

Guidelines for Obstathons

Note: The *FEI World CupTM Driving Rules for the Season 2015-2016* have been referred to in the development of these Guidelines and acknowledgement is given to the FEI as copyright owner of that material.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These Guidelines are intended to assist in the conduct of Obstathon competitions and are to be read in conjunction with the relevant parts of the CDE Rules 2015 Rules for Australian Carriage Driving Society Combined Driving Events effective 31 August 2015 (“**CDE Rules**”).
- 1.2 An Obstathon is defined as a short-course competition comprising both Marathon Obstacle-type and Obstacle Driving (Cones)-type elements, conducted wholly within an arena, either indoor or outdoor.
- 1.3 At the discretion of the Organising Committee, an Obstathon may consist of one or two rounds of competition, with a drive-off as necessary to decide final placings in the event of a tie.
- 1.4 Horse welfare shall always be the primary consideration – competitor’s attention is drawn to compliance with the ACDS Horse Welfare Policy .

2.0 Competitor Requirements

- 2.1 Harness and carriage specifications shall be as for Marathon phase under the CDE Rules.
- 2.2 Any advertising displayed by competitors shall comply with Article 941 of the CDE Rules.
- 2.3 The carriage shall carry the designated number of persons for that class as per the Marathon phase under the CDE Rules.
- 2.4 The minimum age of drivers and grooms shall be as per Art 912 of the CDE Rules.
- 2.5 Drivers shall be a current ACDS member.
- 2.6 The minimum age of horses / ponies shall be as per Art 929 of the CDE Rules.
- 2.7 All persons on the carriage shall wear equestrian-standard head protection as set out in the ACDS by-laws, correctly fastened, whilst in the competition arena(s).
- 2.8 At the discretion of the Organising Committee, a dress code may be implemented.

3.0 Course

- 3.1 Obstathons are held over courses which consist of the following:
 - A maximum of four marathon type obstacles.
 - Eight to 12 cone-type obstacles (depending on size of arena).

- May include a bridge - the bridge may not be shorter than 6 m. or higher than 20 cm. There must be wings and they must clearly be an aid to guide the horses and safe for the horses. The Bridge can only be crossed in a straight line direction with no turns or knockdowns applicable.
- 3.2 A marathon type obstacle may have up to a maximum of 5 lettered gates.
- 3.3 The bridge may be used from both sides as a single obstacle and as part of a combination with a marathon type obstacle
- 3.4 One pair of cones must be part of the bridge, their width must be a minimum 1.90m and a maximum of 2.00m.
- 3.5 The distance between the start line and the first cone and last cone and the finish line should be approximately 15m.
- 3.6 In a marathon type obstacle, each gate becomes free after it has been passed in the correct sequence. It can be passed again, however dislodging or knocking down an element (including the obstacle structure, even if the dislodgeable element belonging to it has already been knocked down) count as penalties.
- 3.7 Competitors shall be allowed a minimum of 15 minutes to inspect the course prior to the first round. If there are no changes to the line of the course for the second round, no further inspection is required.
- 3.8 Width of Cones – the following clearances shall apply:

	Division Class	Cones Width
Horse	Four-in-hand and Tandem	1.80m to 1.90m
	Pair	1.70m to 1.80m
	Single	1.50m to 1.60m
Pony	Four-in-hand and Tandem	1.70m to 1.80m
	Pair	1.50m to 1.60m
	Single	1.40m to 1.50m

- 3.9 Marathon type obstacle – width of gates – the following shall apply:

	Division Class	MO Widths
Horse	Four-in-hand and Tandem	3.50m to 4.00m
	Pair	3.50m to 4.00m
	Single	3.00m to 3.50m
Pony	Four-in-hand and Tandem	3.00m to 3.50m
	Pair	3.00m to 3.50m
	Single	3.00m to 3.50m

For this purpose, in designing a course, it is permissible to set the width of the cones using the largest width to be driven during the day's competition. i.e. if there are horse pairs, pony pairs and pony singles competing on the day, it is permissible to set the width for the entire day at the cones width for horse pairs.

4.0 Officials

Obstathons shall be conducted under the authority and direction of the following officials:

- 4.1 Head Judge – shall be an accredited ACDS Cones Judge and shall hold responsibility for the safe and correct conduct of the event.
The Head Judge should be located in a position where it is possible to view all parts of the arena during the competition and have a bell or buzzer which is sufficiently loud to be heard by competitors even over noise or loud music.
- 4.2 Technical Delegate – shall be either an Advanced or Novice ACDS Technical Delegate and shall be responsible for ensuring the technical aspects and safety of the event.
- 4.3 Field Judge – shall observe the competition from the arena and advise the Head Judge of any penalties or irregularities. The Technical Delegate and/or Course Designer may act as the Field Judge.
- 4.4 Course Designer – responsible for designing and setting out the course. May also be the Technical Delegate where appropriately qualified.
- 4.5 There should be radio communication available between the Head Judge and Field Judge / TD / Course Designer.

5.0 Starting Order

- 5.1 In the case of the 1st round, the starting order is to be decided by a draw, conducted where practical in the presence of the competitors.
- 5.2 If a second round is to be conducted, placings after the 1st round shall determine the 2nd round starting order, with competitors starting in reverse order of placing i.e. fastest time last to go.
- 5.3 In the event of a tie for first place after the 2nd round, at the discretion of the Organisers a drive-off may be conducted over a shortened course. In this instance the starting order shall be as per the 2nd round for those competitors involved. There will be no course walk.

6.0 Penalties & Scoring

- 6.1 In principle, all rounds are to be run as time competitions, with penalties converted to seconds (Art 978 of CDE Rules).
- 6.2 Penalties and eliminations

The following apply in terms of course penalties and grounds for elimination:

Incident	Penalty
Dislodging a ball in a single obstacle	5 seconds
Knocking over or down any element of a Marathon type obstacle	5 seconds
Causing an obstacle to be rebuilt (clock stops). The clock starts again when the Driver approaches the next obstacle or gate.	10 seconds plus 5 seconds

Groom (s) or driver dismounting 1st time (clock does not stop)	5 seconds per incident
Groom (s) or driver dismounting 2nd time (clock does not stop)	10 seconds per incident
Groom(s) or driver dismounting 3rd incident	Elimination
Groom uses the reins or the brake	20 seconds
Passing a compulsory gate in the wrong direction in Marathon type obstacles - corrected	20 seconds
Passing a compulsory gate in the wrong direction in Marathon type obstacles - not corrected	Elimination
First or second disobedience	No penalty
Third disobedience	Elimination
Wrong course single obstacle (sequence or direction)	Elimination
Failing to pass through starting or finishing flags	Elimination
Carriage turnover	Elimination
Active use of the whip by the groom	Elimination
Ball is dislodged or a wooden block or a dislodgeable element is knocked down by any means	5 seconds
All grooms not on the carriage when the carriage passes the finish line.	Elimination
Not stopping when the bell is rung whilst the competitor is on-course	Elimination

6.3 The following count as disobediences:

- When a Competitor attempts to pass through an obstacle and his horses shy away from the obstacle at the latest moment, without hitting any part of the obstacle.
- When the horses run away, or when, in the opinion of the Head Judge, the Competitor has lost effective control.

6.4 After the starting bell is rung the Driver has 45 seconds to start the course. If they have not started, the clock starts to run irrespective.

6.5 In situations of excessive use of the whip or other obvious horse welfare issues, the Driver must be called publicly to the Jury Box.

6.6 In all cases (i.e. 2 rounds or 2 rounds plus a drive-off), the time of the 2nd round shall be added to the time of the 1st round and the time of the drive off shall be added to the time of the 1st and 2nd rounds.

7.0 Judging Guidance

7.1 All balls, wooden blocks or other dislodgeable elements which are knocked down, remain on the ground until the Competitor has finished his course, unless the Head Judge has rung the bell and the single obstacle or element(s) of the Marathon type obstacle have to be rebuilt, or the exit or the entrance

are knocked down from the bridge. In this last situation the cones have to be rebuilt without the bell being rung.

- 7.2 If in the course of the competition one ball of a single obstacle has been dislodged (a 5 second penalty is incurred), an additional 5 second penalty is given if the other ball on the same obstacle is dislodged later by whatever means.
- 7.3 If a Competitor dislodges a ball of a single obstacle or displaces significantly an element of a Marathon type obstacle by any means, before the obstacle or gate is driven, the Head Judge rings the bell. The clock is stopped, at the most convenient time for the Driver, before the obstacle in question is approached, to allow the resetting of the obstacle. In this situation a 10 second penalty is incurred for rebuilding an obstacle in addition to 5 penalty seconds for dislodging the ball, wooden block or whatever from the obstacle that has been replaced. No time correction.
- 7.4 Significantly displacing an element of a Marathon type obstacle means that the element is moved or knocked over in a way that the Competitor has no possibility to continue his course through the lettered gates, or the obligatory gate is clearly changed in position and original width or it becomes a safety issue for the Competitor or horse(s). In this case the Head Judge must ring the bell. If not significantly displaced, the Head Judge does not ring the bell and the Competitor has to continue his course.
- 7.5 When the Marathon type obstacle is significantly changed and the Competitor cannot continue his course, the Head Judge rings the bell immediately and stops the clock. After the obstacle is rebuilt he rings the bell again. The Competitor has to start the obstacle by the first obligatory gate (A) again. The clock starts as the Competitor passes this first obligatory gate. For each knocked down element a 10 seconds penalty and for rebuilding, each time, an additional 5 seconds penalty is added.
- 7.6 If a Competitor corrects a wrong course he has to restart at the gate he missed. Such as: if he went from A to C, then realises it, he restarts from B. The time runs on, no bell is rung.
- 7.7 When a Competitor has completed a Marathon type obstacle with or without knocking down one or more balls, wooden blocks or other dislodgeable elements, and later on in the course, by whatever means, he knocks down one or more balls, blocks or other dislodgeable elements of this Marathon type obstacle, an additional 5 seconds penalty is incurred for each ball, block or other element, dislodged.
- 7.8 A Driver must proceed directly between obstacles attempting to pass through such obstacles in the correct numbered order.
- 7.9 A Cone-type obstacle must be driven through by at least one wheel of the carriage. If one or two balls are dislodged, a 5 seconds penalty is incurred. It is not necessary for the horses to pass through the cones.
- 7.10 Should the reins, pole straps or traces become disconnected or broken or the carriage seriously damaged; or should a horse get a leg over the trace, pole or bar, the Head Judge must ring the bell and a groom must dismount and reconnect or repair. The Competitor will be given a 5 seconds penalty per groom dismounting. The clock will be stopped.
- 7.11 In case of obvious cruelty the Head Judge has the duty to ring the bell and disqualify the Competitor from the event.

- 7.12 If the Bridge is passed through from both sides, such as No. 4 from the right and No. 12 from the left, the exit side is NOT neutralised, i.e. penalties can be incurred on both sides. If the ball of the cone is displaced when the carriage leaves the Bridge, the obstacle should be rebuilt without the bell being rung.
- 7.13 If the Driver is on course and the bell is rung the Driver must stop. If he does not stop after a repeated ringing of the bell he will be eliminated.

8.0 Additional Matters

- 8.1 Organising Committees, at their discretion, may apply additional requirements to the competition to suit local situations. In this case, any additional requirements must be notified to the Competitors in writing prior to the competition.
- 8.2 Distribution of prize money or other awards shall be at the discretion of the Organising Committee.