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Minutes

Meeting	EEF Eventing Working Group	
Date	5 th September 2016	
Time	1500hrs	
Location	Telephone Conference Call	
Chair	Mike Etherington-Smith	
Minutes	All	
Participants		
Mike Etherington Smith, Chairman (MES)		GBR
Philine Ganders-Meyer (PGM)		GER
Constantin van Rijkevorsel (CvR)		BEL
Lars Christensson (LC)		SWE
Alec van den Abeele (AvdA)		BEL
David Lee (DL)		IRE
By Invitation		
David Holmes		GBR
Apologies		
Dr. Hanfried Haring, EEF President		GER
Michel Asseray		FRA

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Agenda				
Pt.		Topic	Speaker	Annex
1		Opening, Welcome, and Apologies	MES	
2		Olympic Format	All	
3		Proposed FEI Rule Changes	All	
4		AOB	All	

Minutes

1. Welcome & Apologies

Apologies were received from Michel Asseray and Dr Hanfried Haring. David Holmes (GB) and Debbie Marfell (GB) were welcomed to the call.

It was agreed that the minutes from the previous meeting should stand unless there are any differences in these Minutes in which case these Minutes override the previous ones.

2. Format

All agreed that the format for Tokyo needs to remain as per the current format apart from the dressage all taking place on one day. The reason for remaining in the present format is because of the remote cross country venue rather than any other reason.

Post Tokyo the feelings of the majority of the working Group are that the format proposed mid 2015 and in the Minutes of the previous meeting of the EWG should stand although it is felt that there is no need to rush in to a definitive decision on 2024 right now unless the FEI/IOC requires one now. There was one opinion which preferred the Tokyo format going forward but could live with either format. The key decider here is the views of TV who have variously said that we should, for the Team competition, finish with the cross country.

Olympic Format post Tokyo subject to outcome of the work on Sports Presentation

Horse Inspection (max 4 per nation to present, Teams of 3 to be declared after the Horse Inspection)

Day 1 Dressage (everyone)

Day 2 Jumping & XC (everyone) Team Medal ceremony or there could be a simple initial presentation with the main medal ceremony taking place before or after the Individual ceremony on the final day

Day 3 Horse inspection. Jumping for Individual competition (top 20/25 after Day 2) followed by Individual Medal ceremony

All affirmed that reserve horses must be permitted to travel and that once the team has been declared for this format reserve horses should definitely not be allowed to come in to the competition at any stage, ie no substitution at any stage should be permitted. The reasons for this are:

- a. it would be open to abuse
- b. it would not be fair to all nations
- c. it would complicate the sports presentation which everyone believes is one of the key areas that has to be addressed and improved

3. Scoring& substitutions/continuing in the competition

It was agreed that the present scoring system is fine and does not need changing. 'Lowest score wins' is easy for the general public to understand. It is also strongly felt that if someone is eliminated in any phase they must be eliminated from the competition and take no further part nor should a substitution be permitted. This is against one of the core values of the sport.

However, the EWG remains open minded about someone who is eliminated in a certain phase being given an agreed penalty and being able to complete the next phase provided they pass a horse inspection. The penalty must be sufficient to ensure no medal can be won by a team in such circumstances.

Furthermore, all agreed that there should be no change to the current scoring system in the sport unless a conclusively better one can be found. All are mindful of the technology costs involved with changing a scoring system and we ask the FEI to bear this in mind also.

4. Sports Presentation

All agreed that sports presentation is key to the future popularisation of our sport and hope that the FEI proposals will be shared in due course.

It is also felt to be extremely important that any/all proposed rule changes have sports presentation as part of the thought process.

5. Additional point/request

The EWG would like to please ask the FEI to look at how many teams would have completed Rio 2016 were they only to have had 3/team and then share this information. It is recognised that this is not necessarily a true reflection of what would have happened since team tactics would have been different but it is felt that this would be good information to have as well as the number of teams who would have completed with competitors who were eliminated on the cross country being permitted to show jump albeit with a fixed penalty for their elimination.

It would also be interesting to analyse the MERs of those who did not complete the cross country.

5. Proposed Rule Changes

The EEF EWG welcomes the opportunity to feed back on the proposed rule changes for 2017 and would like to say that unless otherwise commented on below the EWG accepts the proposed changes.

a. MERs/Qualifications

It is recommended that no changes are made to the current MERs until the new Committee being chaired by David O'Connor makes its recommendations to the FEI Eventing Committee. More work is needed on this topic before change should be introduced.

One point raised which merits discussion is as follows:

MERs for CCI4*/ Uncategorised & D & C Riders: in order to allow experienced horses to help coming up riders to get into 4*-level it should be enough, if riders/horses fulfil some of the requirements separately but at least 2 results (and at least one CCI) as a combination. Otherwise the experienced horse would not make it up to CCI4* if it has to do two more CCI3* before. Furthermore owners will only give their horses to the top riders in future with no chance for the upcoming ones to reach the higher categories any more.

b. Star system

There were mixed views expressed about introducing the new system. Some were in favour, others expressed concerns with the main concern being cost and affordability. It was discussed that the proposed new 1* would be optional for NFs and would not form part of any MERs and provided this was the case some of the concerns disappeared. However, there are some nations who do not see the need for these classes and feel that it is a level of competition which should be left to NFs as to whether they have them or not. They believe that their place is as a national, not international, competition.

Another reason expressed for not liking the proposed new 1* level is that it lowers the entry level to international competitions; if people wish to aspire to compete at international events they should achieve a minimum standard, ie the present 1*. The point about cost and affordability is a very important one, the FEI must not seek to impose costs on OCs

c. Proposal re 'skinny fences', 'inside or outside the flag'

There was support for the concept expressed in the email from GDC dated 22nd May 2016 and it was agreed that this is definitely worth further consideration. One caveat is that whatever the final decision on this proposal the outcome must not be confusing to the public. It will certainly assist with the Olympic Games with 3/team and if it is introduced it would obviously need to be applicable across the sport.

All agreed though that this particular proposed change needs further discussion and consideration to consider all the options and to ensure that sports presentation is not compromised in any such rule change. There are options to this issue which need consideration one being the fence judge has a red and green flag to indicate to the competitor whether inside or outside the flag. All agreed that it is good to tidy up a 'grey' area.

If further consideration is not going to be given to the proposal then a suggestion of anything between 41 & 50 penalties be awarded.

d. Penalties for activation of frangible/deformable mechanisms

The majority of the EWG are in favour of removing the penalties now for activation of a frangible device. The reason for this is to ensure that course designers use the mechanisms that are available without fear of competitors being unfairly penalised plus it removes the challenges that are faced by Ground Juries when they have to make the decision as to whether to take away the 11 penalties.

e. Annex B, jumping efforts

All agreed that the current minimum number of permitted efforts should be retained at 3* & 4* levels, ie there should be no increase, but it was agreed by the majority that raising the maximum number is a good idea

f. New Annex 1

All agreed that this was a good proposal but they should be guidelines, definitely not rules. It is felt that the FEI should definitely not be trying to impose itself on this competition nor is it practical given that there are several very successful competitions already running. It is also felt that it is not acceptable for the FEI to try to impose sanctions on those who compete in these competitions.

Conclusion

The EEF EWG remain available to assist in developing ideas and concepts and carrying out any further research to help come to the right conclusion.