

Bill's *angry!* What? ... Oh, Never mind

The USEF issued a rule change this spring that made no sense to me. In fact, it seemed pretty stupid. Included in the new list of acts which require elimination due to unauthorized assistance are help from the judge in catching a rider's loose horse after a fall or helping the rider remount.

On first reading, my reaction was "there's a rule I'm going to break." I can't imagine sitting stone-faced in my booth watching some poor soul struggle to climb back up onto her equally distressed horse. In about a minute we'd un-do all the effort made to promote the human side of judges!

Then I read down a little farther to another rule change. Now the fall of horse or rider is no longer scored "according to how it affects the performance of the movement." Now, as the FEI rules dictate, a fall entails immediate elimination.

This is a change that's harder to argue with. Whether it should be so might be a matter of opinion, but as Klaus would say, "A thrrrule iss a rrrrule."

The first one still strikes me strangely. If as soon as the rider or horse hits the ground they are eliminated, why do you need a rule that eliminates them a second time if the judge helps them up? It's like those legislators who want to make attempted suicide be a capital offense.

Anyway, I'm feeling better about things. I surely don't want you to fall off in my ring, but if you do, at least without any *further* penalty I can brush you off and send you on your way.