

3. The Course, Parade Ring and Winner's Enclosure

NUMBER OF FIXTURES ON A POINT-TO-POINT COURSE

- 3.1 The number of Point-to-Point Meetings that are to be held over any one course is conditional upon a report from the BHA Inspector of Courses who takes into account the interval between meetings, the nature of the ground, the personnel and equipment available, and the ability of the fences to withstand more than one day's racing.

POINT-TO-POINTS ON LICENSED RACECOURSES

- 3.2 Applications to hold Point-to-Point Meetings on licensed racecourses will be subject to the following conditions:

- (a) All Point-to-Point fences should be separate from those fences used for races under the Rules of Racing.
- (b) No cars should be parked on any part of an existing turf Flat or Steeple Chase track.
- (c) Provided that the racecourse is agreeable and by doing so it did not damage the existing track there should be no restriction on the use of the parade ring, saddling boxes and security area.

Note: The BHA General Instruction on the use of racecourse stables between meetings must, however, still be observed.

- (d) If any running rails are moved all exposed spigots must be removed or totally covered.

PRE-INSPECTION OF COURSES

- 3.3 Every course will have appointed to it:

- a BHA Inspector of Course (BHA Inspector) with overall responsibility for any decision relating to racing on the course; and
- a part-time BHA Local Inspector (Local Inspector) with responsibility for day-to-day discussions with the course and for carrying out pre-raceday and raceday inspections.
(see Appendix (3)B for 'Selection, Training and Assessment of Local Inspector')

Courses will be inspected in advance as well as on the day of the races. The name and address of the respective Local Inspector and BHA Inspector allocated to each course will be supplied to the Fixture Secretary after the Fixture List has been arranged.

A BHA Inspector will examine every point-to-point course before that course's first meeting of the Season.

The Clerk of the Course at a Point-to-Point Meeting will be required to produce all fences in reasonable time before the day of the Meeting. The Local Inspector must be invited to make an inspection of the course at that time so that there will be ample opportunity for any action to be taken and alterations made where necessary. Depending on the condition of the course on their first visit, an additional visit may be necessary. If an additional inspection is necessary it will occur before the meeting takes place.

In any event the Local Inspector will attend on the day of racing and at the conclusion of the meeting send a report, covering both their pre-raceday and raceday inspections, to the BHA. **Local Inspectors are advised to discuss the content of their report with the Clerk of the Course on the day and a copy of the report will subsequently be provided to the course.**

Point-to-Point Organising Committees are advised to take advice on the building of their fences from a professional fence-builder who is employed by a racecourse holding steeple chase fixtures under Rules. All fences on any one course should, as far as possible, be uniform and consistent; in particular on those courses where both portable and permanent fences are used.

A Local Inspector cannot act as a Steward at a Point-to-Point Meeting where they are its Inspector. In addition, where a Local Inspector is offered another Raceday Officials duties on a course where he is the Inspector, he must consider the potential conflict of interests and seek clarification from the BHA. Similarly, Local Inspectors should not be a member of a Hunt Committee staging a fixture on the course that they inspect.

If there is concern regarding the condition of the course in advance of entry stage that may lead to abandonment or postponement of the meeting, the BHA Inspector of Courses should be consulted and can attend prior to a final decision being reached.

When a Meeting is abandoned or postponed, the Local Inspector must be informed immediately. Failure to do this may cause an unnecessary journey being made and the organisers of the meeting will be responsible for paying the Inspector's travelling expenses. A fee for attendance plus car mileage will be paid.

CONSTRUCTION OF FENCES (Regulation 80 and Appendix (3)A (to this Instruction))

3.4 Detailed recommendations on the construction of permanent fences are set out below. Inspectors have been asked to ensure that these recommendations have been carried out to their satisfaction before any Point- to-Point Meeting is held.

Should there be plans to modify any fences away from the traditional structure, the BHA Inspector must be consulted in good time ahead of the meeting.

If there are any particular points which need clarification, the BHA Inspector should be contacted for their assistance. BHA Inspectors visit all National Hunt courses regularly during the Season and if given adequate warning may be able to meet Clerks of Courses or Local Inspectors to discuss points of detail.

BHA Inspectors should always be informed when a course intends to use a new fence builder.

The BHA acknowledge that measurements when constructing fences can never be absolute, and that small variations may be found, but courses should endeavour to meet the guidelines stated. See Appendix (3)A for fence construction diagrams.

(a) **Height of Fence**

Fences shall not be less than (1,295mm.) 4ft 3ins. in height, measured from take-off side to the highest point (A-B) except in the case of a water jump or where the nature of the ground justifies any variation.

(b) **Plain Fences**

A plain fence should be built on a base of about (1,676mm.) 5ft 6ins. (C-D) and the slope of the fence should reduce the thickness at the top to about (305mm.) 12ins. (E-F) which should be of fine birch. The base measurement is calculated as the distance from the take-off board, or apron to the point on the landing side vertically below the overhang of the birch.

(c) **Open Ditches**

The width of the fence at the top should be about (610mm.) 2ft (L-M) and the width of the ditch (1,524mm) 5ft, measured from the front edge of the frame on the take-off side to the front of the guard rail (O-P). The frame rail of the fence on the approach side must be obscured so that horses approaching the ditch do not see two parallel rails (the guard rail and the frame rail) and the material used should not overhang the ditch by more than (457mm) 18ins.

Where portable open ditches are used, the turf should either be dug out or covered with sand or earth.

(d) **Frames / Advertising Hoardings**

No frames should be higher than (559mm) 24ins. From ground level (J-K). Advertising hoardings (either canvas or rigid) must not be attached to fences unless they are securely fixed and below frame height. There must also not be string attached or tied to the birch above the height of the frame.

(e) **Guard Rails**

(i) Open Ditch - It is recommended that the rail is between (304mm) 12ins and (457mm) 18ins high and must be painted white. The boards beneath the rail (in cases where a turf facing is not used) must be painted white. To prevent shine a gloss finish must not be used.

(ii) Plain Fence - Where guard rails are used, they MUST be painted white. A gloss finish must not be used. Dimensions of (102mm) 4ins by (51mm) 2ins are recommended. The top of the guard rail should not be higher than (635mm) 25ins. (i.e. half the height of the fence) from ground level, and must be recessed into the line of the fence (G-H).

The Padding of Guard Rails, where used, is compulsory. Fence builders should cover all guard rails with tight fitting and well secured

foam padding (also painted white). For the avoidance of doubt, the take-off boards on open ditches must also be padded.

N.B. Guard rails are not compulsory. However, should a Meeting wish to omit guard rails in their fences (ordinarily when using spruce) they must first seek approval from their BHA Inspector.

(f) **Take-Off Boards**

These are compulsory and must be painted white. (254mm) 10ins. by (51mm) 2ins. is the recommended minimum size of which (51mm) 2ins. should be either let into the ground or turves placed between the ground and the board. There must be no gaps between the ground level and the bottom of the take-off board. In addition, to ensure clear visibility of the take-off board it may be necessary to strim along the front of the board.

(g) **Aprons**

It is recommended that birch, broom or spruce is used. Gorse is not acceptable. In order to maintain uniformity all plain aprons must consist of the same material. Open ditch aprons may consist of other suitable material as agreed with the BHA Inspector.

(h) **Wings**

Wings must be provided and except in the circumstances detailed below must be made of plastic. The design and type of wing support must be approved by the Local Inspector. The supports should be constructed from rounded timber and be no more than (76mm) 3ins in diameter with the support behind the leading edge of the wing being preferably padded. Under certain circumstances (e.g. high winds) a support in the form of a T-bar can be used mid-way along the wing. This can be constructed from rounded timber or plastic and must be no more than (1,219mm)4ft in height and (76mm) 3ins in diameter.

The recommended height of the wings where they join the fence is about (1,829) 6ft. and the length not less than (5,486) 18ft.

When a fence is built in the line of an existing bank or wall, wings need not be provided, but the bank or wall for a distance of (4,572) 15ft. on either side of the fence, must be, or made up to be, not less than (1,829) 6ft. in height. (See 'Gaps Beside Fences' below).

Wings should be sited where possible such that they are no more than 3ft out from the perpendicular.

(i) **Width of Fences**

Unless otherwise agreed with the BHA Inspector the overall width of the first fence (inclusive of bosses) for any race should not be less than 14 yards in width and every other fence not less than 10 yards in width (inclusive of bosses).

(j) **Gaps Beside Fences**

Every fence must have a gap adjacent to it on one side through which the field may race in the event of the fence being deemed unsafe to jump. The gap should be no less than 5 yards wide with no barbed or naked wire left within 15 yards of the gap, nor shall any vehicle be parked within that distance of the fence or gap.

The gap and angle of adjacent wing must be positioned to give the least deviation from the line of running and should also be roped off. THE RACING SURFACE THROUGH THE GAP MUST BE COMPARABLE TO THAT OF THE MAIN PART OF THE COURSE.

It is recommended that such gaps should be on the outside of the obstacle.

(k) **Area Around Fences**

Where fences are built in an existing fence or hedge line, there shall be no barbed or naked wire left within 15 yards of the fence on either side, nor shall any vehicle be parked within that distance of any fence.

Where fences are sited within close proximity of the car parks (i.e. home straights etc.), the Clerk of the Course must ensure that there is a sufficient lay-by area between the wing of the fence and the perimeter of the car park area. (See 'Gaps Beside Fences' above).

It is strongly recommended that all public areas immediately before and after a fence are double railed/roped on the inner to prevent the crowd from standing (or cars parking) too close to the racing line.

PORTABLE FENCES (SECTIONAL FENCES)

3.5 On those courses where portable fences are used, the design must be approved by the BHA Inspector. Should a Meeting consider the introduction of portable fences on their course, the Clerk of the Course must first of all obtain the necessary approval from the BHA Inspector.

Care must be taken to ensure that the portable fences are consistent with those permanent fences already sited on the course. Instructions on the construction of portable fences are available from the manufacturers and should be strictly adhered to. It is important to ensure that the adjoining sections are bolted together at the base, and then secured either by means of metal/steel hoops or wooden stakes on the landing side (not above timber it is supporting) to avoid any movement.

When fences are refurbished, it is essential that they are made up to the required standard.

LAYOUT OF COURSES

3.6 (a) **Overall Layout Considerations**

Some time should be taken to consider the following key points (not exhaustive) when considering changes to a site for a Point-to-Point:

(i) **Access and Egress.**

- Roads and gates available for normal movement to and from the course to avoid queues on public highways.
- Routes and waiting area for emergency vehicles including Air Ambulance

(ii) **Horse Box Park.** Close to road. Shady with through draught if likely to be hot. Access to water. Preferably away from public but easy to reach from Parade Ring and course (but preferably not visible before winning post).

- (iii) **General Public.** Car park in line with expected numbers, and plans in place for overflow. Movement through the day should not naturally bring them close to Officials' area or horse box park
- (iv) **Serious Incident/Emergency.** Layout of site, including routes in and out, allow Officials and external emergency vehicles to handle any incident without serious adjustment required.

(b) **Course Modification**

Plans to alter the course away from the known circuit, require consultation with the Local Inspector in good time ahead of the meeting and if necessary further consultation should take place with the BHA Inspector.

(c) **Position of Start**

There should not be an excessive run up to the first fence. A distance, where practicable, of between 100 yards and 120 yards is recommended.

(d) **Marking of Course**

Where it is necessary to fence any part of the course to prevent the public from encroaching on to the track during the course of a race the uprights used to support the ropes or tapes should be of wood, rounded to minimise the chance of injury to horse or rider. Organisers must consult their BHA Inspector if they wish to use any material other than the above. The use of metal stakes is not satisfactory. It is strongly recommended that as much of the home straight as possible is railed to provide a well-defined line for tired (and possibly drifting) horses towards the end of the race.

Public car parking should be organised in such a way that it is not possible to park immediately adjacent to running rail or ropes/tapes which define the racing line. (See also 'Health and Safety' section 6.3).

(e) **Bends**

Bends should be clearly marked with flags or boards which may be supported by black and white hurdles, plastic rail or round bales. The use of a single round bale to denote a bend is to be avoided. In each case the supports must be secure with the markers positioned so that they do not interfere with oncoming horses/riders.

The use of roped bends to mark the inside of the racing line is not permitted. Where rope is essential, course markers must be used to keep runners off roped bends. Clerks of Courses are advised to consult their BHA Inspector should they wish to source plastic running rail.

Bends and course markers should always be supported by a bundle/faggot of birch or padding (i.e. foam) attached to their outside.

(f) **Extra Course Markers**

Organisers are advised to retain a number of spare course markers in the event that bad weather necessitates 'dolling out' certain false or waterlogged patches of the track.

(g) **Marking of Course Site**

Critchley and Severn plastic are not acceptable materials for use anywhere on the Point-to-Point Course.

Note: Not all of the requirements highlighted in sub-sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 need to be complied with in the case of Hunt Members races being run over natural country.

NUMBERS BOARD

- 3.7 A numbers board must be provided and suitably positioned to be clearly visible to the public and be of an appropriate size to advertise the maximum number of runners and riders, colour changes, overweights, blinkers, tongue straps and the going.

CONSTRUCTION OF PARADE RINGS

- 3.8 It is recommended that the parade ring is large enough to accommodate the number of horses equivalent to the maximum safety factor, allowing not less than 16ft per horse, and is double railed with child resistant fencing. Properly fixed orange/blue plastic mesh material can be used for this purpose. If a metal crowd barrier is being used to define a parade ring, it must be fronted by an inner rope at least 6ft inside it. Where a winners/unsaddling enclosure is incorporated into the parade ring, sufficient additional space must be provided over and above the 16ft per horse.

Besides Officials, only owners and riders with horses participating in the race should be allowed access to the parade ring. A sign confirming that children under the age of 12 (or older if stipulated by Health & Safety requirements and/or the Organisers) are prohibited from entering the parade ring must be installed.

PROCEDURE FOR MOUNTING IN PARADE RING

- 3.9 The following procedure is recommended. When the signal to mount is given, the horses:
- (a) shall be made to stand still with their heads towards the centre of the Parade Ring and riders will walk immediately to where their horses are standing and will mount there, or
 - (b) will continue to proceed around the Parade Ring and will be mounted at the walk.

Horses should not be lead or ridden across the middle of the Parade Ring. When the rider has mounted, the horse may be walked round the Parade Ring, in the same direction as the horses were walking before they were mounted, until it is time to go down to the start.

SCHOOLING OVER FENCES

- 3.10 The practice of allowing horses to be schooled on a course after the completion of a Meeting is only permitted (regardless of subsequent meetings due to be held), with the permission of the land owner and at the discretion of the Organising Committee.

However, it is the Organising Committee's responsibility to ensure that adequate medical and veterinary cover is in place and that both the course and fences are put back properly in readiness for the next meeting.

WINNERS/UNSADDLING ENCLOSURE

- 3.11 Individual (i.e. partitioned) stalls for the first four horses in each race are not recommended. An "open plan" area for these horses is a better alternative. Where provided, stalls must be made sufficiently wide for the horses' comfort and to minimise the risk of connections, photographers etc. being kicked or squeezed against the partitioning.

COURSE WATERING/HARD GROUND

- 3.12 Organisers are strongly encouraged to liaise with their Stewards and BHA Inspector if the going is likely to be Hard (i.e. the ground is impenetrable with a stick of not less than ½ inch diameter tip). If the ground is considered to be officially "Hard" the meeting MUST be abandoned/postponed.

Before plans are made to water a course Organisers MUST ensure they have obtained a water extraction licence where it is necessary to do so.

To maximise the efficiency and consistency of any watering carried out Organisers should take account of the following "best practice" guidance:

- Every effort must be made to achieve an overall consistency of ground conditions of the racing surface/by-pass areas and to avoid any rutting thereon from vehicles during application of water.
- 'Spiking' the ground, if possible, will assist in the penetration of the water.
- If the water is to be dispensed from a bowser then it is best to dispense it sideways from the bowser.
- Organisers should take care that watering does not continue so close to the first race time that the conditions become very slippery. Advice should be taken when deciding whether to water on the raceday itself.

COURSE REINSTATEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- 3.13 It is strongly recommended that the course is reinstated or 'put back' within 24hrs-48hrs of a Meeting - especially when the venue stages more than one fixture during the year. In these cases 'treading in' and the use of a Cambridge Roller (conditions permitting) are recommended. The BHA Inspector can provide general advice on sports turf equipment.

Organisers must contact their BHA Inspector prior to implementing any large-scale de-compaction work that they are intending to carry out. This includes the use of any 'earthquake' machine or 'shakeaerator'.

FINISHING POST

3.14 A board 2ft wide backing the far side finishing post. It must provide enough contrast for the Judge to be able to clearly identify the finishing line.

The board will prevent others filming the finish from the far side along the finishing line.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX (3)A FENCE CONSTRUCTION GUIDE

APPENDIX (3)B LOCAL INSPECTOR – TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION

Appendix (3)B

Local Inspector –Training and Accreditation

THE ROLE

1. A Local Inspector is employed by the BHA and receives travel expenses and a 'daily rate' for carrying out a pre-raceday inspection and raceday inspection of each of their course before every Meeting.
2. At each inspection the Local Inspector must assess all aspects of the course for compliance with the Instructions – ground, fences, alignment, by-passes, signage, rails, etc.. Any failures or concerns should be pointed out and discussed with the Clerk of the Course, and a time frame given for them to be rectified.
3. On raceday, the Local Inspector should also take a wider view of the overall arrangements in place at a Meeting and check that flags and by-passing equipment are in place at fences and that fence attendant briefings take place. During racing any perceived problems with the veterinary or medical arrangements should also be discussed with the Clerk of the Course.
3. If any serious concerns are identified that may jeopardise the Meeting taken place the Local Inspector should immediately seek advice and assistance from the respective BHA Inspector
4. At the conclusion of every Meeting a report should be completed and sent back to the BHA. The report should include any points of concern and the time frame given for their correction.

SELECTION

5. Any person's may be put forward to become a Local Inspector. The person should, preferably, have previous first-hand knowledge of Pointing and previous experience of working at a course.
6. If it proposed that the person is to act as a Local Inspector at a course with which they have previously had a direct involvement, the person and the BHA must be satisfied that they can set aside their previous involvement with the course and act in an independent capacity on behalf of the BHA>

TRAINING

7. In order to be accredited as a Local Inspector any new person should, whenever possible:
 - act for a Season accompanying the existing Local Inspector
 - accompany a Local Inspector, at a different course, to observe them carrying out their pre-raceday and raceday inspections
 - accompany the Clerk of the Course throughout a Meeting.
 - accompany the BHA inspector at a Meeting.

8. Completed, at least, two Local Inspector reports in respect of attendance at a Meeting either with the existing Local Inspector or the BHA Inspector.

Note: Whilst training expenses for mileage are paid but not the 'daily rate', which is only paid to accredited Local Inspectors.

ACCREDITATION

10. After any training day the respective Local Inspector, Clerk of the Course and BHA inspector will be required to submit a 'Performance Assessment'.
11. The Local Inspector reports submitted must be of an acceptable standard.
12. A final assessment day, overseen by the BHA Inspector or existing Local Inspector, will be carried out and must be passed to their satisfaction.

ONGOING TRAINING

13. Thereafter, a Local Inspector must attend one training course every four years put on jointly by the BHA and PPA.