

Return to Competition Rule *effective 4/1/2009*

Attention: All Stewards/Technical Delegates and Competition Managers As of April 1, 2009, GR1317 “Return to Competition” requires any competitor who sustains an apparent concussion or unconsciousness to provide a signed release letter from a medical professional that states that they are fit to return to normal activities before they will be allowed to compete at USEF competitions. We will now rely on the Accident/Injury report forms for notification of apparent concussion and unconsciousness; therefore it is the Steward or Technical Delegate’s responsibility (as stated in GR1317) to ensure that these report forms are filled out completely and accurately (including clearly identifying the competitor), and to ensure that the report forms and any medical release letters that are provided during the competition be submitted to the USEF office by 6:00 PM on the day following the last day of competition. The new version of the Accident/Injury Report Form (available at www.usef.org under “Forms and Pubs” and the “Competitions” department) has a box for the qualified medical personnel to check if the competitor can be released without further treatment or evaluation. If during the course of the competition, a competitor falls, and is determined to have a possible concussion or unconsciousness according to the qualified medical personnel, the Steward or Technical Delegate must not allow the competitor to compete until a medical release letter is presented.

From now on, any Accident/Injury report that is submitted indicating that the rider may have sustained a head injury without a corresponding medical release letter will result in the rider being listed on the Federation Medical Suspension List (which can be found by logging in to “My USEF Account” and then viewing the “Medical Suspension List”). It is the competitor’s responsibility to provide the letter to the USEF office to be removed from the Medical Suspension List, and to withdraw from competing until the medical release letter has been submitted. More information, including a “Return to Play” FAQ regarding the new rule, is available on our website under the “Competitions” department. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at (859) 225-6959 or by e-mail at lclaywell@usef.org. Contact: **Leigh Anne Claywell, Director of Competitions**

GR1316 Accidents Involving Competitors: “Return to Play” FAQ

- **Who may determine whether a competitor is apparently concussed or unconscious?** Any show official or qualified medical personnel who is made aware of an accident on the competition grounds may determine that a competitor is apparently concussed or unconscious. Once apparent concussion or unconsciousness is determined, an evaluation by qualified medical personnel will be required before the competitor may return to competition.
- **What happens if the competitor refuses further treatment or refuses to discontinue competition after evaluation by qualified medical personnel?** The competitor will be precluded from schooling or competing anywhere on the competition grounds until a signed release is received by USEF from a licensed medical professional.
- **What are the current “return to competition” criteria established by the Federation?** The criteria is that a licensed medical professional; i.e. physician, physician’s assistant, or nurse practitioner must have re-evaluated the competitor and determined that he/she is medically fit to return to normal activity.
- **What does a competitor need to do to get off of the Medical Suspension list?** The competitor must submit a release which is signed by a licensed medical professional to USEF in order to be removed from the Medical Suspension list.
- **Is there a specific form that must be filled out and signed by the licensed medical professional that will serve as the release from the Medical Suspension list?** No. The release should be on the letterhead, or other form or release, of the treating physician, physician’s assistant or nurse practitioner who evaluates the competitor. If the Qualified Medical Personnel at the competition determines that a competitor does not require further evaluation and treatment, he or she may indicate on the USEF Accident/Injury form that the competitor is OK to return to competition.
- **What does the release from the competitor’s doctor have to say to get off of the Medical Suspension list?** The release must state that the competitor has been medically cleared to return to all normal activity.
- **Can one of the qualified medical personnel at a competition provide the signed release that is needed to get off of the Medical Suspension list?** Yes. The Qualified Medical Personnel on duty at a competition may evaluate and release a competitor if they determine the competitor does not exhibit signs of being concussed.

- **Who should the signed release be submitted to at USEF and how should it be delivered?** Signed releases may be submitted to the attention of Leigh Anne Claywell at USEF via email at lclaywell@usef.org, by fax at 859-231-6662 or by mail (4047 Iron Works Pkwy; Lexington, KY 40511).
- **What proof is needed for a competitor on the Medical Suspension list to receive a refund of submitted entry fees, etc. if they are unable to compete?** The competitor's name will appear on the USEF website on the Medical Suspension list. The USEF Competitions department will also be able to submit proof of the competitor's status to any competition by request.
- **What if a competitor competes while on the Medical Suspension list?** Any competitor who competes while on the medical suspension list will be subject to sanctions from the USEF Hearing Committee.
- **Is this rule compliant with HIPPA protection?** Yes. The information that will be provided on the Medical Suspension list contains only the names and USEF membership numbers of competitors who have had a reported accident and have not submitted a compliant signed release to USEF and it is only accessible to Competition Management. Once the release is sent to USEF, it will be reviewed confidentially and legally and will not be publicized. One of the goals of this rule is to protect the privacy of the competitors by providing a standard procedure for returning to competition that will prevent competitors from having to explain and prove repeatedly to each new competition that they are ready to compete again, without disclosing private information.
- **What if a competitor is injured and cleared during the same competition?** The competitor should submit the clearance letter to the Steward/TD of the competition and it should be sent into USEF with the Steward/TD Report Form.
- **Do other contact sports have policies regarding concussion or unconsciousness?** Yes. The NFL, NHL, and NASCAR all have similar policies and rules, as do other governing bodies of equestrian sport.
- **What is the effective date of this rule?** This rule is effective April 1, 2009. Contact: **Leigh Anne Claywell, Director of Competitions**