

IEOC Meeting Notes – Rolex CCI** April 28, 2005**

We had a good mix of national and international official present at this meeting. Present were: Jack Burton, Loris Henry, Marilyn Payne, Roger Haller, Pat Maykuth, Gretchen Butts, Karen Winn, Trish Gilbert, Jack Fritz, Jane Hamlin, and Wayne Quarles from the US. International official present were: Ana Schravessande, US/Mexico; David Lee, Ireland; Jennifer Millar, New Zealand; Mike and Angela Tucker, Great Britain; Jan Stephens, Canada.

The discussion of the entire meeting centered on the new rules and suggestions for the future for officials, put forth by the FEI.

Jumping Judges

So far this year at every FEI competition in the US, the ‘jumping’ judge has sat in the back and watched the judging, except at one competition where the judges had made several mistakes that the GJ had to correct. It is felt that requiring this additional official is a financial burden on the organizer when the GJ members are experienced in this phase.

In North America, the Eventing officials do judge the jumping phase, as most competitions run over two or three days, unlike the one day competitions that are more prevalent in Great Britain and Ireland. It was noted that this rule has an exception for Australia and New Zealand. In North America the Training Program for officials covers in detail, the judging of the jumping phase. In the United States the TDs are trained and licensed to judge the jumping. In Canada there is also training for Event jumping officials. The number of starters in Events in the US alone is over 40,000. This gives the officials quite a lot of jump judging experience.

The US and Canada plan to draft a proposal to the FEI exempting them from this rule at all competitions, other than FEI Championships, when the level of expertise of the GJ is known to be experienced in judging the jumping phase.

Ground Jury FEI Proposal

Costs: It was agreed that as the riders are becoming more professional we have to ensure that the GJ’s should be just as professional. In the past the number of events was smaller and most officials were of a financial caliber where they could afford to donate their time occasionally to officiate. As the number of competitions has dramatically increased, the demand for officials has increased. It is felt that the expense to maintain a license and a high level of training, to be up to the level expected of our officials, can be quite time consuming and expensive. If an official only officiates a few times a year, there is no way for them to recoup this expense when they are expected to also officiate only for expenses. If a scheme for compensation for all officials were established, then the officials would be more encouraged to spend the time and money on education.

Education: In general we all agree that officiating requires teamwork between the CD, GJ, TD and Steward. It is generally agreed that the weakest point of most Ground Juries is the course evaluation, as many Presidents have a stronger Dressage background than Eventing. To this end it was agreed that the TD should be the 4th member of the Ground Jury team, as they are generally stronger in course design and evaluation. All GJ's rely heavily on the TD for this already. If the TD is paid, as proposed by the FEI, then they are subject to **being fired**, also.

Having the GJ **not to** approve courses up to the 3 and 4 star levels does not make sense. They need to be evaluating the lower level courses in order to understand the progression of the levels. The FEI seminars need to ensure that the Judges get as much course evaluation as the CDs and TDs. In addition, the course should emphasize more the jump judging. This can be accomplished with the use of video and practice in addition to the rules and design.

Having only one GJ member per competition leaves no place for the training of the up and coming judges, to become effective GJ Presidents.

Recruitment of new officials is already quite difficult. Most riders and trainers who have the background and experience to be good officials are professional, and earn their living by their trade. Many comment that they cannot afford to officiate, even in the US where officials are paid. The riders and trainers can make more in one day than a US official makes at a 3 or 4-day long competition. Finding likely candidates with the correct priorities to become an official is not keeping pace with the demand created by the rising numbers in our sport.

FEI Safety Report

Pay Maykuth, a member of the US Eventing Association Safety Committee compared the statistics from the FEI to the statistics found in our National competitions. The statistics show that there are clearly more falls at 3-days than at horse trials. The percentage of falls over the years stayed fairly consistent. At the 1-star level it averaged 5% falls, and increased evenly by 3% at 2-star (8%) and 3% more at 3-star (11%). Then for the 4-star level it jumped to 14-21%. This large increase may be due to the smaller numbers at this level. Mike Tucker confirmed that these statistics matched what they are seeing in Great Britain.

It is agreed that while the statistics are important that further data needs to be evaluated by competition to say whether the statistics are valid or not. This data needs to evaluate the events where the falls happen, the fence type and construction, footing, weather and how the fall happened.

It was suggested that the US might start using fall forms similar to the FEI forms, in order to assist collecting this additional data.

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