



25th February 2002

To all concerned,

There are several issues at stake which PERA would very much like to gain your opinion on and therefore is looking forward to your reactions either directly back to us and/or to the FEI and FEI eventing committee.

Not all changes were made purely from a safety point of view, for example, the reducing of phases B, C, and D were done; 1) because of criticism after Sydney to avoid bad pictures going around the world of very tired horses at the end of phase D, 2) to allow course builders (and T.D's) to go for shorter distances either if the chase is not ideal (footing, shape etc.) and on phase D to make it harder to get the time as the maximum jumping efforts would stay the same. The maximum length has stayed the same (only for the Olympics it is reduced to 13 min instead of 14 to bring it in line with all other 4-stars). All the speeds have stayed the same (except phase C).

To go through the phases :

1. The Horse inspections:

There is a strong feeling that if and when horses are sent to the holding box, the horses should not come back to the Ground Jury but the Vet. in the holding box in consultation with the official vet. Should pass or fail the horse. This would mean in some cases that a higher standard of vet. is required in the holding box.

2. Dressage:

The new tests are slightly more difficult, but as a whole we think they will ride well - maybe 1 or 2 tests need slight adjustments for 2003?

To give the scores in % which are then translated into penalty marks, we feel is a good idea as it is easy for any one to see what average score a combination had per mark. (e.g. 65 % is 6.5 average per mark.) It also allows more to be given marks per test without upsetting the dressage influence, this must help the judging!

For example; the halt, reign-back and strike off in canter can now be 3 marks instead of 1. We feel that we should use this even more and give a mark for each movement starting with the entrance (one mark for straightness) then the halt etc. etc.

We also feel not doubling the end 4 marks is a good thing!

The judges and the judging.

The number of judges :

There is a feeling that for normal CCI's 1 and 2 star, 2 judges would be enough (to reduce costs) with one judge on the short side and one at E or B. For 3 and 4 stars (or Champs.) some would like to see 4 or 5 judges with 2 on the long side. This would slightly increase costs, it would give more judges a chance to judge at higher level and might improve the list of judges. Even keeping only 3 judges, should 1 or 2 judges sit at the long side? (There will be only 1 member of the jury of appeal now so there is a cost reduction there !)

The judging :

In general it is felt that there is still not enough consistency in the judging and it is felt that better training is needed together with a better system of getting new people on the lists. There is a lack of control on the judging and no feedback is available afterwards (as probably after the X.C. and S.J. this gets pushed away). In football there is an independent panel to evaluate the referee's, do we need something similar in eventing ?

It would not be to tell judges off but to try and improve the consistency of the judging and to prevent the same mistakes happening twice.

Should the multiplying factor be reduced to 0.5 (instead of 0.6) now that show jumping penalties have been reduced to 4 instead of 5? and to make the time on D slightly more important?

3. Phase A, in principle, stays the same. It is now seen more as a warm up phase for the chase rather than part of an endurance test. Footing must allow for some warm up canter work !

Phase C and the C-Halt : There is a strong feeling that this worked well overall last year and maybe to have a 10 min halt and reduce the speed to 160m/min is too much walking during phase C. It is felt that phase C does not have to be longer than 6 or 7 km in total, but rather than reducing the speed on C it seems more practical to add time onto C in case the time in the C-halt is reduced so the total time of C will stay the same even if last minute changes to the C-halt have to be made. There is no need than to change the time sheets.

Phase B : to reduce the minimum optimum time with 1/2 min. for all stars. (3 star can still be 4 min and 4 star still 4 1/2) is mostly received well although most riders feel that 4 min for a 4 star is enough.

4. X.C

In general people are happy with the new rules now that one rider fall is allowed and elimination comes with the 4th stop and not with the third.

Improvement is made by allowing a horse to jump down steps or fences lower than 30 cm out of a standstill . The alternative fences work well although there was no consistency in the way they were flagged.

PERA would like to see some change in the penalty given for the second refusal at an obstacle and for the rider fall, so the total score shows exactly what has happened. We see no need to give 40 penalties for the second refusal at the same fence as a combination is out of the prizes and it could happen at, for example, 4a and 4b which is more or less the same as at 4 and 5. 60 penalties always means three stops , now it can be 3 stops or 2 stops or a fall. Also for that reason we want to see a fall penalty as 55 (or 65) penalties.

To make the scoring system more simple we would like to see the same penalty per second for all phases (A - B - C and D). A lot of riders would like to see 0.5 penalties per second.

5. The Show Jumping .

People can live with giving the same penalty for a rail down (as is done in pure show jumping).

In general it is good the same scoring system same as much as possible with regards to the general public. For the same reason we can live with 4 penalties for a refusal as with the added time penalties, the total of penalties occurred will be more than for just a fence down. We would like to see however elimination with the second refusal and not after the first as we feel there is no problem for the general public to understand this and we must not eliminate combinations unnecessarily after 3 days of hard work.

We feel the same for a rider fall in the show jumping or a slip on the flat !!

The aim of our show jumping is different from that of pure show jumping.

We also feel that the time factor is too important and that 1 penalty per second is too much. If riders go clear but are 4 and a bit seconds over the time they have more penalties than with a rail down. Some times riders have to chase the time too much, resulting in fences down which is not good for our image! Also courses are not measured consistently enough; some times the time is easy and sometimes it is too hard to get, with no options to go inside a fence to make up time, so all that is left to do is to gallop between the fences.

By now most of us see that the chosen solution for the Olympic format is the best to avoid the problem of not being allowed to get two medals for the same effort.

But we would like to see clear rules for both show jumping rounds!

The number of obstacles, the difficulty, the distances etc. etc. We can't leave this up to the course builder in charge. We all must know the rules in advance !!

Also the show jumping order in the first round (where teams are still involved!) and the time between the 2 rounds.

6. Qualifications

Although most people can see the need for "sharper" qualifications, it is felt that it would be better to take the overall score into account rather than to split it up like now. Now riders with a lower overall score (less penalties) might not qualify at the same event as riders with more penalties. To get a system where for example one must be within 70 penalties of the winner to qualify seems a better solution.

It is also felt that to have to do 3 or 4 advanced to be able to start in a 3 star (or 4 star) is too difficult to achieve in most countries and even in the U.K. and the standard of advanced can differ too much. Also once one has reached a level it is too easy to drop down again and the period to stay qualified must be increased to 3 years and the standard to stay in that star category must be lowered. One whoopsy whilst finishing that event and one might have to go back a level again !

7. Jr. and Y.R. ages:

Some nations want to extend the ages for Jr. to 19 and Y.R. to 22

What are the views on that ?

8. There is strong feeling amongst quite a few riders and "Chef.'s" to use the same principle for all Champs. as for the Olympics, with regards to the team and the individual. (Apart from the fact that we do not need two show jumping efforts, as the FEI has not got the rule that one can't win two medals for the same effort.) It is felt that if all potential 6 riders would be part of the team (with only the best 3 counting) this would be better for the sport. The best nation will win regardless of who is picked for the team. The difference between team riders and individuals per nation will go. It is often easier to get funding for a team than it is for individuals so for the lesser nations it might mean more effort will be done to get more riders at the start. (Tougher qualifications prevent weaker combinations to start now anyhow.) A smaller nation still can win if it has three good rounds just as now. Better to understand for the general public. In Show jumping and Dressage also all starters are part of the team.

9. The FEI rider ranking.

The FEI has not approved the PERA system for the rankings that was based on number of starters. (This system allowed one to gain points relative to how high one finished percentage-wise according the number of starters, rather than on straight placings only. At events with a low entry field, some deduction of points is also made.) Presently the winner of, for example, Blenheim with over 110 starters gets the same amount of points as a winner of an event with only say 10 starters and so number 7 and last at these events gets more points than say number 10 at Blenheim who ended in the top 10 % !

Please send us your views on all of the above. It is very important if you want to state your opinion and want PERA to work for you. This goes for all involved in international events whether as an NF, a rider, a coach or an owner!!

The Professional Event Riders Association.