

# Minutes - IMGA International Representatives' Meeting

August 11, 2021; 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. CET

- **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chris Wheeler – IMGA  
Alun Whitney – IMGA (Wales)  
Keith Martin– IMGA  
Jens Martin – IMGA  
Andrea Piazza – Italy  
Caroline Parmelin - Switzerland  
Conor O’Leary – Ireland  
Elaine Trevor-Jones – England  
Inga Daler – Norway  
Lizzy Frank – Luxembourg

Michelle Cruikshanks – Canada  
Nick Sloane – South Africa  
Pat Reece – South Africa  
Paul Greiling – USA  
Rachel Lechner – Austria  
Robin Donnay - Belgium  
Signe Sehested - Denmark  
Sue Robertson – New Zealand  
Veronica Dodds – Scotland  
Warwick Slade - Australia

- **MEETING CONVENED – 8:04 P.M. CET**

- **BEST WISHES FOR RECOVERY – C. Wheeler:**

- Davy Quinn has been hospitalized having recently suffered two strokes - our thoughts and prayers are with Davy and his family at this difficult time.

- **ITEM 1- C. Wheeler:**

- **Vote on making passing the Online Assistant Referee course compulsory for all of our IMGA competitions:**
  - Effective January 1, 2022 if passed
  - Clarification that the intent is for passing the online course to be mandatory,
  - Discussion:
    - Concern re: deficit of qualified Asst. Refs. for e.g. World Individuals where many new riders and inexperienced parents attend - able to phase in the requirement?
    - How far in advance of a competition must the course be successfully completed?
      - Suggestion to allow a couple of days prior to competition for completion which requires 3 – 4 hours; this allows for compilation of list of successful Asst. Refs.
      - Suggestion to include course completion requirement with information in the Entry Package - ensure adequate preparation time for participating riders/countries
- Country Representatives to promote this initiative among country membership; overall goal is to maximize fairness on the competitive field
- **Motion:** For all IMGA competitions starting in 2022, that all Assistant Referees have passed the online or In-person courses in the last three years.

- Fifteen country reps. eligible to vote incl. two manually recorded votes: 100% in favour. Motion Passed (8:25 p.m. CET)

- **ITEM 2 - C. Wheeler:**

- **Vote on IMGA giving money to host countries that have lost money due to cancelled shows due to COVID 19.**
- **Motion:** Should IMGA give money to the host countries who lost deposits due to COVID 19 cancellations?
  - Sixteen eligible votes (incl. L.Frank - LUX - joined at 8:27 p.m. CET) incl. two manually recorded votes: 50% in favour - 50% opposed → revote as one vote was mistakenly registered - 50%/50% + one manually recorded vote "no" resulted in narrow defeat of the motion
  - Result is very close; additional debate on the matter may be expected at the IMGA AGM

- **ITEM 3 - S.Sehested**

- **Debate on policy needed if a pony fails a drug test.**
- Signe provided detailed description of historic suspicions of illegal painkiller use at IMGA Sanctioned competitions hosted by Denmark. Much evidence of painkiller use in quantities beyond that reasonable to conclude that only one pony was involved.
  - 2021 European Championships experienced the same evidence of painkiller use but with reporting by several riders such that two parties were confronted - it appears that there was a level of general knowledge about doping among members of one team:
    - One case involved a substance purchased via the Internet - not likely to be of concern;
    - Second case resulted in progression of denial and multiple versions of events by the owner/parent in question; the pony in question appearing for its session on consecutive days lame, then sound, then lame. The team was allowed to compete.
    - FEI Drug testing for this pony was completed by Official vet and sent to Newmarket for analysis -results pending:
      - Negative results - Danish organisers bear the cost of testing
      - Positive results - Pony owner pays cost of testing
- At issue:
  - Delays in testing results; consequences are delayed or non-existent; currently no carryover to the following year if late season testing is involved
  - Possible perception that IMGA is "soft" on doping of ponies
  - Costs of testing - who bears these?

- Reliability of reports by others i.e. who is reporting on the basis of what information? Direct witness of doping? Hearsay? Concern for anonymity of reporting party(ies)
  - Andrea (ITA) and Rachel (AUS) described the depth of anti-doping measures for all National Championships for their respective countries including:
    - (ITA) Rapid testing with turnaround of three days - urine initially or if unavailable, blood; positive rapid tests: secondary testing to Newmarket
    - (ITA) Random testing - for first through third place - three ponies for teams, two for pairs
    - (ITA) Positive test results in one suspension from competition - "no question"; Italian Officials are in year five of in-depth measures to control doping.
    - (Austria) Testing at all National Championships for all disciplines - random and unpredictable therefore a strong deterrent
    - (Austria) National Anti-Drug Assoc. can test any pony at any time - first urine, then blood if required.
      - (Austria) Positive result - one year ban for rider who pays costs
      - (Austria) Negative result - National Association covers cost.
  - Chris calls for volunteers to discuss, continue research of FEI resources, include information from Andrea and Rachel; this working group would report as an Agenda item at the IMGA AGM; discussion/voting expected.
    - Rachel, Andrea, Signe volunteer; others to consider and email Chris with interest in joining working group.
- **ITEM 4 - C. Wheeler**
  - **Grading of pool ponies - update**
    - Extensive discussion about grading system proposed by A. Whitney with various examples and hypothetical situations presented e.g. mimic 'rider new to pony' situation rather than rely on owner assessment.
    - Items recently added to grading chart as proposed included:
      - Rider-based evaluation of potential pool ponies by a small (4-6) group of local riders prior to an event;
      - Pony's ring experience and time involved in competition
        - Discussion of these items included consideration of geographic, assessment timing, rider skill as factors impacting ability to apply a 'set' system across countries e.g. Australia, USA;
    - Reference made to the existing pool pony allocation system which was approx. 90% complete - additional criteria could be added e.g. NZ list as developed by B. Welsby, M. Welsby and S. Robertson - resend to Chris and A. Whitney (S. Robertson (NZ) with purpose of re-examining NZMGA process
    - A. Whitney - Overall goal of proposal is to ensure consistency in the grading process for pool ponies

- Suggestion - C. Wheeler - On bidding for competition, the process for grading is to be included in the bidding process -
- Action - Chris, Alun, and Elaine (ENG) to re-examine NZMGA process and continue discussion at IMGA AGM; complete further review and gather additional opinions.

- **ITEM 5 - C. Wheeler**

- **Self-sourcing and pool ponies debate - another proposal - The following paragraph be added to IMGA Procedure 3: "Allocation of Hosting for IMGA Sanctioned Competitions."**

**"When bidding to host an IMGA event, the organising country must include the process for providing and selecting pool ponies." Debate.**

- Review of intent for original proposal: "no self-sourcing";
- A. Whitney notes having moved on from original proposal;
- C. Wheeler outlines recent consultation with non-European country Reps. regarding this proposal and sense of no agreement within that group due to huge range of circumstances encountered by each;
  - Suggestion made that bidding countries state how ponies will be selected at time of bidding:
    - This would encourage hosting by a variety of countries; careful consideration is required of system proposed by bidders re: garner Reps'. votes for the most appealing bid presented;
    - W. Slade notes that Section 3 of ***Organising to Host an IMGA Event*** already makes the statement that method of allocation be indicated at time of bidding.
    - Discussion of various models of pony allocation and implications thereof e.g. if self-sourced pony goes lame, a team wishing to select a pool pony would have to wait until the full pool selection process takes place before having access to 'leftover' pool ponies
    - Grading for self-sourced ponies was raised as an item for discussion/decision that has yet to be resolved:
      - Discussion - What about proportionality of A, B, C, D, E ponies? What about impact on quality of the pool if self-sourcing is used? e.g. only D and E ponies left in the pool? What are the self-sourcing/pool pony combinations that may be used? What about the grading of all ponies?
      - Example of Australia's intent to complete a database to inventory available ponies across the country prior to requesting loans; informal network system exists in Europe.
- **Note:** - Due to the breadth and depth of discussion and the agreed upon time limit for this meeting, the Item is tabled for further consideration at the IMGA AGM 2021.

- **ITEM 6 – A. Whitney**
  - **Draw system for pool ponies – see attachment from A. Whitney**
    - Proposed system briefly reviewed as being part of overall Pool Pony allocation package originally presented by A. Whitney; suggestion from W. Slade (AUS) that once a draw system is put in place, organisers' feedback and comment on that system would guide revisions. General assent.
  
- **ITEM 7 – C. Wheeler (for M. Tutt – Communications Officer)**
  - **Update of Communications liaisons for each country**
    - Ensure that a Liaison person has been appointed ASAP and note that "Megan wants thousands of photos from competitions."
  
- **ITEM 8 – C. Wheeler (for M. Tutt)**
  - **Instagram account update**
    - Megan Tutt (Communications Officer) needs photos from countries hosting competitions
  
- **ITEM 9 – C. Wheeler**
  - **IMGA July Newsletter update**
  - Note games-based limited advertising included in recent edition;
  - Confirmed that the Newsletter may be accessed through links - Facebook, Instagram, Website.
    - Most effective approach for sharing seems to be email by Country Representatives to their membership.
    - Any questions regarding the content of the Newsletter? None noted;
    - A. Whitney sought confirmation of the official IMGA Facebook page as there are two - brief history provided and Reps. are to note that "IMGA Official" is the current IMGA endorsed page
  
- **ITEM 10 – C. O'Leary (IRE)**
  - **IMGA Survey Update**
    - Final edits being completed; Conor (IRE), Chris (IMGA) and Mats (GER) to meet and complete at WIC.
  
- **ITEM 11 – S. Signested (DEN)**
  - **Europeans 2021 Feedback**
    - Warm temperatures, COVID reminders evident, not one single infection
    - Competition was good with no serious incidents
    - Substitute referees were brought in.

- Additional item for consideration: use of ponies already having competed at European Individuals being used as 6<sup>th</sup> pony at the Teams' competition; question as to additional demands of Individual competition as warranting reconsideration of daily race maximum stipulations; an item for presentation to the Rules Committee.
  - Financial Report for sanctioned competitions – S. Sehested seeks confirmation that this is a mandatory item for completion post-competition;
    - J. Martin to confirm if Financial Report is mandatory part of post-competition report to IMGA
  - C. Wheeler expresses “Thanks” to Signe and Denmark for hosting this competition.
- **ITEM 12 – C. Wheeler**
    - **World Teams 2021 Feedback**
      - C. Wheeler noted an amazing improvement to the site, ample volunteer support, a wonderful Opening Reception chez Quentin.
      - Chief Referee Mark Crowe was excellent, receiving a standing ovation at the final Gala
      - “LaBonde came through” – Many thanks and “Congratulations to Quentin and the French Federation for a great job!”
      - S. Sehested queries apparent lack of consistency across Referees seemingly resulting from transition from the old to new rules – she felt that restarts were numerous; A. Whitney notes negative impact of COVID interruptions to transition from old start rule to the new one;
      - Brief discussion re: expectation of improved consistency going forward and across countries;
        - Suggestion that video support resource for “good” and “bad” starts would be useful and well-received; could some clips be taken from upcoming competitions for use worldwide?
      - Note that the riders are now held more responsible for presenting themselves correctly for the start.
  - **ITEM 13 – A. Whitney (for I. Hopkins (WAL))**
    - **World Individuals Championship Update**
      - Ready to go; Wales opened up and is now subject to few COVID-based restrictions; much is considered as the “new normal”;
      - Referee shortage due to COVID and other factors will have an impact which may be more pronounced at WPC; selection of Refs may need to go beyond the list of those who applied for competitions
    - E. Trevor-Jones (ENG)
    - **World Pairs Championship Update**
      - Organizers are set; Competition to be held September 16 – 19 at Newark;
      - Entries opened online week of August 9; will close September 3, 2021. £300 per pair including breakfast and dinner catering + final evening at upgraded hall.

- Security and Medics on-site
- Waiting for specifics on hospitality since the venue acted as a COVID vaccination clinic
- All available information is posted on the website
  
- P. Greiling (USA)
- **Nations Team Championship Update**
  - Venue and ponies ready; NTC as featured event at Equitana had been planned however country responses are either “firm no” or “soft no” due to COVID;
  - Appreciation expressed to USMGA for persevering with planning through very difficult COVID times, travel restrictions in eligible countries, and recent upsurge in USA COVID cases.
  - Agreement that NTC is not feasible given the circumstances – move the event to USA 2022; N. Sloane (South Africa) indicates willingness to move NTC 2022 forward to South Africa 2023.
  
- **ITEM 14 – C. Wheeler, P.Greiling (USA)**
  - **November AGM (In Florida)?**
    - USMGA has excellent hotel facility on Captiva Island awaiting booking confirmations from IMGGA International Reps.
    - Brief discussion re: barriers to attendance in-person - general consensus to postpone the In-Person IMGGA AGM hosted by the US to November 2022 and conduct a virtual AGM for November 2021.

**Thanks to Attendees**

**Adjournment**

As noted by Michelle Cruikshanks (CAN) - August 11, 2021