



IEOC regional meeting at Burghley Friday 1st September 2023

In attendance: Andy Griffiths (GBR Chairman), Sue Stewart (GBR Secretary General), Carolyn James (AUS), Roger Day (GBR), Jeff Newman (USA), Sylvia Williams-Roberts (AUS), Tracey Leigh (AUS), Tim Downes (GBR), Judy Hancock (GBR), Nikki Herbert (GBR), Ro Audley (GBR), Doris Ridett (AUS), Richard Nesbitt (IRL), Christian Struck (DEN), Julia Otto (GER), Marie Durin (FRA), Andrew Tucker (GBR), Jane Tuckwell (GBR), Clare Wagstaff (GBR), Elin Stenberg (GBR), Gillian Kyle (IRL), Angela Tucker (GBR), Alec Lochore (GBR), Sarah Bullen (GBR), Thomas Duggan (IRL), Andrew Bennie (NZL), Anne-Marie Taylor (GBR), Anna Karin Tiden (SWE), Marcin Konarski (POL), Sue Ockenden (CAN), Lindy Best (GBR), Katrina Midgley (GBR)

Apologies: Jan Cottam (GBR), Merel Schurinck (NLD), Christian Landolt (SUI), Zara Pawley (GBR), Lindy Young (AUS), Ann Bostock (GBR), Xavier Le Sauce (FRA), Stuart Buntine (GBR), Wiebke Hennig (GER), Anibal Marianito (POR), Wayne Quarles (USA), Jean Mitchell (IRL), Helmut Mett (GER), Christina Klingspor (SWE), Helen Christie (NZL), Wayne Copping (AUS), Faith Ponsonby (IRL), Peter Ponsonby (IRL), Stuart Bishell (NZL), David Lee (IRL) Mercedes Campdera (MEX), Joe Carr (USA), Katherine Lucheschi (ITA), Michelle Debenham (AUS), Sue O'Brien (NZL),

1. Welcome

Andy Griffiths (AG), IEOC Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked Miranda Rock and the Burghley Committee, and Rupert de Mauley, RGH for providing facilities for the meeting.

AG referred members to his notes for members "A brief back story on the last 10 months" which were handed out to meeting participants (see appendix). He went on to note the key points in communications recently received from members in Australia and New Zealand (see appendix).

Andy then opened the meeting to the floor, asking for members views and comments on the IEOC survey and clarifications on per diem, Level 4, appointment of Officials for Championships and Games. There needs to be a clear pathway through for all rather than appointments going to a select few.

AG clarified that Level 3 would still be able to be members or assistants at these events. The President of the GJ, TD, CD, CB had to be Level 4.

Jane Tuckwell (JT): It is a tough call to get the balance of GJ, and new younger officials are needed but mustn't be picked until they are ready. There is a big difference even between the 5* events. 5* events need to encourage appointments and need to be independent to make the right balance.

The events should dictate and be independent in choice of officials to make up the right team and need to bear in mind the costs eg an Australian official is expensive.

JT would also consult with the TD and CD as these officials know who is out in the field doing a good job.

AG: Transparency is needed on how these decisions are made along with working across the board to build good teams.

Anne-Marie Taylor (AMT): Had been told officials to be used only once a year but several are used several times.

As there are only a few 5* events is it fair for judges to have too many invitations? Only 21 slots and appointments appear to a closed shop.

GBR avoid asking the same officials for their two 5* events.

Per diem

AG asked for a vote if members were in favour or not of the per diem which will be compulsory in 2024, (optional in 2023) and asked for a suggestion of an acceptable range of fee.

Several officials raised their hands to signal they were in favour of being paid a fee.

Alec Lochore (AL) hinted this will be discussed at the next FEI meeting following feedback from NFs.

Marcin Kornaski (MK) felt it will be the death knell of the sport as volunteering is part of the spirit of the sport and he has concerns that paid staff is unhealthy. €100 per day is a cost to OC and many volunteers don't need the money. Also, events would not be viable if he had to pay his FEI officials.

AMT: would not want to be paid if it meant events weren't viable, but said either all officials should be paid or none.

Sue Ockenden (SO) stated everyone is paid individually and some are too expensive to use. Stewards are the cheapest but vets etc costs are getting out of control.

Tim Downes felt it inhibits younger people from getting involved if there is no recompense.

MK said everyone should be able to go on FEI Course paid for by the FEI from a £3 levy from every rider worldwide. This won't be popular with the riders. JT and others agreed this would help.

Clare Wagstaff (CW): Costs are a lot for OC but many officials cannot afford the cost and are therefore unable to accept appointments.

Tracey said unless the officials pay their own way, they are unlikely to get the invitations.

Lindy Best felt that costs are secondary to some but hospitality and being looked after and respected is essential.

AL: New regulations like stable decontamination are added cost to OC along with multiple payments to be met. Only way to recoup is from riders. 95% of 5* events lose money. A balance must be found (UK entry fees are fixed but not worldwide).

He is sympathetic to the plight of officials, but payment isn't possible as costs have become unsustainable.

Per diem has different levels. What does this mean? The FEI need harmonisation with the other disciplines.

Thomas Duggan (TD): There are taxation issues re PD payment and OC carries responsibility for dealing with this.

Katrina Midgeley (KM): Only way to be sustainable is not to pay.

SO: 4* pay \$4,000 annually to FEI per event.

MK felt people are happy to volunteer at 5*.

Many members would like to be paid but concerned about the impact on the viability of the sport and the inevitable detriment in attracting new younger officials. All do it for the love of the sport but feel undervalued and unappreciated.

AG: NFs need to be addressed and made aware of this.

IEOC survey: Level 4

Many confidential replies were received and questions were asked if GJ and TD should have competition experience.

AL: No, should be based on competency and demonstration of skills rather than by being a competitor.

TD: Riders won't come forward and take time for training and hard to differentiate between successful competition and just taking part.

Roger Day/Nikki Herbert: Officials assess and report back after events resulting in assessment of officials.

KM: Experience important and maybe a time limit could be considered to make qualification more attainable.

MK: 4*/5* riders could be fast tracked.

Angela Tucker (AT): Agree with AL, but competency not evident at Level 4 as yet.

AL: No L4 appointed as yet, bar Lars Christensson, Philip Surl, Anne-Mette Binder and Sandy Phillips.

MK: Did the Education Dept decide on the Assessors?

AL: Started with Working Group to align with levels of other FEI disciplines and then the Education Dept set criteria as to how to progress. Officials who met the criteria were then invited to come forward. Championship judging needs didn't distinguish between say Balkan 1* and WEG, but FEI didn't immediately agree a criteria.

AB: Agreed 5* judges should have sound criteria, but the FEI hasn't answered.

AL: Working Group has been set up, but it is very time consuming and expensive.

Abuse of officials/social licensing/social media

AG stated the FEI Legal Dept proposes a new paper as to how to react to social media to be sent to NFs and they bear a responsibility to their officials.

AL: FEI can only react on the information they are given, and things do go unreported, but vital to make an OFFICIAL report on the correct form. As the FEI only 'recognised 5 reports last year, these reports must be made.

Gillian Kyle (GK): She made a report in the correct way and received a call from the Legal Dept six months ago but nothing since.

Richard Nesbitt (RN) reported where rider named seven Stewards and abused them along with fake photographs and their email addresses and other contact details. Was told this was an Animal Rights Group. There has been no action reported yet from the FEI.

AG said XC most vulnerable discipline and Tim Downes stated Dressage has a lot of grief at present.

2. Meeting close

AG rounded off the meeting saying the IEOC needs your input so do put your views forward which through the IEOC can be confidential.

Sue Stewart thanked Rachel, Moore for her invaluable contribution to the administration of the IEOC and also asked for acknowledgment of AG's work and contribution to the expenses involved in the FEI Meeting in Lausanne, and any donations to the IEOC would be very welcome.

IEOC
Notes for members
31.08.23
Andy Griffiths.
Chairman

A brief back story on the last 10 months.

August 2022 Level 4 was announced, following the FEI having taken advice from its working groups for the education of Level 4 officials.
At no time was the IEOC consulted on this.

As a result the IEOC was bombarded with questions from its members that resulted in an 8 page document of questions to the FEI that needed answers and/or clarification.

To date we have not had a written response to this request for information, however the FEI did offer an in-person meeting in Lausanne.

The board then decided to compile a survey to send out to its members which it did resulting in a 40% response rate.

Also within this survey there was a confidential section, the members were given the opportunity to give their views on how they see the sport is being governed and the recommendations made.

Unfortunately it appeared that the overall feeling amongst the members was that the Eventing Department fell somewhat short in its dealings and communications with the volunteer officials at every level.

The feeling was that there was a general lack of respect and understanding given for their concerns and there was a complete absence of transparency in their inadequate responses when made at all.

The survey findings were then circulated amongst the IEOC members.

Following this there was a meeting arranged in Lausanne where the members views were put to the President and Secretary General along with David O'Connor, Chairman of the EC.

Following this we met with the Heads of Departments to discuss the points in more depth with a view to find some resolutions.

It was repeatedly pointed out that the majority of the workforce within our sport was made up of volunteers.

Therefore the future of it very much depends on their continued goodwill. The FEI needs to be reminded of this and that as such they must offer respect and acknowledge this.

We must remind them also that the IEOC are working with the FEI and not against them!

The future as we see it:

I MUST MAKE IT CLEAR THAT ALL OUR POINTS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE A STARTING BLOCK ONLY AT THIS TIME. CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION WILL TAKE PLACE TO FINE-TUNE AND RECOMMEND CHANGES.

The main areas of concern:

1. Social licensing
This is critical.
Our sport has 3 elements and is therefore very exposed (more so than other sports) as XC is open for all to see, therefore vulnerable to adverse media when things go wrong. (Especially at high profile events)
i.e. fatalities and injuries to horse and or rider

2. EMOTIVE ISSUES REGARDING LEVEL 4
IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT
level 4 is a level at which officials may be considered to be the President or TD of FEI appointed championships and 5 star events.
Members of Ground Jury can be appointed form level 3 lists.

Main questions raised to be discussed:

1. Level 4 competition riding experience of candidates
2. Appointment of officials...championships 5 star. Should a level 4 official officiating as President more than once a year?
3. Abuse of officials
4. Payment of officials. The change of FEI rules 2024
5. Yellow card warnings

The way forward.

Summary of thoughts, comments, concerns and ideas for solutions from AUS-IEOC members re the recorded minutes of the IEOC and FEI meeting on June 21st and the Action Plan which followed

Process

There were significant concerns expressed about the process that took the IEOC from the meeting with the FEI to the changes proposed as a result. In particular members feel they have not been properly consulted with, on the recommendations and further that the needs of regions outside of Europe are not properly represented.

Concerns with specific recommendations

- 1) the proposal that all ground jury at level 3 and 4 must have ridden to 3 and 4* respectively, to hold this position.**

This has been particularly sensitive issue for Ground Jurors and officials from other roles, including TD's and course designers who feel this will trickle down to affect them.

It is the general view that this recommendation will reduce an already dwindling pool of potential officials without producing an improvement in quality for the following reasons.

- The inability to accede to the highest levels of eventing officials no matter their competence will significantly reduce the incentive for officials to start on what is already an arduous and expensive pathway.
- This will further negatively affect the demographic of the pool of officials which is already a problem. To quote directly from one National Federation "current officials are getting old, and we can't see new ones coming along to replace them for the future".
- There is no guarantee that it will improve the performance of officials and in fact has every chance of doing the opposite for the following reasons.

A)

As quoted by one official 'In my personal experience some officials, who have ridden at a $\frac{3}{4}$ * level, remember what they were able to achieve as a combination with their best horse and as a result have an unrealistic or high expectations of what the average horse can be expected to achieve at a given cross-country level'.

B)

As another official said 'Just because you have ridden at a certain level, does not mean you can judge dressage or assess a cross country course.' It may be that you rode at the level very badly but got away with it.

C)

The job is more than just the cross-country course-as the late Mike Tucker famously said "you can't be a good TD, if you are rubbish with people"-arguably many 3 & 4-star riders would not pass that test!

D)

Every official, that has been through the current education system, has something to contribute. Eliminating a large number of officials with this recommendation, means we reduce the variety of skills available for different situations and circumstances.

The Objective of the recommendation:

Members feel that the focus needs to be on - What is the objective of this recommendation?

If the overall goal, is to have ground jury members, who can better understand and assess a cross country course, then perhaps the answer is to look at further improving the education system.

Maybe more time needs to be spent on the cross-country as part of the education system. Perhaps GJ need to spend time at events with CD's and TD's looking at and discussing courses, before they are open and evaluating how horses jump and reviewing hoofmarks at the conclusion.

Maybe they need to know how to measure a corner, a table and understand the correct fitting of frangible devices etc. before they reach a certain level.

I have been informed by one official, that in some countries, GJ must be national TD's before they start their journey as a GJ member....

Ultimately the goal should be to have competent officials produced by building on the experiences they have, reinforced by a robust education and assessment system.

2) The recommendation mandating OC's pay for the cost of travel.

- There is agreement amongst all the officials I spoke to that the practice of "buying a job" by forgoing the per diem payments and expenses for accommodation etc through the period of the event should not be allowed.
- The cost of travel expenses is a particular problem for officials from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, America, and Japan. It is substantially higher than for those officials traveling from within Europe or the UK.
- The current practice of officials from Australia and NZ funding their own travel to Europe and/or Britain, makes the cost of employing them, equivalent to hiring a local TD and allows them to gain value experience at their own or their national federation's expense.
- Officials feel this should be encouraged, as it helps ensure consistency of our sport around the world and avoids the Eurocentric concentration, of higher-level officials and appointments -it is indeed practically impossible to reach level 4 without officiating in Europe.
- Officials in our region feel that they are already at a major disadvantage to officials in Europe and the UK and have expressed, that if they are not allowed to pay for their own travel to Europe, to put themselves on a 'level playing field,' they will be further disadvantaged.
- They have expressed that if this recommendation is enforced, they surely will not get jobs or experience in that part of the world.

The objective of this recommendation:

If the aim of this recommendation is to reduce the number of officials forfeiting all their expenses, and having an advantage over those who cannot, then mandatory the per diem and payment of local expenses should resolve this .

- Officials have communicated that they agree the per diem of 100 euro and the payment of local expenses should not be forfeited, as that is putting those officials who can afford to do that at a clear advantage, in any part of the world.
- They have expressed that paying travel, is simply putting them on a level playing field to officials in Europe.
- In consulting with several FEI organising committees regarding payment of travel, it was unanimous that they could not afford to pay travel from Europe or the UK or vice versa.

- In addition, if OC's were given a choice between using someone closer with a comparative skill level, they would select the less expensive travel.

In summary Members have strongly recommended that: -

- The IEOC withdraw its recommendation re the need to have ridden at 3 and 4* level to be a level ¾ official.
- The IEOC amend its recommendation re OCs paying Officials costs to retain the requirement that per diem and local expenses must be paid by the OC and may not be forgone by the official to "buy" a job.
- That officials based outside of Europe be allowed to fund their own travel to Europe, no matter what the circumstance.

Synopsis of NZ-IEOC Members Online Meeting

Held via Zoom on Monday August 28th, 2023 at 7:30pm to 9:00pm

Present: 20 NZ officials (Judges, Technical Delegates, Course Designers and Stewards) 3 IECO Board members (Wayne Copping, Susan O'Brien and Michelle Debenham) and the IEOC Board Chair (Andy Griffiths)

Purpose of Meeting

1. To express the NZ-IEOC members view with respect to recorded minutes of the IEOC and FEI on June 21st to the IEOC board in particular ***“IEOC supported the introduction of the Level 4 (L4) concept; their members expressed the opinion that L4 requirements include international riding experience at CCI4* as a minimum for all L4 officials.”***
2. To express the NZ-IEOC members view with respect to the IEOC Action Plan from June 21st meeting to the IEOC board concerning in particular:
 - IEOC Action Plan 2. FEI Evening Education System / c. the Career Pathway for Judges / ii Level 3 Judges
We request that to be a Level 3 Judge candidates should have evented internationally, as a minimum to 3*
 - IEOC Action Plan 3. Payment of Officials and in particular the request by the IEOC that Article 514 be updated to read - ***An Official may ONLY forfeit travel expenses and/or the per-diem if they are doing so in order to maintain or upgrade their status, and must declare this to the FEI.***
3. To express NZ-IEOC members concerns with regards the process and procedures of the IEOC concerning the minutes and requests published in IEOC Action Plan as a result of the June 21st meeting.

International CCI4* riding experience as minimum requirement to all L4 Officials / L3 Judge candidates to have evented at CCI3*

The very strong feeling of the meeting was against both, the support expressed by IEOC members present at the June 21st meeting between IEOC and FEI concerning the minimum requirement for all L4 officials to have ridden at CCI4* and the IEOC Action Plan request that L3 Judges have ridden at CCI3* as a minimum.

The meeting felt that:

- These riding requirements undermine the years of experience, education via seminars and testing annually online and every 3 years at seminars to progress up to L3 and beyond. The education system is designed to ensure that all officials are given the necessary skills and experience to provide the best quality officials for events and reach a certain standard before promotion.

What evidence is there that riding to CCI3* or CCI4* level will improve the skills of officials being developed by the FEI system? What evidence is there that eventing officials are lacking certain skills needed to run events that can only be obtained by riding at CCI3* and CCI4*? Clearly identifying and articulating these skills would better enable the educational syllabus to be adapted and at the same time all the criteria for promotion to be tightened up.

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At one of the workshops held during the Eventing Forum in January 2023 at Jardy, to discuss education of officials, it was commented that leadership and management training for officials was needed. How and why has riding at CCI3* and CCI4* become a “*minimum*” career path requirement and superseded what officials themselves recommended to enhance their skills and performance at the start of 2023.

- These riding requirements will significantly reduce the incentive for many officials to continue or start on the personally expensive and time-consuming “*career pathway*” for all officials. It will also significantly reduce the pool of talent from which future officials could be developed. The recruitment pool for officials is already small. Limiting the ability to work at the upper levels of the sport L3/L4 to those that have ridden at CCI3* / CCI4* will only make it smaller. In addition, while the pool of CCI3* / CCI4* riders may have increased over the past 10 years (COVID-19 years excluded) becoming an official is only one career path open to such riders and one that is voluntary rather than paying like most of the other career pathways.

Payment of officials.

There was a strong feeling that the IEOC Action Plan request to change the current wording of Article 514 of the Eventing Rules as suggested by the IEOC will put its officials from New Zealand and also from the rest of the eventing world outside Europe and UK (i.e. Australia, South Africa, Japan, USA) at a disadvantage to those in Europe and UK.

The meeting felt that:

- Significant travel, both in terms of cost and time as a simple fact of geography for officials from outside Europe or the UK. The practice of New Zealand officials covering their own travel costs to the USA, Europe/UK makes the cost of employing them by an OC equivalent to those of local officials. This allows officials to gain available experience outside their home country.
- The IEOC’s proposed change in the wording will create a significant financial disincentive for OCs to use overseas officials from New Zealand, as well Australia, Japan, Asia, the Americas, or the developing eventing nations.
- The proposal would also stop OCs in this part of the world from using officials who travel to New Zealand and Australia for holidays.

In conclusion the NZ-IEOC members would ask that the IEOC :

- Withdraws its stated support that a minimum requirement for all L4 officials to have ridden at CCI4*.
- Withdraws its stated request that to be a Level 3 Judge candidates should have evented internationally, as a minimum to 3*.
- Supports that IEOC officials based outside Europe and the UK be allowed to fund their own travel to Europe and UK to gain experience at events irrespective of whether or not that travel is part of any promotional requirement.
- Review its consultation processes and ensure that any “request” or “support” to changes in rules or educational pathways for officials be based on a robust global consultation process rather than surveys or regional meetings held predominantly in Europe.