



IEOC regional meeting at Badminton Friday 10th May 2024

In attendance: Andy Griffiths (GBR Chairman), Sue Stewart (GBR Secretary General), Annabel Scrimgeour (GBR), Nicky Salmon (GBR), Gillian Kyle (IRL), Angela Tucker (GBR), Alec Lochore (GBR), Sarah Bullen (GBR), Thomas Duggan (IRL), Jan Cottam (GBR), Andrew Bennie (NZL), Helen Bowler (GBR), Anne-Marie Taylor (GBR), Barry Roycroft (AUS), Jo Crabtree (GBR), Sue Ockenden (CAN), Donna Smith (GBR), Adrian Buzzard (GBR), Marie Durin (FRA), Helen Brettell (GBR), Emma Hickey (IRL), Roger Day (GBR), Jonathan Clissold (GBR), Giuseppe Della Chiesa (ITA), Tim Downes (GBR), Elin Stenberg (GBR), Jane Tolley (GBR), David O'Connor (USA), Gaston Bileitczuk (FRA), Pascal Le Borgne (FRA), Sarah Verney (GBR), Jennifer Millar (NZL)

Guests present: Pierre Le Goupil, Eventing Course Designer, Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Apologies: Jutta Koivula (FIN), Judith Eisnecker (AUT), Dave Thompson (GBR), Zara Pawley (GBR), Patrick Carew (IRL), Eileen Pritchard-Bryan (USA), Christian Landolt (SUI), Carolyn James (AUS), Sylvia Williams-Roberts (AUS), Andrea Webb (AUS), Anne-Mette Binder (DEN), Christian Struck (DEN), Tissie Reason (GBR), Linda Pearce (GBR), Sally Price (GBR), Xavier Le Sauce (FRA), Clare Wagstaff (GBR), Charles Trolliet (SUI), McPherson (BEL), Wayne Quarles (USA), Jean Mitchell (IRL), Roger Kane (AUS), Helmut Mett (GER), PollyAnn Huntington (AUS), Helen Christie (NZL), Wayne Copping (AUS), Faith Ponsonby (IRL), Peter Ponsonby (IRL), Stuart Bishell (NZL), David Lee (IRL), Joe Carr (USA), Katherine Lucheschi (ITA), Genevieve Pfister (SUI), Michelle Debenham (AUS), Sue O'Brien (NZL), Julie Chapman (GBR), Ann Bostock (GBR)

1. Welcome

Andy Griffiths, IEOC Chairman thanked Jane Tuckwell and Rupert de Mauley, RGH for providing facilities for the meeting.

Andy welcomed Pierre Le Goupil, Eventing Course Designer, Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

2. Report on recent IEOC activities

Andy Griffiths (AG), IEOC Chairman opened the meeting with the following updates on officials' appeals against the FEI in relation to the Level 4 education system and the IEOC's claim against the FEI in relation to the MoU. (see Appendix).

Officials' appeals against the FEI in relation to the Level 4 Education System

To recap, seven Officials have appealed against the FEI's decision to not transfer them to Level 4. This matter remains ongoing.

IEOC's claim against the FEI in relation to the MoU

The IEOC was, from 2014, a recognised Stakeholder of the FEI. The aim of that relationship was to act as the voice of our members, and to grow the sport together. As part of this, the FEI and the IEOC signed a Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU") which governed the terms of that relationship.

Last year, the IEOC Board raised various questions and concerns with the FEI about matters impacting officials, as it was permitted to do as a recognised Stakeholder. Unfortunately, the IEOC felt that there was a lack of cooperation and engagement from the FEI in relation to these matters. We tried our best to restore a positive working relationship with the FEI but were unable to reach an agreement with the FEI that would guarantee our members' voices were properly heard. We therefore felt we had no other option but to file a claim with the FEI Tribunal, requesting that the FEI comply with the MoU.

Since then, the FEI disappointingly announced on 29 February that it had terminated that MoU with immediate effect. After taking legal advice, we have disputed that the termination was valid – and have asked the FEI Tribunal to confirm this as part of the claim.

Both the IEOC and the FEI have now filed their written arguments and evidence in the claim, so we are now waiting for the FEI Tribunal to make its decision. FEI Tribunal decisions are normally published online on the FEI website, and so we hope to provide you with more of an update when the decision is issued.

If the decision is not in our favour, we have the option to appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, but we of course hope that is not necessary.

Ultimately, our goal is for the FEI to recognise the IEOC as a stakeholder once more, and for us to re-establish a positive working relationship, so that we can ensure you are properly represented at the FEI and so we can continue growing the sport together.

3. Secretary General's report

Sue Stewart (SS), IEOC Secretary General noted the transition to an online meeting format for the IEOC AGM in 2023 had been well received by members and achieved the Board's aim of enabling many more members to participate in the AGM. The IEOC AGM in 2024 will once again be held online via Zoom. Full details will be circulated nearer the time.

The Board is making use of Zoom technology to conduct their quarterly meetings.

The IEOC was pleased to launch its new Officials pack in April, which the Board hopes will prove to be a valuable resource. In this pack we have collated materials to help Officials locate and access the key resources they require to fulfil their roles.

SS thanked Anne-Marie Taylor for proposing this pack be produced, and providing an initial list of potential resources which the Board then reviewed and expanded on to ensure resources for all officials' roles were included, and Rachel Moore for all her work locating and collating the materials into the pack.

SS confirmed the pack will be updated replacing the FEI Eventing Guidelines on Use of Tack, Equipment and Dress (which is no longer relevant) with a link to the new FEI Tack App.

The Officials pack is available for download from the IEOC website at <https://www.ieoc.info/resources>

SS confirmed Jan Cottam and Nikki Salmon are working to identify new Stewards.

4. Discussion on flag rule

Giuseppe Della Chiesa (GDC) presented the following idea that has been discussed amongst CDs with a view to putting it forward to the FEI as a proposed rule change.

The thinking behind the proposed change is technical not political, to get horses jumping better by putting them in a better position to clear the fence by being straight.

The idea is:

- to improve the current flag rule which is hard to judge quickly and accurately,
- to encourage wider fences,
- not to dislodge flags,
- riders to present more constructively.

It is proposed there would be a small penalty (4 or 5) if a flag is adjusted/hit.

GDC asked the meeting what concerns this proposal might provoke.

- Annabel Scrimgeour (AS): sounds good provided there is a consistent mechanism.
 - GDC replied: it would be similar to SJ – jumps activated in the same way on a particular day/competition, therefore an easier solution. This would be more appropriate and consistent than the current 15 penalties.
- Jan Cottam (JC): what about time to replace a flag?

- GDC replied: similar situation to asking for fence to be rebuilt, but certainly should be considered as active risk management.
- Sarah Bullen (SB): will this be discussed by the FEI Eventing Committee?
 - GDC replied: it will be introduced to NFs to feedback. A good time to do this will be after the Olympics, therefore it is a proposal for next year.
- Wayne Roycroft (WR): disagree. A jump can't be improved just by moving a flag to make it easier to judge. But there will be a knock on effect as no consistency globally.
 - GDC replied: agree, but it would still be an improvement on the present 15 penalties.
- Anne Marie Taylor (AMT): can you foresee a situation where a flag being knocked = 20 penalties?
 - GDC replied: hitting a flag would still be penalised.
- B Roycroft: As an organiser we find running events is becoming non-viable due to the expense. Is this rule due to the rider accidentally knocking a flag versus a poorly ridden horse? Should it be less than the 4 penalties for a SJ rail, or should we increase the penalty per flag knock, therefore multiple poor jumps can be impacted?
- Pierre Le Goupil (PLG): from a designer/builder's point of view making flags a little wider to be more inviting and less tricky could be an option.
- Andy Griffiths (AG): thanked GDC for putting forward this proposal. It is important to have a level playing field in the sport. This is currently only a discussion of the concept, no decision has been made as yet, collaborative discussions will take place before any proposal is put forward.

5. Report from Pierre Le Goupil, eventing course designer, Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Pierre Le Goupil gave a very interesting and informative update on preparations for in Versailles for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

6. Any Other Business

Communications between officials and FEI

- David O'Connor (DOC) advised discussions take place between Officials and the Eventing Committee alternate months, so the committee have a broad sense of issues. Due to current legal proceedings nothing can be widely discussed. The next discussion will be held on 24th May.
 - AG asked if this can be available to all Officials.
- Alec Lochore (AL) important to ensure database information is up to date.
- Tim Downes (TD): it would be more constructive to give advance notice of meetings.
- AMT: it's easy for long term Officials to approach the FEI/Eventing Committee but newer Officials find the IEOC a better means of communication.
 - This comment was widely supported by meeting participants.
 - AL: this present impasse therefore needs to be sorted.

Recruitment of new Officials

- AG: new Officials need to be recruited into the sport. Canada are unable to find any new entrants.
- Sarah Bullen (SB): the time and expense involved is too onerous, and approaching the FEI is not easy and often intimidating.
- AG: this is an age-old problem, but nothing seems to be improving.
- Nikki Salmon (NS): recruited one today.
- DOC: national classes find same problem as NFs
- NS: have similar problems due to expense and commitment. Many people have full time occupations therefore limits on holiday time etc.

- JC: more finance means organisers fund the improvements.
- AL: this is a global problem. Fence judges are in a similar situation. We need to encourage present people involved in sport now to give back. The problem is industry wide and across the board throughout equestrianism.
- NS: perhaps launch an initiative where members need to devote 1-3 days to volunteering.
- TD: this is an issue across all sports/pastimes, there is too much home entertainment.
- Annabel Scrimgeour (AS): there is too much abuse of officials on social media.
- Sue Stewart (SS): the costs of maintenance and travel are prohibitive.
- Donna Smith (DS): officials who need a daily rate will lose out to those who don't
- Roger Day (RD): Regional Directors used to talk to volunteers, make them feel appreciated and therefore encourage reinforcements.
- AG: this issue needs to be addressed.
- Jennifer Millar (JM): perhaps each rider should supply a jump judge.
- Helen Brettell (HB): perhaps the length of day could be reduced.
- Gillian Kyle (GK): the experience and costs would be prohibitive.

7. Meeting close

The meeting concluded at 18:45.