

# FEI SEMINAR WARENDORF

A report by Peter Herrick

The Eventing Committee of the FEI held a "Top Officials Seminar" in Warendorf Germany, on 7 & 8 March. This was a very good gathering of 35 of the most experienced Eventing Officials from throughout the World, and included Judges, Technical Delegates, Course Designers, Riders and Trainers.

Wayne Roycroft, the Chairman of the FEI Eventing Committee, welcomed the officials. He outlined the threat that the sport was under, and emphasized that we must work together to protect the sport that we all love.

He announced that the qualifying criteria for the Athens Olympics required competitors to achieve qualifying results from:

Either 1 CCI\*\*\*\*

Or 2 CCI\*\*\*

Or 1 CCI\*\*\* and 1 CIC\*\*\*

These qualifying results must be obtained between 1 January 2003 and 30 June 2004.

The parameters for the competition would be:

Dressage: 2002 CCI\*\*\*\* Test

Cross-country: approx 5700m @ 570 mpm 45 efforts max.

Showjumping: Team: 500-600m @ 375 mpm @ 1-20m 13 efforts max

Individual: 450-550m @ 375 mpm @ 1-25m 12 efforts max

## FEI SAFETY PROGRAMME

Mike Tucker outlined where this programme was going.

It originated from the British Safety Commission, which was set up in the early '90s. The International Safety Committee was started in 1999, and the two combined in April 2000. The main recommendations to this committee were to prevent horses falling and to identify all riders.

The committee deals with many areas, including: Medical, Veterinary, Training of Horses and Riders, Course Design, Training of Officials, Equipment and Qualifications.

The most obvious areas that affect all Officials at events that have come out of this committee are: The Fall Report Form

The Course Report Form

The Medical Report Form

The deformable fence, or safety pins.

The main points of the FEI policy on safety is the:

- Implementation of the recommendations of the Safety Committee
- Transfer of urgent recommendations to event Organisers
- Interpretation of the feedback from National Federations
- Formation of a Risk Management plan
- Implementation of safety measures

The Risk Management plan involves close cooperation with the Transport Research Laboratory, and the foundation of an FEI Safety Base. This will expedite the training of Officials, and the production of an annual Safety Report.

An example of how the database is working, is that the FEI now writes to the owner of any horse that has had two falls in a twelve-month period. They are getting a good response from this.

#### SAFETY PINS:

It is still early days in the use of these pins to build deformable fences. However the committee is collecting data on how they work, and the signs are pretty encouraging.

The aim of the pin is to reduce the somersault type fall, as these are the falls with the higher risk of serious injury. The penalty for breaking one of these pins is elimination, as it is regarded as a horse fall.

The pins have been trialled in England, Australia, America and Europe. It is expected to get a much better assessment of the benefits of these pins at the end of this year.

#### AIMS:

The two main aims of the Safety Committee are to reduce the number of riders who are seriously hurt in falls, and to reduce the number of horse falls.

They aim to accomplish these aims by:

- 1). Reducing the number of somersault type falls, as these are the most dangerous. 27% of riders are seriously hurt in this type of fall, compared with only 3% in rider only falls.
- 2). Reducing the number of horse falls.
- 3). Improve rider protection through the use of better equipment, back protectors and better hats etc.
- 4). Monitoring the number of falls where only the rider falls.

#### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

The committee will use several key indicators to help it achieve its aims:

- 1). Monitor the number of riders who are seriously injured, i.e. sent to hospital.
- 2). The number of horse somersault falls as a percentage of starters
- 3). Other horse falls as a percentage of starters.
- 4). The number of unseated riders as a percentage of starters

From all this committee will produce a Global Indicator by combining all the factors and weighting them according to their relativity.

Thus it is very important that they get all the information back from all events so that they can compile these statistics. To start with they only got 60% returns. but now they are getting 90%. Only one New Zealand event did not send back complete data last year.

#### END OF SEASON REPORT:

At the end of each season, the committee will produce an annual report to the FEI, which will be sent to all National Federations.

This report will include:

The number of Cross-country courses by type and level

The number of competitors per course

The relative risk factors

The number of falls per fence category

An evaluation of fence types

The committee makes no excuse for concentrating on rider falls at this stage, as they feel that by reducing these the horse injuries will also reduce.

#### DRESSAGE

Everyone moved into a very large indoor school at the German National Team training School near Warendorf for the dressage section of this seminar. The facilities at this centre were magnificent, and make one very envious when you think of what we have at Taupo. Europe is very different!!

Christoph Hess led this session. He emphasized that the basics of training are rhythm, suppleness and contact, and the horse must have balance. Judges must mark a movement as they see it. A good movement must be marked as a good movement.

He also felt that it is important to identify the main part of a movement, and to weight the mark for the movement accordingly.

He acknowledged that it is often confusing to spectators when the judges give different marks, and the aim must be to get the marks as similar as possible. However judges get a

different perspective of a movement depending upon where they sit. This will probably be even more pronounced this year when one of the judges will be sitting at B or E.

In his opinion the essentials of being a good dressage judge are:

- 1). To derive personal pleasure from being a judge, plus having an objective attitude.
- 2). Having the ability to concentrate, take stress and to have a good memory.
- 3). To have complete knowledge of his subject matter.
- 4). Having the ability to perceive the ride as a whole.
- 5). Having the ability to observe, recognize and differentiate.
- 6). To be able to come to a quick and precise decision.

A good variety of “guinea pig” horses then performed some of the FEI Tests, and the Judges marked these. This created some very good discussion of why certain movements deserved certain marks.

#### SHOWJUMPING

An interesting Show jumping course had been set up, which was walked by all the participants and which created a lot of discussion. The following major points came out of this:

- 1). The course must be a good test for the level that it is set for, but it must be fair.
- 2). The course should be relatively straightforward for the lower levels, but can be quite technical for the higher levels. Technical distances are fine at the higher star level.
- 3). The idea of relativity to the Cross-country course is not relevant today. The influence of the Cross-country course should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 4). The cups must be fair. They may be deeper for \* but can be shallower for \*\*\*\*.
- 5). The course should be measured fairly, and not on the shortest possible track.
- 6). The 5cm height adjustment must be used fairly. If a fence can be built at 1-20m, then it must be 1-20m and not 1-25m. If, because of the design, it can only be 1-17m or 1-22m, then it can be built at 1-22m. The height adjustment should never be used in heavy going.

#### FUTURE OF EVENTING

On the following morning, a general discussion took place on the future of Eventing. The main point of discussion was whether the prime focus of the sport should stay in the CCI format or change to the CIC format. Most of those present spoke in favour of the CCI format remaining the pinnacle of the sport, but it was pointed out that many countries didn't have the infrastructure to run CCI\*\*\* events, let alone a CCI\*\*\*\*.

Wayne Roycroft pointed out that the WEG is now the problem. The Olympics are committed to a CIC, and sites for WEG are never chosen with a CCI in mind. The FEI Executive and the Aachen Organising Committee are very keen for the WEG to be a CIC. One of Aachen's problems is that there is no CCI course nearby, and they have to negotiate with 52 farmers just to run the Cross-country day.

It would seem that the most likely outcome will be for the Olympics and the WEG to be a CIC\*\*\*\*, and then to have a CCI\*\*\*\* World Championships every second year in the years in-between the Olympics and the WEG.

It was pointed out that Rugby was doing something similar, with sevens being used to get the sport into the Games, but the 15-man game was still the ultimate. The Ironman is the ultimate multisport, but they use much shorter distances in the Olympics.

## NEW RULES

Hugh Thomas went through the new rule alterations. He emphasized that all Officials must interpret the rules in a sporting spirit, and look for what is intended in the rule. However he made the point, that a rule cannot be ignored just because an Official doesn't like it!! Some points he made were:

Article 520 25 penalties can be given for dangerous riding, including before the start, or any of the other penalties may be given. However verbal warnings must never be given. A warning is a yellow card, which should come from the Ground Jury.

Article 529 the C halt will normally be 0 mins. 5 or 10 mins should only be used in exceptional circumstances. If the C halt is 0 mins then it will not be compulsory to have personnel to man it.

Article 531-8.4 On phases A & C riders can be recalled to go through the flags the correct way. It can be confusing in some situations, and we don't want to eliminate riders unnecessarily.

Article 533-2.3 The new wording allows the TD and the Ground Jury to let riders cross their track on a line that improves the flow if they are using the longer black flag alternative, but not if they are using the direct route.

This would normally incur 20 penalties for crossing their track at X. However in the new wording the TD and the Ground Jury may allow this.

Article 535-3.1 Hugh Thomas again stressed that we must look for what is the intention of the rule.

This is 20 penalties as the Rider has avoided the question and crossed the track at X that he made before he jumped the last element.

This is clear, as although he crossed the track at X that he made before he jumped the last element, he has not avoided the question.

#### FEI SEMINARS

Mike Etherington-Smith outlined the Eventing Committees thoughts on where these seminars should be going. This generated quite a bit of discussion!!

He said that a lot of these seminars had not really tackled the problem of training Officials properly in the past. It must be remembered that all Officials on the FEI lists represented the FEI as well as their National Federation.

It is felt that seminars are better combined for Judges, TDs and CDs as the inter action between the groups is very good for all. However it was felt that Stewards were a specialist group and were better to have their own seminars run by Stewards.

The Committee is recommending that there be three levels of courses in future:

Level 1: for potential FEI Officials and National Officials to be run and organized by National Federations.

Level 2: “test courses” for Officials wishing to upgrade from National level to Candidate International level, and for Officials wishing to upgrade from Candidate to International level. These would be run by the FEI.

Level 3: refresher courses for those already at International level.

Officials who are on two lists would be able to retain their qualifications for both lists from one seminar, however their initial seminar would have to be for just one list.

It would be imperative for participants to attend at least 75% of a seminar in our to qualify for a certificate. The committee also felt that 25 participants was really the

maximum number that could be handled at a seminar, any more and it could become too disjointed.