



Minutes for Event Riders Association (UK) meeting

26th July 2010 @ 7pm

Headley Stud, Newbury Road, Headley, Thatcham, RG19 8LB

Chairman: Francis Whittington (FW)

ERA Board: Francis Whittington, Andrew Hoy (AH), Rodney Powell (RP), Jo Cook (JC)

ERA UK – Aims

- Improve Communication between riders, organisers, BE and Owners
- Create structure to ERA and tidy finances
- Develop and grow sport – focus on representing/helping riders at lower levels

Vision

- Have regional representatives at local level
- Rider rep at every event
 - Rep will get actively involved and obtain feedback from all at event (competitors, grooms, owners etc)
 - Provide constructive feedback to event organisers / BE / FEI

Achieve today

- List of feedback – take concerns forward

Points raised:

ERA legitimacy

- BE stated at their AGM two years ago that ERA don't have any legitimacy or influence (Tilly Tilbrook)
- FW has spoken to BE
 - ERA are more organised and structured legally
 - BE are now supporting us and coming to us for our feedback from riders & forum
- Aim to create a foundation and build relationships with BE and Owners Association
- Communication is key – now have a direct voice into BE (Nominate a rider for BE board)

Balloting and Entries



- Balloting and late entries system unfair (Jonathan Chapman) - riders want to be able to change horses or get a refund
- BE are looking at changing the entries system (Francis)
- Lack of transparency in balloting is a concern (Nick Walbridge)
- The systems needs to be consistent and made public how events carry it out (Nick.W)
- Encourage riders to post on ERA forum – some worried may make situation worse (Kerry)
- Need to give constructive criticism to organisers (Francis)
- Should be able to change riders in unforeseen circumstances without penalty (Jules Stiller)
 - Event in question – taken feedback on board (Francis)
- Why hasn't BE taken up a centralised entry system? (Francis)
 - Difficult to enforce (Amanda Ratcliffe)
 - BE website – difficult to use (Nick Gauntlett)
 - BE looking into (Francis)
 - Survey in circulation (Chris King)
 - Carrying out testing – centralised entries system (Paul)

Action: ERA website to launch a poll on centralised website

Course Grading

- Do competitors want event courses graded? (Amanda)
- Can be graded on ERA website (Francis)
- Aim – Riders rate/grade and raise constructive feedback – sent directly to organiser (Francis)
- Forum – allows riders to ask opinion (Francis)
- Aim – To influence the existing annual publishing of course grading in Eventing magazine as this is currently based on professional riders only (Francis)
- Could ERA influence event organisers to give better feedback to grassroots riders? (Chris)
- The forum should give riders the ability to ask these questions (Francis)

Rider Reps

- Rider reps notice doesn't mention the ERA website (Jess Walker)
- New rider rep forms going out with BE entries from now (Francis)
- Rider rep at events will be non competing and will walk round actively obtaining feedback at events, will be contactable and can raise rider concerns with stewards / event organisers (Francis)
- ERA will provide rep (voluntary)
- Rider reps will not offer advice on how to ride a fence – ERA need to communicate this (Francis)
- Will professionals give advice to lower level rider reps? (Marion Wallbridge)
- Once the process is working people will use but it needs support(Francis)
- Ensure rep can deal with urgent matters –prioritise (Francis)
- All info used for feedback (Francis)



Downgrading rules

- There was no consultation on the downgrading rules – the new rules were imposed. Where is the common sense approach or sanity check? (Marion Wallbridge)
- British Dressage run a Restricted and Open system. Why don't BE adopt this? (Rodney)
- ERA will raise to BE (Francis)
- Why did BE bring in Foundation points as they are meaningless (Tilly Tilbrook)
- Qualifying system – not clear (David Hamilton)
- Need to create universal language (Paul)
- New FEI chairman is being proactive (Francis)

Showjumping

- SJ order is unfair and inconsistent between events (Coal Keen)
- Suggested bigger time slots – number board system (Chris)
- Run to time doesn't work (Caroline Howie & general consensus)
- Not enough time to walk showjumping course – had to jump a CIC** SJ Course without walking it (Nick Walbridge)
- Surely this is a safety and insurance issue?
- Suggested 5 mins slot every hour on the hour for course walking (Amanda)
- Suggested times available to walk displayed clearer (Jules)
- Courses remain same at 1 days (Jules)
- ERA will raise with BE and Event Organisers (Francis)

Dressage scores

- Sometimes had to go cross country not knowing dressage score. This influences the way a horse is ridden XC (Coral)
- Riders should know their score and / or position before XC (Raised)
- Scorers are volunteers and the speed depends on experience (Paul)
- Scores should go up asap @ event & website (Raised)
- Depends of situation / technology / availability of signal (Paul)
- Suggest helpful to announce dressage score at end of SJ round rather than before (Raised)

Refunds

- The waiting list system penalises one horse riders (TT)
- Refunds for withdrawals minus a handling fee should be given when the slot is replaced (Raised)
- Being addressed with BE – refund if fill space (Francis)
- Suggested partial refund (Francis)
- Centralised system – fairer (Jules)
- Like to see a fairer waitlist (Raised)

Start Fees

- There is no penalty to the Event Organiser if the ground is poor or fences are not improved (raised)



- Funding for running events is / can be poor. Riders need to take responsibility for their part in this and enter earlier
- Riders don't mind paying start fee if the course is maintained (Coral)
- Suggested paying start fee after Dressage/SJ (Raised)
- Suggested fee should be proportionate to work done to ground (Raised)
- Events are charging a maximum start fee when nothing has been done to the ground
- Stockton Lovell reduced the starter fee this year at Intermediate level (Tilly)
- We should post positive comments like the above on the forum too (Francis)
- Too complicated to pay later (Chris)
- Give incentive for organisers to improve (Raised)
- Suggested higher start fees = higher prize money (Francis)
- At Tweseldown in July 2010 there were dead flowers still in the fences from Spring
- Raise will BE (Francis)

Rules

- Rules should be made simpler (Chris)
- ERA will be raising with BE (Francis)
- FEI rules changes too regularly, timelines are different, qualifications complicated.
- Unqualified should be first to be balloted.
 - Hartpury have recently balloted qualified but left unqualified in. This should not be the case.
- ERA International need to raise with BWDP
- Guiseppe (new FEI Chairman) is making a difference (Francis)
- BE should be lobbying the FEI. Do BE not influence FEI events run in the UK?

Funding

- How is ERA funded? (Raised)
- Fundraising mainly (Francis)
 - Hold dinners at major events
 - Hold dinners at all CIC**** internationally
- Members will vote on financial support to improve events (Francis)
- ERA membership currently free – this would only change if members will benefit from or save money by joining (Francis)

Safety

- ERA wants to promote safety in the sport (Francis)
- Develop training scheme subsidised by ERA (Francis)
- We should post updates on ERA UK website on new section (Raised)
- CDT should be made national (Jonathan)

Next meeting should be held before British Eventing AGM in November 2010 – date TBC