



European Equestrian Federation

Meeting	EEF Eventing Working Group
Date	5 th February 2016
Time	1100hrs
Location	Maritim Hotel, Dusseldorf Airport
Chair	Mike Etherington-Smith
Minutes by	All

Participants	NF
Mike Etherington-Smith, Chairman (MES)	GBR
Philine Ganders-Meyer (PGM)	GER
David Lee (DL)	IRE
Constantin van Rijckevorsel	BEL
Patricia Clifton	GBR
By Invitation	
Apologies	Dr Hanfried Haring, Lars Christensson, Michel Asseray

Agenda				
Pt.		Topic	Speaker	Annex
1		Welcome and Apologies	MES	
2		Minutes of last meeting	All	
3		Response to FEI re Agenda 2020 Proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Olympic Format - Numbers per team & drop score in Olympic Games - Composite teams in Olympic Games - Number of flags in Olympic Games - Name of the sport - Sport presentation in Olympic Games - Format for other championships - Other 		
4		FEI Sports Forum	All	



5		February 23 rd meeting at LHR	All	
6		Date of next meeting	All	
7		AOB including reminder that FEI Rules revision will take place after Rio 2016	All	



Minutes of EEF EWG meeting at Dusseldorf Airport 5th February 2016

1. Apologies were received from Dr Hanfried Haring, Michel Asseray, Lars Christensson

Introduction.

All agreed that we must be proactive and constructive seeking a way to unite all our thinking for the best interests of the sport. The sport, the FEI and the Eventing Committee all face a mix of thoughts and suggestions as to the optimum way forward for the sport and we all need to play a positive role in the debate.

2. Minutes of previous meeting were approved
3. Matters Arising were addressed during the course of the meeting
4. Response to FEI re Olympic proposals regarding Agenda 2020

Olympic Format

Two key points:

- Must aim to keep 2 medals
- Avoid any reference to star levels, this is the Olympic format

The EWG wants to keep the existing format with a few modifications. After much discussion amongst colleagues and others within the sport the EWG is unanimous in the following:

- The sport must be understandable to everyone and the EWG believes that the public understands lowest score wins and also understands the concept of the drop score
- Ensure that the number of competition days is kept to a minimum in this case 3 plus the Horse Inspection
- Team Jumping before Individual Jumping, top 20 or 25 after the team jumping round to jump in the individual, max 3/nation in the individual, reverse order of merit
- Retain the existing format but reduce the dressage to one day of competition. This means Day 1 will be dressage, Day 2 will be cross country, Day 3 will be Team Jumping followed by Individual Jumping
- All agree that 4 per team with 3 to count is essential in our discipline (see reasons later in the Minutes) which is very different to dressage and jumping. This view was agreed at the last 2 EWG meetings and has not changed
- Having the dressage on one day will require a rewrite of the dressage tests and some preliminary thoughts can be shared with the FEI Eventing Committee (EC) should they so wish
- The cross country phase should be a minimum of 10 minutes to retain one of the key principles of the sport



Composite Teams

- The EWG agrees that composite teams should be permitted. It works at the moment and there is no reason why they should not continue. It is also recognised that there are some regional qualifying competitions with a limited number of teams competing and a team can have bad luck meaning that it misses out on OG participation. It is recommended to revisit the qualifying system to explore whether there is a better system. It is essential to ensure that there are proper and true qualifications to ensure that everyone at the OG is of the right standard and level of experience to be there. All qualifying competitions must be at least 3* level

The EWG does not agree with the following:

- The suggestion that all team riders jump one after the other, the primary reason being that conditions can change during the competition and the sport must at all times be fair to all athletes/horses. Additionally the EWG feels that having the warm up as part of the jumping arena is not necessarily in the best interests of all horses
- Limiting the number of individuals per nation to 2

Additional Thoughts/Points

1. The need to follow Dressage and Jumping should they decide to go for 3/team was discussed and it was agreed that eventing is very different to these two disciplines and that 4/team is what we should keep
2. The meeting on February 23rd at LHR: all eventing nations should be invited to attend whether in person or by conference call
3. It is felt that the sport needs to find a solution to sorting out queries at the end of the cross country phase whether CIC or CCI since people expect to know who wins as quickly as possible. This ties in to sport presentation but is an issue to address anyway.
4. A system needs to be put in place through the rules preventing riders chasing points to get high enough in the rankings to get a place at the Olympics and thereby over-running their horses
5. Team qualification for Olympic Games – must not be at 2* level
6. Individuals at the Olympics: it must be the Individual who qualifies not the nation and so if an individual suddenly cannot go to the OG the one to take his/her slot must be the next eligible athlete on the ranking list, not the next eligible athlete from the same nation as the one who is unable to go
7. Sam Watson, Equiratings, to be invited to join the February 23rd meeting either in person or on the phone to share his findings and to answer any questions that he is able to.

Action: DL to invite



Pros of existing format:

Current Olympic format: Dressage– Team & Individual XC – Team Jumping - Individual Jumping_but have all the dressage on one day

General

- With 1 day of dressage only 3 days of competition
- Results for both medals close to finish of event
- Clear for spectators to watch final decision in SJ arena
- Great atmosphere in jumping arena
- Positive influence on current 4* Events/less risk of collateral damage
- More spectators/sold tickets for SJ sessions

4 per Team - as above plus

- Ensures more better horses and athletes at the OG; 'the best of the best' should have the chance to compete at the Olympics – Agenda 2020
- Creates drama
- Reflects the current/traditional sport and is a known format that has worked well for the last 3 Olympic Games
- Reduces the risk of accidents
- Less risk of fewer finishers (more than 3 times the risk of fewer finishers than Dressage or Jumping)
- Better pictures more likely
- The best team should win, not the luckiest
- Drop score adds an interesting dimension to the competition, is easy to understand, good for commentators, and good for TV. **Action: MES to ask some TV producers for their thoughts**
- EWG is nervous about messing around with the current scoring which works well and has a good balance between phases
- We know that the present format works and is accepted within the eventing community

3 per Team

- Would allow more nations to compete provided they were suitably qualified (up to 7)
- Will promote more defensive riding
- Must revisit MERs and have dedicated, specified qualifying competitions to guarantee appropriate standards of experience and expertise for all athletes and horses at the Olympics
- Scoring would need to be changed; giving random scores for non-completing athletes is not good for the reputation and perception of the sport
- Would potentially lower the standard of the overall competition; the standard should be raised to meet the required standard rather than lowered to meet the standard of athlete/horse; there must be no compromise
- Introduces a greater element of luck in to the competition

Please note - going down to 3/team would automatically, under the current standings, remove up to 21 of the top riders from the current top 50 in the World Ranking list (9 of the top 30).



Important point for the discussions – data shows that nations have better chances of completing/succeeding if there are 4/team than if there are just 3/team and this can be shown to be the case particularly for the less experienced nations.

Sport Presentation

All agreed that this is key to the future appeal of our sport (please refer to Minutes of the last 2 meetings of the EWG) and is an area where we can make significant improvements. CN shared that the FEI has a group looking at Sport Presentation in its own right. All agreed that this is good and essential and look forward to some progressive and innovative ideas.

The EWG has ideas on how to improve sports presentation and will happily engage with the FEI/whoever to share these ideas

Name of the sport

Equestrian Triathlon. This provoked lively debate amongst those present with mixed views being expressed. The name should not change until full and proper research has been carried out amongst non-equestrian public and media/broadcasters. The EWG feels that there are bigger issues to address than the name of the sport.

One view expressed was that rather than invest a significant sum undertaking research in to the name of the sport it would be better to invest the money in to promoting the sport.

Number of Flags

It remains the case that the EWG feels that increasing the number of flags for the sake of it is not in the best interests of the sport because of the risk factor. In London there were already 18 nations taking part, which is a lot. We should nevertheless be seeking to expand the number of nations who have the possibility to qualify for the Olympic Games and be seen to be doing this. We should also try to find a way to have the more experienced nations 'buddy'ing up/mentoring' with less experienced nations (please refer to Minutes of previous meeting).

Legacy & Cost

The EWG is very pleased to learn that the FEI will be working with Bid Cities as soon as they show themselves even though the final venue is more often than not different to the one proposed in their initial presentation to the IOC. The EWG is comforted that the FEI will be involved with the Bid Cities early and can ensure good, appropriate advice is given to minimise costs and deliver the best possible legacy (hard and soft).



Format for Championships

The EWG feels very strongly that the existing formats for championships should be retained and should not follow the Olympic format. The reason for this is to ensure that 'the best of the best' are able to compete at championships.

5. Date of next meeting – later in the year subject to need and whether to meet or have a conference call to be determined
6. AOB
 - Suggestion proposed that if Tom Ryckwaert has difficulty attending the meetings we should ask Alec van den Abeele (BEL) to join the EWG instead. Footnote: TR has agreed that he doesn't have the time to commit to the EWG **Action: MES**
 - Date of FEI Sport Forum is 4th & 5th April 2016. MES (definitely) and PGM (subject to confirmation) will attend
 - All EWG members are encouraged to ensure that their NFs respond to the FEI on the Agenda 2020 points
 - Chairman of FEI Eventing Committee; there is no immediate rush but there will need to be a new Chairman of the FEI Eventing Committee when Giuseppe's term comes to an end

The meeting closed at 1445hrs