

FEI™ SPORTS FORUM

30 – 31 March 2026
IMD Lausanne

Dressage Rules
Session 3





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Chair of the FEI Dressage Technical Committee. Former Chair of Dressage Committee FEI Regional Group VII. International Grand Prix Athlete.



George Williams (USA)

Chair FEI Dressage Strategic Action Planning Working Group. Former President of the United States Dressage Federation, US Equestrian Dressage Youth Coach and High Performance & Pathway Development Advisor.



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Member of the FEI Dressage Strategic Action Planning Working Group, Level 4 Dressage Judge, Western Europe and Africa representative at the International Dressage Organisers Club (IDOC). President of the Dressage Ground Jury for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



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Deputy Chair of the FEI Dressage Technical Committee, Member of the FEI Dressage Strategic Action Planning Working Group & Ethical Training Methods Working Group. Multiple Medal winning Athlete, German National Dressage Coach.



Dressage Excellence

A roadmap to vision 2027 onwards

The **Object of Dressage** is the development of the horse as a happy athlete in a **positive mental & physical state through harmonious education**. Allowing the horse to be calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the rider.

Freedom &
Regularity of
Paces

Lightness of the
forehand, engagement of
hindquarters

Harmony,
lightness, ease
of movement

Acceptance of the bridle and
aids with thoroughness without
any tension or resistance





Operating Framework

- Dressage Technical Committee
- Dressage Strategic Action Planning Working Group
- Dressage Test Writing Working Group
- FEI Rules Revision Process (Partial 2025, Full 2026)
- Equine Ethics and Wellbeing Action Plan
- Ethical Training Working Group
- Relevant Research & Development Projects





FEI Dressage Rules Consultation Roadmap



DTC / DSAPWG

- Discussion with Technical Committees and Working Groups

Rule changes proposals
1 March 2026

- Deadline for NFs to propose rule changes via FEI Rules Revision Process

FEI Sports Forum 2026

- Dressage Rules Revision
- Session

July – November 2026

- 20 July 2026 Publication of Draft Regulations
- July - 7 September 2026 Stakeholder Review
- 6 November - Proposed Final Versions

FEI General Assembly 2026

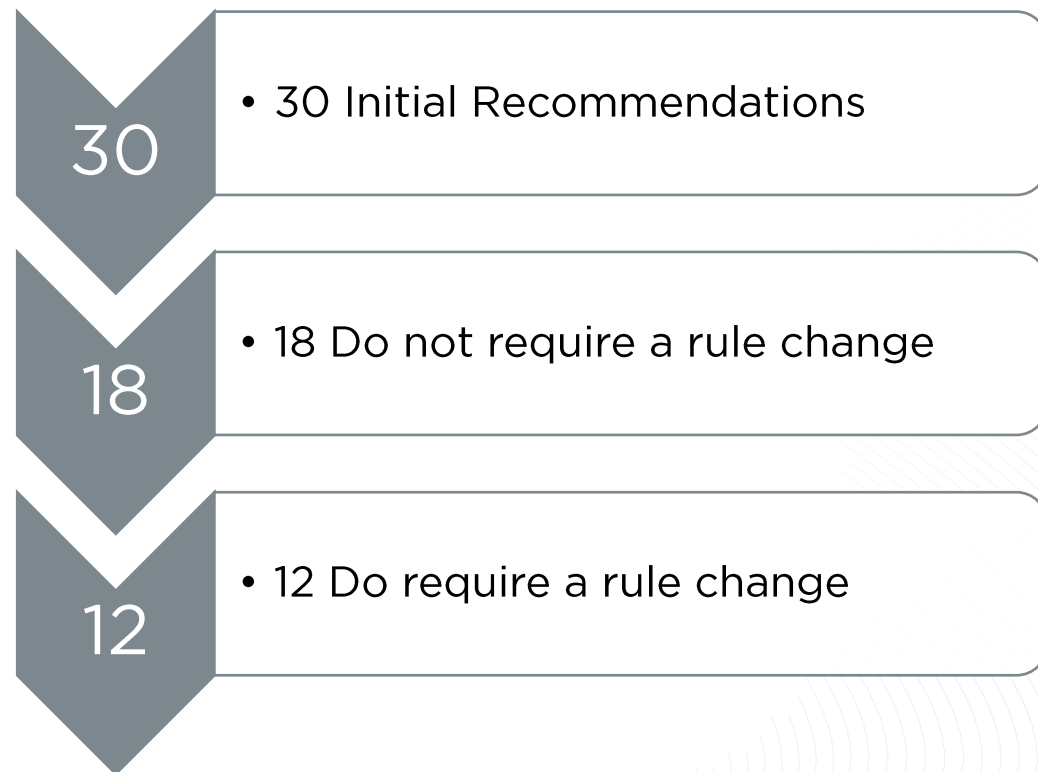
- Rules Session
- General Assembly Vote on FEI Dressage Rules



Initial Actions Low Hanging Fruit


**Dressage
Excellence**

A roadmap to vision 2027 onwards





Judging & Assessment

Recommendation	Status	Rule Change
Review the Degree of Difficulty and Freestyles	Complete – Implement April 2026	No
Update / Revise the FEI Dressage Tests at all levels	Ongoing – Jan 2027	No
Judge to participate in press conference	Complete	No
Review the Judging Guidelines and Firewalls	Ongoing – Jan 2027	No
Review the 2018 Dressage Judges Working Report Recommendations	Ongoing	No
Review judging guidelines and firewalls, make available online	Ongoing – January 2027	No
Review position of Judges for panels of 5 and 7	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes
Use Ordinary Draw for Grand Prix	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes
Observe combination prior to entering the Arena at A	2026 & 2027 Rule Revision Process	Yes
Judges Education, Training & Oversight	Ongoing	Yes / No
Technology to assist Judges / Objective Analysis	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes / No
Individual Judges remarks / comments to be made public	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes
Running score (individual marks) to be made public during the test	Implement / technology dependent	No



FEI Dressage Judge Monitoring Programme

Evaluate:

Short- and long term accuracy of FEI Dressage Judges

Educate:

Constructive and consistent feedback to improve long term performance

Select:

Compare and rank judges, assign to most important competitions

Understand:

Constructive and accurate feedback on judging to all stakeholders

Monitor:

Detect biases and consistent misjudging



Horse Health & Wellbeing

Recommendation	Status	Rule Change
Minimize potential stress. Noise / volume of music / clapping.	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes
Amend Prize giving protocols. Mounted lap of honour first and then top 3 riders for podium unmounted.	Review / Amend Prize Giving protocols for Dressage.	No
Minimum age of horses for Grand Prix and number of competitions per horse per year / per month-	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes
Review the format of the young horse classes and their progression / longevity in the sport. Review date and format of Championships for YH	Research & Development Project, discuss with FEI Vet Dept.	Yes
Review the format / protocols of the Horse Inspection and sanctions if horses not presented properly.	Veterinary Rule Revision Process	Yes / No
Clarity re conflict behaviours and competition exertions	Update Dressage Judges Guidelines	No



Tack & Equipment

Recommendation	Status	Rule Change
Allow choice of double or snaffle bridle up to and including 3* GP level	Complete	Yes
Review / standardise noseband type (Cavesson) across all 3* GP classes	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes
Review age categories for using the double bridle	Current Rule Revision Process	Yes



Warm Up Area / Stewards

Recommendation	Status	Rule Change
Vet delegate to support Stewards in overseeing warm up area	Role of Vet Delegate in Veterinary Regulations	Yes
Protocol for assessing excess / artificial foaming	Veterinary Regulation 1004	Yes
Organisers permitted to video stream the warm up on site	Complete	No
Develop an FEI tool for Horse / Rider Observation during warm up	FEI Equine Welfare Strategy Action 1.1: Ethical Training Methods	No



Communication, Promotion, Engagement

Recommendation	Status	Rule Change
Improved technical commentary and access to live feed during the test	Dressage commentators workshop	No
Raise awareness of lifetime care of Dressage Horses pre, during and post competition.	Communications	No

Education

Recommendation	Status	Rule Change
Registration & FEI ID number to be issued to all Dressage Trainers	Cross discipline initiative	Yes
Continue collaboration between Athletes, Trainers and Officials	Stakeholder briefing meetings at events	No



Partial Rule Revision effective 1 January 2026

Article	Change
429.3 Collective Mark	Rename 'General Impression' – 'Harmony and Demonstration of the Training Scale'
424.5.1 Lameness / Elimination	In competitions that are not qualifying for a next test - Reinspection by FEI Veterinary Delegate or Member of Veterinary Commission prior to starting next test.
424.5 Resistance 424.5.5 Unauthorised Assistance 424.5.6.1 Penalties – Error - Elimination	Introduce the concept of 'Space around the Arena' under Judges' jurisdiction.
434.2.2.2 Bridle with noseband	Choice of snaffle or double bridle permitted in CDI1*, CDI2*, CDIO1*, CDIO2*, CDI3*, CDIO3*, CDIJ, CDIOJ, CDIY, CDIOY, CDIU25 and CDIYH for 7 yr. old horses, Junior and YR Championships.
418. Pre Competition Warm Up	Organisers and the FEI are permitted to use a static camera to make video recording / live streaming of the practice arena(s) to be shown at the venue.

FEI™ SPORTS FORUM

30 – 31 March 2026, IMD Lausanne



FEI™
DRESSAGE

Full Revision of the FEI Dressage Rules



Article 401.8

Categories of International Events

- Youth Events & Competitions
- Children Age 12 – 14
- Consider widening the age for the Children category?
- Applicable to all disciplines – General Regulations



Article 404

Dressage Tests

- Review and update FEI Dressage Tests at all levels
- Include movements to demonstrate suppleness, balance and self carriage
- Review DoD and Freestyles
- Divide ‘Harmony Collective Mark into two separate collectives (Horse & Athlete)



Article 417.3.2

Draw for Starting Order

Organising Committees to conduct an Ordinary Draw for CDI Grand Prix.





FEI DRESSAGE

GRAND PRIX

Event : _____ Date : _____ Judge : _____ Position

Competitor No : _____ Name : _____ NF : _____ Horse : _____ Minimum age of horse : 8 years

Time 6'30" (for information only)

No.	Code	Test	Marking					Objective ideas	Remarks
			10	9	8	7	6		
1.	A X	Enter in collected center Halt - immediability - salute Proceed in collected trot						Quality of paces, falls and transitions, straightness, canter and trot.	
2.	C HXF FAX	Track to the left Collected trot						Regularity, elasticity, balance, energy of movements, overstep, lengthening of frame, lengthening of frame, both transitions.	
3.	KB	Half pass to the right						Regularity and quality of foot, uniform bend, collection, balance, fluency, crossing of legs.	
4.	BH HC	Half pass to the left Collected trot						Regularity and quality of foot, uniform bend, collection, balance, fluency, crossing of legs, has a haunch leaning.	
5.	C	Halt - immediability Main back 5 steps and immediately proceed in collected trot						Regularity, energy of balance, steps, overstep, lengthening of frame, lengthening of frame, Transition to extended trot.	
7.	VKD	Passage						Regularity, cadence, collection, self carriage, back and step, transition to passage.	
8.	D	Piaffe 12 to 15 steps						Regularity, taking weight, self-carriage, activity, cadence of back and step, transition to passage. Maintenance of rhythm, collection, correct cadence, Accuracy in number of lateral steps.	
9.	D	Transitions passage - piaffe - passage						Maintenance of rhythm, collection, self carriage, balance, fluency, straightness, precise execution.	
10.	DFP	Passage						Regularity, cadence, collection, self carriage, balance, activity, cadence of back and step.	
11.	PH	Extended halt						Regularity, suppleness of back, activity, overstep, tension of shoulders, attention to the tail, stretched to the tail, Transition into walk.	
12.	NCM MIC KEX	Collection, self carriage, and posture a ceteris paribus Collection, self carriage, and posture a ceteris paribus Collection, self carriage, and posture a ceteris paribus						Maintenance of rhythm, collection, self carriage, balance, fluency, straightness, precise execution.	
13.	Interchange A 50v Invitation	Interchange A 50v Invitation						Regularity, suppleness of back, activity, overstep, tension of shoulders, attention to the tail, stretched to the tail, Transition into walk.	

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Article 421 Judges Sheets

- Mandatory comment on marks of 7 or below?
- JSP corrections published as Annexes to the results?
- Judges comments to be made public?



Article 424

Penalties- Error-
Elimination

Article 424.5

Reasons for Elimination

Rules Revision – Horse Condition Harmonisation

The FEI Board approved the establishment of a Task Force (final name to be confirmed) to review the various rule proposals relating to horse condition (horse welfare, abuse of horse, etc) with the aim of finding multidisciplinary consensus. The proposed timeline, terms of reference, and composition of the Task Force will be submitted to the Board for approval at its in-person meeting scheduled for 30 June–1 July 2026.



Article 411.3

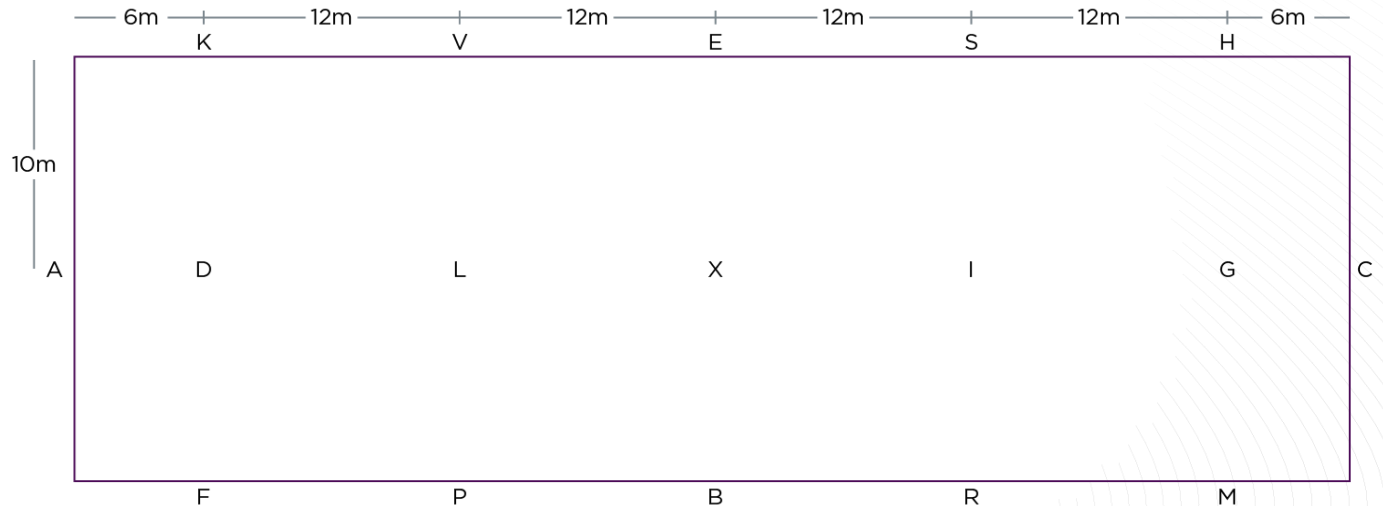
Arena Specifications

Article 424

Penalties-Error- Elimination

Area around the arena:

Is the perimeter immediately adjacent to and encircling the competition arena, which shall remain within the judges' line of sight.





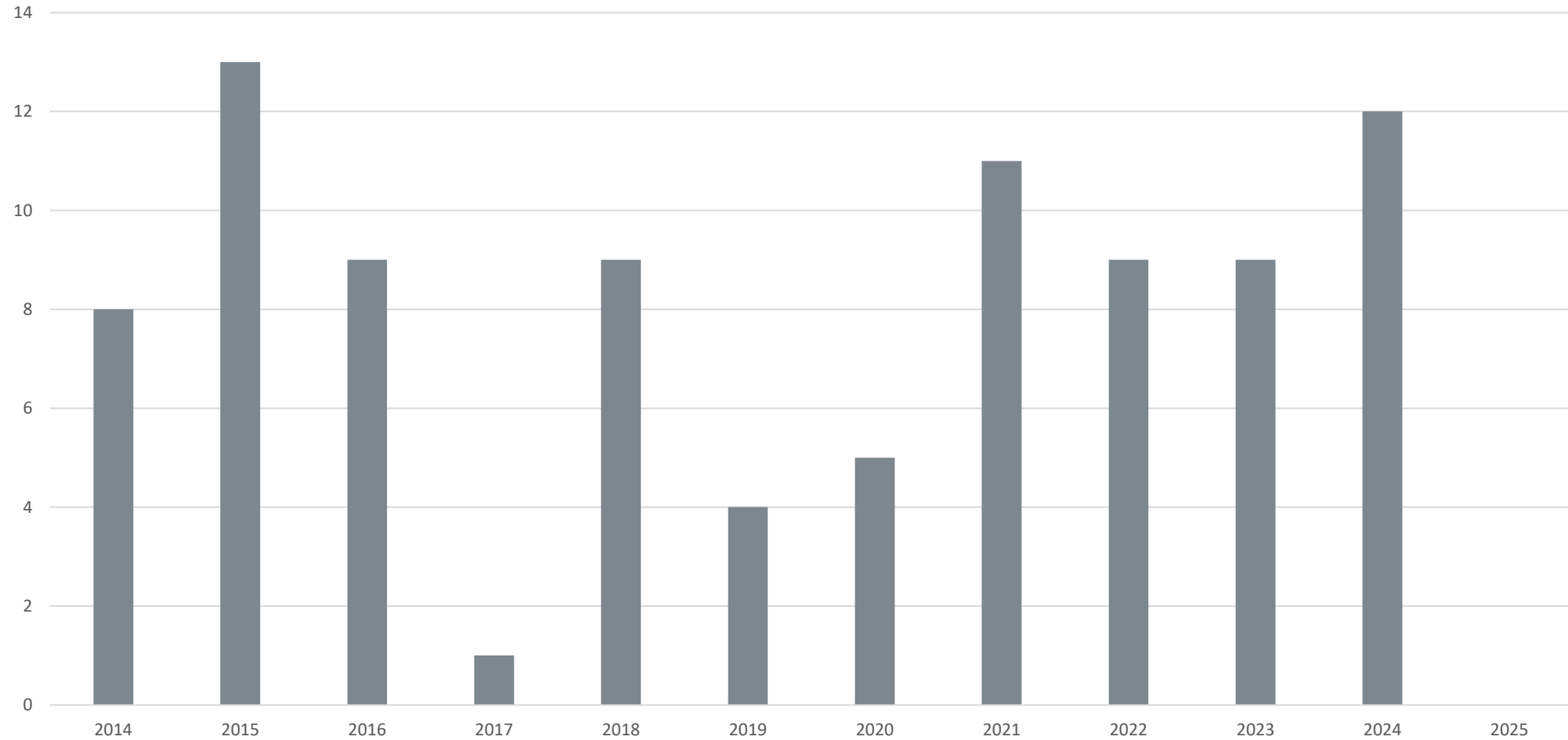
Article 433.1

Horse / Pony Age

- Senior Tests CDI2* and above: should the minimum age be raised from 8 to 9 years of age?
- Should the number of starts at GP be restricted for 8 year old horses?
- Should 8 year old horses be prohibited from competing at GP level until they are 8 years and 9 months?



8 Year Old Horses in GP





CDI2* and above

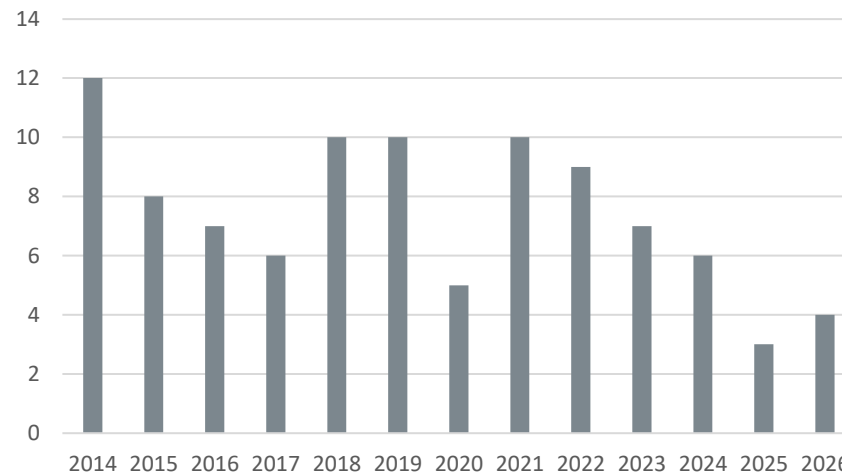
8 year olds Horses that competed in CDI2* and above in 2014 together with their last FEI registration Year

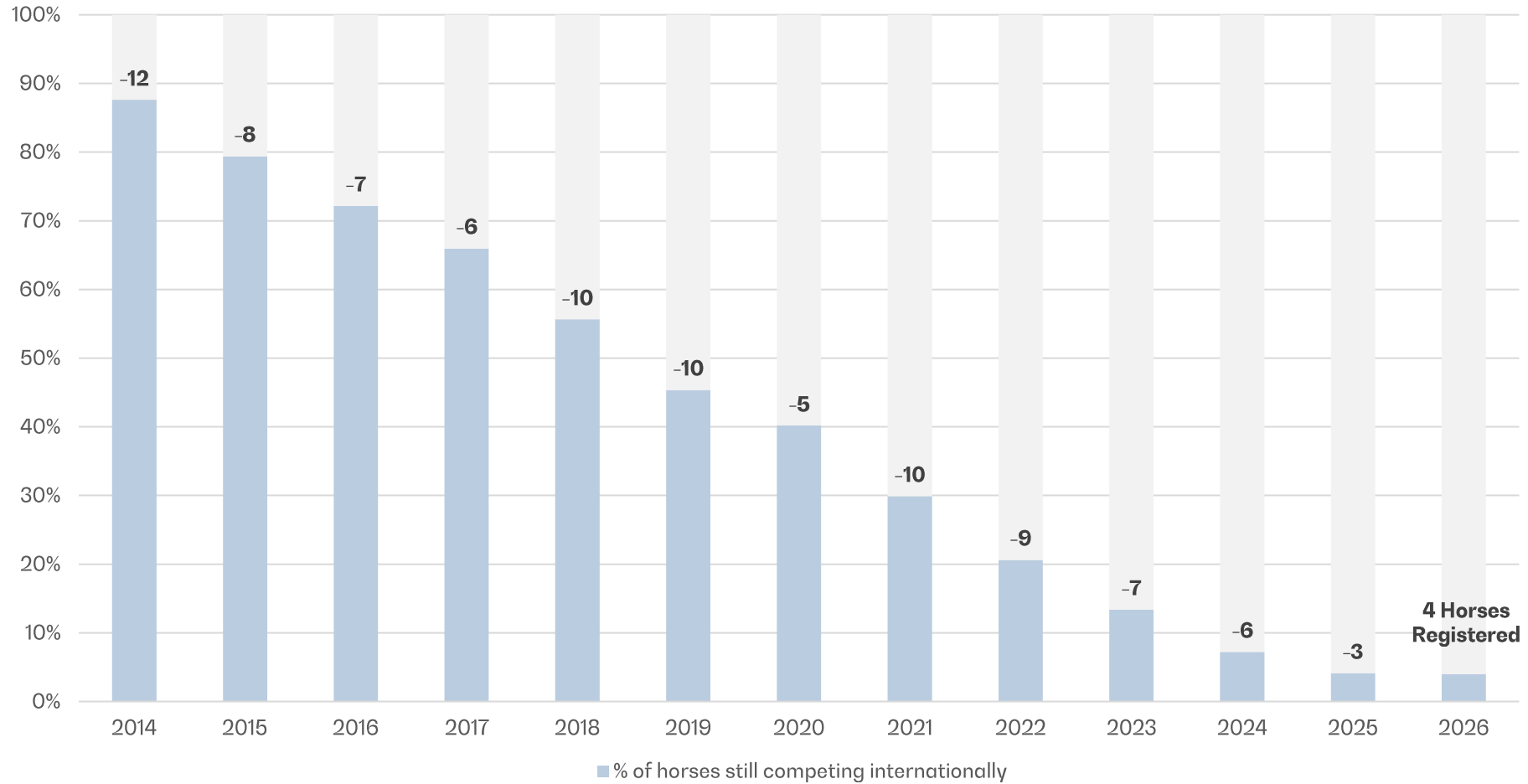
	Last Registration Year													Grand Total
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Nb of Horses	12	8	7	6	10	10	5	10	9	7	6	3	4	97
Percentage of Horses	12.4%	8.2%	7.2%	6.2%	10.3%	10.3%	5.2%	10.3%	9.3%	7.2%	6.2%	3.1%	4.1%	100%
Running Percentage	12.4%	20.6%	27.8%	34.0%	44.3%	54.6%	59.8%	70.1%	79.4%	86.6%	92.8%	95.9%	100.0%	100%

horses competed in CDI2* and above in 2014

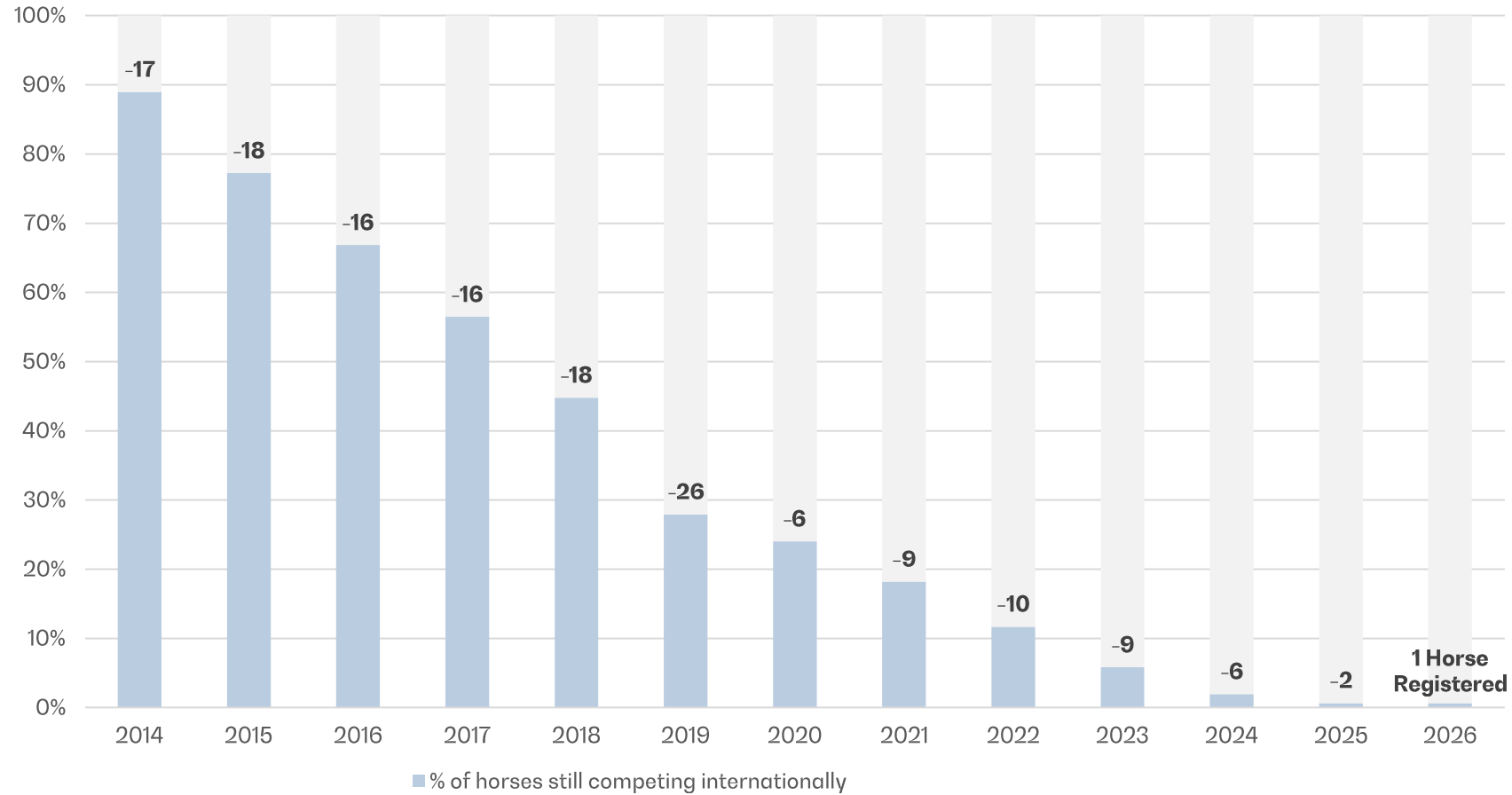
^ 4 Horses out of the 97 Horses are still competing in 2026

Last Registration Year for 2014 8 Year Olds at CDI2* and above





**8 Year Old Horses
(97 in 2014)**

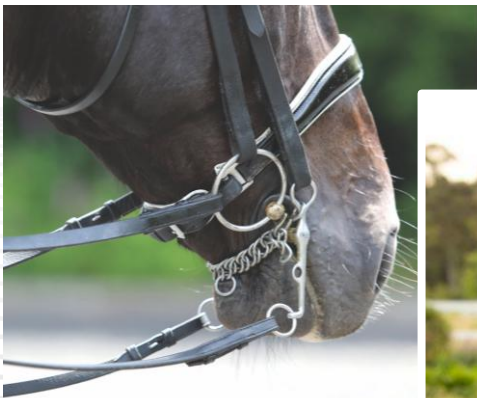


**9 Year Old Horses
(154 in 2014)**



Article 433.1

Saddlery / Equipment



- Choice of double vs. snaffle bridle
- Option of double bridle for Junior class



GP Tests ridden in snaffle bridle at CDI3* level in period 01/01/26 – 01/03/26

Test Level	# Tests	# Snaffle Bridle	% Snaffle Bridle
GP	207	20	9.66%
GPS	115	6	5.21%
GPFS	66	3	4.54%



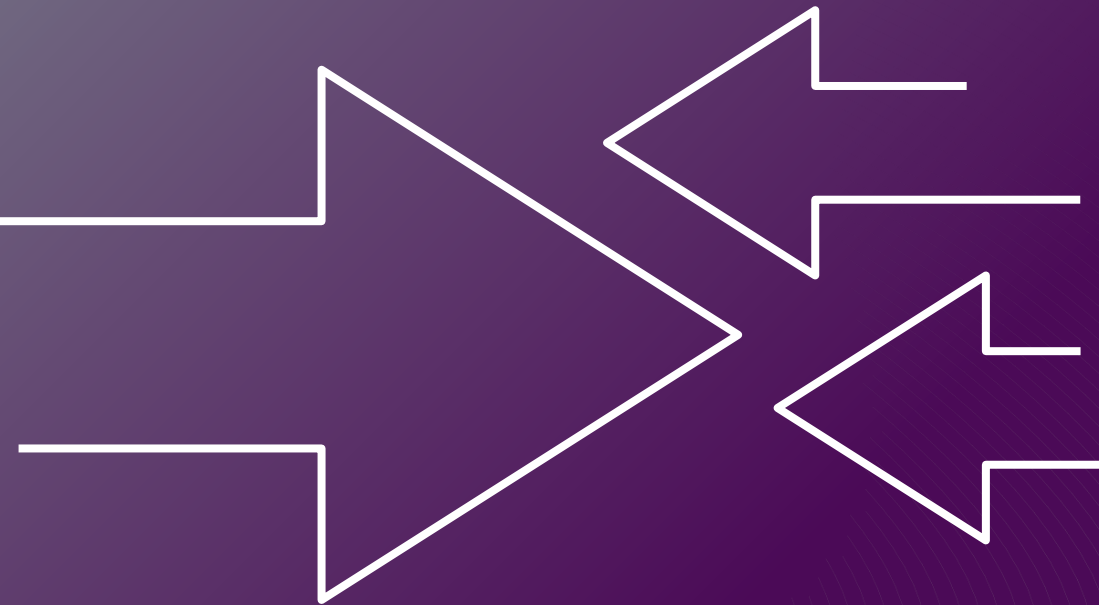
Article 441.9.5.8 **Ground Jury**

- Role of the FEI – Appointment of Officials
- CDI5* - Appointment of President and Members of GJ
- CDI4* - Appointment of Foreign Judge
- Article 443 Stewards – Appointment of Chief Steward for
 - 5* Events
 - CDI-W Events
 - CDIO Events



Officials Transparency Register

- Article 446 Directives for Officials
- Article 447 Conflict of Interest
- Article 448 Codex





Discussion



FEI™

thanks its partners

LONGINES

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Agria

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SADDLES

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EMPOWER YOUR AMBITION



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