

# British Team Chasing (BTC) Rulebook

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Mission and Objectives

British Team Chasing's role is to organise and promote team chasing events, fostering horsemanship, sportsmanship, and camaraderie within the equestrian community.

### 1.2 Rulebook Scope

The scope of this rulebook is to set out the rules under which events affiliated to BTC must be run in accordance with and shall accept and be bound by. All competitors at such events shall also accept and be bound by these Rules. Individual BTC affiliated events must be run under these rules.

### 1.3 Governing Body

BTC is governed by the Board of Directors, on behalf of the BHS, as set out in the BTC Constitution

## 2. Competitions

### 2.1 Event Categories

#### 2.1.1 Open Class

1. The Open Class is a speed class.
2. The majority of the fixed obstacles to be not less than 107cm (3'6") but generally not more than 120cm (3'11") other than in specific and safe circumstances. Length of course to be approximately 3,219m (2 miles) and not less than 2,414m (1.5 miles).

#### 2.1.2 Intermediate Class

1. The Intermediate Class offers two categories: Speed and Optimum Time.
2. The majority of the fixed obstacles to be approximately 107cm (3'6"), but not to exceed 115cm (3'9"). Length of course to be approximately 2,816m (1.75 miles).

#### 2.1.3 Novice Class

1. The Novice Class offers two categories: Speed and Optimum Time.
2. Fixed obstacles which are a minimum height of 80cm (2'8") but not to exceed 100cm (3'3"). Length of course to be approximately 2,414m (1.5 miles).

#### 2.1.4 Mini Class

1. The Mini Class is an Optimum Time class run over smaller fences than the Novice and may have lower minimum age requirements.

## 2.2 Competition Rules

### 2.2.1 General Rules – All Classes

#### 1. **Definitions**

**Elimination** – Rider or team may not continue on the course. In the case of a rider their time will not count towards the team time. In the case of a team no time will be given.

**Disqualification** – In the event a rider or team finishes the course but has broken the rules their score/time will be discounted.

In the case of a rider being disqualified and it is deemed by the stewards they had no impact on the team time, the team time will have a 20 second penalty applied but will stand. If the disqualified rider is deemed to have affected the team time then the team time will be discounted.

2. **Entry Eligibility**
  - a. **Competitors:** Riders must be at least sixteen years of age to enter any speed classes. All riders should ensure they have appropriate experience of cross-country riding. At the discretion of Organisers riders under the age of sixteen may be permitted to compete in Optimum time classes.
  - b. **Horses:** Horses must be at least 4yo to compete in Novice and Mini classes and at least 5yo and over 14.2hh to compete in Intermediate and Open classes. Horses must be vaccinated in line with current BEF guidelines.
3. **Report to the Collecting Ring:** All teams must report to the collecting ring steward at a reasonable time before their running order. Failure to do so may result in not being allowed to start.
4. **Jumping Order:** Competitors must jump the fences in numerical order and leave red flags on their right and white flags on their left. Any competitor who misses a fence must either return and jump that fence and subsequent fences in the correct order or shall be disqualified.
5. **Refusals:** The maximum number of refusals permitted per horse shall not exceed three at any one fence, or five on the course. If this limit is exceeded the competitor shall be eliminated and must leave the course at once. Team elimination or disqualification may occur if this rule is not adhered to.
6. **Falls - Elimination:**
  - a. **Horse Falls:** When a horse falls during any class the competitor is immediately eliminated and must retire. A horse is considered to have fallen when at the same time its shoulder and quarters have touched either the ground or the obstacle and the ground, or when it is trapped in a fence in such a way it is unable to proceed without assistance or is liable to injure itself.
  - b. **Rider Falls:** *Aim of Rule: To mitigate against the possibility of a rider suffering a repeat concussive injury whilst they are still highly vulnerable due to a prior potential concussive injury.* If a rider unseats from their horse whilst on the course they must retire immediately and may not ride again until they have undergone a Head Impact Assessment (HIA) and been cleared by the event Healthcare Professional (HP). If they remount and continue their team will be disqualified. If a rider unseats anywhere on the event site, they may not start a round until they have undergone a Head Impact Assessment (HIA) and been cleared by the event Healthcare Professional (HP). If after being checked by the HP a rider is found to show no signs of concussion and is cleared to ride again and then has a subsequent fall during that day, they may not ride again that day regardless of the outcome of the second HIA by the on-course HP. If a rider, after a fall, refuses to undertake an HIA on the day of an event they will be ineligible to compete again before 21 days, or until such a time, prior to the 21-day period, that they produce a medical assessment to BTC declaring them fit to return to competition. If a concussion is suspected by the oncourse HP but not confirmed by failing a

HIA on the day, a further HIA is required prior to competing. If this is failed, then they are not eligible to compete again before 21 days from the date of the fall. This second assessment can be done by the HP at the following weeks event.

7. **Rider Welfare:**

- a) All competitors are responsible for ensuring their own health and fitness levels are suitable for participation in team chasing events.
- b) It is compulsory for all riders (competitors and grooms) to wear crash hats to currently recognised Safety Standards when mounted at any BTC affiliated event. Hats must not have a fixed peak.
- c) Hats will be identified by a BTC, BE, PC or BRC approved Hat Tag. Only the following hat standards are accepted: British and European PAS 015 (2011) or VG01 040 2014-12 – both with a BSI Kitemark or Inspect IC Mark; American ASTM F1163 2004a onwards with SEI mark, Snell 2016 or 2021 (no other mark is needed with Snell) or Australia and New Zealand AS/NZS 3838 2006 onwards with SAI Global mark.
- d) Competitors are strongly recommended to check their hats regularly and to replace them if damaged or following a fall.
- e) All competitors must also wear a body protector British Equestrian Trade Association **BETA 2018 Level 3 standard (blue and black label)**. A body protector of this nature is also required when competitors are wearing air jackets of any make.
- f) Competitors must provide their own elasticated number bibs. Paper number inserts will be provided by the events.
- g) It is recommended that all competitors wear a correctly fitted gumshield to help reduce the risk of concussion.
- h) No rider may compete who has had a concussive injury within the preceding 21 days.

8. **Horse Welfare:**

- a) Horses should have the required experience, capability and fitness to complete the class they are competing in. It is the responsibility of the rider to ensure this.
- b) The whip should only be used for good reason, not excessively, in the right place and at the appropriate time. Spurs and the bit must never be used to abuse or reprimand a horse.
- c) Any act or series of actions, which in the opinion of the Stewards constitutes abuse of a horse shall be a breach of these Rules and will incur elimination or disqualification.
- d) A horse which is exhausted or too tired to continue should be pulled up. If the Stewards considered this to be the case they will stop the horse and rider from continuing.
- e) No competitor may exchange horses once their team has started. Any change of horse or rider must be notified to the organisers in a reasonable time prior to the start.

- f) A horse may enter or start up to two classes in a day, only one of which may be a Speed Class, and may only enter or start a class once. The only exception to this rule is as described below in rule 8g).
  - g) If a horse and rider do not progress past the fifth fence their individual round may be disregarded for the purposes of rule 8f). This exception (Rule 8g) may only be applied once in a day.
  - h) All horses being ridden at a BTC affiliated event, including ridden in warmup areas, must be ridden in a bridle with reins directly attached to a bit or leather 'D' rings or attached as per the manufacturer's specification to a purpose designed bitless bridle.
  - i) All competitors and horses owners accept the event Veterinary Surgeons have authority to euthanise a horse on humane grounds.
9. **Stewards Authority:** The Stewards and in particular the Course Controller has ultimate authority in all matters regarding the course, welfare and safety, team chase activities and the implementation of the Rules during an Event.
10. **Competitor Insurance:** All competitors must carry Third Party insurance for not less than £5m. It is also strongly recommended that all competitors have Personal Accident Insurance.
11. **Complaints and Objections:**
- a) Any complaint or objection in relation to an alleged breach of these competition rules shall be lodged with the event secretary within 15 minutes of the last team completing the class in which the alleged breach occurred together with payment of a deposit of £40 which will be refunded if the complaint or objection is upheld. The stewards shall use their best endeavours to investigate and hold an enquiry into the complaint or objection within a reasonable time, which will ideally be within 30 minutes of the objection being formally lodged.
  - b) Any objection to the results of an individual team or a class shall be lodged with the event secretary within 15 minutes of the release of the official result of the class in which the alleged breach occurred together with payment of a deposit of £40 which will be refunded if the objection is upheld. The stewards shall use their best endeavours to investigate and hold an enquiry into the complaint or objection within a reasonable time, which will ideally be within 30 minutes of the objection being formally lodged.
  - c) After the 15-minute objection period and once the results have been verified by the Organiser no further objections can be raised.

## 2.2.2 Specific Rules - Speed Class

1. **Objective:** Teams aim to complete the course in the shortest time possible.
2. **Winner Determination:** The team with the fastest completion time is declared the winner. The team time is determined from when the first horse and rider cross the start line to when the third horse and rider cross the finish line.
3. **Penalties:** Penalties may be incurred for rule violations, affecting the overall

time. This may include a 20 second penalty being added on to the team completion time if the first three horses entering the Pen do not have twelve feet on the floor before anyone jumps out.

### 2.2.3 Specific Rules - Optimum Time Class

1. **Objective:** Teams aim to complete the course as close as possible to the predetermined optimum time.
2. **Winner Determination:** The team with the time nearest to the optimum time is declared the winner. The team time is determined from when the first horse and rider cross the start line to when the third horse and rider cross the finish line.
3. **Penalties:** Penalties may be incurred for rule violations, affecting the overall time. This may include a 20 second penalty being applied if the first three horses entering the Pen do not have twelve feet on the floor before anyone jumps out. All time penalties will be applied to the team completion time in order to take the final time further from the optimum time,
4. **Maximum Time:** If at least 3 members have not completed the course within 150% of the optimum time, the team will be eliminated and must leave the course at once.

### 2.2.5 Team Composition

1. Teams must consist of a minimum of three horses and riders and a maximum of four horses and riders. At least three horse and riders shall complete the course successfully for that team to finish. Horse and rider combination may not alter during the round.

## 2.3 Course Design

1. **Design Standards:** Courses must adhere to BTC standards, considering factors such as terrain, obstacles, and safety as outlined in the BTC Course Construction Guidance.
2. **Course Inspection:** All BTC affiliated events will have their courses inspected prior to the event by an inspector appointed by the BTC Executive Committee.
3. **Course Walk:** Participants will have the opportunity to walk the course before the event.

## 2.4 Annual Leagues

1. **Competition:** BTC may run Annual Leagues for the Open and Intermediate Speed Classes, respectively. The league competition will start at the first affiliated event of the calendar year and finish at the last affiliated event of the calendar year.
2. **Eligibility:** Any competitors and their horses eligible to run in the Open or Intermediate Speed Classes will be eligible to enter the Open or Intermediate leagues respectively. Entry to the league competition will be for teams and not individual competitors. Competitors in the Open league teams are encouraged not to run in the Intermediate league teams when there is no Open Class.
3. **Scoring System:**
  - Open League Teams in an Open Class and Intermediate League Teams in an Intermediate Class receive the following points:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> place – 10 points
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> place – 8 points
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> place - 6 points
    - 4<sup>th</sup> place – 5 points
    - 5<sup>th</sup> place - 4 points
    - 6<sup>th</sup> place – 3 points
    - 7<sup>th</sup> place - 2 points
    - 8<sup>th</sup> place – 1 point
  - At an event where there is no Open Class, all Open teams running in the Intermediate Speed Class will receive half the number of points compared to being placed in an Open Class. The placings for the purposes of the League will be given as relative to the other Open teams and not considering the Intermediate teams. The Open teams will not be eligible for any Intermediate League points. The Intermediate League points will be awarded in relation to the finishing positions of the Intermediate League teams only and not considering the Open League teams competing in the Intermediate Speed Class.
4. **League Result Appeals:** If a team wishes to appeal the result of a class they must do so on the day as described Section 2.2.1 para 11b. The only grounds for appealing a result outside of this procedure is if evidence came to light at a later stage which could not have been reasonably known at a time to enable an objection to be raised within the time frame laid out in Section 2.2.1 para 11b. Under these exceptional circumstances an appeal may be lodged with the Board of Directors within 48hrs of the end of class. An appeal must be made in writing and a deposit of £100 must be provided. If the appeal is upheld the deposit will be returned. The findings of this appeal may only potentially affect the league points awarded and may not be able to affect the results of the respective class. An appeal will be held within 48hrs, and its findings announced prior to the subsequent affiliated event.

## 2.5 Prize Giving

1. **Attendance:** All competitors should attend prizegiving if reasonably possible in order to support the hosts, organisers, volunteers, sponsors and trade stands. If prize winners cannot attend a representative should attend to receive prizes on your behalf.

## 2.6 Rider Responsibilities

1. In the case of any Rule affecting riders or their horses, the rider shall be held responsible.
2. Competitors will be expected to pay for any reasonable services they or their horse/s receive from the veterinary surgeon, farrier, horse ambulance or any other medical services.
3. No Competitor may carry out or condone any action at any time whether at an affiliated event or otherwise which may bring the sport of team chasing into disrepute.
4. DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY:  
Save for death or personal injury caused by the negligence of BTC Affiliated Event Organisers for which they are legally responsible, neither the Organisers of any event to which these Rules apply, nor any representative of these bodies or the Governing Body of British Team Chasing accepts any liability for any accident, loss damage, injury or illness to horses, owners, riders, spectators, land, vehicles, contents or accessories or any other person whatever, whether caused by their negligence or in any other way.

## 3 Code of Conduct

1. BTC Code of Conduct document sets out in the expectations and standards for behaviour, sportsmanship and integrity for all participants including competitors, organisers, officials, and spectators involved in BTC events. It aims to promote fair play, respect, and a positive environment within the team chasing community.



## **4 Breach of the Rules**

1. In the event of a breach of these rules the Affiliated Event and or BTC shall be at liberty to enforce these rules by way of a range of penalties including but not limited to:
  - Verbal warning
  - Competitor elimination or disqualification
  - Team elimination or disqualification
  - Deduction of League points (BTC sanction only)
  - Competitor Ban – Minimum one day and maximum of a lifetime ban depending on the severity of the breach of the Rules.

## **5 Stewards and Appeal Body**

1. There shall be one or more Stewards appointed by each BTC event organiser whose decision in respect of these Rules and of Discipline at that event shall be final, except by later appeal to the Board of Directors on payment of a deposit of £250. Where any such appeal is submitted, the Chairman of the Board of Directors will appoint a panel of not less than 3 people with appropriate skills and experience (with a nominated Appeal Chairman) to determine the matter finally and with any appropriate sanction, and in such manner as the panel deems appropriate. The Stewards at a BTC event shall also have the right to refer any matter at their event to the Board of Directors for final determination and sanction in a similar manner to the appeal process.

## **6 Amendments**

1. These rules may be amended at any time by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors.