

"The FEI always had rules to judge rider seat and position, but now new FEI Rules (available on www.fei.org) make it even easier" - says Colleen Kelly

As a Biomechanist Colleen specialises in seat and posture, but struggled to help riders understand the best mechanical position as there were so many different opinions and grey areas.

Now Colleen believes the new FEI Rules are simpler for riders and judges and they back up findings of researchers worldwide. The rules are in **bold** and Colleens thoughts below.

The aids must be imperceptible ...and effortless

The more judges see kicking or pulling, the lower the rider mark - the more effortless, the higher the mark.

Sitting deep in the centre of the saddle

We tested 200 riders on saddle stands with scales, one under each foot. 100% of riders had differences sideways. The

worst: 17kgs heavier on one side. This confirms why many riders have one stirrup lower than the other with the saddle pulled off to one side - easily seen on a circle viewed from behind.

Legs steady and well stretched down ... heels should be the lowest point

At Sydney three day event our researches observed 26 riders during warm up for the dressage phase. 27% of riders had knees over the front of the saddle, and 33% had their knee on top of - rather than behind - the knee pad. Only 36% were found to have their heels the lowest point. This would indicate a more forward cut saddle and shorter stirrups are more appropriate for the dressage phase.

The rider's body should be tall

Measuring 200 riders showed looking down puts approximately 18kg on the forehead! At my lecture at Equine Affaire Massachusetts we asked approximately 7,000 people in the audience to look at the person next to them to see which ear, and shoulder, was closer to the ground. Not one person was level! It therefore takes considerable work to be vertical and not lean sideways (making the horse crooked), not lean forward (on the forehead),

The hands should be carried steadily close together ... straight line from the supple elbow through the hand to the horse's mouth

The supple elbow helps the hands follow the head movement in walk and canter, and stay still in trot. Elastic elbows were mentioned several times at Andrew Hoy's Master Class.

NEW FEI RULES MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR RIDERS AND JUDGES

BY BIOMECHANIST COLLEEN KELLY

Thumb the highest point (of the hand)

Testing 200 riders on saddle stands showed just rolling the hands over put approximately 11kg on the forehead! This happens because hand rotation also affects elbow and chest position.

So - GREAT NEWS from the FEI to help riders understand how they must sit and judges understand how to assess the rider mark. It makes riders safer and more balanced allowing 'the harmonious co-operation between horse and rider.

Biomechanics Lecturer Colleen Kelly, who gave some demonstrations at Sydney three day event, started her career in exercise physiology, working in rehabilitation gymnasiums, and now, some 30 years later, is one of most sought-after speakers around the world. Colleen has always been fascinated by the mechanics of movement, and has taught riders, weight lifters, runners, swimmers and divers.

Sports biomechanics studies how athletes move, lift, carry, push and pull. Equine biomechanics analyses

GWAIHIR HORSE STUD

Congratulates 'Jenbern Momyana' ridden by Emma Scott (owned by Wyn Scott) - winners of the 6yo class and overall champions of the Gwaihir Stud Young Event Horse Class



Photo: Furbtography

Standing at stud

Gwaihir Aubusson & Aurigan de Gwaihir

Young stock available

Photo: Main Event Photography



Gwaihir Stud wishes Ari de G