International Carriage Drivers Association

COMMITTEE MEETING (online)

Minutes

Date : **March 21, 2023 (19:00 – 21:00 h.)**

Present

Four-in-hand horses	:	Boyd Exell (BE – president), Koos de Ronde (KdR), Glenn Geerts (GG) & René Poensgen (RP)
Pair horses	:	Jacob Arnold (JA) & Martin Hölle (MHö)
Single horses	:	Maria Henriksson (MHe), Kelly Houtappels-Bruder (KHB) & Bartlomej Kwiatek (BK)
Ponies	:	Rosanna Walters-Symons (RWS), Lea Schmidlin (LS) & Maria Buchwald (MB)
FEI Athletes Rep.	:	Franz Schiltz (FS)
Special Advisor	:	Hugh Scott-Barrett (HSB)
General Secretary	:	Marie de Ronde-Oudemans (MdRO - minutes)
Not present	:	Franck Grimonprez (FG)

Action

1. Welcome - Introduction of Committee Members

Boyd Exell, president of ICDA welcomes & introduces all committee members. Besides the committee members also are present ICDA's advisor Hugh Scott-Barrett & general secretary to the ICDA Marie de Ronde-Oudemans.

2. Current membership and action plan for growth

HSB prepared an overview of the ICDA members – per March 13, 2023 a total of 251 members & supporters. The goal for now is to obtain an MoU (Memorandum of understanding) with the FEI. In order to have an MoU signed, ICDA needs to have more members, especially active international athletes.
Actions to be taken:

- An ICDA flyer in packages for athletes at Kronenberg — HSB/MdRO
- Emails sent out by NFs
- Social media messaging from all Committee members — All
- Committee members: personal contact with athletes in their division

3. Open discussion on pressing issues by division

Singles

- **General**: The single division includes a lot of athletes, there is no experience of working group & it will take time to bring together singles.

- **Dressage test**: the general opinion is that the current test is a nice test, for both single horses and ponies – there is no urgent need for a new test although improvements could be made . This test has been designed by a number of top single athletes and tested before launch.

Pairs

- **Dressage test**: It is recognised that Pairs test cannot be changed again prior to World Championships. The current test (despite all changes) is a boring test, the changes are not positive, do not challenge the athletes and the test is still not attractive for spectators. In

conclusion a step backwards. A discussion on the approach to design and testing for all new dressage tests follows .

Four-in-hands

- **Heavy mobile obstacles / dislodgeable elements**
  HSB shares some statistics on the impact of the introduction of Heavy Mobile Obstacles and the clarification issued prior to the World Championships in Le Pin and Pratoni, from which it can be seen that there has been a material impact on the results:
  Single Championships
  - Kronenberg 2018: 7 knockdowns
  - Le Pin 2022: 39 knockdowns

  Four-in-hand Championships
  - Budapest 2021: 2 knockdowns
  - Pratoni 2022: 41 knockdowns

  A discussion followed in which a number of points were mentioned:
  - It seems there is more concern about the changes from pairs and four-in-hands than from singles. — Sports forum
  - (Heavy) Mobile obstacles are favoured by OCs on grounds of cost and flexibility.
  - The increase in the number of dislodgeable elements creates much increased challenges for officials.
  - Horse welfare is clearly paramount but if the future is to sure more dislodgeable elements then there should be minimum dimensions (3 x 2 meters) to ensure they are horse friendly

  Alternative solutions include:
  - A reduction in the penalty value of a dislodgeable element from 2 to 1 or even .5 of a penalty
  - A limit on the number of Heavy Mobile Obstacles in a Marathon
  - A limit on the number of dislodgeable elements at day 60
  - A reduction in penalties depending on the number of marathon obstacles

- **Prize money / travel allowance for the World Cup**
  This will be discussed separately between athletes and the FEI as it only applies to the top 10 qualifiers.

Ponies

- **Measurement of ponies**
  All committee members realize that driving has to 'follow' other disciplines. Solution could be that a measurement session is set up prior of / on the day of arrival of a world championship in order to keep the costs low for the athletes. MdRO will contact the Dutch NF if this is possible before Oirschot 2023. — Sports forum; MdRO

- **Team – change of format**
  As not all nations have pony four-in-hands and therefore cannot send a complete team to the World Championship, they are restricted in the potential of competitors. It would be good to change the format to allow nations without a complete team to send more individuals to a World Championship (f.e. 3 athletes per class). Committee members representting the ponies have agreed to work up a recommendation on a format which would boost entries for World Championships — Pony rep./ Sports forum

Para

- **Future / PR**
  - Everybody can enter – **mix** in this class from beginners to advanced.
  - The current **dressage** test is much better that the previous test, difficult for some.

- There are **two classes** - grade I & II, more grades would be better, but at the same time this means no classes will be left as the total of athletes is not increasing. More athletes needed in this -> public relations.
- **PR FEI**: The PR from the FEI lacks interest. After the previous 4 championships there was no news item on the FEI website on who won – this class deserves more recognition. FS shall address this within the FEI. FS

General / applicable for all divisions

- **Warming up / A-section**: Two issues.OCs have the option to choose between a warm up and Section A. This can mean that you come to a World Championship having only experienced Warm ups to be confronted with a Section A. Some greater consistency would be helpful.

- Secondly there remains real confusion both amongst officials and athletes on how rules are applied, as confirmed by recent competition in Live Oak when competitors were required to present ten minutes in advance for an additional inspection. Committee members would like to see reduction in complexity (as now happening with Cool Down). Sports forum

- **New scoring system**: To convert all scores from penalty points into seconds will make scores easier to understand. Changes to system will need to be taken as part of an overall discussion on the optimal weighting for each element
  - Dressage weight has not been changed since 1970 (160 points)
  - Marathon weight has been changed: 0.2 -> 0.25 points
  - Cones weight has been changed: 10 -> 5 -> 3 points

  Dressage will not be weighted the same (as 160 points will be converted to 100%). MdRO will do analysis on 3 major events in 2022. MdRO
  We should also consider weighing of marathon scoring, for example with 8 obstacles 0.25, 7 obstacles 0.3 and for 6 obstacles 0.35 penalty point per second in an obstacle.

- **Starting order dressage**: The current system is not fair (blocks A – F, there is perception that athletes have advantage in the last group). Several alternative have been discussed and decided all to be better than existing rules: Sports forum
  - Draw: all athletes
  - Draw: nations, followed draw by athletes (previous rules)
  - World ranking list – in blocks

- **Starting order marathon**:It is recognised that changing ground conditions can have an impact on outcomes .It is felt ,however that the previous system (running fully in reverse order) is fairer, as medal contenders encounter similar conditions. Sports forum

- **Dressage test – procedure**: Athletes have already discussed with the Chairman of the Technical Committee a standardised approach on the design of a new dressage test by 3 high ranked athletes and 2 judges. All divisions (ponies & horses) are facing the same challenges.For Horse Teams it is urgent. It is felt that a dressage test in general should have an 'expiry date': every 4 – 5 years a new test. FS informs the Committee that a decision is imminent. Sports forum FS

- **Passengers under 14**: Allow passengers / grooms under 14 during training with helmet & safety vest. Given safety issues this needs further discussion.

- **Helmets**: Helmets are for safety in cones but does not contribute to the authentic base of our sport. Athletes do not want it to be compulsory to wear helmets for dressage.

4. FEI Sports Forum 2023 – Kronenberg

The following subjects should be discussed at the FEI Sports Forum next month in Kronenberg:

- Dressage tests – procedure
- New scoring system
- Measurement ponies
- Starting order dressage / marathon
- Dislodgeable elements / heavy mobile obstacles
- Rule changes: less is more, change only because of safety or to improve / make the sport more attractive
- Warm up / cooldown

5. Next Meeting

Wednesday May 31, 2023 – 20:00 h (CET) – **ONLINE**
An invitation link will be sent prior to the meeting to each committee member.

Important dates:

- Full revision of the FEI Driving Rules – Decisions taken in 2025 for introduction in 2026 (every 4 years)
- FEI Sports Forum: April 11 – 12, 2023 (Kronenberg & online)

March 24, 2023 / MdRO