

Event Organisers Guide

4.7.3 - Events Held in Challenging Climatic Conditions

From time to time equestrian competitions are held in locations and at times of the year when climatic conditions are potentially challenging for horse and athlete. Horse welfare and athlete health and safety must always be to the fore of planning. Studies have been carried out over many years and as a result much is known about how to manage such situations. This includes measures that can be taken by way of mitigation, such as timetabling competitions when conditions are likely to be better, providing horse cooling facilities (shade, misting fans, ice etc) and implementing robust monitoring processes for early identification of any signs of heat stress. Furthermore, scientifically supported techniques and protocols for cooling horses are now well known and well practiced.

Preparations for the Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games saw the first comprehensive and coordinated approach to understanding the potential impact of heat and humidity and how to mitigate the risks posed. This work was further expanded on the run up to the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games, where conditions were expected to be challenging for the equestrian competitions in Hong Kong, and most recently further steps were taken for the 2020 Games in Tokyo.

Here are a number of studies, documents, presentations and other resources relating to managing events and the participation of horses and athletes in challenging climatic conditions:

- [Managing the effects of the weather on the Equestrian Events of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games](#) - Article in The Veterinary Journal 182 (2009)
- [Preparation for and management of horses and athletes during equestrian events held in thermally challenging environments](#) - March 2018
- [FEI Sports Forum 2019](#) - Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games session, including climate mitigation planning & optimising equine and human performance
 - [Executive Summary](#)
 - Presentation - Dr David Marlin - [Climate triggers and climate mitigation](#)
 - Presentation - Dr David Marlin - [How to optimise horse performance in a challenging environment](#)
 - Presentation - Dr Rachel Murray - [Warm-up for horses in a challenging environment](#)
 - Presentation - Dr Jenny Hall - [Climate mitigation for the competition horse](#)
 - Presentation - Dr Peter Whitehead - [Improving human performance in hot weather](#)
- [BEVA - Equine Veterinary Journal - Special Collection - Preparing for Tokyo Olympics](#) - This Special Collection of articles highlights the ground-breaking research which followed the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and ensures that the articles published in EVJ which have contributed to knowledge in

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this area are readily accessible. This work revolutionised understanding of managing equine athletes in hot and humid conditions, optimised identification and management of heat stress and allowed practical solutions to cooling methods to be established.

- [FEI report on outcome of climate mitigation measures implemented at Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games](#)

FEI Campus includes a series of videos under the title '**Beat the Heat**'. A collection of eight episodes covering all important topics for competing safely in hot and humid climates, this animated series informs and advises athletes, officials, grooms, horse owners, and anyone else travelling to hot and humid environments for equestrian sport. The series includes an episode dedicated specifically to preparations and measures put in place to protect horse and athlete welfare at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The FEI '**Beat the Heat**' series can be found [here](#).

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