

COMPENSATING AIDS FOR FEI PARA EQUESTRIAN (PE) COMPETITION

“Compensating aids” are used by riders to compensate for the physical or sensory limitation resulting from their impairment, thereby enabling them to ride a horse. For example a hand hold on the front of the saddle enables someone with a high level spinal cord injury to balance on the horse. A compensating aid is not to be used to compensate for lack of riding skill or as an aid to enhance the horse’s performance - this would be considered a training aid. The well being of the horse is paramount in considering the use of any compensating aid.

The FEI Para Equestrian Dressage Rules 2008 states:

“Riders with disabilities are allowed to compete in FEI Dressage Competitions using compensating aids according to their FEI PE ID Card, as defined by PE Rules and subject to the approval of the FEI Dressage Committee”

“It is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that all special equipment/compensating aids are allowed under the FEI PE rules, and that any used are noted on that competitor’s FEI PE ID card.” (8428.11.0)

The current FEI Para Equestrian Dressage Rules (2008) and FEI Para Equestrian Classification Manual (2008) have been used in the preparation of this document. Riders, coaches and officials should refer to these documents available at the web addresses below.

<http://www.fei.org/Disciplines/Para-Equestrian/Rules/Pages/Regulations.aspx>

<http://www.fei.org/Disciplines/Para-Equestrian/Pages/Classification.aspx>

Compensating aids can be divided into two types:-

- adaptations or modifications to equipment or attire to compensate for
 - loss of function e.g. loop reins for a rider with poor grasp
 - poor control of limbs e.g. securing stirrup leathers to the girth, or
- aids to assist the rider to compete on an equal basis with other competitors e.g use of callers for riders with a visual impairment or use of whips when there is no active leg control.

The classifiers role in relation to compensating aids is threefold.

- To assist riders to understand what aids are available to them
- With the Technical Delegate (TD) and/or Chief Steward (CS) ensure the compensating aids used by a rider are appropriate to their profile and grade.
- Work with officials as requested at competitions to ensure riders are using compensating aids which are appropriate and approved.

Compensating aids can be divided into the following categories.

Modifications and/or adaptations to:-

- Saddlery
 - Saddles
 - Bridles/Reins
 - Stirrups
- Riding attire
 - Riding footwear
 - Gloves
- Other riding equipment
 - Whips
 - Spurs
- Postural supports and orthoses
 - Straps to control body parts
 - Prostheses
 - Braces

Use of Aids (may require exemption to a particular rule)

- Aids to compensate for sensory loss
 - Commander
 - Caller
- miscellaneous

THE USE OF COMPENSATING AIDS

Riders are encouraged to be as able as possible and to only use compensating aids where necessary. The use of appropriate compensating aids will be discussed with individual riders during the classification process and will be documented on the Para Equestrian Classification card.

It is the responsibility of each competitor to ensure all compensating aids they use in competition have been approved and are documented correctly on their FEI Para Equestrian Identity card (FEI PE ID card). Approval of any compensating aid is dependent on whether the equipment and/or modification to equipment or specific aids are allowed for the riders Profile and Grade, whether it is safe and considers the well being of the horse.

The following applies to the use of compensating aids:-

- Subject to the noted provisions, all saddlery and special equipment permissible shall correspond to that allowed under FEI Dressage Rules.
- The compensating aids are listed on the competitor's FEI PE ID card by the classifier as a result of the competitor's functional profile and discussion with the competitor (and the competitor's trainer if required).
- The use, or non-use, of any aid or adaptation must be indicated on the competitor's FEI PE ID card. If listed, the competitor may use the aid, but is not required to use it. If an aid is not listed, the competitor is not permitted to use that aid.
- Use of any equipment, or exemption, that is not covered in the rules must be supported by medical documentation and approved by the Head Classifier.
- All competitors are responsible to have their FEI PE ID cards with them at competitions and the Chief Steward or TD may request to see the card at any time.
- The Judge, Chief Steward or Technical Delegate (TD) at any show has the right to inspect the aids and declare an aid unsafe for horse or competitor. At no time should a competitor be secured in any way to the saddle or the horse. The competitor must be able to fall free of the horse.
- Adaptations to equipment or Velcro or similar materials that assist in the balance of the competitor may change the functional profile of that competitor. Competitors may be re-classified and, as a result, may change Grade. The competitor would then have the option to ride in the higher Grade or not to use such adapted equipment.
- Velcro/hook and loop closures may be used to assist the rider in the saddle. The total amount of Velcro, or similar material, allowed by any one competitor must not be more than 50 square cm. and must not exceed the dimensions of 3 cm. x 6 cm. per overlap contact. The total area of Velcro or similar material per leg must not exceed 3 cm. wide by 6 cm. of overlap contact and for safety reasons it is recommended that it is fastened in a 'V' shape."

Note: Riders should check with their National Federation before using any compensating aid in able bodied National competition

DESCRIPTION OF COMMONLY USED COMPENSATING AIDS

Table 1 lists the **commonly** used compensating aids.

SADDLE	STIRRUPS	BRIDLE/REINS	WHIPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised pommel • Raised cantle • Hard hand holds • Soft hand holds • Seat saver • Knee rolls/blocks • Thigh rolls/blocks • Padded saddle flaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubber bands around foot and stirrup • Enclosed stirrups • Strap from stirrup leather to girth • Strap from stirrup to girth • No stirrups • One stirrup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looped rein/s • Connecting bar reins • Bridging rein • Ladder reins • Split rein (with double bridle) • Rein guides (rein through ring on saddle) • Reins attached to stirrups • Elastic insert in reins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One whip • Two whips • Strap attaching whip to hand
RIDING ATTIRE	POSTURE, POSTURAL SUPPORTS & ORTHOSES		OTHER AIDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gloves • No boots • Modified riding boots • Gaiters • Half chaps • Off set spurs • Safety vest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velcro strap across thigh to saddle • L or R Arm sling • Neck collar • Ankle foot orthoses • Prosthesis • Wrist brace • Back support • Trunk support • Rides with one hand 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salutes with head only (Salute WHO) • Callers • Commander • Commander using sign language • Enlarged arena letters • Use of radio frequency device (for hearing impaired) • Voice

SADDLERY

1. SADDLES

A well fitting, well maintained saddle of any type suitable to the horse and rider shall be used. Examples include dressage saddles, sidesaddles and Western or English saddles. At the halt, there must be a clear 3 cm. between any means of support from the saddle and the competitor's trunk. Any adaptations to a saddle must allow the competitor to fall free of the horse. If modifications are made to the saddle, these may be subject to review.

Modifications

➤ Raised pommel and /or cantle

This modification provides assistance with balance for those riders with difficulty with trunk control. The depth of the seat must be less than 12 cm. when pressed down (simulating a competitor sitting on the seat).



Measurement of the depth of the saddle when seat is pressed down, distance from seat to top of cantle or pommel is no greater than 12 cm.



INCORRECT - CANTLE TOO HIGH
greater than 12 cm. from seat to top of cantle



Adapted saddle with raised cantle and seat saver (also single solid hand hold)



Adapted saddle with knee guides



Side saddle

➤ **Seat saver**

A seat saver is a removable attachment to the seat of the saddle for padding to protect the skin of those competitors with impaired sensation. (8428.5.0). Seat savers may be made of various materials such as leather, lambs wool or synthetic material.



➤ **Hand hold**

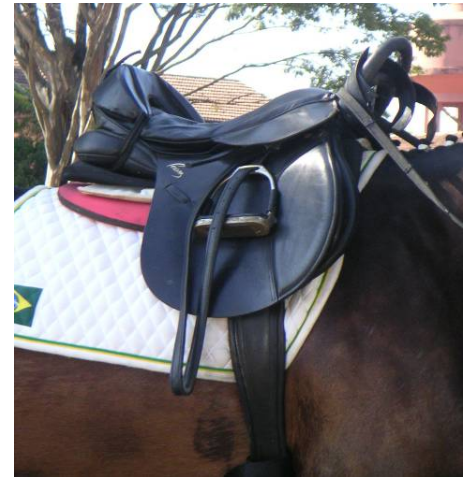
A hand hold is a device attached to the front of the saddle in front of or above the pommel and may be made of soft material such as leather in the form of a strap. Alternatively it may be constructed of metal or wood with padding covering it for grip and safety. The use of a hand hold assists the rider to balance. Handholds may not be more than 10 cm. above the pommel when held and not more than 30 cm. wide (8428.4.2). A neck strap, around the horses' neck, may be used. Monkey grips or straps are considered a soft hand hold.



Saddle with soft hand hold across the pommel



Saddle with double hard hand hold



Saddle with single, hard hand hold

2. STIRRUPS

➤ Elastic bands

Riders may use elastic bands to assist to maintain position of the foot in the stirrup. Such elastic must be of a width and strength to allow the competitor to fall free of the horse. Other material (such as Velcro) may also be used (see above). A combination of enclosed stirrups and elastic bands may be used by riders with poor control of their ankle and lower leg.



Velcro to assist foot to stirrup



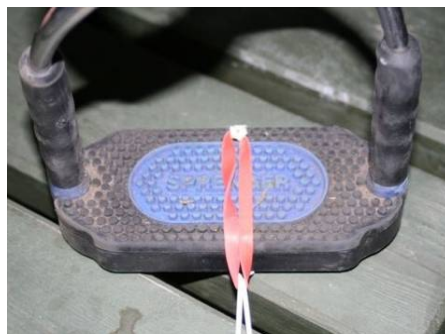
Devonshire boot and foot secured with rubber band around the heel



Rubber band securing the foot to the stirrup



Attaching elastic bands



➤ **Enclosed stirrups**

A variety of “enclosed stirrups” are allowed for use by riders including: Devonshire boots, Anderson stirrups and caged stirrups. Those who wear footwear without a heel must use safety stirrups. Western or Oxbow stirrups, if used, must be fitted with a Devonshire type boot to prevent the possibility of the foot sliding through the stirrup.



Devonshire Boots – Covered Stirrups

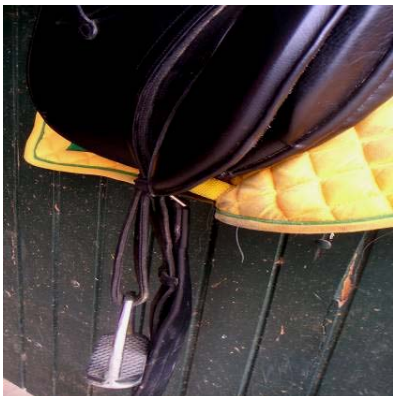


Open safety stirrups



➤ **Securing of stirrups to stirrup leathers or girth**

A Velcro or thin leather strap may be used to attach stirrup irons to the girth strap to assist control of the lower leg for those riders with significant weakness or dysfunction in the legs. This aid will assist in steadying the lower leg and avoiding the stirrup(s) from swinging and hitting the horse.



Stirrup leather secured to girth



Stirrup secured to girth

➤ **Riding with or without stirrups**

Either two stirrups or no stirrups may be used for those riders with weakness, dysfunction in the legs, sensory disturbance, or an inability to use stirrups safely. One stirrup is used only for those riding side saddle or with one absent lower limb and no prosthesis.



3. BRIDLE and REINS

➤ Double bridle

Double bridles are allowed in all Grades providing there is no official objection from the TD, Chief Classifier or member of the Ground Jury. If it is required tack for competition, the non-use needs to be indicated on the FEI PE ID Card. The two reins on one side must both go to the competitor's hand(s) or be connected into one rein (split rein) before reaching the competitor.



Double bridle with split rein and looped rein



Double bridle with split rein

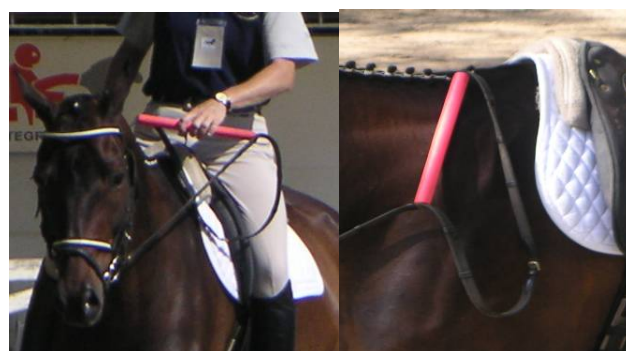
➤ Reins

A variety of rein adaptations and modifications are possible including looped reins, knotted reins, built up reins or other means of providing improved grip to the reins for those with weakness or dysfunction in the hand/arms.

Any rein from any bit in the horse's mouth must be in direct contact with the competitor. Foot reins are only allowed when no other reins are going to be controlled by arm(s) or hand(s) from the upper part of the body of the competitor.



Elastic inserts on reins



Connecting rein bar
For one handed riding and rein control.

EXAMPLES OF LOOPED REINS



Rein Bow ® brand



➤ **Rein guides**

Rein guides are only allowed for competitors with short or no arms. If the rein is not used in a conventional manner, it must be in as straight a line as possible from the rider's point of contact on the reins to the horse's mouth. For competitors with two very short arms reins may be run through rings that are attached to the front of the saddle by leather straps. These rings must not be in a fixed position, but shall be loose.



➤ **Whips**

Up to two conventional whips of any length may be carried if required. Any alteration to conventional whips must be approved by the TD, Chief Steward or President of the Ground Jury. A whip is used on one or both sides. Whips may compensate for those unable to use their legs effectively for leg aids and may only be carried by competitors who are able to control their hand movements. At the salute, the competitor must either carry the whip(s) in the non-saluting hand, or salute with the head only. The whip may be attached to a glove or other clothing, as long as it will break free from the competitor.



Whip attached with Velcro

RIDING ATTIRE

- Boots** Plain black or brown half chaps (smooth leather) or gaiters to the knee may be used. If a competitor's impairment does not allow the wearing of boots/shoes with heels (due to sensory impairments or deformities) and the competitor uses stirrups, PE approved safety stirrups must be used. Boots may be modified to make them easier to put on and take off.
- Gloves** Gloves shall be worn if possible. These may be adapted for the competitor as needed. The competitor may choose to not wear gloves.
- Helmets** A suitable riding hat must be worn at all times whilst mounted. It must be of international safety standard (i.e. ASTM/SEI for equestrian sport) and have a well-fitting chinstrap and a three or four-point harness. The peak (if any) must be soft and flexible. Chinstraps must be fastened at all times when mounted, and hats may not be removed for salutes or mounted prize-giving ceremonies.
- Blindfolds** Riders with functional Profile number 36 (blind) riding in Grade III must wear a PE approved blindfold, blacked out glasses or blacked out swimming goggles when training at the competition venue and while competing. These may be subject to inspection by a classifier or other PE official immediately after the rider leaves the arena following the completion of the test. If a rider chooses not to wear a blindfold, they must compete at Grade IV.
- Spurs** Spurs are optional for FEI PE competitions if there is no official objection from the TD, Chief Steward, Chief Classifier or member of the Ground Jury. Spurs must not be offset, unless this is allowed as a compensating aid. Metal spurs with round hard plastic knobs are allowed (Impuls spurs) as are Dummy spurs with no shank. Competitors who cannot control their leg movements should have this noted on their FEI PE ID card.

POSTURE, POSTURAL SUPPORT AND ORTHOSES

The competitor may choose to ride with or without a prosthesis or orthotic.

- Trunk supports may be worn if medically necessary (with Medical Doctor approval). These must be indicated on the PE FEI ID card.
- Arm Sling (pictured right) can be used if a competitor is unable to use an arm, or there is uncontrollable movement in an arm. The arm may be strapped to the body or worn in a sling.
- Riders with upper limb impairments may ride with one hand only, often with use of connecting rein bar.
- A safety vest may be worn on the inside or outside of the jacket but is not considered a compensating aid.



Safety vest with inflatable air bladder



Safety vest with side openings

OTHER COMPENSATING AIDS (must be documented on the FEI PE ID card)

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| Salute with head only | For FEI PE competitions, hats must not be removed at the salute and contact must be maintained on the reins. If necessary, the competitor may salute with the head only. |
| Use of voice | Competitors in Grades III or IV may not use their voice at any time during the execution of their test unless stated on the FEI PE ID card as a compensating aid. Competitors in Grade Ia, Ib or Grade II, or competitors with Profile 36 (totally blind) may use their voice as an aid whilst riding in their allocated Grade, provided they do so in moderation. |
| Commander
(reading of the test) | Competitors with intellectual impairment (Profile 39), visual impairment (Profile 36) or neurological conditions leading to memory loss may have a commander. Application with the required supporting documentation must be made to the PE Chief Classifier for permission for a commander. Tests may be commanded in English, or in the competitor's own language. |
| Caller/Living Letters | For those with visual impairment to indicate the location of the position of the Arena. Callers may only call the name of the letter(s). May also be accomplished by sound (electronic or mechanical) or enhanced visual cues. The competitor must provide the callers/mechanisms. |
| Radio
Communication | Those competitors, qualified as above, who are also deaf or hearing impaired may use sign language or radio communication. It is necessary for a steward to be present during the dressage test if this form of commanding is being used. |

FEI PE ID CARD (FEI Para Equestrian Identification card)

To participate in FEI PE competition the competitors must have a validated ID card available to show FEI officials.

The details on the card are:

Name
Nationality
No.
Gender
Date of birth
International Functional profile
Equestrian Competition Grade
Date of Classification
Compensating Aids [All compensating aids that are allowed and may be used must be on the card]
Valid until [Renewable every 5 years].

Card details are checked as correct by the Head Classifier and signed.

To apply for a card or to renew the card contact:

Mrs Lynn Lawford Email kplclawford@hotmail.com
Address: Penraig
Pontfadog
Llangollen
Wrexham Wales UK
LL207AU.

The FEI PE ID card is issued only to riders with international Classification status and can be used for competitions run under FEI Rules.

In most instances National Federations will allow the use of the FEI PE ID card in competitions run under National rules. However, this may not always be the case as there may be a National system in place. Therefore, it is imperative that riders refer to their National Federation regarding the use of their FEI PE ID card for competitions held under National rules.