



# INTERNATIONAL MOUNTED GAMES ASSOCIATION



## **Agenda: IMGA online meeting Saturday 8 February 2025 20:00 CET**

### **Attendees:**

Jemima Gardiner - Australia  
Rachel Lechner - Austria  
Robin Donnay - Belgium  
Michelle Cruikshanks - Canada  
Elijah Zhangxiaotian - China  
Elaine Trevor Jones - England  
Jonathan Marion - France - for Stéphane Tardif  
Volker Baasch - Germany  
Conor O'Leary - Ireland  
Lizzy Franck - IMGA Communication Officer - Luxembourg  
Sue Robertson - New Zealand  
Veronica Dodds - Scotland  
Quentin Voeltzel - IMGA Vice-Chair - Sweden  
Quentin Gargallo - Switzerland  
Paul Greiling - United States of America  
Alun Whitney - Wales

Chris Wheeler - IMGA Chairperson  
Jens Martin - IMGA Administration and Finance Officer  
Mark Crowe - IMGA Chief Referee

### **Guests:**

Sean Bource - WTC Belgium 2025  
Bridget Scott

### **Meeting Convened 20:00h CET**

#### **Introduction:**

#### **Updates from the Chairperson:**

##### **1. The Hosting A Sanctioned Competition document**

- Has been updated by Chief Referee Mark with assistance from Michelle - reduced in size from 64 to 51 pages and nearly complete.
- **Note:** one item for consideration by the International Representatives group today:
  - One page of the original *Hosting* document indicated number of games for Pairs and Individuals as seven (7) versus another part of the document stating eight (8).

#### Discussion/Opinions:

- Eight games for pairs seems reasonable - for Individuals the ponies are working harder.

- Seven is more appropriate for both formats due to the increased speed at which games tend to be played in recent years.
- Mark confirms that the current year's games lists have been created with seven races
- Chairperson Chris feels that the number should remain the same for this year given that the information has been published. Additional discussion possible at a future date and perhaps even the 2025 AGM.

## 2. IMGGA Annual General Meeting

- Austria is suggesting 25 and 26 October 2025 since this coincides with their pairs competition - a nice additional feature for the AGM

Discussion:

- Paul notes that this weekend is the traditional weekend for USMGA year-end final competition - a major event
- Quentin shares that Switzerland has a major event on that weekend
- Mark has a significant event for Irish Pony Club

**Action Item:** Austrian Representative Rachel offers to seek November dates from the Austrian organization. IMGGA AGM proposed dates are November 15/16, 2025.

- Suggestion made that AGM attendees could view recorded footage of the late October Austrian Pairs competition was met with a favourable response.

### Agenda Item 1

**Proposal: Seeding. Alun Whitney (WAL). See attached PDF. Vote on this.**

- Alun reviews the proposal that he presented in November –
  - Seeding using 'snake' (preferable for fairness from Alun's perspective) versus 'snail' method.
  - Suggests to first consider and approve the overall idea of seeding versus continuing with random draws for heats.

Discussion/Questions:

- Question: How is the first draw completed? Does someone just sit down?
  - Opinions:
    - Previous year's end results used to develop the draws for the first competition
    - Going back to the way it was previously done
    - New Teams would be added after the known teams were sorted out
    - Seeding proposal seems to result in competitors meeting the maximum number of other competitors
    - Very fair based on your performance rather than 'luck' or lack thereof
    - Much fairer than in recent years
    - Jens - used final scores from previous year to place teams in the first session - team attrition was a significant factor for which there was not a tenable solution proposed at the time
    - Caution advised - the case of the FFE doing seeding prior to team arrivals is not generally popular
    - Chief Referee assigning draws is not advisable

- Random draw for first session would make it easier to apply this system to other international competitions
- Question: For clarity, is this proposal for Team only or for all IMGA competitions?
- Suggestion: Consider original proposal and then, if carried, discuss its applicability to Individuals and Pairs:
  - Keep or reject current system in favour of seeding system? Conduct second vote if seeding system proposal is adopted:
    - Random draw for Session 1 or seeded based on previous year's A Final?
    - Potential third vote - Apply seeding system to Team or all IMGA-sanctioned competitions?
    - General agreement to proceed as suggested above
- Question: What was the rationale for removal of the seeding system in favour of random draws?
- Answer: Jens - historically, the point of seeding was to keep top teams away from each other until the finals. Several years ago, discussion promoting a shift to random draws revolved around the idea that 'weaker' teams could get a 'lucky' breakthrough through random draws in the qualifying sessions, giving them a chance to advance to a higher final
- Current proposal is really just about spreading the teams out - currently, lower number of heats (as in WTC 2024) is a significant factor in favour of this approach
- Chief Referee Mark and Alun view low number of heats as more reason to come up with a way of ensuring the spreading out of top and bottom teams
- **Procedural Note:** RingCentral polling feature no longer available - voting completed through participant Chat room, each representative privately messaging Administration and Finance Officer Jens of their vote.
  - Voting representatives: Sixteen (16)
  - Voting results - to follow once chat room responses are tabulated

## **Agenda Item 2**

### **One heat scoring system wording - Conor O'Leary (IRE)**

- Chairperson Chris reminds attendees that at the Roganstown 2024 AGM, the International Representatives were in favour of the one heat scoring system - we are now seeking approval of the wording proposed by Mark and Conor:

*For Single Heat Competitions only, the following change in scoring system shall apply:*

- *All competitions shall be run to the current template of qualifying rounds plus finals.*
  - *In a competition where there are only enough entries to fill a single heat, teams/individuals will carry forward to the final, a score relating to their finishing position in each qualifying session. This score will be the inverse value of their finishing place in each session.*
  - *For instance, if there are 7 teams/individuals in a session, the team/individual finishing in first place for each session will carry 7 points to the final, the team/individual finishing second will carry 6 points to the final, and so on to the team/individual that finished seventh in the session, carrying 1 point to the final. If there are 6 teams/individuals in a qualifying session, the winner carries 6 points forward to the final, and so on.*
  - *The starting score in the final will be the accumulated carried forward scores from each of the qualifying sessions.*

- Teams/Individuals will line up in the final in the order that the carried forward scores dictate.

The scoring system of all competitions with two or more heats, shall remain unchanged.

### **Agenda Item 3**

#### **Rules Committee Update - Jens Martin (Rules Committee Chairperson)**

- Activities for 2024 wrapped up and the 2025 Rulebook is available online.
  - Original print copy publisher has been switched due to a mechanical issue which would have caused a three week delay.
    - New printer to start printing next week
    - Hard copy should be available by the end of next week
    - To order hard copies, the ordering instructions will be added to the website
    - Chris can bring copies to la Bonde or he can post/mail them

### **Agenda Item 4**

#### **Rulebooks**

- Very important to do thorough education this year due to the nature of the changes, particularly:
  - The *genuine attempt* - largely no longer there except for select races in which the rules indicate the requirements. Wording is now "*Attempt*".
  - The requirement to *rewind* for error correction - each step of a race in which an error occurs does not have to be rewound but rather the race equipment must be reset, corrected by the rider causing the error, as it was at the point when the error occurred, prior to completion of the race by the team, pair, or individual.
- Country Referee Liaisons holding a meeting (February 20) at which Warwick's Rule changes presentation will inform Liaisons
  - Liaison referees should plan to take that information/presentation to their respective countries for a complete roll out
- Chairperson Chris feels that Communications Officer Lizzy will be beneficial in publicising rule changes across IMGA communication platforms
  - Chief Referee Mark notes that Lizzy has started this process - just working through scenarios for key items to share

### **Agenda Item 5**

#### **2025 Competitions - Updates - NTC, WIC, ET&IC, WTC, WPC.**

##### **World Team Championship - Sean Bource**

- Organization is underway with entries closed officially Friday, February 1
  - Open teams - fourteen (14)
  - U18 teams - eleven (11)
- Still waiting for answers from three countries - thank you very much to all of the countries who have replied
- Website is up and running and information is also published on the IMGA website

- Working on different topics at the moment so please note that detailed responses to queries will follow
- 25% deposit due February 16 - financial obligations are already high so this influx is required.
- There will be an Individual competition organized for the 6<sup>th</sup> riders .
- Belgium organisers are looking forward to seeing everyone at the competition
  - Question: Late entry limit? Answer: Later entries are being accepted with an attached extra set of fees; however, they will be most welcome to join in the championships
  - Wales and Scotland are planning tryouts and will have team selected shortly
    - Sean confirms that team entry count includes the Austrian and USA teams - just send the form without details - the deposit is key at this time.
      - Austria can't send the official form due to internal bureaucracy about identifying and approving riders
      - Italy encountered the same; again, Sean indicates no need for rider specifics, just the commitment and deposit.

**Procedural Note:** Seeding Vote no. 1 - Jens requests that voting representatives use the chat room to send their vote to him privately.

### ***Nations Team Championship - Jemima Gardiner***

- West Australia committee is going full steam ahead with organizing.
- Would like to thank Margaret for refereeing and Chris for acting as the IMGA official
- Balanced event schedule - safe, excellent experience
- Monthly meetings with task delegation - grant and fundraising. Mindful always of balanced budget.
- Information going online at the end of February
  - \$1000 AUD entry fee
  - \$600 pony fee for overseas riders which includes insurance costs
  - At this stage no transport \$'s available
  - Deposit due early April; June - final balance due
  - Team Arrival - noon September 8; departure noon September 12 -
  - All to rent caravans, etc.
- Merchandise and supporter packs and camping - details being provided in next short
- Social events have been set
- Next focus is on securing ponies to ensure that all riders have the best experience possible
- Warwick conducting Assistant Referee and Referee training to update the West Australia membership in March - he will inspect their equipment at that time.
  - At the beginning of the year, equipment checks were conducted with upgrading continuing
- Chris notes that he booked his flights this morning and expresses thanks to Jemima for the excellent presentation

### ***World Individual Championship - Quentin Voeltzel***

- Forty (40) entries so far
  - Looks like it is going to be well attended with high international participation
  - Many competitors are indicating that they will be staying on for the second weekend
  - The organisers are busy fielding questions for information regarding timing of the competition - there continues to be a misconception that the competition is going on at the same time as Champions' league
- Inspections and bureaucracy - process is underway, and no second inspection visit needed

- Organisers are working on expanding food service options - e.g. rotisserie in addition to other offerings

### **European Team and Individual Championships - Conor O'Leary and Mark Crowe**

- Opened February 3, remaining open until May 16, entries possible beyond deadline (subject to additional fees)
- Mark updated information regarding transit paperwork required - Conor notes that it is less restrictive than going to the UK to compete.
  - Note that transit paperwork for competing at ETIC is limited to that competition, riders can't stop and compete along the way on that paperwork.

### **World Pairs Championship - Chris Wheeler**

- Email address for Organizer Ghislain Deslandes is on the IMGA website under 'Events' so contact him regarding World Pairs

## **Agenda Item 6 (completed ahead of Competition Updates)**

### **IMGA Newsletter - Chris**

- Communication Officer Lizzy is hopeful that the publication was to our liking; Jens notes lots of good follow-up and Chris states that Lizzy has the additional communication platforms active
- General agreement that the newsletter was informative, well laid out, and very visually appealing

## **Agenda Item 7**

### **Officials for our 2025 Championships**

- See meeting slide show presentation

## **Summary of Action Items from our AGM** (completed ahead of Item 7)

Chris reminded attendees - with graphic illustration of "oubliette" - that we do not wish to lose track of the action items that we had resolved to complete:

- **Action Item 1:** Assigning an additional official at the warmup arena(s) to monitor and assess pony soundness and welfare.
- **Action Item 2:** Consider further refinements to the breathalyser testing process so that identification is confirmed. Ideas needed for this.
- **Action Item 3:** 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.
- **Action Item 4:** Country Representatives to ensure that their organisation contacts the winning rider/pair/team such that the trophy/cup is returned, engraved, and in good repair onward to the next competition.

**Update:** Chris reiterates the need to track these trophies

- **Action Item 5:** Worldwide Games. 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. Volunteers needed to help check timings, please.
- **Action Item 6:** 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.

- **Action Item 7:** International Representatives to send ideas to Chris for getting trainers in to those developing countries.
- **Action Item 8:** Mark - develop a reference card of common, important IMGGA procedures relevant for score box personnel.
- **Action Item 9:** 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.
- **Action Item 10:** Veterans competition: International Representatives - share with country organizations and direct inquiries and suggestions to Chris who is coordinating discussion by interested parties.
- **Action Item 11:** Vice-Chairperson Quentin to gather additional committee members to begin the work of the Sponsorship and Promotions Committee.
- **Action Item 12:** Establishment of a Pony Welfare Commission. French to take chair/leadership role.
  - **Update - French suggestion for the composition of this committee** - Jonathan:
    - This committee should include experienced rider/coach/referee/vet - needs Stéphane to continue to work on this item
    - Suggesting that like other of the IMGGA committees, the group be composed of those with vested interest
    - Suggests that the committee have arbitration capacity regarding matters coming before it
    - Notes that the French are instituting such a commission
    - Follows by indicating that the FFE held elections recently so are not in a position to meet at this moment
    - Chris invites French Federation to contact himself and Quentin who are keenly interested in furthering the implementation of this IMGGA action item.
- **Action Item 13:** Vice-Chairperson Quentin - to work on the question of the white flag (wild card) provisions as they relate to banned riders.
  - **Update - Introduction of proposal developed by Quentin** - Chris:
    - Quentin provides the overall rationale for proposal of including democratic approaches and due process
    - Feels that a country's decision to ban a rider could be justified and that an active decision-making process is needed to consider the reasons for a particular ban rather than having anyone free to just enter competitions i.e. limit liability for IMGGA and ensure that those involved in significantly bad actions are not permitted to join competitions run by IMGGA
    - Chris elaborates that Quentin is suggesting that a group of four or five members consider/review entries from those wishing to ride under the white flag provisions
    - Question for Quentin: Who do you envision being members of this group? Answer - Quentin: Wants to include an appeal process - as is the case in a variety of organisations - and so envisions including a lawyer and veterinarian (ideally from the membership to reduce costs)
    - Chief Referee Mark notes that the Ground Jury process already includes provisions for appeal
    - **Procedural point and clarification** - Chief Referee Mark feels that there are two discussion topics currently underway:
      - 1) White flag provisions
      - 2) Appeals in general

- Quentin - noted that discussion at AGM focused on the difficulties inherent in sharing information about reasons for a country's ban on a rider - confidentiality, etc.
- **Action Item follow-up** - Chairperson Chris requests that International Representatives give some thought to this matter and discuss it with members at home keeping in mind the following:
  - This group would consider each case of a 'white flag' entry having been banned in their home country
    - To consider: Do we need to set up a commission including e.g. a lawyer and additional experts, and international persons having the required expertise?
  - This continues as a discussion item so please ask at home and ask Quentin for additional information or clarification
  - Additional clarification/opinions:
    - Administration Officer Jens would flag an entry where a country says "no", then the matter would be referred to this IMGA commission for consideration and determination?
    - The reason for the ban needs to be considered
    - Entry form - any chance that the existence of a rider ban could be a line on the entry form?
  - Jens reviews the current process - when entries are made, country organizations are asked to confirm that riders are free to represent their country. In the case where a country responds, 'no go', then the entry is automatically sent to the 'white flag' side of the process
  - Discussion continues - Confidentiality issue - confirmation that a rider who refuses to share reason for their ban is prohibited from entering i.e. if the country organisation refuses to share the reason for the rider's ban based on confidentiality, then it is the responsibility of the rider to provide the reason in order to have their entry considered
  - Question: Can the reason for the ban and white flag entry be part of the early entry process rather than being flagged close to the competition date?
  - Administration Officer Jens reminds the group that the 'banned rider' scenario is rare
  - Overall - To prevent a banned rider from competing, the reason for the ban would need to be in contravention of IMGA standards, etc., not just that the rider fell out of favour in their home country or e.g. owed fees. Significant negative actions would be grounds for ban from IMGA competition - criminal activity, cruelty, not bureaucratic issues
  - **Action Item Follow-up:** Chairperson Chris notes that Quentin will bring his proposal for consideration at the May meeting. This is an important issue having significant impact.
- **Action Item 14:** To introduce an IMGA Rider Engagement Officer.

**Next International Representatives' online meeting is Thursday 22 May at 20:00 CET**

### **Voting Results - Agenda Item 1 - Seeding Proposal**

- Administration Officer Jens provided voting results and confirmed that these are effective immediately:
  1. Return to system of seeded heats from current randomly selected heats
  2. Implement a Random draw for the first heat followed by seeded heats
  3. Apply the system of seeding to all competitions - Team, Pair, Individual

**Action Item:** Chief Referee Mark to confirm with Mats that MG Scoreboard can provide random heats for the first session and then shift to manually seeded heats; Alun notes that MG Scoreboard should have this capacity

Discussion/ Clarification:

- Question: Did we agree on 'snake' or 'snail' version of seeding for purpose of the vote? Answer: Mixed response. Some agreed that they voted based on 'snake' version favoured by the proposer while others voted based on historic 'snail' version
  - For clarification, Alun reviewed proposal describing both seeding systems- snake maximizes the balance within and across heats. Snail was used many years ago by IMGGA.
- The vote on adoption of seeding system was repeated with specific reference to the two versions of manual seeding - Snake and Snail
  - **Voting results:** (Note - fifteen votes cast)
    - Vote administrator Jens reports that the 'Snake' system of seeding has been adopted.

### **Closing Comments from Chairperson Chris:**

Thanks very much to everyone for attending and for adapting to the voting modifications this evening. May 22<sup>nd</sup> is the next meeting - Thursday selected due to increasing weekend commitments by May.

**Meeting Adjourned 22:12 CET**