

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Extraordinary	12/1/2025	8/27/2025	Approved 8/26/2025

Extraordinary Change Reason

horse wellbeing

Rule Change Intent

Horses must be fit to compete at all times while participating in Federation licensed competitions. The discovery of blood on a horse, whether actively bleeding or evidence of recently having bled, may be grounds for elimination. Instances of blood in the mouth or flank, as well as blood caused by tack and equipment must result in elimination from further competition. In minor cases of blood, from a horse biting its tongue or lip, a participant may be permitted to rinse the horse's mouth and, if the bleed ceases, continue on in competition. All other blood discovered by a judge, Steward, or Technical Delegate may result in elimination at the discretion of the official.

Proponent Details	Contact Information
USEF Officers	Leslie Mangan
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Linked Rules	Comments
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American Saddlebred

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/18/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 04/30/2025

Draft 1: The committee was in favor of the intent but had several questions regarding the proposal. More clarity should be added to clarify elimination. Is elimination from the class or the whole competition? If a horse is eliminated from the class, would they be eligible to show back in the Championship if they were previously entered? A judge should be added to the language in GR843.1 because often a steward is not around. This would allow the judge to call a timeout to evaluate the horse. If a timeout is called, who would be charged the timeout?

Andalusian/Lusitano

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/08/2025

Draft 1: The committee has many concerns they feel should be addressed regarding this rule change: what is minor vs major in terms of blood?; "un-intentional action" should be taken into consideration; certain non-blood instances should be addressed in the rule such as the Hackamore/Bosal horse – having raw spots on the chin and interrupted skin (raw, clear fluid seeping instead of blood), the judge needs to understand these type circumstances; also spurs can be abusive without causing blood but causing the same type of raw spots. The committee feels that the rules are clarifying without any definition which in turn causes more confusion in the enforcement of these rules. Also, the committee would like to point out the current similar rules that are present in the AL Chapter: AL101.18 makes a horse with a cut/abrasion/blood ineligible to receive an award in the class, also in the AL Reining and Doma Vaquera divisions fresh blood requires elimination from the class.
Draft 3: The committee would like consideration given for this rule or another GR rule to address the abrasions and rubs that are often caused by the use of a hackamore or bosal which can in some cases also cause blood. The committee feels that these extreme abrasions should also be considered at the judge's discretion for elimination.

Arabian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/26/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/05/2025

Draft 1: The committee feels that this rule change needs major revisions to address a list of questions and potential issues: What is the horse eliminated from; class, competition? What are the procedures for examining/rinsing of the mouth; stopping a class, wait until the class is completed? Who has the authority to eliminate and how is this handled along with breed specific blood rules? The committee also has several concerns: blood caused during "field of play", accidental, etc.; how does this rule allow for those instances? The rule should be addressing blood that is athlete induced, not blood that is at no fault of the rider, or caused by field of play in the sport or an accident not on the part of the rider. The decision making process regarding the rule is concerning; not giving the ride the benefit of the doubt. The committee fears elimination regarding blood that is by no fault of the rider or abuse type situations.

Draft 3: The committee feels that this rule change causes a slippery slope in how blood is viewed by the horse industry, but especially the public. With this, what is the procedure; the class is stopped, but is an attendant called in, does this count as the exhibitor's timeout, how can the official evaluate whether the blood is truly a minor case or not, how is the official supposed to definitively judge whether the horse only bit it's tongue or not, what happens if the judge eliminates the horse for blood, but is found after the elimination to have only bit it's tongue and be a minor case? The committee also worries about the precedent and view this rule sets with the public viewing of how we handle blood, when you have a live audience watching, but especially a wide audience on the live feed video. If the rule is intended to catch only "flowing or actively bleeding cases of blood", the rule itself should reflect this within the verbiage used.

Athletes Advisory

Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/19/2025

Carriage Pleasure Driving

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/05/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/06/2025

Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent, but feels that the language needs to be reworked as it is unclear. One of their major concerns was whether this would necessitate holding up classes while the horse in question is examined, which could slow down the competition flow.

Draft 3: The committee feels that their concern about competition delays has not been addressed, and that the rule needs further clarification - what is a "significant" vs. "minor" bleed?

Connemara

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/26/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/13/2025

Draft 1: While the committee agrees with the intent of this rule change, they feel that better defining of elements within the rules is needed. The committee would like to see an exception of inspecting bits, the addition of "rider induced" verbiage for the presence of blood, the addition of procedures for a bleeding mouth including the rinsing aspect, and quantifying the differing scenarios involved with this rule.

Draft 3: The committee would like to see clarity added to the rule in point one regarding elimination. The committee feels that the following verbiage brings clarity: "Eliminations for blood are final from the relevant class". The "relevant class" verbiage is used throughout the rest of the rule change, but not in point one in this instance regarding elimination.

Council - Intl Discipline

Draft 2: Recommends Approval 01/07/2025
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/27/2025

Draft 2: The Council supports and recommends approval of this rule change proposal; however, requests that "visible blood on the field of play..." is included in the rule for clarification.

Draft 3: While the Council agrees with the intent of this rule, they expressed concern over how this rule would be managed in the field (i.e., class vs jump off). For example, a combination that moves forward to a jump off, equitation work off, or second round of a hunter classic / derby.

Council - Member Services

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/17/2024
Draft 2: Recommends Approval 12/19/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/27/2025

Draft 3: The Council agrees with the intent of this proposal, but recommends the following be considered: (i) If the blood is caused by tack or is athlete-induced, elimination from the class should be required. The rule should also contemplate active bleeding versus the appearance or presence of dried blood; (ii) The rule should outline that no method of inspection can be employed that could make the bleeding worse (i.e., aggressively rubbing a small abrasion on a pastern that causes it to resume bleeding); (iii) The proposal needs to clarify that the suspension of a class for the purpose of examination of a horse does not constitute a formal time out under the rules; and (iv) The Council feels that stewards and TDs should be added to the list of officials in point 2 who are authorized to stop a class and conduct an examination.

Council - Natl Breed & Discipline

Draft 2: Recommends Approval 01/06/2025
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/19/2025

Draft 3: The Council would like the officers to consider the following: Could the verbiage of blood be updated to free-flowing blood, the interruption of schedule to be further clarified, and the concerns on the liability of judges should they call for an elimination be considered. Would they be covered under the field-of-play decision rules? The Council also asked that the language referring to "rinsing" of the mouth be removed so it only states "wiping of the mouth". Rinsing would imply that the competition would be responsible to have water always present center ring for these purposes.

Dressage

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/13/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 04/07/2025

Draft 1: Dressage has more stringent rules on blood which would take precedence, but we do not believe TDs should be authorized to eliminate. We are also not in favor the ability to wipe blood away to see if it reappears, and if this is intended to be outside the competition ring, that needs to be stated within the rule.

Draft 3: The committee echo's USDF's comments that Dressage needs to be exempted from this provision as many aspects of this proposal are in conflict with the DR rules, which are stricter than this proposal. DR rules prohibit time outs and include an exception if the blood is a result of environmental factors. Moreover, it is not clear whether this proposal would apply at all times or just in the competition ring and if just in the competition ring, the proposal is silent on how blood it is to be dealt if spotted outside the ring.

Driving

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 10/15/2024
Draft 2: Recommends Approval 01/02/2025
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 04/08/2025

Endurance

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/19/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 04/22/2025

Eventing

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/19/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 04/29/2025

Draft 1: The Committee supports the rule in concept, but in order to recommend approval, they would like to see the language amended to allow flexibility in cases where blood is not cause by tack or equipment. Due to the nature of the sport, there could be minor cases of blood on the horse's flank or in the mouth from environmental factors that should not result in automatic Elimination (Ex. blood as a result of a cut from a brush fence on Cross Country). The Committee believes any evidence of blood caused from tack should be Elimination, but for all other cases it should be reviewed case by case. Additionally, they do not believe that Stewards should not have the power to Eliminate the horse; they recommend the President of the Ground Jury, Veterinarian, or Judge should have the final say on the Elimination.

Friesian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/18/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/14/2025

Draft 1: The committee has concerns regarding the rule not making exceptions or differentiation for blood caused accidentally, at no fault of the rider, "field of play" type situations. Also, the committee feels that the verbiage "minor blood" needs defining as currently, how does one determine if the presence of blood is minor. The committee feels that consideration should be given regarding how or why there is blood present in the mouth; a horse biting its lip or tongue is at no fault of the exhibitor. The committee also would like to see the procedure/process of elimination included in the rule verbiage.

Hackney

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/20/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/12/2025

Draft 1: The committee was in favor of the intent but had several questions regarding the proposal. More clarity should be added to clarify elimination. Is the elimination from the class or the whole competition? If a horse is eliminated from the class, would they be eligible to show back in the Championship if they were previously entered?

Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/16/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 04/07/2025

Draft 1: The Committee agrees with the intent of the rule change, but would like all breed and disciplines to fall under the same welfare rules, to reflect harmonization across disciplines and standardization of welfare rules for all without exceptions.

Jumper

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/18/2024

Draft 1: The JSC disapproves because of the current discussions at the FEI level from their implementation of a similar rule which has caused unintended consequences. This needs further discussion to include discretion on case-by-case situations.

Licensed Officials

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/09/2024
Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 01/13/2025

Draft 1: The committee does not believe that there should be clarification around if a steward/TD should be permitted to eliminate a horse. It appears to vary in practice across breeds/disciplines.
Draft 2: The LOC agreed with the concept of this rule change but thought it would be helpful to specify that Breed or Discipline rules that are more stringent than this rule would supersede the GR rule.

Morgan

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/08/2025

Draft 1: The committee feels that this rule change needs revisions based on the following: accidental incidences that are caused by playing the sport should not cause penalties (athlete induced only); what is the horse being eliminated from?; what is the procedure for this examination to take place?; would an elimination from a qualifying class, eliminate a horse from competing in the championship class?
Draft 3: The committee would like the judge to have the option of allowing a horse found with a minor case of blood in the mouth to continue in the class instead of solely the options of rinsing/wiping or elimination. The committee strongly feels that an exception to the GR time out rules must be made so that a time out called for by the judge in the case of blood does not count as the exhibitors one time out allowed; consider this instance an "officials time out". The committee also feels that this rule puts too much pressure on the judge with too many possibilities of charges/issues brought against the official from their decisions on blood in the moment.

National Hunter Committee

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/03/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/05/2025

Draft 1: The committee felt this topic would be better suited within GR838.
Draft 3: While the committee agrees with the intent of this rule, they expressed concern over how this rule would be managed in the field. Specifically, the committee noted that some horses are prone to scratches and other fungus of the legs, increasing the chance for environmentally-caused blood. In addition, the committee expressed concern over how this would impact competition scheduling, noting interruptions of classes. The committee felt that blood should be addressed outside of the competition ring, with potential elimination to occur after the horse has completed the course, instead of stopping a horse mid-course. The committee would like each discipline to have their own specific blood rules, and if there is to be a GR rule, they feel the blood rule should fall under GR838 Unethical Treatment of the Horse.

National Show Horse

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/27/2024
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/07/2025

Draft 1: Overall the committee feels that this rule change needs revisions and more thought time. The committee appreciates the giving consideration of differing circumstances, but feels that the mouth should be separate consideration from blood on the body.

ParaEquestrian	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 10/15/2024	
Paso Fino	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/19/2024	
Roadster	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/21/2024 Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/12/2025	Draft 1: While the committee is in favor of the intent, there were several questions around the following: Who would the timeout be charged to if the official asked for the horse's mouth to be rinsed? ; If a horse is eliminated from the class, will they be eligible to show back in the Championship class if entered prior? ; Does elimination mean from the class or the competition?
Saddle Seat Eq	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/21/2024 Draft 3: Recommends Approval 04/28/2025	Draft 1: The committee agrees that horses with fresh blood should not be competing, however, they had several clarifying questions for the proposal. More clarity should be added surrounding the elimination. Is the elimination from the class or the whole competition? If a horse is eliminated from the class, would they be eligible to show back in the Championship if they were previously entered? If a timeout is called for a judge to evaluate, who would be charged the timeout?
Shetland	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/27/2024 Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/14/2025	Draft 1: The committee would like clarification on whether the elimination is from the specific class, or from the entire competition. They would also like to support a language change to refer to "athlete induced blood", as sometimes equipment can accidentally cause a mark or rub that doesn't have ill-intent.
USDF	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 01/01/2025 Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 01/01/2025 Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 04/09/2025	Draft 1: While in support of the concept, this rule is in conflict with the DR rules, which are stricter than this proposal and include an exception if the blood is a result of environmental factors. It is not clear whether this proposal would apply at all times, for example if blood is discovered on a horse in the stall during a walk through the barns or just in the competition ring. Finally, this proposal takes authority out of the hands of competition management to eliminate for blood and give that authority to the TD or Steward, which is a significant deviation from the current authority vested in these officials. Draft 2: Dressage needs to be exempted from this provision as many aspects of this proposal are in conflict with the DR rules, which are stricter than this proposal. DR rules prohibit time outs and include an exception if the blood is a result of environmental factors. Moreover, it is not clear whether this proposal would apply at all times or just in the competition ring and if just in the competition ring, the proposal is silent on how blood it is to be dealt if spotted outside the ring. Draft 3: Dressage needs to be exempted from this provision as many aspects of this proposal are in conflict with the DR rules, which are stricter than this proposal. DR rules prohibit time outs and include an exception if the blood is a result of environmental factors. Moreover, it is not clear whether this proposal would apply at all times or just in the competition ring and if just in the competition ring, the proposal is silent on how blood it is to be dealt if spotted outside the ring.
USEA	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 01/08/2025 Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/22/2025	Draft 1: The Board feels due to the nature of the sport, there could be minor cases of blood on the horse's body from environmental factors that should not result in automatic Elimination (Ex. blood as a result of a cut from a brush fence on Cross Country). Language is inconsistent throughout the proposal.
USHJA	
Draft 1: No Action 12/12/2024	Draft 1: Would like to see another draft. It would be better located this with the rest of the GR838 welfare rules.
Vaulting	
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 04/08/2025	Draft 3: The Committee suggests defining "minor cases" in more detail.
Veterinary	
Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/23/2025	
Welsh	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/05/2024 Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/06/2025	
Western Committee	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/17/2024 Draft 3: Recommends Disapproval 05/08/2025	Draft 1: The committee feels the rule needs further clarification. Will the individual be eliminated from the entire competition, or just from one class? What is the definition of "minor blood" vs. a major bleed? Draft 3: The committee feels that the proposal in its current format is too vague, and leaves room for lawsuits against judges if an "incorrect" call is made. They would prefer the rule to be stricter about blood in the mouth to prevent the appearance of impropriety.
Western Dressage	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/16/2024 Draft 3: Recommends Approval 05/14/2025	

GR843 Blood

See section and division rules for additional restrictions and/or penalties for the presence of blood.

- 1. Blood on horses must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Eliminations for blood are final.**
- 2. A licensed judge or the Ground Jury must stop the class for the examination of any horse with blood in its mouth or elsewhere on its body.**
 - a. In minor cases of blood in the mouth, such as where a horse appears to have bitten its tongue or lip, the licensed judge or the Ground Jury may authorize the rinsing or wiping of the mouth and allow the horse to continue. If the horse continues to bleed, it will result in elimination from the relevant class.**
 - b. In all other circumstances, any horse with blood in its mouth must be eliminated from the relevant class.**
 - c. Blood discovered elsewhere on the horse's body may result in elimination of the horse in the discretion of the licensed judge or the Ground Jury. If the blood is determined by the licensed judge or the Ground Jury to be athlete induced or caused by tack or equipment, the horse must be eliminated from the relevant class.**
- 3. Where a horse is eliminated from a class that is a qualifier for a championship or other class, the eliminated horse may compete in the championship or other class, if the horse is otherwise qualified to do so and the blood is resolved prior to the championship or other class.**