

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Standard	12/1/2025	1/31/2025	

Rule Change Intent

The intent behind allowing optional protective boots and bell boots of black or white in color would be to prevent unnecessary injury or injuries that may impact the horses health and/or well-being. Any boots may be removed for inspection post ride to allow officials to check for any obvious bleeding or other signs of injury. The change of this rule would allow for protective wear similar to those equine athletes competing in eventing, jumpers, reining, driving, etc. In order to regulate the protective wear, similar restrictions to the jumper rules would be put in place. This would insure that the movement seen by a horse is not impacted, either by hinderance or exaggeration, by the protective wear. Many equine atheletes school at home in protective wear and allowance for the optional use of boots at shows woud allow for increased protection away from home where there is an air of excitment and tension.

The potential impact of leaving the rule as is may subject horse and rider combinations to injuries that are preventable, but lead to elimination from the event at best, and career ending injuries at the worst.

Proponent Details	Contact Information
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Linked Rules

Linked Rules	Comments
Andalusian/Lusitano	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/30/2024
Arabian	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/02/2024 Draft 1: The Committee feels that this rule change is not needed at this time.
Connemara	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/01/2024
Council - Natl Breed & Discipline	
Dressage	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/13/2024 Draft 1: Without intended, it is difficult to discern the meaning of this rule and there in no provision added for how this would be accomplished at the competitions - additional training and staffing would be required at each competition ring.
Friesian	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/02/2024 Draft 1: The Committee feels that this rule change will allow for more issues in the policing of equipment.
Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/16/2024 Draft 1: The committee favors the Dressage Committee's comments.
Licensed Officials	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/09/2024 Draft 1: The committee feels this is too difficult to regulate and control.
Morgan	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/16/2024
USDF	Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 01/01/2025 Draft 1: This rule, if adopted, would be difficult to monitor/enforce as it is very hard to ascertain which boots are "performance enhancing." In addition, this proposal is in conflict with the rules of the FEI, which are followed by Dressage and prohibit the use of boots in the competition ring.

DR121 Saddlery and Equipment

11. Boots and bandages. Boots and bandages without magnets are permitted in the warm up and other training areas. In competition the use of any kind of boots or bandages that contact the horse's legs on or above the hairline at the coronet or tail bandages are under penalty of elimination, prohibited. **In competition, the use of boots is permitted provided the total maximum weight of equipment permitted to be added to a horse's leg, front or hind is 500g (shoe excluded).**

a. Boots: Non-weighted, non-performance enhancing protective boots (any boot that does anything but protect the horse's leg/ankle will be considered performance enhancing) are permitted in warm up, training areas, and competition arenas. All front leg protections must be properly fitter to the horse. Proper fit can be shown as: have a maximum interior length of 14 cm. All hind leg protections must have a maximum interior length of 16 cm. The following requirements apply to all boots and bandages:

- 1. An adult finger, roughly one (1) inch in diameter should be able to fit between the boot and the horse's leg at the top and bottom of the boot.**
- 2. The boot should cover most of the cannon bone and inside of the fetlock, but not rise to the back of the knee or below the fetlock.**

b. The following criteria must be respected in relation to boots worn:

- 1. The inside of the boot must be smooth, that is, the surface must be even and there may not be any pressure points on the inside of the boot; sheepskin or synthetic linings are permitted;**
- 2. Fasteners that allow for even pressure along the leg are permitted Only Velcro-type fasteners are permitted; no hooks, buckles, clips, or other methods of attaching the fasteners may be used;**
- 3. No additional elements may be added to or inserted in the boot itself, other than a protective flap, providing it is soft and clearly intended for protection only.**

c. Exception: Leg bandages are allowed in Pas de Deux and Quadrille classes.

d. Bell boots. Non-weighted, non-performance enhancing bell boots (any boot that does anything but protect the horse's shoe and hoof will be considered performance enhancing) are permitted in warm up, training areas, and competition arenas. Bell boots can be pull-on or fastened with Velcro.

e. If a tack inspection is performed after completion of the test, the rider or their representative is responsible for removing the leg protection (boots and/or bandages) and/or bell boots and presenting the items for inspection to the designated ring steward who will ensure that nothing prohibited has been added, such as weights or other insertions.

f. Any blood seen on the legs under the bandages/boots or on the lining of the bandages or boots equates to elimination from the class. Boots cannot be used to hide active bleeding or injuries.