

Working Group "Jumping"
27 April 2011, Leipzig (GER)

Meeting Minutes

Meeting title	Working Group "Jumping"
Date	27 April 2011
Time	10.00 to 16.00 h
Location	Leipzig, Show Venue of World Cup Finals Room K 1 (Administration Building)
Chair	Hanfried Haring
Minutes taker	Anna Williams

Attendees Invited		
Participants	Title	NF
✓ Hanfried HARING	EEF President	GER
✓ Otto BECKER	Member FEI Jumping Committee	GER
✓ Ludger BEERBAUM	IJRC	GER
✓ Will CONNELL	Chef de Mission	GBR
✓ Rob EHRENS	Chef d'Equipe	NED
✓ Sven HOLMBERG	Former Chair of FEI Jumping Committee	SWE
✓ Soenke LAUTERBACH	Secr. Gen.	GER
✓ Wiveka Lundh	Sports Director	SWE
✓ Claude NORDMANN	Internat. Relations	SUI
✓ Eleonora OTTAVIANI	President IJRC	MON
✓ John P. ROCHE	Director Jumping	FEI
✓ Kevin STAUT	IJRC	FRA
Cancellations:		
Marco FUSTE		
Emile HENDRIX		
Christian PAILLOT		
Ingmar DE VOS		
Invitees	Title	NF
✓ Breido Graf zu RANTZAU	NF President	GER

Last modification on: 12 May 2011

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Agenda	
1	Paycards
2	Nations Cup Formula - Rules
3	FEI European Jumping Championship Format
4	Conversion Rate
5	European Cup
6	Registration of Riders and Horses
7	A. O. B.

The Chairman gave a brief introduction to all participants and thanked them for their attendance. He explained the Protocol for the meeting and proposed that in cases where no solution was found, a group of about three people was to be tasked with finding a solution at a later stage and report back to the Board.

- 1) **Nations Cup Formula / Rules**
- 2) **European Championships Format**

Sven Holmberg introduced the two topics as he felt they were strongly linked. He explained that currently there is a huge quality gap between the three European Nations Cup Leagues; the Top League, the Promotional League and the Challengers League. He explained that many of the Promotional League Organisers were having difficulties on three points :

- Attracting Sponsorship
- Attracting the higher level riders
- Cost of having to invite so many teams

In addition he explained the problems for the smaller National Federations currently competing in the Top League. With eight shows to attend during the season, plus the Final, many of the smaller nations were struggling to field a quality team at each event. The welfare of the horses was questioned as they were being pushed to compete in more events than was perhaps ideal. On another note, he explained that the Organisers of the Top League felt that they were too limited in their invitations. So overall, he felt that a revision of the current conduct of these Leagues was necessary.

Mr. Holmberg then went on to explain a possible proposal concerning slight changes in the format of the European Championships. It was agreed that the discipline of Jumping is continuing to grow throughout Europe, and as a consequence more and more teams are wanting to compete in the Championships. As things stand, the sheer length of the competitions is too



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much. The time for all riders taking part to compete is simply taking too long, resulting in a lack of public and sponsor interest. In addition the large number of competitors makes it a very expensive venture for any potential organisers. All members agreed that something had to be done to make the competition more interesting.

It had been discussed to eventually link the Nations Cup events with the European Championships to create a qualification system to limit the number of competitors at the Championships. It was proposed that the top 8 teams from the Top League, the top 4 teams from the Promotional League and the top 3 teams from the Challengers League would all be automatically qualified to compete in the Championships.

The general concern from the Working Group was that all National Federations in Europe should have the chance to qualify. It was also asked whether the limitation on the number of teams in the European Championships was indeed the right direction to take, despite all agreeing that it would be the best route to take from an OC cost, public and sponsor interest point of view.

Following the introduction the members were asked to give their opinion. There was an overall majority to keep the 8 events in the Top League with the possibility to reduce this number should any of the OCs fall below the required high standard of organisation. All were in agreement that it is important to work hard on raising the standard of the Promotional League. The reason for this was two fold :

- 1) A higher level of competition would be more attractive to riders, sponsors etc.
- 2) The level between the Top League and Promotional League would not be so great when teams are promoted/demoted.

It was agreed unanimously that there should be no cross-over points between Leagues. In addition it was felt that, from a horse welfare basis, it is better when each team has 5 athletes and horses rather than the current format of 4 athletes and horses. A suggestion was made that for the Top League, whilst 8 events remain, it was only necessary for NFs to compete in 6 of these. However, the overall opinion for this was very clearly that, as it was a series, it was important from a sport and sponsor point of view that all teams should be competing at all 8 events.

It was agreed that a proper evaluation of the shows should be set up which would allow new up-and-coming events in to the Top League and also would mean that those events not keeping the high standard would drop to the Promotional League – of course this wouldn't be such a huge difference if the level of the Promotional League is increased significantly.



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All members felt that in principle a qualifying system through the FEI Nations Cup Leagues would be appropriate. However, the members were unsure as to how this would enable individuals to qualify. In summary, the members suggested that discussions would continue through the initial part of the CSIO season with a decision to be taken in Aachen this summer.

3) Paycards

The discussion moved on to paycards, and Mr. Soenke Lauterbach gave a brief introduction on the subject. This is an ongoing issue, and many plans have been made since 2000 to try and limit the practice, but so far to no avail. Whilst rules are in place for invitations in higher level events, the same level of control is not available for lower level events which leaves the situation open to abuse. However, proof of the practice is hard to come by, and until now only one case has been officially reported which is currently at the Tribunal. Whilst everybody stands against it officially, it is widely known that the paycards and/or VIP table issue is common practice.

If a decision is taken, then a strong stand must be taken and a way to prevent and monitor the process must be put in place. The question was asked whether indeed a sort of paycard system should be allowed as for many OCs the additional income is necessary in order to host the events. If it was to be incorporated in the rules, it may prevent the underhand dealings that are currently taking place. Whilst there are strict penalties in place for any organiser found to be accepting paycards, actually proving that they are doing so is virtually impossible.

One solution for the higher level events was the introduction of a Certificate of Capability system; this would mean that only riders with the appropriate level would be competing at the top level events and not simply those who can afford to pay off the organisers. All participants considered that this was a very good solution and certainly something to be considered. However, this would not help the situation in the lower level events. It is a serious problem for the young talents to be able to get entries in the bigger events which enable them to climb the rankings. It was suggested that the schedules be changed for higher level event and that a minimum of two places must be reserved for riders under the age of 25 rather than the current one place.

All agreed that asking the riders to inform the FEI or the IJRC of organisers accepting paycards was not a viable option and was not fair on the riders. If OCs learnt that the riders were sharing the information, then they would never be able to enter the events again, and this would be no problem for the OCs as there are always riders willing to pay and fill their space.

It was unanimously agreed that the practice of paycards was bad for the progression of the young talent and the sport in general. It gives a very bad image, and something must be done. The only possible solution that the



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members were able to find was the Certificate of Capability option or otherwise the possibility of 20% of the invitations for an event being given as FEI Wildcards (remark from the Chair: at European events to be given in agreement with EEF). A public list, with riders nominated by their National Federations, would then be published of riders who are in line to receive these wildcards in order for them to get a foot up on the Rolex Rankings list which would then enable them to make entries through the invitation system.

4) Conversion rates

Ms. Eleonora Ottaviani made a presentation on the current situation of the Conversion Rate issue and explained briefly the meeting that took place in London previously with representatives from the FEI, OCs and the IJRC. The members agreed to leave the decision up to the Bureau, which will take place on May 5th 2011. Should the Bureau not be able to make a decision based upon the suggestions from the London meeting, then the members of the Board who sit on the Bureau will push for a different solution based upon the following:

The suggestion was to set a fixed rate based upon the general conversion rate between the Swiss Franc and the Euro and to create a 'safe' corridor with a certain percentage. Should the base rate move outside of this corridor, then discussions should be re-launched to find a solution once again. All members felt this would be a reasonable solution to a very difficult problem.

5) European Cup

Mr. Jan Auen Hafskjold had contacted the EEF with a proposal for a new series for 'lower level' riders (i.e. those that fall outside of the top 100 in the Rolex Rankings) based on similar formula to the FEI World Cup™. The Working Group felt this was a strong idea to be followed up. It was suggested to contact the NFs and ask them to support the idea and encourage their OCs to become involved.

It was agreed that Mr. Hafskjold would be contacted again and asked to come back with a more solid proposal with greater detail. The idea should definitely be worked upon and should be further discussed with Mr. Hafskjold. Please refer to the Annex.

6) Registration of Horses and Riders

This issue needs to be further discussed during the upcoming meetings to be held in Lausanne. It was felt suitable that a solution to this issue should be found in conjunction with the new Secretary General of the FEI. (Remark: This has been done.)



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7) Any Other Business

Date of the Rolex FEI World Cup™ Final

Many participants expressed concern at the date of the 2011 Rolex FEI World Cup™ Final. It was felt that it was too late on in the season as many riders were already preparing for the outdoor season, most especially with the first FEI Nations Cup™ just 2 weeks after the weekend of Leipzig.

Number of competitions at CSIs counting for Rolex Ranking points

All of the participants felt that there should be a limit of competitions counting for the Rolex Rankings at each event. It was felt that a suitable suggestion would be the following: 2 events to count at a CSI2*, 3 events to count at a CSI3* and 4 events to count at CSI4* and CSI5* events. It was felt that this would be a fairer solution. It was also reiterated that perhaps 30 competitions should be taken into account for the Rolex Rankings.

Global Champions Tour

There was much discussion about this series and the concerns of the riders about the current pressure for them to earn points throughout the season. It was explained that as the points earned throughout the season now count at the Final, there is a great pressure on the riders to attend every GCT event, often at the expense of other events such as the FEI Nations Cup™. It was also felt that perhaps the number of GCT events should be limited to a much lower number in the interest of the sport and horse welfare.