket scores'.

The Committee feels that a goal of seeing as many finishers as possible is desirable for all levels, but wishes to emphasise that the degree of difficulty must not be compromised in order to achieve this, for example by the over-use of alternatives.

It is felt that one of the essential skills of riding cross-country courses is being lost with the advent of bigger timber and softer profiles. Riders must be able to slow down and be able to jump, out of a rhythm, the occasional simple, more 'upright' type of fence. This applies to all levels of competition. Any fence like this, if created, must be suitably positioned in the middle of a course off a turn or on slightly rising ground where riders will not be tempted to gallop fast at it and it must be 'horse friendly'. Special care must be taken, particularly at the lower levels, in how and where these fences are introduced recognising that significant improvements in the safety of all courses are being made and this improvement must be maintained.

It also is important that all officials recognise the different standards of, and understand what is appropriate at, the various star levels. The belief is that the levels should be the same around the world, i.e. a 2 star in the UK or Brazil should be the same degree of difficulty as a 2 star in Australia or Russia. Additionally, it is expected that national classes of this level (CNC's) should in principle be of the same standard. This is particularly important given that they are part of the FEI qualification process.**

The introduction of the Safety Report is also giving useful information about the standard and degree of difficulty of courses although it is recognised that the quality of the field and the weather and footing conditions can produce misleading statistics.

The following notes are for guidance and do not represent a complete guide to course design!

One Star

The first step on the ladder introducing horses and riders to a wide variety of fences and simple questions. There will probably be a wide variety in the age group of the horses competing and a wide range of rider ability. The emphasis is very much on education of horse and rider. Simple combinations, turning and accuracy/line questions, corners, ditches, etc need to be introduced. The 'intensity of effort' is low and regular 'let up' fences are needed. This level also needs to prepare horses for 2 star competitions.

Two Star

More sophisticated types of questions building on what has been learned at 1 star level. Less 'let up fences' than 1 star but still recognising that this level is where many riders will introduce their horses to CCIs having by-passed the 1 star level. The trend is currently to begin to 'cluster' fences at this level which puts more emphasis on riding skills and swifter reactions from the horses. Still producing horses and riders at this level.

The step up from 2 star to 3 star is a big one and so often this is the most difficult level to design well.

Three Star

This level qualifies horses and riders for the major championships and competitions of the highest level and so must work towards what is being sought at the next step. The 'intensity of effort' increases from 2 star level, there will be less 'let up' and more related fences. The balance begins to swing from education to examination yet still recognising the need to produce horses and riders and give them the opportunity to learn and benefit from their experience.

Four Star

The highest level requires the most sophisticated courses which looks after the less experienced whilst providing a suitable test for the best – not easy!

CCI's v CIC's

We now have the 3 types of competition, - CCIs with Steeplechase, - CCI without Steeplechase, and - CICs.

The introduction of CCIs without steeplechase has encouraged more competitions in some parts of the world with the associated development benefits and this is to be welcomed. Many other nations which have a long history of Eventing as part of their equestrian heritage are also staging these competitions and this pattern looks set to continue and develop.

The Committee is keen to see those nations who wish to continue staging CCIs with Steeplechase to have the opportunity to do so and leaves it to OCs and NF's to make this decision. The philosophy behind CCIs with Steeplechase remains as it has always been.

The Committee is, however, determined to have a clear difference between CCIs without Steeplechase and CICs:

1. The fundamental difference between CCIs without Steeplechase & CICs: is that a CIC is essentially a One Day Event run under FEI Rules whereas a CCI without Steeplechase is just that, a regular CCI cross country course without Phases A, B, and C. The philosophy behind these two types of competition remains as it always has been.

2. The length of the course is an important issue. As from January 1st 2006 there is a significant change in the permitted distances for CICs, the intention being to ensure that the cross-country distance for CCIs remains definitely longer than that for CICs. The two competitions must remain different tests and not blend into the same product. There is also a change in the window of distances for CCI***'s to between 5700m and 6840m for implementation on January 1st 2007 although we would like to see this happening in 2006 where possible.

The changes are that for CICs from January 1st 2006 the permitted distances will be:

CIC1*	2400m-3200m
CIC2*	2800m-3600m
CIC3*	3200m-4000m

CCIs remain as with the exception of CCI3*'s which change as per #2 above and as below:

CCI1*	3600m-4680m
CCI2*	4400m-5500m
CCI3*	5700m-6840m
CCI4*	6270m-7410m

3. Intensity of Effort. This is a much debated subject and it is up to all officials not to overdo this. It is impossible to cover this subject in detail since each site is different but it is important to appreciate that at the CICs we must be careful not to lose sight of the fact that this is still a cross country course which must not be too intense. If the CD wishes to use the maximum number of permitted efforts in a CIC the course will inevitably be much more intense than if the maximum number of permitted efforts are used at a CCI. It is therefore seldom that the maximum number of permitted jumping efforts should be used in CICs.

It is also suggested that in CICs, recognising the intensity is a possible issue, there will be one or two less 'related' types of questions or combinations compared to what one would expect in CCIs.

The window of distances and efforts is there to give designers flexibility but it is essential that courses must still flow and have a good feel and balance.

With this in mind we are introducing a small but significant change to the maximum number of permitted efforts at the CCI1* and CCI2* levels as follows: -

CCI 1*		
Length of course	7-8 minutes	max 30 efforts
Length of course	8-9 minutes	max 32 efforts

CCI 2*		
Length of course	8-9 minutes	max 34 efforts
Length of course	9-10 minutes	max 37 efforts