



IEOC regional meeting at Badminton Friday 5th May 2023

In attendance: Andy Griffiths (GBR Chairman), Sue Stewart (GBR Secretary General), Jane Holderness-Roddam (GBR), 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), Judith Eisnecker (AUT), Helen Bowler (GBR), Jakob Leth (DEN), Judith Eisnecker (AUT), Anne-Marie Taylor (GBR), Lyn Roycroft (AUS), Erin Steinberg (GBR), Jo Burbidge (GBR), Les Smith (GBR), Jo Crabtree (GBR), Martyn Johnson (GBR), Xavier Le Sauce (FRA), Neil Abrahams (UAE), Alison Abrahams (UAE), Anna Kane Tideu (SWE), Bjornetun Kastanman (SWE), Christopher Heiden (AUS), Marcin Konarski (POL), Wendy Lansdown (NZL), Janet Robertson (NZL), Nathalie Descan (FEI), Phillip Surl (GBR), Lindy Best (GBR), Mike Etherlington-Smith (GBR), Sue Ockenden (CAN), Stuart Buntine (GBR)

Guests present: David O'Connor, Chair, FEI Eventing Committee, Catrin Norinder, FEI Director, Eventing & Olympic Games, Mats Bjorneton, Mim Founder

Apologies: Nikki Herbert (GBR), Jonathan Clissold (GBR), Wiebke Hennig (GER), Tony McPherson (BEL), Wayne Quarles (USA), Jean Mitchell (IRL), Roger Kane (AUS), Vince Roche (AUS) Helmut Mett (GER), Christina Klingspor (SWE), Anton Granhus (NOR), PollyAnn Huntington (AUS), 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), Wendy Wergeles (USA), Genevieve Pfister (SUI), Karlene Osorio-Khor (USA), Michelle Debenham (AUS), Sue O'Brien (NZL), Vicki from Quirindi Eventing (AUS), Donald Kear (GBR), Jill Sinclair (AUS), Dave Thompson (GBR), Helen West (GBR)

1. Welcome

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

Andy welcomed David O'Connor, Chair of the FEI Eventing Committee, Catrin Norinder, FEI Director, Eventing & Olympic Games and Mats Bjorneton of Mim.

2. Report on recent IEOC activities

Andy Griffiths (AG), IEOC Chairman opened the meeting with the presentation given to the online meeting with the FEI on Friday 28th April 2023 (see Appendix).

AG stated that the FEI do appear to be taking Officials concerns seriously, and together we are working to find solutions.

3. Update regarding the 22nd IEOC AGM

Sue Stewart, IEOC Secretary General confirmed that given the advances in technology, the IEOC Board has decided that in future the AGM will be held online via Zoom.

The Board feels this is a positive step forward for the club and will enable many more members to attend the AGM.

This year's AGM will take place online on Sunday 26th November at 09:00AM UK time.

Full details will be circulated nearer the time.

The IEOC hopes to have a regular regional meeting at Burghley.

4. Report from David O'Connor, Chairman, FEI Eventing Committee

David O'Connor (DOC) advised the FEI's aim is to harmonise all disciplines together.

He confirmed the Eventing Committee have a monthly online meeting. The next in-person meeting will take place in June.

He went on to confirm:

- Rule changes can only be made every four years, other than adjustments for safety issues and maybe rider qualifications. It can be difficult to keep up as other disciplines change their rules.
- There has been a two-year discussion regarding the new levels of Officials.
- It is important to attract new Officials into the sport.
- All appointments are influenced by market forces. At the recent Sports Forum in Jardy it was asked whether 4* and 5* Officials should be appointed by the FEI, this is open for discussion.
- Rider qualifications can be difficult due to varying standards throughout the world.

Regarding the incident at Blenheim 2022, Catrin Norinder (CN) clarified that veterinary decisions are not normally made public.

- Sarah Bullen commented that the rules state any treatment must be in the treating box.
- Nicky Salmon asked why the rider was allowed to ride their second horse at Blenheim, which set a bad example, and allowed them to gain an MER.
- Anne-Marie Taylor (AMT) felt the rider should be banned for the sake of the social licence.
- Jan Cottam said the rider was allowed to compete soon after, GB were unable to prevent this as the FEI hadn't done so.
- Andrew Bennie agreed that the communications from the FEI in this case were bad, and the Officials were blamed.
- Annabel Scrimgeour stated many Officials were very upset about this case and the outcome.
- AG asked for reassurance that the FEI will act and fix these issues in the future. Andrew Bennie seconded this.

DOC acknowledged that the FEI must inform all parties involved of the outcome, and promised the FEI will improve their communications going forward.

After the meeting CN provided the following detailed explanation of the Blenheim incident:

It is important to note the following principle: The FEI Officials (such as the Ground Jury) only have jurisdiction during the "Period of Jurisdiction", as defined in the FEI General Regulations (which is basically starting 1 hour before the first Horse Inspection until 30 minutes after the announcement of the final results). After such time period, the Ground Jury is not entitled to impose sanctions or take decisions. In this specific case, the matter was reported to the FEI HQ by the Veterinary Delegate. As per the Veterinary Regulations, the following provision applies: "The GJ is primarily responsible for issuing all sanctions as listed below. Notwithstanding the foregoing, where a violation occurs and either no sanction or an incorrect sanction has been imposed at the Event, then FEI Headquarters has the right to impose the

appropriate sanction(s). In addition to the listed sanctions, other sanctions may also be imposed by the appropriate body in accordance with the GRs and/or any other Sport Rules.”

The Ground Jury could have imposed a fine and disqualification from the Event, but they had not done so.

The FEI HQ did the follow up and the rider injecting the horse was sanctioned in accordance with the FEI Veterinary Regulations, ANNEX VI Sanctions in case of FEI Veterinary Regulation Violations, violations numbers 30 and 31, with a fine of CHF 1000 each, including reporting to the FEI Veterinary Department, disqualification from the Event and compulsory EADCM sampling. This was followed up by the FEI Veterinary Department and the sanctions were imposed. We think that it is also important that we share the legal challenges to prosecute horse abuse cases based on post mortem examinations. While the post mortem report is confidential, please see hereinafter a few extracts of the post mortem so that you can understand the FEI’s difficulties as it is for the FEI to establish the burden of proof that a violation of the rules occurred. For example the report mentions that “a definitive cause of death is difficult to establish in this case”. The substance injected (cartrophen) is also not even a prohibited substance (neither a Banned Substance nor a Controlled Medication).

Extracts of the post mortem report:

“Despite extensive gross post mortem and histological examination of tissues, a definitive cause of death is difficult to establish in this case.” (...)

“Given the clinical history of injected medication immediately prior to collapse of the horse and the absence of other significant pathological findings, an anaphylactic reaction is considered a possible cause of death in this case, although it is difficult to definitively confirm.” (...)

“Given the absence of specific pathological changes it is difficult to completely exclude other possible causes of sudden death such as a fatal cardiac arrhythmia.”

Therefore, given the fact that the FEI had no evidence on the cause of death of the horse and could not establish any link between the injection and the death of the horse, the FEI had no other choice but to drop the disciplinary case. But this is a matter for the FEI Legal Department to decide, not the Ground Jury. The FEI Legal Department is responsible to prosecute cases in front of the FEI Tribunal or Court of Arbitration for Sport, but it is also the duty of the FEI Legal Department to do so based on evidence.

The FEI Legal Department had not informed the FEI Officials involved in the Blenheim incident that the case was dropped (for the horse abuse charge), and they should have. The matter has been addressed and the FEI HQ should keep the relevant FEI officials informed on any FEI’s relevant decisions. The FEI asks the FEI Officials to report any incident and we rely on FEI Officials to do so, and it is therefore indeed important to ensure that the Officials are aware of the outcome.

There was no public statement about the Blenheim incident as there were “only” a violation of the FEI Veterinary Regulations (and the FEI HQ deals with a lot of such violations and the FEI HQ does not do any media statement or press release about such violations). It is to be noted that the Ground Jury is primarily responsible for issuing all sanctions listed in Annex VI of the FEI Veterinary Regulations. It is meant to be more “administrative sanctions” for veterinary irregularities (vaccination, passport, veterinary medication and supportive therapy, and other irregularities). As the FEI did not impose additional disciplinary sanctions, there was no reason to communicate about the matter. The FEI also did not receive any media query on the matter.

Payment of Officials

CN stated that the rules specify that Officials cannot make any financial contribution to an event in exchange for an appointment. However, it is acceptable for them to pay their own travel expenses and/or accommodation.

- AMT stated this rule means organisers are inclined to only invite Officials that are able to pay their own travel and accommodation expenses.
- Stuart Buntine (SB) and Martyn Johnson stated they feel Officials should be paid, and currently this is a grey area.
- Marcin Konarski (MK) felt this would make it too expensive to run competitions, given the costs of the XC this is a different sport from SJ and dressage.
- SB asked for clearer direction to be provided, following a period of consultation.
- Alec Lochore stated difficulties arise when BE will not allow national events to increase entry fees, which makes it hard if Officials wish to be paid as per all other disciplines.
- CN said the payment is being implemented step by step and will be mandatory next year.
- CN confirmed comments on this rule have already been received, and suggested proposals are put forward by NFs and other FEI stakeholders.
- CN advised proposals will need to be in by 1 July, and stakeholders will be advised.

Sue Stewart stated some Officials who have been invited and accepted positions, (sometimes as a “hangover” from Covid cancellations) have been cancelled when the question of payment comes up and been replaced by Officials who do not want to be paid.

Does this ensure a level playing field and there is a danger that only Officials who can afford to self-fund will take priority?

CN suggested further discussion on this topic takes place at the in-person meeting between the FEI and IEOC in June, however, ultimately it will be important to include all stakeholders (Organisers, Athletes, Officials) in this conversation.

5. Any Other Business

A number of questions were submitted and sent to the FEI in advance of the meeting. The questions, and responses given by CN after the meeting are provided below, along with any comments made during the meeting.

How do Level 3 Stewards attain Level 4 with the limited number of events available?

After the meeting CN provided the following information:

The following officiating experience has to be achieved prior to the application:

Have officiated as Chief Steward OR Assistant Chief Steward at five (5) different CCI4*/CCI5* Shows or CH2*/3*/4*/5*.

Number of CCI4/CCI5 Shows in 2023: 123 Shows (115 and 8)

Eventing has been managing the high level events for many years with 20x L3, now L4 – there has been no issues identified to date.

During the meeting

- DOC confirmed the FEI are looking at the number of events available.
- CN confirmed the FEI will review and revise anything that doesn't work next year

How do Level 4 Officials maintain their status with limited events available?

After the meeting CN provided the following information:

The amount of requirement for officiating at a certain level of competition in the 3 years' timeframe is very low, L4 Officials can officiate at any level of competitions to maintain their status, just as in the past years/decade.

Stewards: Have officiated as a Steward at least at four (4) international Events in **any** discipline, with at least **one (1) CCI** within the previous three years.

The exception on the level is for the evaluation for L4 Judges, TDs and CDs (happening at CCI4*+) – one in 3 year - and:

Judges: one CCI3 (for a total of officiating records: 6, incl. 1x long 7 in 3 years)

It is reminded that TDs have only **3xCCLs in 3 years**, incl. 1x long

CDs: 8xCCL4*as CD or Assist. CD and 4x CCLs at lower level as CD or Assist. CD **We are aware of the requirements and the course designer pathway will be reviewed at year end.**

FEI comment as referred to during the meeting 28 April:

Number of Eventing Events in 2023: 253 which is about 856 competitions (pre-olympic year)

Number of Events in 2022: 260 – which corresponds to 788 competitions (2019: 758 competitions)

It is reminded that 70% of International Eventing is run at CCI2/3*.

CCI5* and CHs are less than 1% of the sport

CCI4* is 17%

During the meeting

- DOC confirmed the FEI are looking at the number of events available.
- CN confirmed the FEI will review and revise anything that doesn't work next year

Rule 525.1 Dangerous Riding (defaulters.)

g) Continuing after 3 clear refusals, or fall, or any form of elimination.

When an athlete is eliminated because the hind quarters have not jumped the solid part of the obstacle, continuing on course without representing will incur elimination.

The athlete won't know this has happened, or then he would return and retake the fence.

Sanction of Recorded Warning seems to be incorrect and so most GJ's don't give any sanction leading to inconsistency.

After the meeting CN provided the following information:

This item is included in the overall discussion on the rules, and proposals on how to achieve more consistency in regard to judging such situations worldwide are welcome.

During the meeting

- DOC stated the rule allows plenty of discretion for the GJ, and if in doubt, there is no need to impose a sanction.

Concern re Category A riders and qualified 5* at the end of 2022 has been downgraded to Category C involving now having to do three 3*short before being able to compete 4* short again. The horse has already done four 4*long.

National rules allow competing at Advanced level even though this is the same as 4*short.

Having previously competed at twenty two 5*, and now with only one horse, it is going to be very difficult to get up to A or B Category, Could the increments for qualification be smaller, (especially bearing in mind the two non event pandemic years) rather than halve them thus putting more stress and ability to get competition runs for the horses?

Our sport is already seen as elitist and expensive and this rule makes it so much harder for riders to achieve their dreams!!

After the meeting CN provided the following information:

Please refer to the rules revision explanations after consultation with all stakeholders published in view to the GA 2022. The modification of the rules was based on the statistics and the general Risk management approach of recently of results.

During the meeting

- DOC stated this is an issue for riders rather than Officials. Active participation at the level is important, this is supported by the statistics. Riders do need to prove their competence after a gap, especially at 5*.

The following topics were raised from the floor during the meeting.

Level 4 Officials

Mike Etherington-Smith (MES) asked what is the purpose/reasoning behind the Level 4 list of Officials?

- DOC/CN confirmed this is to ensure harmonisation with other disciplines and the committee defined this after two years of investigation.
- AL/SB stated rider/owner expectations require a high level of competency, with more training throughout an Official's career, having officiated as President at Championships, 5*, OGs etc.
- It is not a rite of passage for horses or Officials to go from 3* to 5*
- The FEI looked at other sports.
- The TD situation is slightly different.
- DOC said there is no definition of the role of Assistant CD in the rules. This is being reviewed.
- Officials at the meeting suggested the previous criteria for I, O and C level lists could be considered for the new levels.
- MES stated that in four/five years time we could be short of Officials. Please review the process as the current criteria are not good enough. MES has already sent the FEI his thoughts on this, and will resend.
- AG asked is there a limit to the number of Officials required, and can we have a clearer pathway for Officials to reach level 4.
- DOC confirmed the criteria will be reviewed if needed and proposed solutions are welcome

Philip Surl (PS) is concerned that there is some inconsistency at all level of events leading to bad rider stats. Officials must be strong and act on what they see.

AS stated this very often makes you unpopular and therefore not invited again. However, it is part of our job to ensure standards are consistent.

It was pointed out that there is a rule allowing for an event to be downgraded, and this should be used even if it's unpopular. It is important that Officials are strong to ensure riders are properly prepared for the 5* level.

DOC stated this has been a problem for many years, there are already stats for horse and riders, trying to do the same for events. Use is being made of HFI ERQI and Equiratings to pinpoint if events are too easy. May have a way to track CDs/events by the end of the year.

AMT: TDs see XC before the GJ, which is too late for the GJ to make any changes. Some TDs/CDs may not always have enough knowledge/experience.

Martyn Johnson (MJ) suggested maybe the FEI could take more control of appointments to enable them to send in a specific TD if there's concern with an event. There could be a stipendiary TD to maintain standards, but this would inevitably increase costs.

MES asked, is anything being done to address the issue of why some Officials are under-used whilst others are over-used?

MES asked what feedback has there been on the proposed mandatory rotation of CDs? CN stated information will be coming out to all.

CN reiterated that all these topics are up for discussion.

MES stated the GA always passes any new rule.

AL encouraged everyone to contact their federations with questions or problems to take forward.

MK stated federations are not interested.

There was a general request for new people to be brought into the sport.

6. Meeting close

The meeting concluded at 18:15.



The Current State of Play

IEOC Presentation to the FEI

Lausanne

28th April 2023

Objectives of the IEOC

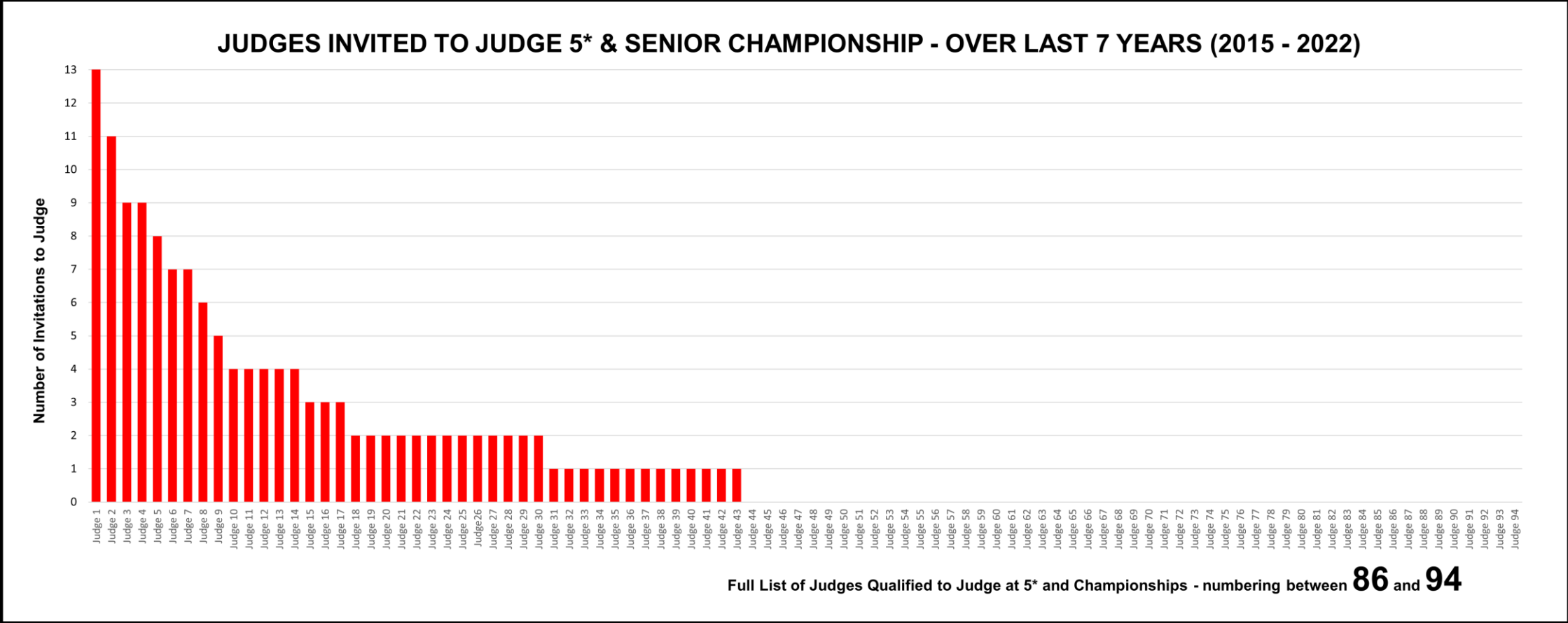


- To represent all voluntary Eventing officials – 590 active registered Members
- To work for the Sport's horse and human welfare
- To input on the Rules to ensure they are fit for purpose in protecting horses and people
- To ensure Rules are applied by officials who are knowledgeable, incisive, authoritative and impartial
- To ensure these officials are the best – trained, constantly assessed and complemented with new blood
- To support FEI officials and through them the FEI

The FEI's Brand and social license depends entirely on the quality of its officials

Concern among Eventing officials

- Since 2015, between 86 and 94 **JUDGES** have been qualified for 5* and Senior Championships
- This chart shows the invitations received by each of these **JUDGES**



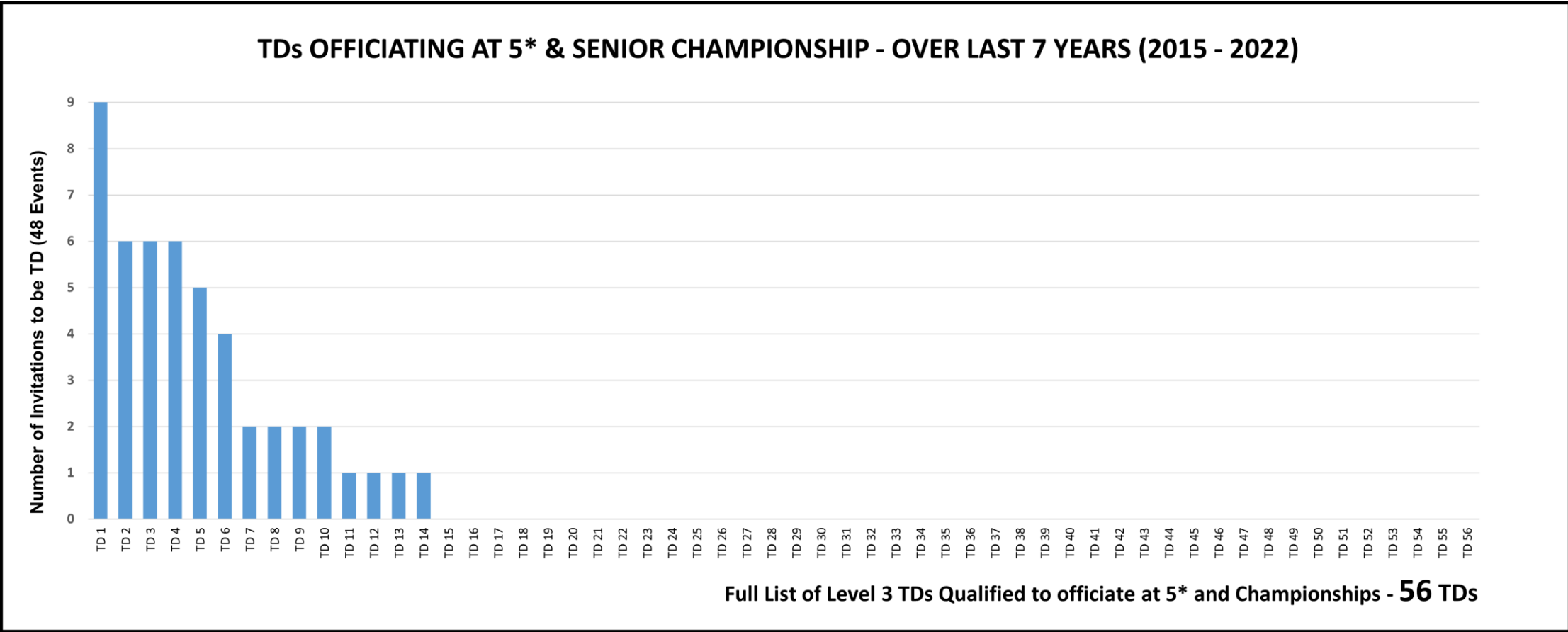
Judges – Over these 8 years:

- **50%** of ground jury places have been taken by **10%** of those qualified to judge
- **1 judge** has judged at **29%** of all these **top-level Events**
- **2 judges** between them have judged at **48%** of the **top-level Events**
- **3 judges** between them have judged at **72%** of all these **Events**
 - In three different years, **1 judge** judged **3** out of **7** top Events in each year
 - In one year, another judge judged **3** out of **7** top Events
 - In another year, **1 judge** judged **50%** of that year's top Events

54% of judges qualified to judge at top level never got invited once

Concern among Eventing officials

- Since 2015, 56 **TECHNICAL DELEGATES** have been qualified to officiate at 5* and Senior Championships
- The chart below shows the invitations received by each of these **TDs**



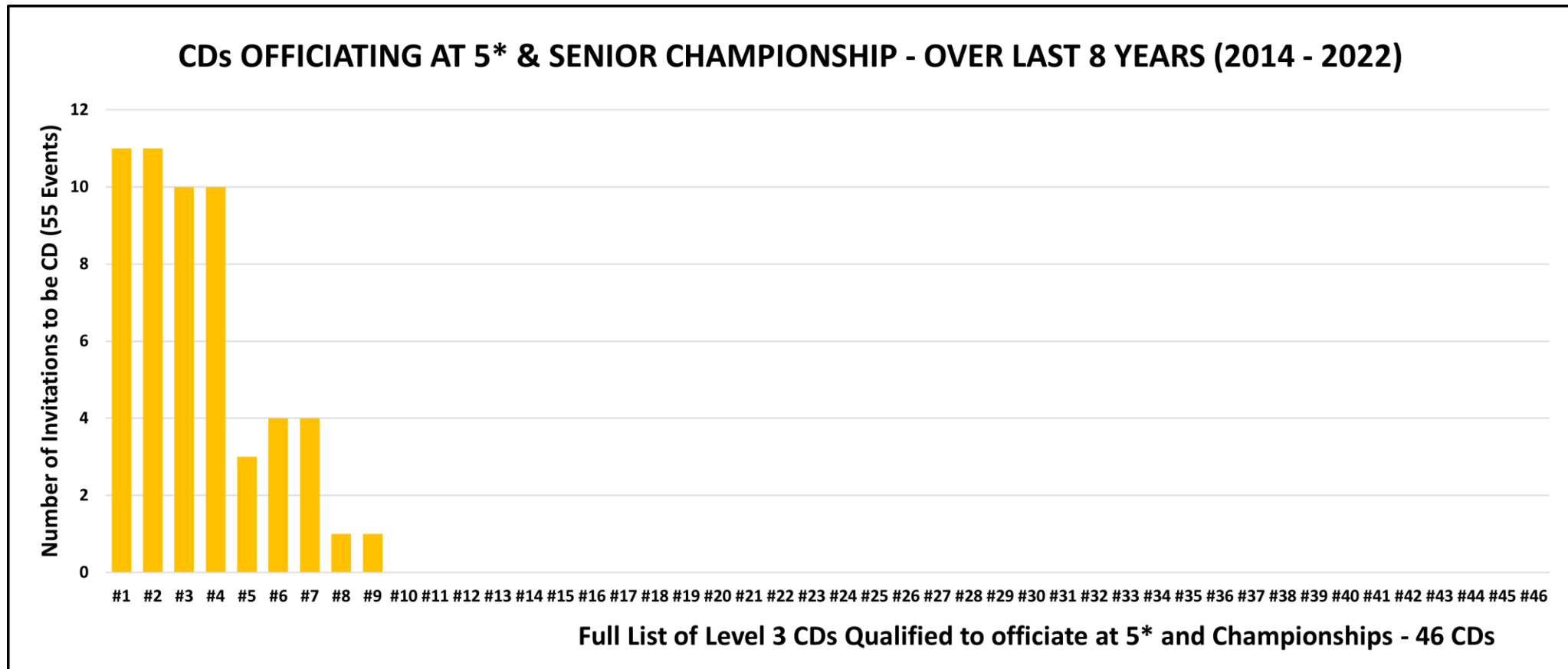
TDs – Over these 8 years:

- **14 TDs** (25%) of the **56** qualified Level 3 TDs officiated at all 48 Events
- **1 TD** officiated at **9** of the **48** top Events (more than one in 6 of the total)
- **56%** of all Events were TD-ed by **4 TDs** (so 7% of those qualified)
- **2 TDs** officiated in **3** out of **7** Events in the same year

75% of TDs qualified to officiate at top level never got appointed

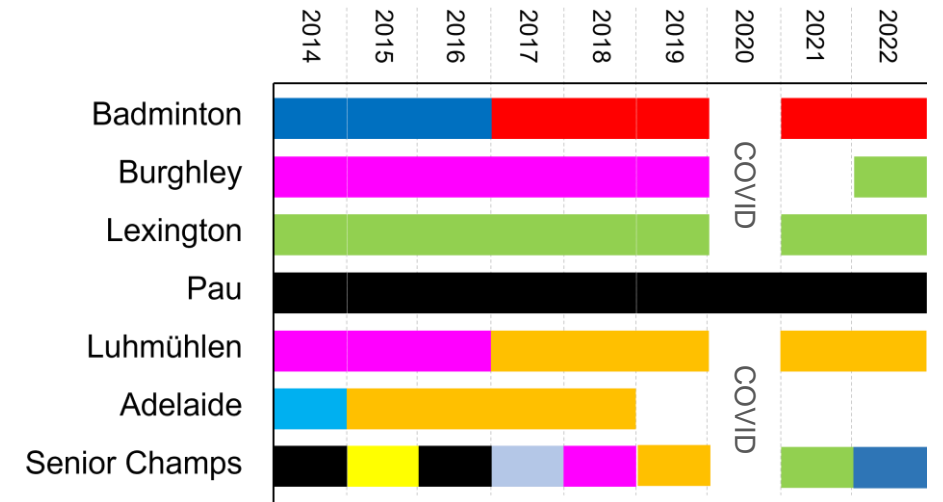
Concern among Eventing officials

- Since 2014, there have been 46 **COURSE DESIGNERS** qualified for 5* and Senior Championships
- The chart below shows the invitations received by each of these **CDs**



CDs – Over these 9 years:

- The tenure of **COURSE DESIGNERS** is 'sticky'
- The chart here shows the top 7 Events per year
 - Each colour represents a different **COURSE DESIGNER**
- Once a **CD** is appointed to an Event, they stay for years
- Rotation only occurs at Senior Championships (bottom row)



Observations:

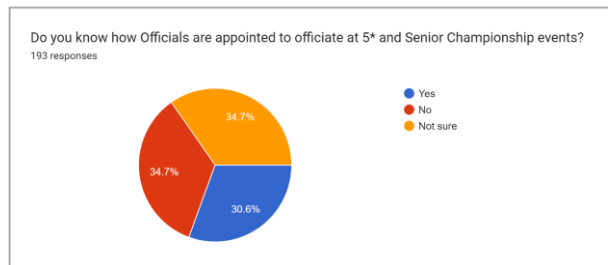
- The appointment of all Eventing officials is unarguably skewed – not even / or fair
- The majority of the qualified officials are never invited to officiate at the highest level – why?
- Is it because most of the qualified officials are not of a sufficient standard?
- Is there something lacking in the training / examination / accreditation system?
- Or are these biases caused by how officials are invited to officiate?

How are judges appointed?

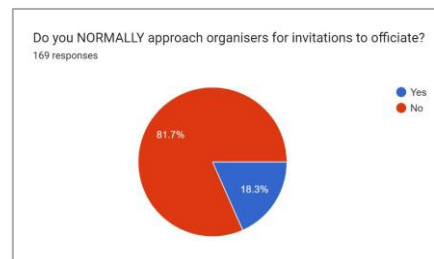
- 69.4% of officials 'Don't know' (34.7%) or are 'Not sure' (34.7%) how officials are appointed¹
- Judges are not meant to solicit for invitations
- Nearly 1 in 5 officials say they approach organizers for invitations²
- 46.2% offer themselves to organizers saying they're "already flying into the country" (= 'subsidization')³
- This means a number of judges have been appointed for convenience or financial reasons

Notes:

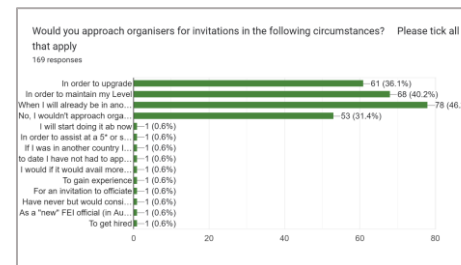
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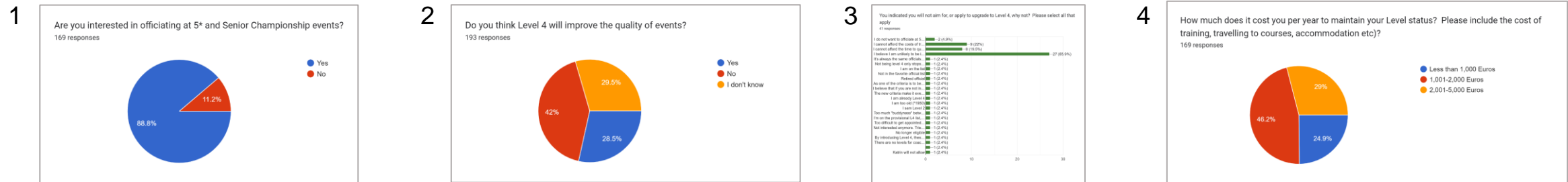
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Concern among Eventing officials

- 88.8% of all officials would like to officiate at 5* and Senior Championships – Level 4¹
- 42.0% of officials do not believe Level 4 will improve standards – 29.5% ‘Don’t know’ if it will (**71.5% contra**)²
- 25% of officials say they would not be applying for Level 4 (65.9% of these saying “they wouldn’t get invited”)³
- 29% of IEOC Members said maintaining their qualification cost them between €2,000 and €5,000 p.a. ⁴
- 46.2% of IEOC Members put the cost of maintaining their qualifications between €1,000 and €2,000 p.a. ⁴
- NB: Judges are volunteers and, in the main, are not paid (neither are many of the other officials)

Notes:



Level 4 will be an added expense with officials having limited chance of being appointed

The Application of FEI Rules

Application and consistency of FEI Sanctions

- Similar Rule infringements attract different (and sometimes no) sanctions:
 - Hats taken off: an Italian rider was sanctioned / while Michael Jung went unpunished
- When judges give sanctions, they are not always followed through:
 - For possession and use of a hypodermic needle at a competition: publicly, the rider has gone unpunished
- Officials do not feel supported by the FEI
 - Abuse of an FEI ground jurist: the case was passed off to the NF and the rider only fined nationally
- A reluctance to show consistency undermines the FEI's authority – risking welfare and social license

Application of the Rules should be overseen by the FEI and enforced universally

Disquiet among Eventing officials



Martin Plewa:

- The Sport's most eminent figure:
- Olympic GJ president, TD and FEI course director
- Disciplined by the FEI for offering an opinion in public



Riders and team officials

- Two criticized FEI officials in the press – another personally abused an official
- The FEI offers no support or back-up for its officials



Christian Landolt:

- One of the Sport's most eminent figures:
- Olympic GJ, championship president and FEI course director
- Resigned recently after the FEI failed to support him against rider abuse

Officials do not feel supported by the FEI

Summary

- The appointment of officials at 5* and Senior Championships is skewed – not even / or fair
- The same handful of officials are only ever invited to officiate at the top level
- Some judges waive fees / meet their own costs of flying to a country / even sponsor the event (*subsidization*)
- The majority of officials (who incur significant expenses to stay qualified) are never invited to officiate at 5*
- If standards of officials need raising, look first at the handful of officials who currently officiate everything
- Moving up the Levels is flawed – it requires constant assessment at Events, how if you're not invited...
- The FEI does not support and stand behind the officials who volunteer in its name
- Officials are barred from criticizing the Sport in public, but competitors / their entourages can criticize officials
- Eventing officials do not feel supported or appreciated by the FEI Eventing Department

Being an official is expensive, while the system is not transparent, equitable or supportive