



International Mounted Games Association

22nd Annual General Meeting 2024

Minutes



**Roganstown Hotel, Swords, near Dublin, Ireland
November 16 and 17, 2024**



1. Introduction

Welcome by the Chairperson – Chris Wheeler

- Meeting convened Saturday, November 16, by Chris Wheeler at 8:30 a.m. (GMT)
- Chris hopes that all are well and thanks attendees for being here whether in person or remotely
- Guidelines for those online – voting online, voting once only

Participants in attendance as of 9:12AM GMT:

IMGA Officials:

Chris Wheeler	Chairperson	Present
Keith Martin	Vice Chairperson	Apologies
Jens Martin	Finance/Administration	Present
Eleanor Wheeler	Communication	Apologies
Andrea Piazza	Development	Remote
Mark Crowe	Chief Referee	Present

International Representatives (V – Voting member):

Jemima Gardiner (V)	Australia	Remote
Rachel Lechner (V)	Austria	Remote
Robin Donnay (V)	Belgium	Remote
Michelle Cruikshanks (V)	Canada	Present
Leo Liang (V)	China	Absent
Jens Holm Nielsen (V)	Denmark	Absent
Pete Walters (V)	England - for Elaine	Remote
Stéphane Tardif (V)	France	Remote
Volker Baasch (V)	Germany	Remote
Conor O’Leary (V)	Ireland	Present
Andrea Piazza (V)	Italy	Remote
Lizzy Franck (V)	Luxembourg	Absent
Sue Robertson (V)	New Zealand	Remote
Allister Hamilton (V)	Northern Ireland	Present
Stian Hennie (V)	Norway	Present
Ali Fawad Chadhary	Pakistan	Absent
Veronica Dodds(V)	Scotland	Present
Nick Sloane (V)	South Africa	Remote
Quentin Voeltzel (V)	Sweden	Present
Marino Kammeran (V)	Switzerland	Present
Quentin Gargallo	Switzerland	Present
Paul Greiling (V)	USA	Remote
Alun Whitney (V)	Wales	Remote

Guests

Bridget Scott	Scotland	Present
Warwick Slade	Australia	Remote
Thierry Constant	Belgium	Remote
Valentin	France	Remote

Ghislain Deslandes	France	Remote
Alex Wheeler	England	Remote
Jonathan Marion	France	Remote

Eligible Voting Representatives – 19

Schedule

- Outlined by Chairperson Chris to include two breaks and lunch with adjournment expected at roughly 18:00 GMT.

2. Looking Back at 2024

2.1 Review of IMGA's year – Presented by Chris Wheeler

Three new venues were featured this year - two in Italy as well as the FFE headquarters in Lamotte – all were excellent facilities! Thanks to the organisers of each IMGA Championship competition this year. Our thoughts go to those at Scuderia where a fire was experienced last month – Chris expresses the hope that recovery from this tragedy is going well.

Trot up

- The official procedure started at this year's Championship competitions; country to country differences were noted
 - Original thinking had been that attending vets would do their own trot-ups recognizing that they may have individual procedures
 - Louise produced video of trot up in Italy for later reference
- Some teams were immaculate in trot up; arenas well laid out with flower decoration and generally professional display
- Going forward, note the importance of all ponies being trotted up – please complete for all ponies competing
- Chief Referee Mark notes that trot up at Europeans was a challenge due to number of ponies
 - La Bonde trot up was a challenge due to mixed age groups and the lateness of the veterinarian due to medical emergencies
 - Chris – need a sensible schedule
- Additional suggestions for increasing ease and efficiency of trot ups:
 - Riders and ponies are readily visible in the warm-up ring; if we had a person to monitor the warm-up, it would be possible to see ponies not fit to proceed
 - Norway conducts trot up inside the warmup arena
 - Others have a skilled observer at the warmup arena to assess pony fitness to proceed
 - Chairperson Chris notes possibility of additional pony check in the warmup arena, with the vet and referee continuing in their roles of assessing pony welfare

- Upcoming agenda item is proposal for establishment of a Pony Welfare Commission so additional discussion of this matter by meeting participants is anticipated
- Chief Referee Mark notes that arrangements for competition veterinarians are different country to country - not always feasible to have the vet as the welfare officer

Action Item: Look into assigning an additional official at the warmup arena(s) to monitor and assess pony soundness and welfare.

Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer (WBGT) –

- Thanks to Conor and members of the Health and Safety Committee for instituting this measure which was very good and provided ‘in the moment information’ to guide weather-based decision-making.

Comments:

- Variability of temperatures over the course of the day was noted; temperatures below the 30°C limit at the start of a morning session tended to rise so the importance of prompt start times was emphasised
- Referees noted checking the WBGT on a frequent basis during the day; at Individuals, a break was easily facilitated due to there being fewer riders; referee encouraged riders to individually indicate need for a break and/or pause at the misting station.
- This kind of information allows organisers and participants to effectively respond to e.g. federation observers or members of the public questioning measures taken to protect ponies and riders during extreme temperatures

Assistant Referee Course -

- Chairperson Chris requests that International Representatives encourage people planning to act as Assistant Referee to get their qualifications successfully completed and submitted well in advance of competitions - certainly earlier than the night ahead of the competition
 - In general, Chris is seeing a higher level of knowledge but “wonders somewhat if the flags are going up at every instance of infractions”
 - Continue to push the need for qualifications as we go forward - emphasis is on knowledgeable assistant refereeing

Breathalyser Update -

- Chris reports that testing of riders, officials and referees went well and included important testing on the practice days
 - Assertion by one rep that three riders under the influence registered zero on testing, not at WTC; need to have testing all day rather than just in the morning
 - Chris confirms that breathalyser testing is available all day – and certainly at the Referee’s discretion; no one has approached him or Mark as the Referee with concerns

- Some discussion occurred regarding the desirability of confirming identification of those taking breathalyser test e.g. relatively unknown persons are being tested as assistant referees; should we request photo ID card?
- Concluding comment that our sport is really improved by this measure reflecting our diligence and attention to safety

Action Item: Chris – consider further refinements to the breathalyser testing process so that identification is confirmed.

Hat bands –

- Riders to be requested to bring hat bands of white and black that fit and meet requirements
 - At WPC, hat silks (helmet covers) handed out matched the multi-colouring of hat bands being used by pairs - much time sorting out to ensure visibility at finish line; suggestion made that this probably needs to be added to the rules

Action Item: Rules Committee to consider this matter and follow up.

Bitless Bridles –

- Update - About a year ago, Chairperson Chris was approached by several people keen for the introduction of bitless bridles as allowed tack; he would like to go ahead but has little data and evidence on which to go forward.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Suggestion made that those interested in using a bitless bridle could go through a safety check
 - knowledge of fitting and how to use is crucial for riders and tack check personnel
 - riders need proper training to ensure that they are using properly as these can be severe if not properly adjusted
- Re: evidence and data – the French Federation provided a lengthy document containing examples and benefits which was too late for submission to AGM agenda
 - Observed that France already has this rule (bitless bridles permitted) which is working very well and has not generated problems
 - Bitless now successfully used in cross-country and show jumping
- Rules Committee Chair Jens notes that Rules committee has received inquiries over the years but has never wholly adopted bitless bridles as permitted tack
- Noted that appeals for information from the World Bitless Bridle Association have not yielded enough consistent information to go forward with the recommendation
 - Likewise, that 'bit' associations may be expected to provide similar response about the variability of bit action
 - There are many versions of bitless bridle – need more information for best suited to mounted games

- Need to decide what the guidelines are going to be and provide clarity in the rules
 - Consider a letter of recommendation from the home country attesting to the rider's competence with bitless as an idea
- Chief Referee Mark relates that Margaret W. (NZ) faced significant challenges in seeking recommendations for a specific type of bitless bridle to suit our purposes
 - Generally unsatisfactory responses from the Bitless Association; Chairperson Chris is impressed with the fact that the French have made suggestions and recommendations
 - Reference person suggested: Alize Froment – French expert on bitless
- Opinion expressed that alignment and clarity needs improvement between the rulebook's permitted bits provisions and those listed in the supplementary tack and biting reference pages
- Chairperson Chris – closing comment re: bitless-
 - Shares myth of Phaeton who drives the sun across the sky entering into an argument with Helios who asserted that Phaeton couldn't control the horses; Zeus needed to intervene to strike down the out-of-control Phaeton and his horses from the sky. Need to control those horses!

Action Item: Margaret W. (NZ) - to consolidate rulebook and supplemental page of bits to ensure consistency; any persons having data and evidence regarding bitless bridles to please forward to Margaret.

Cups – Trophies -

- Chairperson Chris notes that approximately thirty cups and trophies are in circulation and summarizes the size of the task in keeping them current, engraved, repaired, safely transported to the next year's competition:

Action Item: Country Representatives to ensure that their organization contacts the winning rider/pair/team such that the trophy/cup is returned, engraved, and in good repair onward to the next competition.

Comment/Suggestions/Questions:

- promote renewed knowledge of the meaning of the cups and trophies

Action Item: Communication Officer - to initiate a means to promoting the cups e.g. social media interviews with cup originators and/or winners for the current year, etc. Additionally, while the website is the current storage place for the information about each cup, which is good, an up-to-date list of who currently has what cup would be highly useful.

Worldwide Games –

- Mats – Germany – no update report – it is happening in the background as the technology is being worked on
- Chairperson Chris is keen to get this activity going as soon as possible - comment made that some form of this idea could go ahead even if imperfect to begin with – make improvements over time

Action Item: Chris will work to move the general concept forward to implementation, while technology is being developed by others; initial goal of holding Worldwide Games three times a year.

Camera Systems-

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Questions, comments and responses revolved around the suitability of the current eight camera system
 - Observation made that the delays in completing video reviews are based on difficulty cueing up multiple camera angles, etc, with this relatively old equipment which is not user-friendly
 - Advantages and disadvantages of iPads briefly discussed including difficulty synchronizing multiple views – needs exact timing
 - Superiority of camera systems purchased and used by Italy for WTC and WIC was noted – user friendly, easily synchronized
 - Further discussion expected re: Proposals 4.16 and 4.18 on Sunday's agenda

Tack check -

Chefs d'équipe –

- International Reps to please remind their country organizations (and chefs d'équipe) that the Chef d'équipe has responsibilities i.e. not just a name on a form
 - Significantly, the Chef d'équipe needs to maintain ongoing communication with riders to ensure that all is going well
 - Suggestion made to communicate Chef d'équipe duties as part of the early information for each competition

Action Item: Chris – reiterate and publicise duties and tasks of the Chef d'équipe.

Newsletter –

- International representatives not consistently passing on information to country organizations and membership – please ensure that you do so
- At competitions, suggestion made to post information on the notice board, an actual whiteboard or blackboard at a conspicuous location on site

Unexpected volunteers –

- Thanks to those who just turn up and offer their help who may not have signed up in advance, e.g. at the trot up, sorting the lines, breathalyser testing – to relate a few of the many tasks completed by ‘unexpected volunteers’
 - Scoring, tack check, cameras, commentary box – a personal thank you from Chris for all that you do
 - At World Pairs, Quentin (SWE) got together an informal gathering for former Chief Referee Davy. Although sad, this was a nice and meaningful occasion

2.2 Rules Committee Report

Presented by Jens Martin

Summary of activities during year to date-

- Busy year on Rules Committee
 - Five (5) rule change requests have been accepted for next year
 - Updates to helmet standards have been completed to bring them up to modern standards
 - Appeals process rules have been revamped to align with common practice; original rules were perhaps not ever entirely fully implemented ever
 - Streamlined to be simpler and reflect what has actually happened in recent years
 - Much interest expressed in creating new games –
 - Ball Swap is a new individual game
 - Hug-A-Mug has been added as an individual game
 - Mug Changes has been added as an Individual, Pairs and Team game on a trial basis for the coming season
 - ‘Genuine attempt’ is an ongoing and difficult issue for which discussion and a solution are still ongoing at the Committee level
 - Note that Facebook discussion between prominent riders has been taken into consideration; in one way or another, the question of ‘Genuine Attempt’ will be resolved
 - Check the website for the ‘still pending’ items on the Rules Committee’s agenda

Rule Book sales –

- Estimates for 2024 printout of Rulebooks were accurate – only two left at the end of the year

Status of Rule Book for 2025 –

- At this time of the year, an assessment is typically taken to see if changes are worthy of a new edition; likely to proceed with new 2025 rulebook due to the number and nature of the rule changes for next year
 - Change in administration of the rulebook – printing and shipping being taken on from England coordinated by Chairperson Chris with end product expected to be the same

- Q.: Chief Referee Mark seeks clarification re: duties/taxes being added. A: expect that there may be changes
- February is likely the startup of Rulebook shop
- Likely to print 250 copies @ £4.52 or 300 copies @ £4.35 – goal is to keep the cost at about £5
- Chris can transport copies with him to Europeans
- China has printed their own mounted games rulebook in Mandarin and English

Rules Committee Election-

- Later item on the agenda

Communication to Rules Committee-

- Chief Referee Mark – based on rider comments, last year's short arena Windsor Castle was felt to be less challenging i.e. turning around the cone for orb put-on is too easy compared to straight approach
- Online feedback system to Rules Committee – current system isn't generating much comment

Action Item: Conduct a publicity drive regarding the rule change request process – still maintaining the set list of who may submit a request – International Representatives and Referees – remind membership that they may contact the Committee with questions and ideas.

Additional Discussion/Comments:

- Instagram and Facebook are platforms that riders access rather than website
- Suggestion made to increase publicity whether by Facebook discussion page or another commonly used platform
- Opinion expressed that we need to consider carefully our rules and how they're presented and acted upon. This impacts the spectator image of our sport – complexity of and time used to resolve infractions takes away from the sport
 - History review of founding Chief Referee Peter Dale's approach which included post-session review of infractions
 - Camera reviews take time so we should be able to allow races to continue while review is taking place – Lamotte as an example of that process
- Extensive discussion about role of camera – “to disprove an Assistant Referee, not prove them”

Refer to items 4.16 and 4.18 – These proposals are expected to generate additional discussion

2.3 Financial Report

Presented by Jens Martin

Refer to Annex 2.3 for accounts

Current financial situation November 2024 –

- Balance sheets show income and expenditure almost exclusively based on rider fees balanced against referee expense reimbursement – the system is now fully operational
- System for prediction of expenses had only 7% margin of error so fairly accurate
- This year there was quite a lot of activity – income and expenditure amounts were expanded; we experienced a marginal loss so no tax to be paid for 2024
- Rulebook as an income-generating item – negligible
- Two competitions have outstanding payments due to finish out the year
- Question: What is the difference between the event levy and the amount paid to officials? Answer: Estimation of referee travel expenses informs rider fee to be paid for each competition in order to reimburse

Action Item: Jens to distribute information relative to this matter.

Setting of Affiliation Fee for 2025 –

- Affiliation fees have remained stable for the past ten years and seem to be just about right – balanced income and expenditure. In the event that decisions made during the AGM impact expenditure, then a reconsideration of the affiliation fee may be necessary
- Affiliation fee is currently £315 per year with discounts/penalties based on a country's membership status

Finance and Administration Officer Jens put forward a motion to accept the financial reports as presented: “Yes, or no?”

Voting representatives: 16 (technical difficulties for three (3) representatives subsequently resolved)

Voting results:

Yes - 100% No – 0%

The motion is passed.

Finance and Administration Officer Jens put forward a motion to approve the affiliation fee at £315 for 2025. “Yes, or no?”

Voting representatives: 15 (+ 2 – “yes” manually)

Voting results:

Yes - 100% No – 0%

The motion is passed. The Affiliation fee for 2025 is £315.

2.4 Other reports from IMGA Officials

- Vice Chairperson (Keith Martin) -
 - As presented by Chris Wheeler: On behalf of IMGA, Chris expresses an official “Thank you!” to Keith who has done a wonderful job for many years both behind the scenes and at the helm of IMGA.
 - Keith was the first elected Chairperson of IMGA at its origins, returning to the role on the passing of Chairperson Nikki. He once again took on the role of Vice-Chairperson, supporting Chris in his transition as the next Chair
 - We will get together an appropriate presentation to him in the next while
 - Keith will continue to maintain the website
 - From Jens: Keith has been the Chair or Vice-Chair for twenty-one years, has thoroughly enjoyed his time, and has been so supportive to Jens in his involvement over many years. Keith is now feeling that it is time to move on to other life adventures.

- Chief Referee (Mark Crowe) -
 - Completing first year as IMGA Chief Referee – December 2023 Nations, WTC, WIC and WPC
 - Do need to continue working on the consistency of starts which is a later discussion item
 - Most other items are included in his competition reports so are not summarized in detail

- Communications Officer (Eleanor Wheeler) -
 - Feels that additional skills to those she possesses would be of benefit to completing the responsibilities of this role
 - Lizzy (LUX) will continue as Communication Officer (acclaimed)
 - Many thanks to Eleanor for having taken this position on in an interim capacity and for so ably completing all tasks and responsibilities during the past two years

- Development Officer (Andrea Piazza) -
 - With commitments to organizing Italy’s hosting of WTC, didn’t develop exactly what he had planned as Development Officer but going forward, continues to hold as a major goal, ideas for promoting and building the sport with the younger riders
 - Andrea will present these at the next International Representatives’ meeting; Chris offers to help with any of his ideas
 - Chairperson Chris has been busy talking about Mounted Games possibilities with Pakistan – also, much discussion about cricket
 - Karen from Norway went to Pakistan to conduct practical and classroom sessions

- Pakistan participants are very enthused and are looking forward to doing more with games
- The question becomes how do we get people in to do more training?
- Suggestions from meeting attendees included:
 - Post coaching and training opportunities from interested countries on IMGA social media
 - Consider that if aware of possibilities, there are trainers keen for a 'working vacation'
 - Send out information via International Representatives to country organizations/committees for them to publicize opportunities
- Additional new country discussions underway with Chairperson Chris:
 - Finland – Frida who is Swedish but lives in Helsinki, went to do training in Finland; with WTC in Norway 2026, there is good impetus for neighbouring countries to become involved
 - Nigeria – Ali is keen to start a mounted games club on a golf course – local politics of terrorist groups are interfering with progress
 - Mexico is still going with mounted games – Jésus is continuing, and Paul (USA) and Chris are in discussion about supporting role for the USA in Mexico's mounted games development
 - Czech Republic is still Alzbeta – still going on; would be great to invite some of her riders to participate in a competition
 - Spain – no replies from Judith at all for some time
- Chris receives communication from some of these new countries which are each making their small and large steps
- General agreement on publicizing opportunities for travel to coach and train, and also for volunteer families in existing countries who would take in visiting riders

Action Item: International Representatives to send ideas to Chris for getting trainers in to those developing countries.

Action Item: Chris via Communication Officer - publicize the opportunities for billets on home fronts and for trainers to travel.

2.5 Reports on 2023/24 Championships (See Annex 2.5 – page 46 - for full reports)

- Nations Team Championships (2023) – Mark Crowe
 - Fantastic venue and facility – Many thanks to Nick, Tanya, and their organizing committee for a great competition, pool ponies, and wonderful atmosphere.
- World Team Championships – Mark Crowe
 - Venue was fantastic
 - Pool pony organization and cost were areas of concern
 - Pony selection needed to have followed IMGA's procedure

- Costs not clear in advance and in many cases, well above the typical amounts paid; not fair to participants who need to plan well in advance
 - Communication needed improvement in timeliness – one team unable to attend due to travelling visa timelines
 - Overall, a great competition, and the Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer kept temperature and humidity measures at the forefront
 - More than one country echoes that it was hard for their riders to plan for and deal with costs; Good competition but riders needed more information
- World Individual Championships – Mark Crowe
 - Additional comments from Mark – Scuderia was a really good venue
 - Similar small recommendations as for WTC regarding need for adherence to protocols e.g.:
 - Riders needed to appeal to the Referee, not scorers
 - IMGGA system for tied points was not honoured
 - Interference by Italian official was not acceptable
 - Second arena – did not run tie-breaks and an Italian federation rep. overruled an IMGGA Referee (who should have stood their ground)
 - No preparation for livestreaming
 - Overall, a fantastic experience
 - Suggestion made by Alun that a checkbox document be available in the scorer's box to help following procedures that are common but not always well-known by organisers' federations and staff e.g. tie-break
 - MG Scoreboard – additional support with pre-event preparation needed so that all systems are functional and all operators familiar with inputting, etc.
 - Need breakdown of IMGGA scores for all heats

Action Item: Mark – develop a reference card of common, important IMGGA procedures relevant for score box personnel.

- World Pairs Championships – Mark Crowe
 - Improvements over the years have resulted in a fantastic venue
 - Trot ups could have been better scheduled
 - Chris notes that Welcome ceremony with foods contributed by each nation was great and resulted in the mixing of all the teams from the outset – La Bonde organisers' idea – fabulous
- European Teams and Individual Championships – Alun Whitney
 - Often opposition between IMGGA and Federation approaches
 - Mark – discussion re: extra referees – additional refs were there with the view to conducting video review, etc. there was also anticipated to be a need due to anticipation of more riders than actually turned out
 - Similar process for Italy and France re: advance discussion about additional referees and their expected roles i.e. shadowing, conducting video review, or line judging for finals, or refereeing

- Chairperson Chris notes that he did not see the background issues as impacting the riders and the competition at all – the referees, both new and veteran, were well-experienced and did a good job
- Jonathan (FRA) relates that dinner for €25 was a good way to go for the gala and should be considered for future galas so that all are able to attend.
- General agreement by those in attendance at the competition that the gala dinner was amazing and the venue, spectacular; noted the huge effort by the organizers and the federation to put on this major competition

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- In general, the proposal to provide oversight to competition planning has been suggested with the idea that more frequent and deeper pre-implementation checks and confirmations would be beneficial to organisers and yield improved results
 - One country specifically expresses agreement with concept of more review for hosts, having found it helpful when they were hosting
- Chief Referee Mark – re: WTC – Italy looked into and invested in up-to-date camera systems which proved to be much more effective at video review
 - Both Italian referees were very knowledgeable about the system which helped immensely
 - The existing IMGGA camera system is not intuitive and takes much effort to learn and to find specific race locations for review

2.6 IMGGA Sub-Committees

Compliance (Keith Martin)

- Jens will take on Chair role for the Compliance Committee which exists to deal with any compliance issues but for which the major task is conducting the compliance check in even years
 - Note that at the 2023 AGM suggestions were sought from the larger countries' mounted games organizations who were expressing difficulty completing their compliance check in a timely manner. No suggestions received as of 2024 AGM
 - The Committee is down in numbers – Jens is seeking help so please let him know of your interest
 - Michelle volunteers

Health, Safety and Risk Management (Conor O'Leary)

- Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer – use of this temperature, humidity, and sunlight measurement tool, and accompanying index for threshold of activity modification, was successful
 - There was a request for review of the threshold temperature i.e. whether it should be lower than the existing 30°
 - The model of WBGT selected and used was very satisfactory

- Ideas and suggestions – send through the contact to the committee

Strategic Planning (Chris Wheeler)

- Re: Competition Calendar Year - spent a significant amount of time speaking with schools regarding ideal times for release of students e.g. spring or fall, to participate in a bona fide sporting event (with, ideally, a letter of support from the International Representative or official of the country's Mounted Games board/committee)
- Note that Quentin has moved away from the hot summer months for next year's WIC to be held in May.
 - Suggestion made to develop a yearly calendar for countries to indicate their school terms and major exam periods

Action Item: Chris – request of each member country to indicate their major exams, terms, term holidays with a view to creating an overall calendar for reference by all involved in major competitions

Livestreaming – Chris –

- In general, there is agreement that this needs to improve and that the technology exists – several challenges are noted re: use of drones, etc.:
 - Football, basketball, etc. have a specific point of action which is not the case for mounted games where simultaneous action occurs in multiple locations
 - Go pro cameras would require feeds from multiple operators leading to a high level of video production complexity
- Discussions and problem-solving are ongoing; ideas to the technology committee continue to be encouraged

Veterans Division - Chris

- Strong interest in a number of countries for development of a separate Over35 (or Over40 or Veterans') competition so as not to conflict with pony procurement for existing major competitions
- A number of individuals are working on it and Ireland plans a "Veterans" division for Europeans 2025
- Needs to be financially viable and would involve pool ponies – ideas are being generated

Action Item: International Representatives – share with country organizations and direct inquiries and suggestions to Chris who is coordinating discussion by interested parties.

Arenas in the face of Climate Change - Chris

- In La Bonde there was excellent groupwork to salvage and cope with downpours
- Looking to the future, there is a tendency toward using all-weather sand surfaces, generally yielding surfaces rather than dry hard-packed or muddy

surfaces. Have we come to the stage of all-weather surfaces as the only acceptable competition arenas?

- Noted by several that whatever fields are used, whether grass or all-weather surface, they need to be specifically prepared for sport i.e. adequate base material and sub-surface drainage system, suitable surface material, and irrigation etc.,
- Observed by several that we cannot specifically rule out grass arenas since surfaces can vary – some excellent, well-drained, grass-on-sand arenas exist, and some countries don't have an option for sand arenas e.g. New Zealand, Australia

Technology (Jens Martin)

- Previous MG Scoreboard developments outlined and transition from previous system reviewed - expectation going forward is that MG Scoreboard is our means of scoring and draws, noting that there is a proposal later in the agenda for a return to a 'manually', results-based seeded system for determining heats

Training and Qualification (Mark Crowe)

- **Assistant Referees and Referees** - Committee maintains and updates lists of qualified people
 - There are 944 Assistant Referees on the list
 - Thirty-four (34) will be lost from the list due to need to re-qualify (after three years)
 - There are 161 full Referees - 11 four-star, 18 three-star, and 33 two-star
 - A limited number of provisional one-star Referees were removed due to inactivity
 - Note process for qualification online – start with the Website
 - Additional countries are interested in doing in-person Assistant Referee and Referee Qualification sessions –
 - Much to be gained from discussion, video analysis, and scenarios considered through in-person training
 - Country liaisons for Training and Qualification continue to be active resource

Action Item: Mark will email as soon as possible the Assistant Referees who are coming off the list – alternatively, Mark will send through to the International Representatives the list of their country's AR's needing recertification.

- **Country training of coaches** - was a project undertaken through the Training and Qualification committee with some progress
 - This project would benefit from renewed activity and focus on further developing and implementing a standardized coach training program
 - Mark would be happy to stand down from the Training and Qualification Committee, to allow for selection of another chair to lead the group

Sponsorship and Promotions – Chris

- This is an item that has come up each year for the past several: the Sub-Committee needs a Chair
- Some discussion occurs regarding the keeping or dismantling of this committee based on long-term inactivity
- Quentin (SWE) accepts the role of Chairperson of the Sponsorship and Promotions Committee with thanks from the Chair and meeting attendees
 - Quentin has experience in this area, a number of committee candidates in mind, and ideas with which to begin the work of the committee.
- Andrea (Country Development Officer) views this committee as very compatible with the Development Committee
- Andrea suggests Andrea Farinetti (ITA) as a strong candidate to consider for the committee

Action Item: Quentin to gather additional committee members to begin the work of the Sponsorship and Promotions Committee.

3. Looking Forward to 2025 and Beyond –

Chairperson’s Comments - Chris Wheeler –

Music at competitions –

- Ensure that playlists are ‘clean’, please i.e. free of offensive language or content

Camera help –

- Ensure assigned, knowledgeable people in sufficient number for the duration

Early Information –

- Ensure that this is a priority so that riders in their home countries can plan, generate their appropriate travel visa’s, etc.
 - Should not be the case that a country withdraws due to insufficient lead time for visa applications and processing

Nationalities’ apertifs –

- Well done as welcome gesture

Chairperson to attend each of the competitions?

- Finance and Administration Officer Jens – not a requirement constitutionally
- An official of IMGA is required to attend e.g. Jens at Nations 2023 in South Africa
- Shared sentiment by several that there be a requirement for attending Chairperson or IMGA Official to be properly accommodated e.g. not two-person tent in a field

3.1 Election of IMGA Officials for the next two year period

- **Vice Chairperson**

Candidates as of November 16, 2024 8:30 (GMT):

Quentin Voeltzel (Sweden)

Supported by Jens Holm Nielsen (Denmark)

- Question for the candidate: If elected, how do you feel about the perception of a conflict of interest between your involvement with IMGA and with STRUK?

Answer: Quentin does not see reasons to create a perception of conflict of interest: He maintains friendship and the organization of competitions which he previously coordinated - these predated STRUK.

Margaret Welsby (New Zealand)

Supported by Sue Robertson (New Zealand)

Voting Representatives: 18

Voting Results:

Quentin - 83 % Margaret - 17 %

Quentin Voeltzel (SWE) is elected to the position of Vice-Chairperson IMGA for the period November 16, 2024, to November 21, 2026. Thank you to Margaret for her candidature and for her continued role as a tack expert reference.

Quentin is so pleased that there are so many great people who are supporting and furthering the sport.

- **Officer for Finance and Administration**

Candidate:

Jens Martin (Luxembourg) - acclaimed

Supported by Michelle Cruikshanks (Canada)

Jens continues in the role of Finance and Administration, with thanks.

- **Communication Officer**

Candidate:

Lizzy Frank (Luxembourg) - acclaimed

Supported by Allister Hamilton (Northern Ireland)

Looking forward to Lizzy's talents and skills which include multilingualism. Many thanks to Eleanor Wheeler for having taken on this role.

3.2 Selection of referees for 2025 IMGA sanctioned competitions

Refer to Annex for 3.2 for the list of candidates.

- International Representatives with voting privileges, please send votes to Finance and Administration Officer Jens by 23:29p.m. (GMT) on Saturday, November 16, 2024.
- Jens has received responses from five countries as of 12:36 (GMT).

3.3 Election of Rules Committee members

Rules Committee members to be elected for the next two years

There are six places available on the Rules Committee.

Refer to Annex 3.3

- **Candidates:**

Jens Martin supported by Lizzy Frank (Luxembourg)

Margaret Welsby supported by Sue Robertson (New Zealand)

Alun Whitney supported by Michelle Cruikshanks (Canada)

Luigi Irollo supported by Alun Whitney (Wales)

Bridget Scott supported by Veronica Dodds (Scotland)

Mark Crowe supported by Conor O'Leary (Ireland)

Warwick Slade supported by Jemima Gardiner (Australia)

Voting representatives – 18

Voting Results - 15:35 (GMT) - The following are elected to the Rules Committee effective November 16, 2024, to November 21, 2026:

- Mark Crowe
- Luigi Irollo
- Jens Martin
- Bridget Scott
- Warwick Slade
- Margaret Welsby

3.4 IMGA sanctioned championships for 2025 - UPDATES

IMGA World Team Championships (Ghlin, Belgium)

Note change of presentation date: Sean Bource to present on Sunday at 10:45 a.m. (GMT)

- Belgium is looking forward to hosting the WTC 11 – 17 August 2025
 - Non-European riders have provision for an early arrival
- Schedule includes teams' arrival Monday, through competition conclusion Saturday and departure Sunday, August 17

- Venue is a racecourse with significant established infrastructure
 - Near to airports
 - Website will provide travel options
- Riding on seven lanes
 - Arena is 160m long so will be shortened for safety
 - Final dimensions will be 80m x 130m, so organisers are requesting consideration of running eight lanes
 - Warmup area is close by – 20m x 80m - with a holding area outside of the entry to the main ring
- Entry is €3800 – budget process was difficult and stressful due to rising costs; in 2018, €3600 was the entry fee
 - Since 2018, there has been a 25 – 30% increase in all costs
 - Organisers share that it is becoming much more complicated and trickier to host a major competition especially when every piece of infrastructure must be rented
 - The 2025 entry fee is possible based on twenty-five (25) teams participating; should there be fewer than 25 team entries, uncertain as to how the competition could proceed
- Team entry fee includes:
 - One stable and one shaving – additional shavings available for purchase
 - Hay not provided
 - One hookup per team
 - Breakfast (7) from Wednesday to Saturday
 - Dinner (7) from Wednesday to Friday
 - Six riders and trainer tickets to Gala
 - Medical coverage
- Supporters' packages will be available and finalized in the weeks to come
 - different supporter packages – to each include at least dedicated camping, access to showers and toilets, and access to the competition
- Camping area – Rider and Supporter areas are separate
- Non- European teams – goal is to provide the best ponies possible
 - Price per pony is €600 including transport
 - Note that organisers had to go outside of Belgium for ponies: to France including the far distant southeast
 - Negotiated with riding schools including providing ponies' equipment
 - Have so far secured the ponies that they need for non-European teams
 - Ponies are experienced and have competed, including even the C and D finals level ponies
- Not many extra ponies will be provided due to finances and the logistical complications
- Note that all ponies should, as of now, be fit and experienced for this level of competition
- Looking to make everything fair for all riders and ponies
 - Height and weight factors being considered for matching of the ponies to the incoming non-European riders
- Consideration being given to ensure proper equipment with each pony:

- To be contractually supported with owners
- Refundable deposit amount required from every rider
- Both sides protected as far as tack condition - suggestion made to photograph all tack on departure from originating source as well as at conclusion of use for the competition
- Chief Referee Mark provides reminder of the existing system for grading ponies
 - Sean to confirm that the grading protocol will be followed –
 - Organisers are working on this – to date they have also requested of the owners that they grade their ponies ‘excellent’, ‘very good’ or ‘good’
- Sean to follow protocol to the maximum possible – Mark happy to meet remotely to facilitate this process
- Medical service is on site during competition and practice
- Medical facilities in the area will be alerted of the event
- Farrier on site during the competition and on-call at other times
- Veterinary services will be onsite during the competition and on-call at other times
- Gala €65 - includes three course meal, gala party, trophies presentation and celebration

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Question: When do entries open for World Team Championship? A.: Entry closing date is January 31, 2025, including pool pony requests
- 25% of entry fee due as deposit February 15; May 31 balance of full payment due; Payments June 1 and after are full payment +10% additional fee
- Pony procurement emphasis is on non-European teams who they encourage to self-source as well in order to maximize their potential for best ponies and competition experience possible
- Communication and Information:
 - Website: wtc2025.be - active December 2024
 - Email: info@wtc2025.be - already active
 - Instagram: [wtcbe2025](https://www.instagram.com/wtcbe2025) – launching the end of November
 - Facebook - Mounted Games – WTCbe2025 (pictures, events, etc. to be posted to all socials going forward)
- Merchandise sales – Sean working on arrangements with organising sub-committee including merchandising with idea of pre-ordering as possible
- Request and agreement to provide Power Point presentation to share with others in home countries
- Additional organizational note – WTC activities going to be in a large marquis which will concentrate the competition in a smaller footprint for improved accessibility
- Meeting participants express thanks for the excellent presentation
- Presenter – Andrea – thanks Quentin for the idea of photographing pony tack and equipment at outset and conclusion of competition to ensure that all parties verify the condition on receipt and return. Organisers will plan for that.

IMGA World Pairs Championships (Corné, France) – Ghislain Deslandes

- Entry fee €700 if ahead of May 1 - 10% increase after May 1, 2025
 - Entry fee includes:
 - Two stables
 - Two competition entries
 - Two gala tickets
 - Two meals during the week
 - Two supporter/ family wristbands
- Hay will be available for purchase on site
- Straw in the stables; shavings available for purchase by arrangement
- Gala for supporters - €35 to bring an additional supporter
- Purchase supporter package €30 euro – includes full access to plug-in and facilities
- Everyone will require a wristband for safety and commitment – gives access to everything
- Organisers would love to hold a Veterans' category for riders 40+
- The entry will be on the website
- Ghislain providing an email address to contact him - for riders in search of ponies
- Ponies will be individually costed

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Vice-Chair Quentin reiterates the requirement for the competition to follow IMGA rules and competition protocols
 - For the score box, the appointment of the personnel is the responsibility of the organisers
 - The referees are appointed by IMGA following application and election process
- Quentin will, as Vice-Chairperson, visit and walk through the Hosting document with the organisers of World Pairs

Break - 11:17 (GMT) for 15 minutes

IMGA World Individual Championships (La Bonde, France) – Quentin

Note - completed first in the 2025 updates

- Quentin pleased to have the honour of hosting once again; trying to schedule for the first weekend in May for U12 – U18 divisions, with U18 having the option to stay on to the compete in the Open division the following weekend; they could go home for the week and have their ponies stay on.
- Entry form to come out soon – already knows that top level riders are planning to attend
- Change of timing out of the summer; thinks that it will be great for the junior group to have additional separate time together
- Entry fee will be geared to the weekend e.g. stable €75; entry €250 approx.
- Planning for entry fee return to riders achieving a score of 70 - done at his discretion
- If you need ponies, let Quentin know since he will provide an appropriate pony to borrow
- Leaving the ponies or arriving early and leaving ponies is possible

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Question: Would they all be in the same arena as that for the youngsters?
Answer: included discussion regarding the altered tone of the competition with the youngsters there; Quentin: Depends on the entries as to which and how many arenas are in use.
- Question: To confirm, two galas would take place, one for each weekend?
- Question: Chief Referee Mark – talking in terms of referee appointment and six lane versus eight lane arena, the latter being preferable from Mark's point of view, who is ultimately responsible for the competition when Champion's league is competing at the same time as IMGA
- Note: IMGA association doesn't recognize STRUK
- Concern expressed re: some details of concurrent competitions e.g. behaviour and pony welfare. Red card behaviour outside of the ring by the STRUK competitors: how to deal with that. Also, what of a STRUK rider trying to ride in one competition and then the next? Maximum race allowance?
- Further discussion re: options for timing to separate IMGA completely from the Champions competition:
 - May 8, 9, 10, and 11 would be the suggested dates with younger divisions on Thursday and Friday, and the Open division running on Saturday/Sunday
 - The option for U18's to stay on and compete in the Open division still exists (with consideration of the 96-race limit for ponies)
- Need to determine referee availability from those who applied for the Individuals i.e. Chief Referee Mark had originally been available for only the first weekend, thinking that Opens would be the first weekend; he would make arrangements to be available for the second weekend

Lunch Break - To reconvene in one hour

IMGA European Team and Individual Championships (Millstreet, Ireland) - Mark and Conor

- imgaeuros2025.com is the website
- €10,000 prize - seeking all possible sponsors
- Aiming to return to the Main Street welcoming parade which is picturesque, and the turnout of locals was fantastic in 2019 and prior to that, 2016
- Entries will open January 31/February 1 and remain open to May 1, 2025
- Extended entry deadline for the Opens until May 15
 - Entry fee – plan for in excess of €550 per team rider since prices are likely to be higher, not just sure by what amount at this point
- Individuals – white flag provisions for non-Europeans Individuals
- Organisers will facilitate pony procurement to the extent possible given the high demand likely
- Alun notes that the Royal Welsh is July 21-23, the week prior to Europeans, with open invitation to participate – get your entry in as it will be fully subscribed

IMGA Nations Team Championships (Perth, West Australia) – Jemima Gardiner

- Planning is progressing well:
 - Grounds booked
 - Fundraising ongoing
 - Australia selecting team in February so that they can begin sourcing from local owners
 - Depending on team riders' source locations, additional ponies may be possible from adjacent states for the September 8 – 14 competition
- Pony hire \$600 AUD including stabling, feeding, and likely transport

3.5 IMGA sanctioned championships for 2026 - UPDATES

IMGA World Team Championships – Stian Hennie (Biri, Norway - two hours north of Oslo)

- Thank you, Stian, for the thorough and informative slide show presentation

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Question: Any possibility for European riders to access pool ponies beyond those required for overseas riders? i.e. some European countries may struggle to get ponies to Norway. Answer: Stian indicates that there is no paperwork required to travel from Europe to Norway and back and no paperwork charge.
 - Note: No direct ferry from UK to Norway but there is a ferry from/to Germany and Denmark
- Question: Likelihood of significant mosquitoes? Answer: Definitely possible – ten (10) electronic mosquito zappers have already been purchased.

- Competition dates are July 18 – 26 and a Facebook page is to be established in January; there is already an APP

IMGA World Pairs Championships (Corné, France) – Ghislain Deslandes

- Update Slide show presentation from Corné is the same one as already provided earlier in the meeting by Ghislain and viewed by meeting attendees

IMGA World Individual Championships (Lumuhlen, Germany) –

- Planning now and hoping for one additional large arena on grass to be completed; great main arena, Chris notes
- Question: Is arena sand? Answer: Prefers sand but the use of the grass arena depends on number of riders entered. Seven lanes would require 69.5m width (@8m per lane).
- Question: Chief Referee Mark – confirm dimensions? Answer: 70m x 100m are the main arena dimensions

IMGA European Team and Individual Championships (La Bonde, France) - Quentin Voeltzel

- Working with the farmers on the other side of the road in the valley to arrange for the stabling and for keeping team stables within a team encampment area – idea of a ‘pod’ for each country’s camping and stabling
- For the arenas, hoping to increase the size of the small arena but will see how that develops
 - working to have one grass arena on the island in case of very high entry numbers
- Security fencing and traffic lights being installed to manage access to and from, and the safety and security of the compound being situated across the road

IMGA Nations Team Championship (USA) – Paul Greiling

- Currently considering potential venues including Kentucky and Florida - will be contacting Nations countries for their preferences on locations and dates

3.6 Selection of hosts for 2027 IMGA sanctioned competitions

(Note* - Austria, Sweden and France (Corné) are applying for multiple competitions but can host only one)

IMGA World Team Championships (Open)

Candidates: France (La Bonde)
France (Corné)*

Voting Representatives: 17

Voting Results:

Corné -12 %

La Bonde - 88 %

- La Bonde, France is awarded the hosting of the IMGA World Team Championships (Open) 2027. Congratulations, La Bonde organisers!

IMGA World Team Championships (U-18)

Candidates: France (La Bonde)

- Building new stabling
- Goal is to reach twenty-four (24) team entries as was the case in 2014
- Need to all work together so that people come to the competitions

France (Corné)*

Voting Representatives: 17

Voting Results:

Corné -12 %

La Bonde - 88 %

- La Bonde, France, is awarded the hosting of the IMGA World Team Championship (U18). Congratulations, La Bonde!

IMGA World Pairs Championships (All age groups)

Candidates: Wales

~~Sweden~~*- note that Sweden is the single bid for Europeans, so withdraws from bidding for WPC 2027

Austria*

France (Corné)*

Voting Representatives: 17

Voting Results:

Wales - 24 %

Sweden - NA

Austria – 65 %

Corné - 12 %

- Austria is awarded the hosting of the IMGA World Pairs Championships 2027 (All age groups). Congratulations, organisers for Austria!

IMGA World Individual Championships (All age groups)

Candidate: Wales – Presented by Alun Whitney

- David Broome event centre which is a very successful venue with 100m x 72m all-weather arena
- Have held World Team events and WIC there in the past
- Facilities able to support both U12-U18 and Opens
- Preference is to host both competitions – Pairs and Individuals - over eleven (11) days to assist with cost efficiency for attending riders
- Bidding for Pairs and Individuals but would host Individuals as their priority

- Hosting by local riders and provision of a pony for them would be the goal
- All riders to receive awards, as outlined in presentation
- Costs are not entirely known but organisers want to make it financially accessible for families to attend
- Stabling is for the week - next to the arena and close to parking
- limited number of chalets on site for up to six
- Geographically accessible
- Question: Pairs are not viable financially compared to Individual? Answer: ideally pairs would run alongside Individuals such that sharing of fixed costs would cover expenses
- Wales as a good UK venue

Candidate: Austria* - (Presented by Patrick Montgomery)

- Provides historical perspective and current use of the facility by numerous competitions
 - Based in central Europe
 - Paddy provides some of the distances from other countries
 - Vienna is nearest airport
- Infrastructure – facilities and management are seasoned
 - Fixed toilets
 - Newly renovated welcoming centre
 - Indoor and outdoor arenas on 30 hectares
 - Footing is sand and has been excellent through all weather
 - Two large outdoor arenas - 105' x 62', and second 105' x 52', both with seating
 - Vet nearby and farrier set up on site
- Stables – housing for 97 visiting competition horses recently built -more than 200 existing stables – additional old facility has 160 boxes on site
- Bistro on site and nearby restaurants

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Noted that surface of sand/fibre mix is beautifully drained
- Further, that the Austrian organisers are very well organized
- For pool ponies, organisers Paddy and Verena have a pony riding club and would gather in ponies - ordinarily as sales ponies – for the competition
- The actual centre is lovely and very Austrian - building is beautiful for the Gala
- Question: Width of the arena is below the allowable limit so are six and five lanes planned for Individuals and Pairs, respectively? Answer: Would need to run modified games for pairs if held there
 - Note that the width narrows to the runout area
- Question: Any lighting? Answer: Not at this time – on the competition dates, there is a very lengthy seasonal day
- Question: Prices for entry? Answer: May offer early entry discounts – at this early point in the planning, price information is not all available but note that the Austrian federation is interested in promoting the sport, so is not seeking to produce an event for profit

- Support expressed for the idea of the potential benefits of having this new country provide a competition which could encourage Czech participation

Candidate: France (Corné)* - presented by Ghislain Deslandes

- Has put in for three of the 2027 competitions – slide show presentation as previously viewed
- €450 is the approximate expected entry cost

Voting Representatives: 17

Voting Results:

Wales - 59 %

Austria - 18 %

France(Corné) 24 %

- Wales is awarded the hosting of the IMGA World Individual Championships 2027 (All age groups). Congratulations, organisers for Wales!

IMGA European Team and Individual Championship (All age groups)

Candidate: Sweden* (sole bid for hosting)

- Southern location with rebuilt arenas
 - Although 85'm x 135' is half a metre too narrow so number of lanes to be decided
 - Seven lanes for Teams and eight for Individuals is proposed
- 180 stables on site with pony wash stalls
- Start earlier in the week with Individuals and then shift later in the week to Teams - able to host 150 riders although 200 is possible
- Dates suggested Aug 1-5 for Individuals, August 6-7 for Teams
- Cost – seeking sponsors to reduce costs
- Arena rental comes with the 180 stables so that is not an additional cost until 180 stables are filled, after which additional cost might be expected
- Flights into Copenhagen, train to Malmo, then to Flyinge facility

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Question: Best way to drive? Answer: Bridge is fixed price versus variable ferry rate.
 - Question: Is this running in one arena - seeking clarification about second arena?
- Sweden is awarded the hosting of the IMGA European Team and Individual Championships 2027 (All age groups). Congratulations, organisers for Sweden!

IMGA Nations Team Championships (Open)

Candidate: South Africa (Presented by Tanya Menhinick)
(based on Nations countries' Host Roster for 2025-2029)

- Location of competition could be in the Western Cape again or possibly a second contender
 - Would be looking for larger venue to move away from five lane limit
 - Pool pony situation expected to be similar to 2023
 - Host country organisers are enthused about the prospect of once again building a spirit of community as seen at another major competition where the group ate and camped together
 - Overall, trying to keep the cost down
- South Africa is selected for the hosting of the IMGA Nations Team Championship 2027 (Open). Congratulations, organisers for South Africa!

See Annex 3.6 for further details

3.7 2025 Meetings

- On-line meetings 2025:
 - February - date to be determined
 - May – date to be determined
 - August at WTC (Belgium)
- Annual General Meeting: November 15/16, 2025
- Offers for hosting the AGM: Austria
- Questions? – None raised

4. Important Discussions and Decisions

4.1 Proposals regarding new countries wishing to join IMGA

Presented by Chris Wheeler – Chairperson IMGA

- New countries to pay no affiliation fee
- Free membership granted while that country has five or fewer riders participating at an IMGA competition. As soon as their sixth rider competes, that country will start paying the affiliation fee.
- An affiliation fee will be applicable from January 1 of the following year.
- A country that does not pay its affiliation fee has no vote.
- A new country may pay the affiliation fee if it wishes to vote.
- Sponsorships and Promotions

****Note:** item below removed from proposal after further discussion

- ~~A new country will receive a welcome pack of 4 sword rings, 4 bank numbers, 1 pony express mail bag, 4 pony express letters, 1 Hi Lo net, 1 Rule Book. COST OF EQUIPMENT (150 euros)~~
- Sponsorship and Promotions Chair Quentin would be involved in seeking sponsorship differentiated based on the general development status of each particular country – he would like to work on this
- To which countries might this apply? Pakistan, Mexico, Nigeria, Czech Republic, Finland?
- Update to the Constitution required to include the terms “Full Members” (which pay the IMGA affiliation fee) and “Associate Members” (which do not pay the affiliation fee).

Action Item: Sponsorship and Promotion Committee to take the lead on this initiative in collaboration with Chris.

- Chairperson Chris puts forward the following motions:
 - 1) That countries new to IMGA receive free Associate membership until five riders participating in IMGA competitions increases to a sixth rider.

Voting Representatives: 14

Voting Results:

Yes - 100 % No - 0 % Abstain - 0 %

The motion is passed.

- 2) ** That a starter kit of equipment be provided to new countries – no vote required, unanimous agreement to remove this portion of the proposal
 - general agreement amongst reps that other forms of support to new countries would be preferable to equipment which is fairly easily constructed or purchased e.g. coach training, assistant referee training, ongoing rider training, etc.

4.2 New Sub-Committee to be formed to provide oversight and guidance to the five IMGA events

Presented by Warwick Slade

IMGA events take a lot more organising than a local or national event. Often riders flying to the event need to book flights six to nine months out. Organisation of pool ponies may be something that the organising committee has never dealt with before. There are procedures that need to be followed which an organising committee may not be familiar with.

Calls for members of the committee will be put out to all IMGA countries and members to find people with previous experience of managing events. Once the sub-committee is established it will review and update the IMGA document “Organisation of an IMGA Sanctioned competition”. From there a set of checklists will be created to help organising committee at each stage leading up to and after the event. Each member of the sub-committee will be

allocated one event to manage. This person will work closely with the organising committee to provide help and guidance and to ensure that check lists are being actioned.

Presentation by Warwick Slade –

- Proposal is made with the idea of providing more support to IMGA events and their organising committees
 - one of the issues is the scope and outdated status of the organizing document
 - There are also wide ranges of experience among people on various organizing committees
- If a sub-committee was established, it would work to establish specific target deadlines and work to ensure ‘value for dollar expended’ to travel to these events
 - Potential entrants need to know well in advance to allow for financial planning by families
- Process for establishing the committee – ‘tap on shoulder’ of experienced organisers so that five sub-committee members are appointed, each assigned an event for current year, one year out, and two years out
- Original intent of the proposal was to ensure that an IMGA Officer was charged with Chairing the committee to ensure quality, continuity, and liaison with the IMGA Executive
- Good idea especially in light of this year’s straying from the hosting document’s provisions in more than one championship noting that some of those instances were governance and some, compliance
- Consistency and continuity over time would be desired outcome

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Finance and Administration Officer Jens notes that it is not necessarily the case that the Vice Chairperson take on the Chair role for the committee - could be any one of the IMGA officials
- Noted that we are currently not completing competition pre-inspections to the desired level and need to return to this practice since we have been accepting new venues and countries in recent years

Motion: That a sub-committee to be formed to provide oversight and guidance to the five IMGA events.

Voting Representatives: 14 representatives vote prior to cut-off

Voting Results:

Yes - 93 % No - 0 % Abstain - 7 %

The motion is passed.

4.3 The IMGGA event sub-committee be chaired by the IMGGA Vice-Chairman

Presented by Warwick Slade

IMGGA events are one of the most important responsibilities of the IMGGA administration and so should be chaired by a person from the executive.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Proposal that Quentin V. as the new Vice-Chair take on the role of Chairperson for this sub-committee for the two-year term, with reassessment at the conclusion of that term.

Motion: No vote required – unanimously agreed by all.

4.4 A Nations sub-committee be formed to address and discuss the issue pertaining to the Nations countries

Presented by Warwick Slade

Currently, the Nations countries have been meeting informally. Whilst some nations countries have been involved in IMGGA for a long time most new countries will be Nations countries and these countries need the most amount of support. Nations countries also face many different issues from countries on the European continent when attending IMGGA events.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Generally agreed that some of the issues raised are endemic to Nations and others are similar to other countries' organizing issues

Motion: That a Nations sub-committee be formed to address and discuss the issues pertaining to the Nations countries.

Voting Representatives: 14 (poll closed early due to unanimity of results).

Voting Results:

Yes - 100 % No - 0 % Abstain - 0 %

The motion is passed.

4.5 The Nations sub-committee be chaired by the IMGA Vice-Chairperson

Presented by Warwick Slade

It is important that issues raised by the committee can be addressed by either one of the other IMGA sub-committees and/or the IMGA representatives. By placing this responsibility on a member of the executive it ensures that progress can be made, and momentum continued.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Warwick envisions that the meeting be chaired by the Chair or Vice-Chair
- Several Nations representatives express the view that a Nations Country Sub-committee Chaired by the IMGA Chairperson is preferable
- Vice Chairperson Quentin indicates his willingness to support the Chairperson with the work of this sub-committee

Motion: That the IMGA Chairperson act as Chair to the Nations sub-committee for the next twelve months.

Voting Representatives: 14

Voting Results:

Yes - 86 % No - 7 % Abstain - 7 %

The motion is passed.

4.6 Starts

Presented by Chief Referee Mark Crowe

A reminder from the Chief Referee about the start rule and the importance of ALL referees adhering to it.

- Mark is continuing to see inconsistency and Alun remarks that this has been observable even this season

Action Item: Mark and Alun to develop plan to re-emphasise the need for compliance with the start rule especially across the full range of four-star referees.

4.7 Competition draws

Presented by Alun Whitney - Wales

Following many complaints about the draws, is it time to go back to the “old” seeding system?

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Example on the screen – draw provided through MG Scoreboard which was unbalanced
- Description provided of ‘snake’ and ‘snail’ versions of manual, results-based seeding
- Summary of history – manual seeding system was discontinued due to complaints from the teams typically in the middle and bottom of the heats
 - Moving year-to-year, the seeding was carried forward into the new season based on the final result of the previous season
 - Comment made that a team at the conclusion of the year could be very different from its composition at the start of the next season
- Observations made regarding the relative balance between team placings in each of the two seeding techniques
 - There is better balance between the teams in the heats in the snail version; the snake version has a balanced differential between the teams versus the seven-placing differential of the snail version
- Jens confirms that the system used when IMGA employed seeding was the snake version
- Discussion ensued regarding the advisability of holding this vote at the February meeting considering this discussion and the additional information currently being provided about the previous system
- General agreement with the idea of returning to home countries for further discussion of this new information, followed by a vote with no discussion at the February representatives’ meeting
- Much additional discussion regarding the history of the move from this system to random draws

Action Item: Chairperson Chris to include this item on the February International Representatives’ meeting agenda for a vote with no additional discussion.

Action Item: Alun (WAL) to send Chris the models provided during this discussion for consideration by the home country committees.

Action Item: The February meeting Agenda to be distributed by Chris in January 2025.

Chairperson’s final comments for this session -

“Thanks” from Chris to the participants, both remotely and in the room, with a reminder that our starting time in the morning is 8:30AM GMT

Adjournment: 6:01 GMT

Sunday, November 17, 2024

Participants - In attendance as of 8:36AM (GMT):

IMGA Officials:

Chris Wheeler	Chairperson	Present
Quentin Voeltzel	Vice Chairperson	Present
Jens Martin	Finance/Administration	Present
Lizzy Franck	Communication	Apologies
Andrea Piazza (ITA)	Development	Remote
Mark Crowe	Chief Referee	Present

International Representatives (V – Voting member):

Jemima Gardiner (V)	Australia	Remote
Rachel Lechner (V)	Austria	Remote
Robin Donnay (V)	Belgium	Remote
Michelle Cruikshanks (V)	Canada	Present
Elijah Zhangxiaotian(V)	China	Remote
Jens Holm Nielsen (V)	Denmark	Absent
Elaine Trevor Jones (V)	England	Remote
Stéphane Tardif (V)	France	Remote
Volker Baasch (V)	Germany	Remote
Conor O’Leary (V)	Ireland	Present
Andrea Piazza (V)	Italy	Remote
Lizzy Franck (V)	Luxembourg	Apologies
Sue Robertson (V)	New Zealand	Remote
Allister Hamilton (V)	Northern Ireland	Present
Stian Hennie (V)	Norway	Present
Ali Fawad Chadhary	Pakistan	Absent
Veronica Dodds(V)	Scotland	Present
Nick Sloane (V)	South Africa	Remote
Quentin Voeltzel (V)	Sweden	Present
Marino Kammeran (V)	Switzerland	Present
Quentin Gargallo	Switzerland	Present
Paul Greiling (V)	USA	Remote
Alun Whitney (V)	Wales	Remote

Guests

Bridget Scott - Scotland		Present
Warwick Slade - Australia		Remote
Tanya Menhinick – South Africa		Remote
Thierry Constant – Belgium	Sunday presentation	Remote
Luigi Irollo – Italy		Remote
Jonathan Marion – France		Remote
Andrea – Belgium	Sunday presentation	Remote
Sean Bource – Belgium	Sunday presentation	Remote

Eligible Voting Representatives – 19

4.8 Standard set of games equipment

Presented by Allister Hamilton – Northern Ireland

MGANI proposes that IMGGA recommend a standard set of games equipment for all nations and state the size, shape, and weight that will be used at the sanctioned events.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Allister provides background regarding his organization's wish to purchase equipment of the specifications that will be encountered at IMGGA events - including e.g. Association containers for which there are differences in the ability to grip them with a full hand depending on where you are (country or organization)
- suppliers now dictating the sizes even though some of their products don't seem to meet the IMGGA specifications
- Jens notes that the specifications are the same throughout the world which allow countries to develop/create their own equipment – there will be variations by location/equipment manufacturer
- Observation - some complaint about deviations from the IMGGA equipment standards at one of the competitions
- Jens notes that specifications are held in place as much as possible since frequent changes to specifications leave manufacturers with unusable stock
- Allister seeking for club to purchase equipment that riders will encounter in championship competitions
- Discussion concluded with agreement to ensure that equipment purchases are within the specifications and checked across each variable – size, dimensions, weight, material e.g. hard plastic Founder's letters used versus soft, flexible material named in the equipment specifications
- Agreement that pre-competition inspections need to be held months out from the competition dates
- Suggestion agreed upon as a good approach: pre-inspections to include video recording of arena and equipment such that anything missed can be noted and corrected
- Suggestion made that Rules Committee reconsider specifications for Hi-Lo and Bank Race where, in most countries, this equipment doesn't stand up to even mild winds
- Request from proposal presenter Allister that when video checks are done, to please share - Chris notes that these would be sent to International Representatives
- Observation made that the new weight specifications seem to result in some pieces of equipment being lighter
- previous rule clarified by Chief Referee Mark - the previous rule was unclear, stipulating only 400g, so now rule states between 400g and 500g
- For some countries, this will result in an increase to the weight of what they are using – thanks expressed for clarification

Action Item: Competition pre-inspections to include video recording of the arena and equipment such that anything missed can be noted and corrected, and that when video checks are done, they be shared - Chris notes that these would be sent to International Representatives for sharing.

4.9 Format of one-heat competitions

Presented by Conor O'Leary - Ireland

We have seen quite a reduction in the number of teams competing at IMGA championships over the last few years, and we have failed to have enough teams in many age groups, so as to have A and B finals.

This leads to events that quite often fail to deliver on competitiveness with low anticipation levels leading to further reduction in entry numbers.

We would be of the opinion that for the success of championships, rider satisfaction and spectator entertainment, we need to get to a position whereby scores go back to zero for the finals, or some derivative of same.

We propose that for any IMGA team event, at any age group, where the numbers of teams entered mean that no A and B finals will ensue, we would run an alternative format.

As normal Europeans/Worlds would still take the format of four sessions followed by a two-part final.

However, we would propose that the initial four sessions be run as normal, but the scores carried forward to the final from each session would be an inverse of the position they finished in each session rather than the total score.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Historical perspective provided, regarding decrease in the number of teams attending resulting in single heat sessions with significant, unsurmountable leads carrying into the finals
- Discussion revolved around the variations possible to this proposal by Conor, including presentation of the proposal by Amie (NZ) through NZ Rep. Sue
- Marino prepared to pilot this scoring system for a February/March competition scheduled in Switzerland in response to Alun's suggestion that piloting this system would be advantageous prior to any adoption
- General agreement that this format, if adopted, would also be applied to Pairs, Individuals
- Tending toward agreement that the single point differential proposed would be preferable for teams trying to catch up points in the final.
- Noted that this proposal reflects the unique situation for Nations where most teams are adapting to borrowed ponies in the early sessions
- Questions remaining:

- What do we do for points in the final? Keep the full points? Double the points in the final as previously proposed by France? Would doubling the points completely change the nature of the final?
- Presenter Conor suggests that the idea is to mimic going to zero points heading into the final and then carry on accumulating full points in the final

Motion: In the event that we have any one-heat sessions in the upcoming year, we adopt a system whereby qualifying sessions produce points as follows: first in a seven team qualifying session scores 7 points on down to the 7th place team earning one point. In the final session(s), points are accumulated in the current manner – each game generates points i.e. first place for a race earns 7 points, down through to one point for the seventh-place team.

Voting Representatives:17

Voting Results:

Yes - 71 % No - 18 % Abstain - 12 %

The motion is passed.

4.10 Change schedule of IMGA Championships

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

Having all the championships every year creates dilution and very few nations and riders can travel to all of these events. In addition, awarding a World or European title each year significantly limits the value and prestige linked to obtaining it. This functioning also brings organizational qualities that are not very homogeneous. We therefore propose:

Even Years: European Team Championships
 World Pairs Championships
 World Individual Championships

Odd Years: World Team Championships
 European Pairs Championships
 European Individual Championships

Summary presented by Jonathan and Stéphane Tardif (FRA) as translated by Quentin (SWE):

- The main idea is to give the title a better meaning and significance
- Currently the dates are close which Jonathan notes creates less of a draw for spectators and is harder on the support persons
- Each year, having so many championships means that a top team will likely eventually win one of them; somewhat lacking in anticipation and excitement
- For organisers, every year results in lower numbers of entrants as riders choose between several major competition options
- Overall, the idea is to increase the value of the title by making scarcer the trophy opportunity

- Proposal also addresses the increasing cost of travel by still providing world titles each year

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Observation made that Nations Team Championship is not included in the proposal's listing of IMGA competitions
- Discussion re: the younger age groups, children of a certain age are always going to miss out on their senior year with this system
 - Pairs and Individuals will be available in the opposite year for those age groups; note that those age groups largely prefer teams rather than Pairs or Individuals
- Smaller nations are starting to compete in triads rather than fours to allow for team play even when numbers are low
- Finance and Administration Jens provides history of this type of proposal as having been put forward and defeated on five other occasions; most recently consideration was given to the possibility that another organization would fill the gap and draw away riders if IMGA did not provide the full roster of championship competitions annually
- Comment made that every other year could in fact generate keen interest in taking part – limited availability of an opportunity as sharpening interest
- Observation made that in many other countries there are limited opportunities for major competition - not including Nations in the proposal is one thing but as a nation that tries hard to send a team every year, this would be a great loss of opportunity to take part on the world scene
- Query as to whether previous defeat of similar motions may have misidentified the issue as one of frequency of offering rather than the actual problem of scheduling these championships so closely together, all in July and August
- In recent years, date conflicts with major competitions in home countries, have had a negative impact; the costs involved are also significant e.g. expense of travelling, pony transport
- Query regarding history of World Teams – confirmed that WTC have not had younger groups until recently; Worlds team were originally Open only and then expanded to include U17
- Opinion expressed that if younger groups attend, the family 'bank' is potentially empty the time the rider has reached prime, mature competition age
- Discussion drawn to a close by Chairperson Chris - many opinions expressed on this matter and other topics, therefore may proceed to a vote on the motion

Motion: That the IMGA competitions be held in alternating years as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Even Years: | European Team Championships |
| | World Pairs Championships |
| | World Individual Championships |
| Odd Years: | World Team Championships |
| | European Pairs Championships |
| | European Individual Championships |

Voting Representatives: 17

Voting Results:

Yes - 12 % No - 76 % Abstain -12 %

The motion is defeated.

4.11 Validation of Rule Committee Changes

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

The rules proposed by the Rules Committee must be validated by majority vote of the IMGA member countries. CF rules were announced at the European briefing that no one understood.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Concept of this proposal is that the Rules Committee function like other committees – recommendations brought to the Representatives for acceptance
- Rules Committee Chair Jens replies to the proposal:
 - Against for various reasons including that why the proposal has come up is seemingly due to an isolated instance of miscommunication rather than systemic problems regarding the functioning of Rules Committee
 - The business of the Rules Committee is conducted by elected members - International representatives have as a group placed their trust in the committee members
 - In the opinion of the Rules Committee Chair there would be no further validity to continuing with the Rules Committee should this proposal be accepted
 - Notes that there is significant discussion and enough difficulty achieving agreement among the seven committee members without adding the full body of International Representatives
- Proposer Stéphane added that there were different rules applied in three different competitions resulting in confusion as to application of the rules – translation was an added issue
- Referee involved at the competition notes that a rule was not applied by competition Referee as had been newly interpreted by IMGA Chief Referee
 - Noted that Referee Liaison Officer position established for each country to maximize clarity of communication about rule changes through member countries
 - Proposer Stéphane elaborates that use of word “interpretation” emphasises potential for variation in application of a rule – not desired outcome
- Chairperson Chris returns discussion to the topic at hand
- Noted that all Rules Committee discussions are up on the website and that there is even a rider representative on the Committee who will respond to any

riders' questions and concerns, and that the Rules Committee may be contacted at any time by any current means of communication

- Proposer Stéphane relates that it is not the Rules Committee in question but rather the perceived differentiated briefings from Pairs to Europeans
- Co-proposer Jonathan observes that the specific instances are in the past, and appeals for the need "to move on"
- Clarification by Rules Committee members Jens and Mark, that the "genuine attempt" question is currently under discussion by the Committee to bring about a change to improve this historically contentious matter

Motion: That the rules proposed by the Rules Committee must be validated by majority vote of the IMGGA member countries.

Voting representatives: 17

Voting results:

Yes – 6 % No – 94 % Abstain – 0 %

The motion is defeated.

4.12 Conflicts of Interest

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

The Chief Referee as well as all the referees elected for an IMGGA competition must only have the sole mission of refereeing, they cannot under any circumstances hold dual roles or be a trainer in an IMGGA competition.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Example provided re: a competition with a three-team final having a team drop out – proposers assert that such an occurrence would have resulted in lowest placing A final team to be placed into the B Final to comply with the rule that three teams at a minimum participate in any final
- In the example, the Chief Referee was the trainer of the 'bubble' team such that the perception of the French contingency was that this was a conflict of interest
 - Provided the opinion that no sport has a Chief Referee of the entire competition working as a trainer during the competition
- Alun agrees with the proposal and would not wish anyone to experience the resultant negative fallout
- Chairperson Chris requests that Mark repeat the rules as they exist: no involvement of a referee allowed in any other capacity than referee in a given division
- Chief Referee Mark also notes that referees attending major competitions may be lost if they are not permitted to referee due to having a family member riding
- If Chief Referee has a family member riding that is clarified as different from taking on role as a trainer – general agreement
- What about declaration of conflict of interest – as with other committees?

- What about Chief Referee having a stand-in in advance the division in which a conflict of interest exists? The FFE is requesting a written protocol ensuring that the example scenario does not reoccur
- Clarification agreed upon is that the trainer is the role that is problematic for the presenters of the proposal
- Chris makes alterations to wording of the proposal – see Motion below:

Motion: The Chief Referee elected for an IMGA competition must have the sole mission of refereeing, they cannot under any circumstances be a trainer in an IMGA competition.

Voting representatives: 18

Voting results:

Yes – 100 % No – 0 % Abstain – 0 %

The motion is passed.

4.13 Excluding competitors

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

The IMGA regulations must contain a right to exclude a rider/pony pair in the event of non-respect of animal welfare (see Italian pony) and the same in the event of non-fair play (see Ireland). This proposal is linked to Item 4.14

- Proposer Stéphane shares background to the proposal:
 - This summer ponies were observed that were not physically or mentally fit to participate e.g. of pony refusing and rearing when asked to approach the start line
 - Idea of the proposal is that as soon as we see something like this, the rider must leave the arena, disqualified
 - This kind of pony behaviour impacts negatively on the safety of the competition and importantly on the perception of disregard for the treatment and welfare of the pony.
 - We are in an age of much sensitivity around these situations with sharing of videos worldwide negatively impacting the sport

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Follow up to the described scenario: the rider was requested to withdraw and assured the division Referee and the Chief Referee that he could work with the pony to settle it
- Observation made that at Europeans there was not a vet-checked trot up and opinion express that this would have revealed the pony's mental incapacity to proceed - similarly, a vet-checked trot up could have been helpful in this situation at Pairs
- Felt to be a safety risk to the partner standing their pony next to this pony

- The general tone regarding pony welfare is elevated and much attention is focused on any injury or stressed behaviour, whether validated or not – as a sport we are under scrutiny
- Chief Referee Mark reminds the group of the existence and role of the Ground Jury
 - At the time of the described pony behaviour observations, the Ground Jury was convened, made a decision and recommendations, and brought closure to the situation
 - Some continued opinions shared regarding the decision made and that going forward there is a need for much more diligence in acting on and/or removing unsafe, unfit ponies, and unsafe riders
- Chairperson Chris reads the rules applicable to unsafe riders and ponies:
 - GR 2.4 and GR 3.1, (3.2, and 3.3), yellow and red cards, are currently in the Rulebook, “carved in stone”
 - This is a matter to be emphasised through the referee forums and briefings among referees to ensure consistent expectations and application of rules, and consequences for infractions

4.14 Establishment of an animal welfare commission

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

We propose to study the establishment of an animal welfare commission within the IMGA.

- Why? Society dictates this and we need to demonstrate and improve our association’s attention to this
- More and more, activists are attending and claiming the right for horses not to be ridden – we need to work on the full process of animal welfare and on how to respond in the case of interference and/or challenges to our use of horses
- Goal of the commission would be to provide riders, trainers, coaches with the tools to respond to questions and ensure the mental and physical health of the animal
- Need to present excellent equestrian skills and use of the horse under saddle, also to ensure material adapted for each horse
- Officials and organisers to have information and tools ahead of and during an event. Commission also to be a resource helping for e.g. equipment fit to have a more official and unofficial presence
- Need to work proactively on these matters in the face of mounting opposition in most countries

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Question: What form does this commission take?
- Suggestions made:
 - That Margaret W. (NZ) would be an ideal member given her history of promoting pony welfare, proper use and fitting of tack, etc.

- Chairperson Chris suggests that a French member be a member of the Committee
- Committee to seek and take forward existing protocols from reliable sources to expedite establishing the IMGA position and resources
- Rules Committee to be involved where there are proposals to take the form of a rule
- Education to be a matter for the Committee
- Any questions – contact stephane.tardif@ffe.com – French to take chair/leadership role, with thanks.

Motion: Establish an animal welfare commission within the IMGA.

Voting Representatives: 16

Voting results:

Yes – 100 % No – 0 %

The motion is passed.

4.15 Three teams in a final

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

The regulations stipulate a minimum of three teams in the last final - what do we do when one of these teams withdraws?

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Review of the existing rule: Page 30 of the hosting document indicates that the maximum number of teams being placed in the higher final with a minimum of three in the lower final
- Proposer relates that the question in France was of a team pulling out in a final that was already set – Alun notes that this has never previously occurred in Team competition
- Observation made that this situation has previously arisen in both directions in Individuals and Pairs without controversy
 - Information shared that a precedent for two rider Individual final occurred at Europeans with consent of the two riders at the time to continue and not pull someone down from a higher-level final
 - This proposal is intended to consider specially the case of a team pulling out for lack of desire to participate
- Chief Referee Mark notes teams as being somewhat distinct where composition of the finals should be known in advance and shared at the briefing. Very difficult and not sporting to make a change once underway when all teams are playing for a spot in the top final
- Opinion expressed that a two-team final is not at all engaging so could an additional outside rider be allowed? – yes, this is in the rules
- Experience shared where rider would gladly have withdrawn but continued out of respect for the competition

- General agreement in the room that there should be consequences for withdrawal from final
 - Consequences exist for non-compliance with rules in general, and should be the case for this situation, noting there is a differentiation in the case of injury/illness
 - Suggestion made that consequence be a fine which impacts the riders directly rather than a ban from riding the next year which impacts the broader country's participation
 - Many extenuating and mitigating circumstances could exist in the specific case used as the example
- What is the case when the two-team scenario comes up? At the briefing the team numbers for the finals are set and publicized without subsequent possibility for change
 - In team competitions is there a benefit to making it compulsory to compete? (barring injuries and illness)
 - What about the reverse scenario of pulling up a team if an A final team is no longer available?
- GR 1.6 and 1.7 cover the eventualities of rider replacement
- Suggestion made to vote on the principle of the proposal and then carefully craft the wording
- Agreement to move item on to the Rules Committee for development of wording and the full concept of this complex issue

Action Item: Rules Committee to develop concept and wording for this item: withdrawal of a team resulting in two teams for lower final.

4.16 Video Refereeing

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

Video refereeing is authorised, but each video review must not exceed one minute. In case of doubt the basic rule of 'doubt to the rider' must be applied. (Video waiting kills the sport and does not make it televisual at all).

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Note combination with Item 4.18 which is a directly related matter
- One referee to be allocated to the completion of video review
- Alun – clarifies that the purpose of the video is not to prove the Assistant Referee but rather used to disprove
- Further, that there is no point to Assistant Referees if every appeal goes to video review to prove what the AR says - the judgement of the Assistant Referee is the first 'go to'
- Additionally, note that for every call, there was an Assistant Referee or Referee observation of an infraction, therefore no such thing as 'benefit of the doubt' to the rider

- Chris felt that at Finals sessions, the video review was waited on to ensure that the scores up on the board were current and accurate
- Chief Referee Mark notes that the IMGA video system is slow to cue up and also dependent on how well-trained the referee reviewer is
- Australia WTC had local expert in addition to the referee reviewer such that cueing up went quite quickly
- Italy purchased and employed a system much more adept and technologically up to date resulting in cueing up of video sections for review
- Opinion expressed by Vice-Chairperson Quentin that in a number of instances, even call resulting from two assistant referees seeing the same thing was overturned as a result of video review
- Chief Referee Mark counters that this is not the case, continuing by explaining the requirements as per the rules
- Question: Are video cameras of benefit to the whole? Examples exist of competitions where iPads were used by Assistant Referee(s) immediately following their observation of questionable activity
 - Answer: iPads, when previously considered, were contentious due to their requirement for charge, their more limited capacity for storage, and the difficulty of exact synchronization of several iPads to achieve multi-angle point of view
 - Chief Referee Mark confirms that with multi-screen camera, the relevant cameras can be called up quickly to ensure immediate multi-angle point of view, especially with technology currently available
 - Sapphire smart is the equipment
- Returning to the proposal as presented, which requests one-minute maximum review time for video, proposer Jonathan concurs with Chairperson Chris that one minute is not enough for completion of video review
- Agreed that the proposal contains elements which suggest deeper look into possibilities for agreed-upon need to speed up video reviews - enhance or replace current IMGA camera equipment?
- Note that discussion for item 4.18 is included with that of 4.16 which was considered at the same time. If available, these measures would fall under the category of 'nice to have' included in the Hosting document

4.17 Banned Riders

Presented by Stéphane Tardif - France

A rider banned from competing by his country, cannot compete under the IMGA flag, the country pays the IMGA contribution and is therefore in control of its members. The French Equestrian Federation will not insure a rider that it has not selected. To maintain the white card, the IMGA must take responsibility and insurance for the rider.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Proposer Stéphane - as translated by Quentin V. - For banned riders in France, riders must request permission to participate in competition. To ensure the safety of everyone, the FFE considers the history of the rider
 - In the case of IMGGA, we allow 'white flag' participants, which means that the rider could be competing on the home soil where he/she has been banned, leading to insurance issues on a large scale
- Finance and Administration Officer Jens confirms that IMGGA does not provide nor has ever held any kind of insurance
 - Understands the difficulty when a rider has been banned for being unsafe; if such a circumstance arises, it is the strong hope that the referee would already have noted and identified the issue and taken appropriate action
- Additional observation made that this is a very wide topic:
 - Includes the possibility that:
 - The home organization views the rider as not desirable or
 - The rider is under civil or criminal investigation, etc. neither of which may be known by IMGGA
 - Could be the case that the rider is competing uninsured
 - Key point is that a rider not insured by his/her country should ensure that they have full, appropriate insurance
- Example provided of a rider banned by their country known to be going to an international competition; that country contacted IMGGA
 - How to handle situations beyond strictly evidence-based information or official sanctions?
 - Share basic ban information with receiving organisers? Provide no details in serious cases?
 - Rider under doping ban (from another sport's disciplinary proceedings) prevented from competing - much discussion regarding the related legal ramifications
- Option is to remove the 'wild card' participation provision or include requirement to provide reasons for the application, including nature of any ban by the home country
 - Valid reasons behind request for information about a wild card application: matters of violence, criminal convictions, and safety
 - What is IMGGA's jurisdiction?
 - Remember IMGGA's basic premises of inclusiveness and international friendship – how does this fit with minimum standards of competence for participation?
- Information shared that the FFE in France has their own sanctions in the case of banned riders taking part in a competition on home soil i.e. the rider risks much by applying to ride in an IMGGA event on French soil
- Returning to the proposal, note that provision of insurance by IMGGA is not a possibility - "No go"
- Wild card issue/matter is appropriate for further discussion and development – report for February meeting

Action Item: Quentin V. – to work on the question of the white flag (wild card) provisions as they relate to banned riders.

4.18 Video Replays

Presented by Bridget Scott

The current system of cameras is too slow, if the games are paused for a decision between races as happened at the Europeans, horses and riders are kept waiting which is detrimental to their concentration, performance and health (if the weather is particularly bad). Time schedules slip and audiences are put off.

Is video refereeing essential?

If yes, can the current system be improved? Actual system? Training of users?

Should scores be held, and games continue whilst the video is reviewed?

Could multiple iPads, set up around the arena like the New Zealanders use, be better instead of the current camera system.

There has been call for relevant sections of video to be displayed on a big screen (where available) like at football matches, so riders, coaches and audience can see why a particular decision has been made. Does the committee think this is a good idea? Is it a workable idea? Could it happen easily with the current system? Or with the multiple iPad system?

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- See above re: Item 4.16
- In Millstreet on one occasion, used a separate monitor visible to the public for the benefit of informing the audience but environmental factors (glare on the window through which being viewed) meant that this was not ideal/viable
- As per Item 4.16, if available, these measures would fall under the category of 'nice to have' included in the Hosting document

4.19 Referee flags

Presented by Sue Robertson – New Zealand

Referee flags should be supplied to 3☆ and 4☆ Referees at IMGA sanctioned events. I am unsure what these would cost but assume that three of these would be sufficient. This way, all referees use the same flags which helps with consistency and with knowing that the start flags for referees will be at all IMGA competitions. They should be easy to transport and shift around. I would assume a maximum of £25 each should more than cover the cost even if these were to be made?

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Mark notes first that the €50 flag as used in Italy is impractical and eventually wears out; further that there are 11 four-star and 18 three-star referees which represents a significant expenditure
- Proposer Sue notes also that the sentiment is that referees would, through being provided with an official referee flag, be recognized by IMGA for their achievement

Motion: That referee flags should be supplied to 3☆ and 4☆ Referees at IMGA sanctioned events.

Voting Representatives: 15

Voting Results:

Yes - 13 % No – 75 % Abstain - 13 %

The motion is defeated.

4.20 Proposal to introduce an IMGA Rider Engagement Officer

Presented by Veronica Dodds - Scotland

Proposal to create a position for riders' concerns and suggestions to be presented to the IMGA officers for consideration.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Proposer Veronica shares that the basis of proposal was that a rider felt that there was no voice for them in their participation at an event and further that there were limited organised social events – this individual was really seeking someone of their own age through whom to channel information
- Question: Is this beyond the role of the Chef d'Équipe? Answer: Seems more of a social exchange than a Chef d'Équipe responsibility
- Conor (IRE) suggests perhaps a rider(s) to conduct a webinar in March/April of the year of the competition; Conor and Quentin indicate that this is possible for this year – that they will work to bring it about for 2025 competitions that they are organising
- Chris seeks consensus from the group: Is this a 'nice to have' feature implemented by the competition organisers or a 'must have'?
 - General consensus is that this is a 'nice to have' feature to be included in the revisions to the 'Hosting' document

Action Item: Include this in the Hosting document as a “nice to have” feature for the competitions, as implemented by competition organisers.

4.21 Non-European Referees at European Team and Individual Championships

Presented by Bridget Scott

Please re-address the decision passed last year that referees from outside Europe should not be considered for refereeing at the European Championships and vice versa for Nations. This appears to have been a generally unpopular decision. Including in the mix of referees those whose country is not involved would be seen to be fairer as they are less likely to have familial conflicts of interest, and this would also increase the available pool of referees if numbers were low. Segregating referees is divisive, especially as all nations are now allowed to enter the Individual competition at the Europeans.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Proposer Bridget elaborates on the concerns expressed to her by a number of Nations country's referees who were excluded from applying to referee at Europeans even though attending this and other European competitions anyway
- Finance and Administration Officer Jens, confirms that while difficult to definitively assess referees' travel expenses on a year-to-year basis, the system of estimating travel costs for the referees has been reasonably accurate since implemented. In general, a person travelling within Europe will incur lower travel expenses than someone flying overseas
- Noted that European referees have been discouraged from applying to Nations competitions e.g. for Nations 2024, Australian referee applied so Chief Referee Mark withdrew his application in order to facilitate development of Nations country referees.
- Chief Referee Mark clarifies that the riders are levied and this filters through to IMGAs for dispensation to referees i.e. not directly paid to referees by competition organisers
- Query as to whether the payment of referees' accommodations and travel expenses could have a cap, allowing all referees to apply while ensuring that IMGAs rider fees remain reasonable
- From proposal of 2023, Warwick's position reiterated that a referee already in Europe for refereeing be allowed to apply to Europeans

Motion - That referees from Nations countries can apply to referee European Team and Individual Championships.

Voting representatives: 18

Voting Results:

Yes – 83 % No – 6 % Abstain – 11 %

The motion is passed.

➤ **Referee voting results – Jens Martin**

World Team Championship

Mark Crowe

Anthony Rowles-Jones

World Pairs Championship

Mark Crowe

Bridget Scott

Pierre-Luc Portron

World Individual Championship

Mark Crowe

Bridget Scott

Christophe Rossier

Luigi Irollo

Margaret Welsby

Anthony Rowles-Jones

European Team and Individual Championships

Mark Crowe

Jerome O'Connor

Anthony Rowles Jones

Bridget Scott

Michele Spina

Luigi Irollo

Nations Team Championship

Margaret Welsby

➤ **Closing Comments from the Chairperson – Chris Wheeler**

Thank you to all country representatives for your participation and for following along from afar. Thanks to all IMGA Officers and newly elected Communication Officer, Lizzy (LUX) and Vice-Chairperson, Quentin (SWE).

Special thanks to MGA Ireland for their excellent hosting of this AGM at Roganstown, with the wonderful Saturday evening meal at this beautifully comfortable facility and accommodation.

Thanks to Michelle for taking the minutes.

Thank you to all existing committee chairs and to the newly reconstituted Sponsorship and Promotion Committee chaired by IMGA Vice-Chairperson, Quentin.

Happy birthday, Elaine (ENG).

Thank you, Chris, for so capably chairing the meeting.

Action Item: Chris will send through the updated Committees' membership list.

Adjournment: 1:39PM (GMT)

Annex for 2.5

Reports on 2024 Championships

**IMGA Nations Team Championships
Monday 11th to Sunday 17th December 2023
Stellenbosch, Western Cape, South Africa
Report from Chief Referee, Mark Crowe to IMGA**

Organisation

Congratulations to South Africa MGA for a fantastic NTC 2023. Organisation by the local organising team was excellent. The organisers also worked really hard to supply sufficient top-quality pool and self-sourced loan ponies. The entire week including competitions and social events were really well run and were very successful. Jens Martin was in attendance from IMGA – thank you.

Pool ponies

Pool ponies were allocated as close to the agreed IMGA system as was possible given the mix of pool and self-sourcing of ponies. On the Monday the pool ponies were paraded and each played 4 games (Speed weavers, Bottle Shuttle, Bank race and Agility aces). Mark Crowe as referees and Jens Martin graded the ponies based on these races – they were graded on a 7 point scale as A, B+, B, B-, C+, C and C-. This was followed by the pool pony draw. Pool ponies were tack checked at the pool pony parade stage.

Tack check and warm up

The Chief referee along with local volunteers organised tack check again to occur during the warm-up sessions on Tuesday 12 December.

Venue and Arena

Overall, the venue at Stellenbosch was very well positioned with fantastic facilities. The arena was on grass and rode particularly well for the duration of the competition. It had plenty of length, but was a bit tight on width between a fixed scoring box / tower and the fixed edge of the arena. Full size arena games were played. There were 5 lanes, so with 5 teams the scores accumulated through the competition.

The pony pairs race and the hula hoop race were both swapped out of session 1 as all teams except the hosts were on borrowed / pool ponies. By putting these 2 races into sessions 2 and 3 it helped allow riders become more familiar with their ponies before playing these 2 games.

Attendance by the SA Federation

The SA Federation were present and helped oversee tack checks, and general horsemanship. One of the Federation members also helped with scoring of the event.

Equipment

Equipment was standard and mostly as expected.

Medical / paramedic cover

Paramedics were available during the competition.

Veterinary Cover

Veterinary cover was available 24-7 for the entire week of the competition.

Implementation of IMGGA breathalyser policy

One of the IMGGA breathalyser machines was available and testing was organised by Nick Sloan in SA – well done and thank you! All riders, assistant referees and referees undertook a breathalyser breath check each morning of the competition. Overall, this worked very well and continues to be a positive enhancement to all of the IMGGA competitions.

Video system

Four iPads were available to help with video assistant refereeing. Assistant referees on the 3 corners and one at the end helped with starting and stopping the recording. Mark Crowe also brought an additional iPad that was used by the scorers and was also available as VAR purposes on the start line.

Livestream

This was provided by the commentary team with an iPad in the commentary tower.

Final Comments

Finally, many thanks again to South Africa MGA, all its helpers and pool / loan pony providers for running a fantastic and most memorable NTCs. Particular thanks go to Ros Chapman, Tanya Menhinick, Claire Cole, Jens Martin (IMGGA), Nick Sloan for providing the leadership and foresight to make this the successful event that it was.

IMGA World Team Championships
Tuesday 16th to Sunday 21st July 2024
Arezzo, Italy
Report from Chief Referee, Mark Crowe to IMGA

Organisation

Congratulations to MGA Italy for a fantastic WTC 2024 in an excellent venue.

Communication

Chris set up the Chef d'Équipe system that worked reasonably well for communication, although there were a couple of countries where the communications did not feed through to the riders / teams.

Communication by the organisers in advance of the competition was not good and was too late e.g. South Africa could not get sufficient information in time for riders to organise themselves and get their VISAs to travel, so this was a team that as a result could not compete. Also, during the competition, the communication was sometimes difficult. E.g. the supporter cup notice to overseas riders (6th riders) was only sent out the night before the competition started and this requested a per pony fee of €850 for those needing Italian ponies. This was too late and unfair on these riders. Some decided at this stage to not ride as they thought the fee was excessive, but this was very late notice after having made the trip to Arezzo.

Tack check, vet trot up and warm up

The chief referee / referees along with a local team and Vet organised tack check and trot up on Tuesday 16 July. The trot up was set up in an indoor facility and worked well in conjunction with the tack check.

Venue and Arena

Overall, the venue at Arezzo is very well positioned and provided fantastic facilities. The arenas were sand and rode particularly well for the duration of the competition. The main arena accommodated 6 lanes without any problem and that was sufficient for the team entries that we had.

There were minor things that were not good – e.g. the scoring tent was set up on a scaffold platform, with pallets used as steps to get up to it. The pallet steps were somewhat unstable and not really appropriate.

The scoring box in terms of personnel was not set up correctly. There were initially 4 callers who did their own writing. This is not the expected way to do it. There should be one caller (Judge) and 2 writers to record placings and in all cases an iPad should be used to record the race across the start line to facilitate any needed checks or finishing places. The scorers were not supplied with MG scoreboard generated sheets but instead other versions which are much more difficult to use. We have adopted MG scoreboard as the system within IMGA and therefore this is what we should be using. All scorers from the various nations are used to using MG scoreboard generated scoresheets and they are easy and intuitive to use.

Recommendation: Organisers print out MG Scoreboard sheets for the scoreboard teams as part of the organisers SOP.

Pool ponies

The Pool ponies were not allocated by MGA Italy according to the pool pony allocation system. Rather MGA Italy matched pool ponies to the riders based on rider information provided to the organisers. As a result, MGA Italy did not supply any additional or spare pool ponies. So that when problems arose where riders could not get the pony to go up the arena or if an injury occurred there were no alternative spare ponies. This is not the agreed system for pool pony allocation and cannot be allowed to be the system going forward. The charge for pool ponies was also excessive circa €800 per pony.

There was also concern expressed to me that some pool ponies were dropped to the venue up to 3 days before the competition commences without sufficient bedding or hay being provided. Again, this is not acceptable.

Recommendation: For future competitions IMGA need to monitor pool pony allocation plans by host countries, in addition to charges so that both are kept in check and so that our riders travelling from overseas countries are not being asked to pay excessive charges to get pool ponies.

Competition format

Open

9 teams / countries in open; the arena could take a maximum of 6 lanes

So, in the qualifying heats there were heats of 4 or 5 teams.

4 Qualifying sessions and then a 2-part final. A final of 6 teams and a B final of 3 teams.

U18s

8 teams / countries in U18

So, in the qualifying heats there were heats of 4 teams.

4 Qualifying sessions and then a 2-part final. A final of 5 teams and a B final of 3 teams.

Equipment

Equipment was mostly standard and as expected. However, there were some issues with some equipment that should be rectified if there is a proposal to host future IMGA competitions.

1. Early in the year joust was pulled out as Italy said they would not be able to provide functional joust boards.
2. Socks were too light and below the specified weight of 80-100g.
3. Bank numbers were large and exceeded the dimensions of 5cmx10cm.
4. Founder's letters were made of small hard plastic pipe rather than as per the rule book where they should be light, flexible and thin plastic.
5. Poles were plastic rather than made from a very strong wood. But maybe this is a specification that needs to be changed as it is becoming very hard to actually get wooden poles from suppliers of games equipment!
6. The four-flag holders were too tall and too upright and the sockets for flags were too big.

A big thank you to the arena party manager for the competition, Leiti, who did a fantastic job all week with organising the arena and equipment.

Medical / paramedic cover

Paramedics with ambulances were available during the competition.

Safety incident in Arena

One incident of concern occurred during the competition. An open rider was leaning over to pick up a number from the cone while playing bank. The rider's chin strap caught in a clip that was being used on the cheekpiece of the bridle leaving the rider attached to the pony's bridle. Fortunately, the pony did not spook, and the rider managed to release the chin strap and helmet.

Recommendation: That it be added to tack sheets / tack rules that all clips on bridle or reins must be taped during IMGA competitions, and not just clips on the end or reins as is the current rule GR4.4. GR4.4 needs to be amended.

Veterinary Cover

Veterinary cover was available for the entire week of the competition. Well done MGA Italy on providing this essential cover for the competition. A small number of the ponies were vetted out during the competition and pony welfare was prioritised at all times.

WBGT monitoring and temperature conditions during the competition

WBGT monitoring occurred as per the adopted IMGA protocol, with a limit for commencing a session set at a WBGT reading of 30. This in conjunction with running the WTC competitions in the morning and afternoon / evening circumvented any problems of excessive heat during the competition.

There were misting showers available for ponies (during the sessions if needed and breaks were provided when necessary) and after the sessions to cool ponies (and riders down).

Implementation of IMGA breathalyser policy

The IMGA breathalyser machines were available, and testing was organised by the IMGA Chairman with Bridget Scott and Margaret Welsby. All riders, assistant referees and referees undertook a breathalyser breath check each morning of the competition. Overall, this worked very well and continues to be a positive enhancement to the safety of all IMGA competitions.

Video system

Italy had invested in two 9-camera systems that were available for assisting with video playback where necessary to support refereeing decisions. The camera system covered the start line reverse start line, changeover line, reverse change overline, end of arena (two cameras, full view for obstructions), centre equipment line, reverse centre line and a 45° angle from the commentary box. Overall, the system worked well and probably better than the older IMGA systems, the referees helped each other to have video footage cued up where needed as video referees.

Livestream

“GoPro” cameras and a sound system were used for livestreaming through MG scoreboard. This allowed integration of scoreboard results into the livestream. Overall, this worked well, and the organisers are to be congratulated on this.

Ground Jury

The ground jury had to meet regarding a complaint of severe treatment of a pony during one of the warm-up sessions. The ground Jury met with all involved and dealt with the matter and a warning was issued to the rider in question.

Referees and officials

Many thanks to Luigi Irollo as the second referee at the competition for making the competition run smoothly. Luigi refereed the U18 age group while Mark Crowe as Chief Referee refereed the open age group. Thanks also to Bridget Scott and Margaret Welsby for their exceptional help with tack checks and breathalyser. Thanks also to Chris Wheeler for being there as Chairman and his help in keeping all organisation issues on track.

IMGA World Individual Championships
Tuesday 23rd to Sunday 28th July 2024
La Scuderia, Italy
Report from Chief Referee, Mark Crowe to IMGA

Organisation

Congratulations to Sabrina, La Scuderia and MGA Italy for a fantastic WIC 2024 in an excellent venue – La Scuderia.

Communication

Chris set up the Chef d'Équipe system that worked well for communication.

Tack check, vet trot up and warm up

One of the referees along with a local team and Vet organised tack check and trot up on Tuesday 23rd July. The trot up worked well in conjunction with the tack check.

Venue and Arena

Overall, the venue at La Scuderia was excellent and provided fantastic facilities. It had a main arena with 7 lanes and a second arena with 5 lanes. The arenas were sand and rode particularly well for the duration of the competition.

The organisers had scoring teams and commentary teams organised that worked well in both arenas. The scorers were not supplied with MG scoreboard generated sheets but instead other versions which are much more difficult to use. We have adopted MG scoreboard as the system within IMGA and therefore this is what we should be using. All scorers from the various nations are used to using MG scoreboard generated scoresheets and they are easy and intuitive to use. Furthermore, international scoring teams are familiar with these, and they should be standard at all IMGA competitions.

Recommendation: Organisers print out MG Scoreboard sheets for the scoreboard teams as part of the organisers SOP.

Loan ponies

Loan ponies were made available to non-European riders as they were requested, and this gave opportunities to overseas riders to compete.

Competition format

Open

Eight heats of 6 or 7 riders competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with two semifinals and an A final each with seven riders, Lower finals C, D, E, and F.

U18s

Nine heats of 6 or 7 riders competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with two semifinals and an A final each with seven riders, Lower finals C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, and K.

U15s

Twelve heats of 4 or 5 riders competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with two semifinals and an A final each with seven riders, Lower finals C, D, E, F, G and H.

U12s

Six heats of 4 or 5 riders competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with two semifinals and an A final each with 7 riders, Lower finals C, D, E, and F.

Rosettes or keepsake prizes were not available for all competitors.

Recommendation: As per the sanctioned document providing information to organisers of IMGGA events, rosettes or some keepsake prizes should be awarded to all competitors.

Appeals on scores were often directed through the scorers and not the referees.

Recommendation: Riders should be made aware that all appeals must be directed through the referee for the session.

Interference by the Italian MGA federation secretary: At the point of semifinal tee-shirt awards there was interference from the Italian Secretary who insisted that the tee-shirts were awarded incorrectly. This was in fact not the case. This caused significant delay in allocation of tee-shirts and was not appropriate when young riders were mid-way being called up to receive their semifinal tee shirts. There is a system that IMGGA uses when after the heats there is a tie in points. Basically, when tied in points, allocation to semifinal 1 or semifinal 2 is based on draw numbers with the first of a number of tied places being filled by the lower draw number etc.

Recommendation: That local organisers should be fully aware of the IMGGA sanctioned competition document and its contents which contains all details about running competitions.

The runoffs in the second arena were not all run due to insistence from the box that they are not done. This was not correct. At IMGGA events in all cases where there is a tie in points to get into a semifinal or final a run off is required. Also, in lower finals where there is a tie in points there must be a run off to determine final placings.

Recommendation: That local organisers should be fully aware of the IMGGA sanctioned competition document and its contents which contains all details about running competitions including how to deal with a tie in points and run offs.

Equipment

Equipment was mostly standard and as expected. However, there were some issues with some equipment that should be rectified if there is a proposal to host future IMGGA competitions.

1. Socks were too light and below the specified weight of 80-100g.
2. Poles were plastic rather than made from a very strong wood. But maybe this is a specification that needs to be changed as it is becoming very hard to actually get wooden poles from suppliers of games equipment!
3. The triple-flag holders were too tall and too upright and the sockets for flags were too big.
4. Using plastic poles for supporting the Bank boards and Hi-Lo nets were not good they were bending and this was likely made worse with the heat.

A big thank you to the arena party managers for the competition, Sandero, Daniel and Hakim, who did a fantastic job all week with organising the arena and equipment.

Medical / paramedic cover

Paramedics with ambulances were available during the competition in addition to a medical doctor.

Veterinary Cover

Veterinary cover was available for the entire week of the competition. Well done MGA Italy on providing this essential cover for the competition.

WBGT monitoring and temperature conditions during the competition

WBGT monitoring occurred as per the adopted IMGGA protocol, with a limit for commencing a session set at a WBGT reading of 30. This in conjunction with running the WIC competitions in the morning and afternoon / evening circumvented any problems of excessive heat during the competition.

Implementation of IMGGA breathalyser policy

The IMGGA breathalyser machines were available, and testing was organised by the IMGGA Chairman. All riders, assistant referees and referees undertook a breathalyser breath check each morning of the competition. Overall, this worked very well and continues to be a positive enhancement to the safety of all IMGGA competitions.

Video system

Italy had invested in two 9-camera systems that were available for assisting with video playback where necessary to support refereeing decisions. One system was set up in each arena. The camera systems covered the start line reverse start line, changeover line, reverse change overline, end of arena (two cameras, full view for obstructions), centre equipment line, reverse centre line and a 45° angle from the commentary box. Overall, the system worked well and probably better than the older IMGGA systems, the referees helped each other to have video footage cued up where needed as video referees.

Livestream

No Livestream was planned by the organisers so last-minute arrangements were made with members on site to stream using iPads. This provided a livestream, but it was not what is expected from the organisers.

Recommendation: As per the sanctioned document providing information to organisers of IMGGA events a system for providing a livestream for all arenas should be arranged by organisers.

Ground Jury

The ground jury had to meet regarding a complaint of severe treatment of a pony in the warm-up arena. The ground Jury met with all involved and dealt with the matter.

Referees and officials.

Many thanks to Michele Spina, Jerome O'Connor, Margaret Welsby, Warwick Slade, Andrew Rodaughan as the additional referees at the competition for making the competition run smoothly. Referee duties were split amongst the six referees. Thanks

also to Chris Wheeler for being there as Chairman and his help in keeping all organisation issues on track.

IMGA World Pairs Championships
Monday 5th to Sunday 11th August 2024
La Bonde, Normandy, France
Report from Chief Referee, Mark Crowe to IMGA

Organisation

Congratulations to Quentin, Gwen, Louise and Karene from La Bonde for a fantastic WPC 2024 in an excellent venue – La Bonde.

Communication

Chris set up the Chef d'Équipe system that worked well for communication.

Tack check, vet trot up and warm up

The Chief Referee along with Karene and the Veterinarian for the competition organised and carried out the trot up on Tuesday 6th August while Bridget Scott organised the tack check at the same time. These took place beside the main arena. Unfortunately, the Vet was delayed in arrival due to an emergency call. The trot up was also scheduled for a single time and would have been better scheduled with different time slots for each age group.

Recommendation: In future try to ensure Vet doing trot up checks is not also scheduled to be on-call at the same time and also ensure each age group has a different allocated time especially for bigger competitions.

Venue and Arena

Overall, the venue at La Bonde benefited from all the improvements that were implemented for 2021 – thank you, Quentin. IMGA have benefitted significantly from the ongoing improvement works. In advance of the competition Quentin had indicated that we would be using his two arenas and hence a team of six referees was organised. However, while in Italy Quentin then informed us that they would be able to timetable everything into the main arena. This resulted in us having more referees committed to the event than were actually needed. The main arena is wide enough for eight lanes.

Competition format

Open

Six heats of 7 or 8 pairs competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with two semifinals and an A final each with eight pairs, Lower finals C, D, E, and F.

U18s

Twenty-three pairs competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with an A final with eight pairs, and Lower finals C, and D.

U15s

Twenty-five pairs competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with two semifinals and an A final each with eight pairs, and a Lower C final.

U12s

Eleven pairs competed over three qualifying heats. Ending with an A final with eight pairs, and B final with three pairs.

At one point during the U18 final one of the local organising team came into the scoreboard and took the iPad video to look at the finish of a race. They then went out and publicly questioned the referee's decision on that race. This is not acceptable as the scoreboard is an area where only the scoring team, commentator and referees are allowed during a competition. The referee makes all decisions regarding the outcome of a rule infringement in a race.

Recommendation: Local organisers should be fully aware of the IMGA sanctioned competition document and its contents which contains all details about running competitions. It is clear that decisions on rule implementation are for the referee to decide and other members are not allowed to interfere.

Equipment

Equipment was mostly standard and as expected – thanks to Karene.

A big thank you to the arena party manager for the competition, Hakim, who did a fantastic job all week with organising the arena and equipment.

There was a mix up with the presentation of rosettes in U15 'B' final i.e. after the semifinals. A 3-way run off had to take place for the last place in the final and then also for placings 1 and 2 for the "B finalists". Part of the error arose as there wasn't a common language in the scoreboard for that session and there may have been confusion that the placings were by original draw. Final positions in a final where there is a tie on points are determined by the tie-break race. Scorers need to be aware of this.

Recommendations: Officials in the scoreboard need to be briefed on how riders on tied points are dealt with depending on whether it is lane position within the next stage of the competition within a semifinal / final vs final positions in the competition. This is all clear in the organising a sanctioned document.

There was also an elimination complaint in the U15 semifinals. One parent was dissatisfied with the referees' decision over an elimination, she complained at the time to the chief referee who fully reviewed the videos and explained the decision to the mother and trainer; the mother complained in writing to Jens Martin; a full report was submitted by the referee involved and the chief referee. Jens responded to the parent. However, the parent took her view of the matter to another referee whilst at the Europeans, who without consulting the referees involved or the official response to her complaint, gave his view that the incorrect decision had been made and apologised to the parent. Referees need to be aware that they should not comment on decisions made by other referees at other competitions, especially when they are unclear on the circumstances.

Recommendation: One referee should not undermine another especially when unclear on the circumstances. A message will be sent out by the Chief Referee to all referees on what is expected and the best way to manage a situation. Any queries

should be refereed back to the Chief Referee and must not be used to undermine any decisions or other referees.

Medical / Paramedic cover

Paramedics with ambulances were available during the competition.

Veterinary Cover

Veterinary cover was available within 20 mins of the competition site and was available on-call.

WBGT monitoring and temperature conditions during the competition

Temperatures were sufficiently cool that regular WBGT readings were not required.

Implementation of IMGA breathalyser policy

The IMGA breathalyser machines were available, and testing was organised by the IMGA Chairman with Bridget Scott and Louise Hight looking after the station for most of the competition. All riders, assistant referees and referees undertook a breathalyser breath check each morning of the competition. One rider failed the breathalyser on the morning of session 1. That rider withdrew from the competition as they would miss the three qualifying sessions as a result and the rider's partner was able to find another rider to compete. Overall, the breathalyser worked very well and continues to be a positive enhancement to the safety of all IMGA competitions.

Video system

The IMGA eight camera system was used for assisting with video playback where necessary to support refereeing decisions. The camera systems covered the start line, reverse start line, changeover line, reverse change overline, end of arena (two cameras, full view for obstructions), centre equipment line, and a 45° angle from the commentary box. Overall, the system worked well, the referees helped each other to have video footage cued up where needed as video referees.

Livestream

Livestream was run by go-pro devices and appeared to work ok.

Referees and officials

Many thanks to Anthony Rowles-Jones, Andrew Rodaughan, Sharon Daly and Bridget Scott as the additional referees at the competition for making the competition run smoothly. Referee duties were split amongst the five referees. Thanks also to Chris Wheeler for being there as Chairman and his help in keeping all organisation issues on track.

IMGA European Team and Individual Championships
Tuesday 13th to Saturday 17th August 2024
Parc Équestre Fédéral, Lamotte-Beuvron, France
Report from Chief Referee, Alun Whitney to IMGA

Venue

The 2024 European Team and Individual Championships were hosted at the Parc Équestre Federal in Lamotte. The venue provided first-class facilities, including permanent buildings for catering, toilets, showers, and stables. With nineteen arenas available, the venue was well-equipped.

The arenas used for individual competitions were slightly narrower than the standard, leading to a reduction in the distance between lanes. However, this did not pose a significant issue for individual events. The main arena used for the team events and individual A finals was spacious, but its setup could have been improved to enhance safety.

One concern was that the commentary and judging boxes were located inside the arena. I requested that barriers be installed to separate these areas from the playing field. While plant holders were placed as a temporary measure, I recommend using ropes or other physical barriers in future events to ensure the safety of horses, riders, and officials. Additionally, the main arena was slightly shorter and narrower than necessary, despite ample space being available to extend it.

Equipment

A pre-competition inspection of equipment was conducted, and no major issues were identified.

Briefings and Draws

Although I emphasized that the draws should be conducted using Games Pro or MG Scoreboard, the organisers insisted on using their own system. When I raised my concerns, they referenced a document stating:

“The use of this software (or something similar) is strongly recommended for use at all IMGA-sanctioned competitions and must be used for the calculation of draws.”

This excerpt was taken from the Organisation of a Sanctioned Competition, version 2022.3. While the system they used appeared to function adequately, I recommend that all software undergo the same approval process before being implemented in future events.

Briefings were held separately for each age group to ensure clear communication.

Tack Checks

Volunteers appointed by the organisers conducted tack and rider/pony checks before each session for all age groups. Additionally, ponies and riders were monitored in the warm-up area to ensure their soundness.

IMGA Breathalyser Policy

In accordance with IMGA policy, all Open and Under-18 riders, along with random selections from the Under-12 and Under-15 age groups, were required to pass a breath test before their first session of the day. Trainers and arena staff were also tested. Mr. Chris Wheeler supervised the breathalyser process throughout the competition.

Referees

The refereeing team consisted of Anthony R. Jones, Jerome O'Connor, Luigi Rolo, Michele Spina, and myself (Alun Whitney, Chief Referee). Anthony R. Jones served as Chief Referee for the Open Teams while I stepped in to assist the Welsh team. I had no involvement in the refereeing of the Open Teams event.

The referees worked efficiently as a team, holding daily debriefs to address issues and ensure consistent decisions. We rotated referees to provide experience across different competition levels.

However, I faced difficulties with the organisers, who insisted that shadow referees be used on the second day. I reminded them that shadow referees were intended to observe and learn under senior referees, as per the agreed structure. The organisers then threatened to remove all IMGA officials from the event unless the shadow referees were permitted to officiate. After consulting with Chris Wheeler, I agreed to a compromise: shadow referees could participate under the direct supervision of a sanctioned referee, with final decisions being made by the official referee.

While I fully support providing learning opportunities for emerging referees, it undermines the established voting and refereeing structure if referees are appointed arbitrarily by organisers. Shadow referees were, however, fully involved in video reviews and assistant refereeing duties during the A Finals.

Competition

Individuals

The individual competitions across all age groups were highly competitive, with strong participation despite travel difficulties faced by some international teams.

Teams

The number of participating teams was lower than in previous years, with two age groups having accumulated scores rather than qualifiers and finals. The Open B Final was unexpectedly moved to the individual competition rings, which were away from the main infrastructure. This decision was unpopular with the affected riders.

Awards

There were concerns about the lack of awards for the lower finals. In some cases, there was not even an acknowledgment of their achievements over the PA system, nor were riders given the opportunity for a lap of honour.

Medical and Paramedic Cover

The first aid and paramedic teams provided competent and efficient coverage throughout the event.

Video System

All three arenas were equipped with multi-view camera systems for referee use. The cameras were primarily used for appeals but also allowed referees to review incidents independently when needed. While referees were mindful of maintaining the competition's flow, the priority was ensuring accurate decisions.

Live Streaming

Organisers provided their own in-house Livestreaming. Unfortunately link to it was not easily available

Gala

Due to the finals and presentations running late, I was unable to attend the Gala, as I had an early departure the next morning. However, feedback from attendees was generally positive, except for the late start.

Overall Summary

It appeared that the organisers believed they could operate independently of IMGA guidelines and authority. I was told directly that they did not need IMGA's involvement. While the event ran successfully overall, it is crucial to maintain consistent standards and adherence to IMGA protocols in the future to ensure fairness and safety.

Annex for 3.2

Selection of referees for 2025 IMGA sanctioned competitions

2025 IMGA World Team Championships (Open & U-18)

11-17 August

Hippodrome de Wallonie, Ghlin, Belgium

Two referees required

Candidates:

Christophe Rossier

Mark Crowe

Jan Christensen

Anthony Rowles-Jones

Sharon Daly

Pierre-Luc Portron

Bridget Scott

Margaret Welsby

2025 IMGA World Pairs Championships (All age groups)

19-23 August

Corné, France

Three referees required

Candidates:

Christophe Rossier

Mark Crowe

Jan Christensen

Andrew Rodaughan

Sharon Daly

Pierre-Luc Portron

Bridget Scott

Margaret Welsby

2025 IMGA World Individual Championships (U12, U15 & U18)

1-5 May

La Bonde, France

Four referees required

Candidates:

Luigi Irollo
Mark Crowe
Christophe Rossier
Bridget Scott
Margaret Welsby

2025 IMGA World Individual Championships (Open)

8-12 May

La Bonde, France
Two referees required

Candidates:

Christophe Rossier
Anthony Rowles-Jones
~~Bridget Scott~~
Margaret Welsby

2025 IMGA European Team and Individual Championships (All age groups)

29 July – 3 August

Millstreet, Ireland.
Six Referees required

Candidates:

Alun Whitney
Luigi Irollo
Mark Crowe
Michele Spina
Anthony Rowles-Jones
Jerome O'Connor
Bridget Scott

2025 IMGA Nations Team Championships (Open)

8-14 September

Northam Equestrian Park, Western Australia

One referee required

Candidates:

Max French

Sharon Daly

Margaret Welsby

Annex for 3.2

WIC & WPC application from Austria:

<https://we.tl/t-iuQJUX7bgv>

WTC application from France (La Bonde):



IMGA WTC 2027.pdf

WPC application from Sweden:



Application World
Pairs Championship 2

ET&IC application from Sweden:



Application European
Championship 2027.p

WTC, WPC and WIC application from France (Corné):



candidature 2027.odt