

# DS7 - Checking Cross County and Show Jumping Courses

January 2016 –Version 1



It is essential that all courses and venues are checked carefully. Ensure that the facilities are appropriate to the level of competition as well as adhering to the relevant safety standards. A Risk Assessment will also help you to identify any additional unnecessary hazards.

## Before the event

- Arrange a visit to the venue to assess the course and surroundings in plenty of time before the event. See the BRC Organisers Book for the ideal timescales for these visits
- Ensure that several visits are undertaken at various stages. The information gained from the visits will assist in the design and planning stages of the build
- Ensure that groundwork is done in good time to allow for settling and to make sure that the ground sustains the impact over the duration of the competition

## Design and Construction

- Ensure that the design creates a flow that is both educational and rewarding for both horse and rider
- The course should be appropriate for the level of competition
- Assess the suitability of the take-off and landings when determining the placement of fencing
- Ensure that fences are strong and robust
- Ensure that portable fences are secured safely and appropriately
- See the BE guide for using portable fences

## Fence Checks

- Ensure all timber is sound and free from rot or excessive splitting. Always take into account that timber does split naturally. A sponge like texture or flaking is an indication of rot or insect infestation. Timber below ground is more vulnerable and may not be visible
- Ensure ground anchors are used appropriately with portable fences ( See BE guidelines)
- Ensure that the construction and fixings are appropriate to the required level of external durability. All roping should be checked for slack and the ability to be cut if required
- Ensure that there are no hazards. Check for sharp edges and nail heads
- Ensure that the Fence height and dimensions are allowed for the particular class or competition ( See BRC Rule Book)
- Ensure that fence/ drops are measured and recorded. It can be beneficial to photograph all fences
- Ensure that any combination fences are built to the recommended dimensions (See BRC Rule Book)
- Ensure that flagging is appropriately used and additional information is displayed when required. Identify alternative options and elements
- Use of the frangible pin system requires specialist assistance. Access to replacement pins and a means to replace them is necessary if they are activated ( See BE guide to frangible pins)

## Ground Checks

- Avoid areas that have been poached, rutted or with excessive stone content. Different soil types are prone to different problems including water content and drainage
- Ensure the ground is well established turf and associated root structure
- Monitor the length of the grass. A length of between 4-9 inches long is suitable depending on the environment. Avoid over mown grass and overly long grass which would cause different levels of resistance
- If the ground is hard, liaise with the land owner to provide intervention in the form of aeration
- Forecasted weather must be taken into consideration

- Consider additional dressing for the landing and take-off. Dust or stone should be used to stabilise those areas experiencing high impact
- Ensure that there are no excessive areas of standing water and that drainage options are explored

### **Obstructions**

- Obstructions can be natural or man made
- Remove over hanging branches any hedges that obstruct the rider. This does not include brush used as part of the fence
- Ensure that advertising banners and fence furniture is placed safely to allow free passage, in case of an emergency
- Ensure the height of overhead obstructions is sufficient for a mounted rider
- Foot paths need to be sufficiently signed as to warn of movement of horses at speed
- Ensure correct depth of water and suitable base. Ensure the security and safety of the water complex
- Ditches need to be clearly defined and allow an easy exit if required
- Stringing to guide and control areas of movement by both horses and pedestrians
- Ensure that crossing points are clearly marked
- Plan a course vehicle management plan including stewarding. This should be for essential vehicles only with a 10mph speed limit

### **Course length and Jumping elements**

- Courses do not have to be up to maximum length or jumping efforts
- Allowances for the time of year and ground conditions need to be taken into account

### **DO NOT**

- Be afraid to go back to an element that you are unsure of and ask for a second opinion

**DO**

- Ask for help or support from BRC HQ , Official Stewards, your Area Representative or a BE Technical Advisor
- Check the course as many times as you can or see fit
- Resolve any issues prior to the day
- Use plastic safety cups in line with industry standards for the back roll of all spreads in a show jumping course, including the practice fences

**Finance Details**

- Make sure that you have a written agreement with the venue including the financial details of your agreement

**Insurance Details**

- For all events run under the BRC insurance policy, all courses must be checked in accordance with BRC Rules and guidelines

**Other Useful Resources**

- BRC Rule Book
- BRC Rule Book for Official Stewards and Organisers
- BE Guidelines for Fence Judges
- BE XC Guidelines
- BE Clarification on the securing down of portable fences
- BE Frangible Pin System
- BE Rule Book
- BS Rule Book
- Data Sheet DS11 Guidance for booking a venue
- Data Sheet DS19 Carrying out a Risk Assessment