

(March 2010)

OHTA RULES COMMITTEE WELCOMES FEEDBACK FROM ONTARIO ORGANIZERS AND ALL OHTA MEMBERS ** UPDATE ON THE NO STOP WATCH RULE

Early last summer, we reported to you that the OHTA Board of Directors had established the OHTA Rules Committee. The mission of this committee is to (i) communicate to the Ontario organizers and OHTA members the rationale, background and intended outcomes of the new rules and amendments to the existing rules; (ii) provide a forum in which the organizers and members can communicate their ideas, thoughts and concerns to the committee; and (iii) coordinate a formal lobbying effort to the National Rules Committee to express the concerns of the Ontario organizers and OHTA members.

As we explained, there has been a lot of pressure on our sport to make it safer while maintaining its competitive nature. One of the results of this pressure is the initiation of new rules and amendments to existing rules. While it is the mandate and responsibility of the Equine Canada and the National Rules Committee to make and change the rules that govern our sport, and while provincial participants are invited to provide comments on the rules, the OHTA has sensed a growing concern about some of the rules and the process for making changes.

The OHTA Rules Committee is again extending an invitation to you to provide us with your feedback (in writing) on any new rules or rule changes. You can write to any of the committee members via email (email addresses listed below). Your feedback is greatly appreciated, and your identity will remain strictly confidential. **We urge you to contact us as soon as possible because it looks like the deadline for making submissions to the National Rules Committee has been moved up significantly.** We are seeking clarification on the new procedures and deadlines for making submissions and hope to be able to report further to you soon.

The OHTA Rules Committee is also reviewing the new 2010 rule book (available online on the Equine Canada web site; changes appear to be marked with a line in the right margin) to determine whether there are any new rules that bear further explanation and interpretation. If any of you have any questions about any of the rules, new or old, let us know and we will try to find answers.

Rules Committee Members:

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UPDATE ON THE NO STOP WATCH RULE

The rule stays for now; new rules regarding “windows” and calculation of time faults

Based primarily on feedback from OHTA members and an analysis of time fault data over the last several years, the OHTA in September 2009 made a formal submission to the National Rules Committee to abolish the no stop watch rule (the rule, introduced in 2009, prohibits the use of a stop watch by a competitor to time the XC phase at the Entry and Pre-Training levels). Notwithstanding our submission, and support from the British Columbia and Alberta horse trials associations (together, Ontario, BC and Alberta represent the overwhelming majority of eventers in Canada), the National Rules Committee is maintaining the rule. However, they have indicated that they are continuing to monitor the rule.

Your feedback continues to be relevant. In a recent survey of Ontario coaches conducted by the OHTA, it is apparent that our coaches have serious issues with the no stop watch rule. Please continue to let us know your views on this and any other of the rules.

The National Rules Committee also indicated that they would be looking at the “windows” and the calculation of time faults for Entry and Pre-Training, and it has recently come to our attention that the new rule book does contain new rules for the calculation of time faults for completing the XC course in less than the “Optimum Time” at the Entry and Pre-Training levels. The relevant rules, section 2.3 of Article D308 and section 2.3 of Article D311 are excerpted below. Section 1.5 of Article D311 is the no stop watch rule itself.

ARTICLE D308 RULES GOVERNING THE CROSS-COUNTRY TEST

2.3 SPEED FAULT TIME: For Entry and Pre-Training levels, the distance divided by the speed fault speed gives the speed fault time. Completing the course in less than the optimum time is not penalized up to the speed fault time. Completing the course in less than the speed fault time will be penalized in accordance with Art D 311.2.3. The speed used to determine the speed fault speed is the maximum permitted speed allowed for the next level. (eg. For PT- the speed fault speed would be the maximum speed permitted for the Training division)

ARTICLE D311 CROSS-COUNTRY SCORING

1.5 Using a stop watch to time the cross country phase by any competitor at the Pre-Training division or below will be penalized by elimination.

2.3 Time Faults for Excessive Speed on Phase D.

• Preliminary and Training divisions

Each commenced second in excess of 30 seconds under the Optimum Time, - 1 penalty point.

• Pre-Training and Entry divisions:

Each commenced second under the Speed Fault Time - 1 penalty point.

Accordingly, under the new rule, instead of a fixed 30 second window, the length of the window will vary depending on the length of the course. The new windows may be less or more than 30 seconds. **In our monthly newsletter to Organizers, we have urged them to include on their course maps information as to the length of the windows for their particular Entry and Pre-Training courses. There is now more arithmetic involved, and we want to try to help our competitors and scorers stay on the same page.**

Here are some examples that illustrate how the “Speed Fault Time” and the new time fault calculation rules work:

Assume a PT course that is 2000m long. PT speed is 400 mpm. Optimum Time is, therefore, 5 minutes. The “Speed Fault Time” is 4:27 (2000 divided by the Training speed of 450 mpm).

Rider A is a bit slow and finishes in 5:05. She will be assessed 2 penalty points (5×0.4).

Rider B comes in at 5:00, the Optimum Time. She will incur no time-related penalty points. Furthermore, assuming she has no jumping faults, if she and Rider A are tied, the tie will be resolved in Rider B's favour.

Rider C finishes in 4:28. Under the old rules (with the fixed 30 second window), she would have been assessed 2 penalties for being too fast. Under the new rules, she will not be assessed any time-related penalties.

Rider D finishes in 4:15. She will be assessed 12 penalty points for riding the course too quickly.

According to the new rule, and as you can see from these examples, the window is now calculated based on the next level's speed. You can ride an Entry course at Pre-Training speed and a Pre-Training course at Training speed and not incur time faults.