

# International Mounted Games Association 20<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting – November 19, 2022

## Minutes of Online IMGA Annual General Meeting – Saturday, November 19, 2022

### Remote Participation with RingCentral Meetings

Meeting opened by the Chairperson, Chris Wheeler, at 8:11 a.m. GMT (9:11 a.m. CET)

#### 1. Introduction – Chris Wheeler

**Welcome** by the Chair – Note that this Meeting is being recorded beginning 8:11 GMT; 9:11 CET

Thanks to Michelle for taking minutes.

**Guidelines for remote participation** – no proxies have been received so all participants will vote using RingCentral with ballots developed by A. Whitney; from this point onward Chris will share his screen – Alun will monitor for new arrivals to the meeting.

**Participants - In attendance as of 8:11 a.m. GMT; 9:11 a.m. CET:**

#### IMGA Officials:

Chris Wheeler	Chairperson	
Keith Martin	Vice Chairperson	
Jens Martin	Finance/Administration	
Megan Tutt	Communication	Absent
Pierre-Luc Portron	Development	Absent
Alun Whitney	Chief Referee	
Mark Crowe	Chair – Qualifications and Training Committee	

#### International Representatives (V – Voting member) and Guests:

Warwick Slade (V)	Australia	
Rachel Lechner (V)	Austria	
Robin Donnay (V)	Belgium	Joined in progress
Michelle Cruikshanks (V)	Canada	
Alžbeta Mašková	Czech Republic	Absent
Signe Sehested (V)	Denmark	
Elaine Trevor Jones (V)	England	
Jonathon Marion (V)	France	
Volker Baasch (V)	Germany	
Conor O’Leary (V)	Ireland	
Andrea Piazza (V)	Italy	
Lizzy Franck (V)	Luxembourg	
Sue Robertson (V)	New Zealand	
Allister Hamilton (V)	Northern Ireland	
Karen Houge (V)	Norway	Joined in Progress -Represented by Stian
Veronica Dodds (V*)	Scotland	

Nick Sloane (V)	South Africa	
Judith Porcel Follet	Spain	Absent
Caroline Claeson (V)	Sweden	
Marino Kammerman (V)	Switzerland	Joined in progress – Quentin Gargallo
Paul Greiling (V)	USA	
Alun Whitney (V)	Wales	
Sean Bource	Belgium	
Andrea Lohée	Belgium	
Pete Walters	England	
Rory Prime	England	
Mats Hensel	Germany	
Tanya Menhinick	South Africa	

**Total Voting Representatives – 20      Voting by Proxy – 0      Votes submitted through Chair – 1\* (SCO)**

**Voting** – will be on RingCentral Meetings; in the event of technical difficulties, votes to be conveyed through message to Chairperson Chris and alternates as selected by the Chair.

**Note:** For motions relative to Items 4.3 and 4.4, proxy votes were held by the following:

- Warwick Slade (AUS) – proxy held by Mark Crowe
- Sue Robertson (NZL) – proxy held by Chris Wheeler

**Note:** for motions relative to Items 4.3 and 4.4, votes were conveyed as follows:

- Karen Houge (NOR) – vote submitted by Jens Martin
- Veronica Dodds (SCO) – vote submitted by Pete Walters)

**Schedule –**

- Intention is to proceed through the meeting agenda in its entirety today, November 19, 2022.

## **2. Looking Back at 2022 – Chris Wheeler**

**Presentation –**

- Competition in France last weekend – was great
- Belgium held a great competition about a month ago
- Nations Team Championship USA 2023 – Great win to New Zealand; lots of great social and hospitality
- Europe – competitions went well, numbers of entrants was reduced re: Brexit and generally increased cost of living and transporting ponies
- All IMGA sanctioned competitions in 2022 were “really good”; Chairperson Chris was very impressed with the welcome, hospitality, and great riding at events
- Standard was fantastic “all in all”

## 2.1 Review of IMGA's Year – Chris Wheeler

### Presentation –

- **Assistant Referee Course –**
  - Assistant referee course was done with many people; now adding those candidates to official IMGA Referee and Assistant Referee lists
  - Need to address the challenge presented by people completing course the evening prior to competition, therefore not on the list of currently qualified Assistant Referees; this is stressful to organisers identifying Assistant Referees qualified to officiate on the day of the competition
  - Many people have learned much about IMGA rules and refereeing through the completion of online and in-person courses
  
- **Charity Day Orange Day**
  - Thanks to Welsh organisers for their excellent support
  - Many people chipped in wearing and carrying the colour orange
  - Air Ambulance Wales was presented with £1204.00
  - Many people helped – Bridget Scott kindly manned the booth
  - More than the anticipated amount was raised to present to the Welsh Air Ambulance Service
  
- **Short Arena modified games Pilot at Europeans –**
  - Went well based on Chris' informal survey of a couple of trainers and riders whose feedback was positive
  - Additional feedback suggested that these games reduced the technical requirements and increased the speed for some races due to the 'run for home'; also observed was the increase in technical requirements of some games such as Mug Shuffle played both up and back
  
- **Breathalyser Testing-**
  - went well overall; feedback was positive
  - One adjustment to Breathalyser administration that Chris would like to make; seeking input as follows, please
    - Testing starts at 7:00 a.m. but testing personnel seem to be there for the whole day; wondering if we could set a stop point at e.g., 11:00 a.m.
    - Can we ask all riders, trainers, and Assistant Referees to report for testing by 11:00?
    - Based on another country's long-term experience, observation shared that testing has worked well when separated into two time-limited sessions corresponding to the morning and afternoon sessions
    - Question posed as to what provisions would be available for those needing a retest? Confirmation of the availability of testing personnel for this purpose throughout the competition day
  - Question: What about an 18-year-old rider at time of competition? i.e., turned 18 after January 1. Answer: The rider in that case is considered 18 and is tested accordingly.

**Action – Chairperson Chris will look at the timings for Breathalyser testing with the intent to schedule two separate testing sessions a.m. and p.m.**

### Camera Systems –

- Chairperson comments that Alun is fantastic as always at providing and setting up the cameras; systems have been good

- Signe already has the cameras for next year
- Keeping a set of camera equipment on Mainland Europe due to costs of transport and potential import delays for this equipment
- One set was carried during the season to mainland Europe and will stay; safer and cheaper to keep that set there, many thanks to Alun
- Alun is stepping back from setting up and transporting the cameras; willing to assist but is finding that camera system tasks overflow into the role of Refereeing; need people to “step up”
- Chairperson Chris supports Alun’s observations – absolutely; relates the extent to which setting up, troubleshooting, and taking down is very time-consuming, e.g., takedown with cabling covered in sand and muck; huge work to set up and maintain
- One country was able to do full set up in 2021 when Alun unavailable; had to construct longer cables but the system worked well
- Alun added cabling to the storage boxes - shipping is now less practical; countries made aware in advance of requirement to provide cabling, but this continues to be inconsistently available
- Questions re: provisions for cameras for a two-arena scenario; note that Wales has the original set
- Alun questions if eight camera setup is needed for each arena; time-consuming to set up and requires volunteers ready in advance
- Suggestion made that host country be responsible for setup; reminder provided that this has been the requirement to which organisers are not typically adhering
- Note for 2024 – two arenas will be needed; La Bonde will need two sets next August – Chris will take the additional set
- Italy requests equipment specifications from Alun; if purchases planned, an agreed-upon type and quantity of equipment would be helpful
- Alun confirms that equipment and setup/operational checklists and instructions are available; what is needed are organisers to complete the task
- Recognition of difficulty securing volunteers but with advance notification, much groundwork can be completed ahead of the competition
- iPads are used by one country; found that they are easy to use and transport
- Alun found iPads to be more complicated and not as comprehensive; the cost of the eight-camera system is cheaper than purchase price of two iPads
- Australia requests confirmation of either IMGA funding for cameras or cameras transported by Referee for WTC 2023 Response: cameras won’t be transported by the Referee
- Query as to the particulars of the current eight camera system; four cameras and cables would be suitable - probably two cables @ 50yd. and two @ 125yd. Expect £500 for cameras and £100 or so for cables
- Confirmation from Finance Officer Jens – it is possible to ship cameras but transport costs have been variable and prohibitive; may be more economical to purchase a set for each continent – NA, AUS/NZ, etc.
- Alun to handle requests for information and provide equipment standards/specifications; AUS, USA, CAN interested in this information

**Action- Alun and Jens to research and provide information and specifications to each IMGA country for both four- and eight-camera systems suitable for use at Mounted Games competitions.**

#### **Tack Check –**

- went well; help from Margaret (NZL) is appreciated

- Chris indicates that helmet checks are time-consuming; Pony Club uses system of tagging to indicate approved helmets; Chris might try this – it's an instant check that a helmet is approved-

#### **Discussion-**

- One country uses stickers for approved helmets with annual inspection and change of sticker colour
- One country discussed and rejected use of stickers – assessment of helmet safety felt to be the responsibility of the rider not a responsibility of and liability for the organization
- Sticker system previously used in another country and historically, for IMGA; a return to such a system would need supporting protocol - Health and Safety committee item?
- Pros and cons of helmet inspection, responsibility for helmet replacement, and how to monitor discussed
- Riders are variable in their adherence to helmet replacement recommendations; riders could compromise helmet structure away from competition and still present at tack check with an 'approved' sticker
- IMGA maintains an updated, regularly revised list of helmets; outdated helmets removed
- Suggestion: seek guidance from a helmet company re: guidelines to check helmets after falls or impact; in the event of fall or impact at competition, sticker is removed – rider returns to play once helmet is replaced/certified safe
- Original intent of this Agenda item: Improve efficiency of checking hats/helmets - may need to be examined more closely by Health and Safety Committee
- Alun indicates Referees currently have no definitive recourse to prevent a rider's return to play after a fall; other sports have protocols with clear indicators for return to play e.g., medical certification
- Example provided of concussion sustained without head impact underlines the need for general concussion education and protocols

**Action – Health and Safety to examine hat/helmet standards and concussion protocol within the following parameters:**

- Home country holds responsibility for certification of concussion-free status of riders coming into competition
- IMGA involved only in the case of injuries sustained sanctioned competitions
- General knowledge of concussion signs and symptoms would be helpful to all

**The Committee to report at the February meeting of IMGA International Representatives.**

#### **Chefs d'équipe – Chris Wheeler**

- This role resulted in successfully getting information out to teams re: social events, scheduling updates, etc. at competitions

#### **Newsletter – Chris Wheeler**

- Has been good; thanks for contributions – always gratefully received; Megan has done a good job – Thank you, Megan.

#### **Keeping International Competitions Going – Chris Wheeler**

- With Brexit, problems have been experienced but there are countries where people are working to keep games going e.g., Quentin at la Bonde has been very active as has Pete Walters from Sussex; Andrea Piazza (ITA) has been very active, facilitating Italian participation 'everywhere' - borrowed ponies used to allow large contingencies at competitions. Special thanks are extended to Quentin, Pete, and Andrea for their advocacy and active support.

- Growth of the sport continues as an item for consideration by IMGA and IMGA Strategic Planning Committee

## 2.2 Rules Committee Report – Jens Martin

### Report -

- Summary of activities during year to date:
  - Very quiet year; backlog from previous eighteen years completely cleared
  - Mark has submitted some new rule change requests; three have already been completed
  - Question: Will short arena games rules be incorporated into the existing set of rules or developed as separate document? Initial response: Jens sees integration with existing rules as sensible - Committee to consider how to set that up

### Discussion-

- Question: Was there a feedback opportunity for the pilot of short arena games rules? Was there feedback form?
- One country's riders expressed some level of discontent viewing feeling that fast ponies were favoured, and that technical games became speed games due to one length of the arena as a straight run
- Observation made that some races had increased levels of technicality - e.g., mug shuffle played up and back – which balanced the speed concern
- Question: Any tracking of injuries ponies and riders using these modified rules?
- Italy enjoyed these races and will implement them more widely; Canada likewise – has allowed for use of smaller available arenas

### Action-

- Send your feedback to Jens so that it can be directed to the Rule Committee for inclusion in their deliberations
- Ensure that you have sent your comments to Jens by November 25
- Rules Committee to update the Rulebook and consider where best to include the rules for Modified Games e.g., separate section in Rulebook, separate document?

### Rulebook Sales – Jens Martin

- Sales of hard copies: 326 - pretty good; 35 copies left in stock so even if limited changes are made for 2023, strong likelihood of new printing for 2023 with changes.
- Digital downloads: 4718 – note that this certainly reflects multiple downloads per person
- New Rule Committee will be instituted as of today's announcement of election results

### Status of Rule Book for 2023 –

- Expected 2023 printing will incorporate the newly changed rules and if short arena rules are incorporated, those, too; Administrative updates also to be included e.g., Spain as a member country

## 2.3 Financial Report – Jens Martin

### Presentation -

- Current financial status as of November 2022; documents to follow with Meeting Minutes
- Revenue: generated through Affiliation fees, rulebook sales, rider fee payments, and small amount of Newsletter income for a total of £12548.40

- Expenditure: rulebook printing, camera equipment purchase reimbursement, trophies, administrative expenses, charity donations – note decision last year to put Charity Day proceeds to Wales’s cause (Air Ambulance)
- Referee expenses protocol put in place a couple of years ago became active in 2022
- Refs able to claim expenses – fairly complicated system:
  - Briefly: Jens considers referees selected and projects travel expenses based on their residence; this is divided across expected number of expected riders to yield added ‘per rider fee’ for a competition
- £7000 in Referee expenses dispensed this year; reflected overestimation of riders in attendance resulting in deficits in rider fees relative to Referee expenses; overruns forwarded into 2023 calculations
- Referees to submit claims for 2022 prior to December 31, 2022, year end cut off
- Question: Historically, Jens had been asked to wait until completion of all five sanctioned competitions prior to invoicing; suggests that previous practice of invoicing upon completion of each competition would be preferable for bookkeeping from Organisers’ perspective. Should we return to this? Hearing no question or concerns, note that Finance Officer Jens will return to invoicing immediately on completion of a sanctioned competition
- Large 2022 late fee income from Affiliation fee payments - £330; was a record for IMGA
- Note that February is the cut-off to avoid late fees; invoices will be sent as per usual practice by mid-January with payment due by end of February
- Rider fee invoices have not all been paid at this point; profit of £3000 is expected by December 31, 2022
- Jens has been working to discover source of unidentified £2054.26 deposit having no matching IMGA invoice

**Discussion-**

- Request by one representative for distribution of the annual financial statement in advance of the AGM to allow for examination of this document by International Representatives

**Action-**

- Jens will continue follow-up on unidentified deposit amount, having already ruled out a couple of potential source countries; note that 2022 Financial Statement under Revenue identifies this item with a “?”
- Annual Financial Statement documents will be distributed to International Representatives in advance of the AGM beginning in 2023

**Setting of IMGA Affiliation fee for 2023 – Jens Martin**

- Fee has remained unchanged at £315 for likely the past seven to eight years; note the range of fee reductions based on membership status e.g., 50% reduced affiliation fee for first year country membership
- Finance Officer Jens sees no need for increase to the annual fee. Any objections? None expressed
- Chairperson Chris thanks Jens for his continued excellent work in the preparation of financial statements and for handling finances for IMGA

**Action –**

- IMGA Affiliation fee for 2023 will remain at £315 with invoicing expected mid-January 2023 and payment due by end of February.

## 2.4 Other Reports from IMGA Officials – Chris Wheeler

**Report on behalf of Development Officer** – Pierre-Luc not currently in attendance: “No report”. Chairperson Chris met with Pierre-Luc last week and heard that China had been very keen to join; China has not returned recent communication.

**Report on behalf of Communication Officer** - Megan is stepping down as Communications Officer. “Thanks” expressed by the Chair to Megan for her work with Communications and for her publication of the Newsletter.

## 2.5 Reports on 2022 Championships – Chris Wheeler

Refer to Annex for 2.5

- Chairperson notes that competition reports were informative and detailed
- Report received from Referee Mark Crowe for Europeans – Any questions? None
- Report received from Mark Crowe for World Teams-
  - Alun reports a concern that pony pool protocol was not followed: team involved stated that they were just given ponies rather than going through the process
  - Question: One European country received a pool pony – Why? Answer: The team had contacted organisers about their pony’s lameness significantly in advance; Mark indicates that this allocation was done prior to competition
  - In general, it was confirmed that the ponies were allocated in advance.
- Report received from Alun Whitney for World Individuals – Any questions? None
  - Alun emphasises that the host country’s equipment did not meet specifications; the pre-competition inspection process needs to be followed to avoid last minute issues
- Report received from Alun Whitney for World Pairs – Any questions? None
- Report received from Mark Crowe for Nations-

### Action –

- host organisers are to follow the protocols and processes for pony allocation
- IMGA Officials to ensure that the *Guidelines for Hosting an IMGA Sanctioned Competition* document is posted to the website
- Jens and Chris to review equipment inspection process and competition pre-competition inspection requirements

## 2.6 IMGA Sub-Committees – Chris Wheeler

### Compliance – Chair - Keith Martin

- Keith experienced technological difficulty: Table this report until February

### Health And Safety and Risk Management - Chair – Conor O’Leary

- Conor reviews his work to establish history of the Committee and source of general unease of previous members who did not wish to continue with the committee; doping testing is the issue
- Sample provided of Protocol from Irish Harness Racing Association
  - Vets travel with that group
  - very expensive due to testing for performance enhancers rather than our target which is typically for the use of Butazone or pain killers with a pony competing while ‘feeling no pain’

- €250 – 350 per sample; question of whether the IMGA wants to go to that extent i.e. that we view our problem is extensive enough to warrant this approach and its expense
- On request of Chair, Andrea summarizes Italy's approach
  - It is surprise in nature rather than organized with advance notification
  - Two or three ponies taken from the podium – usually no positives in Italy
  - In show jumping there are high frequencies; completed entirely by the Italian federation with no predictability
- Reiteration of general purposes of testing - necessary when there is big prize money at stake and for pony welfare

#### Action-

- Provide your insights and examples to Conor as well as your willingness to assist with the Committee's consideration of this difficult matter.

#### Strategic Planning Sub-Committee – Chair – Chris Wheeler

- Essentially three major features have reduced the number of riders participating in sanctioned competitions; this is the subject of proposals later in the agenda; there is a concern to increase this number.

#### Technology – Chair – Jens Martin

- Quite a bit of discussion about IMGA's continued use of GamesPro for draws; Rory speaks to this matter – given the anticipated obsolescence of MGScoreBoard can GamesPro work for draws?
- Clarification – Q: What is the perfect draw? A: When every competitor faces every other competitor and in uneven heats, that there is a balancing of teams participating in 'small' heats
- Description provided of the draw process: 10000 draws completed – seeks those draws that have every competitor meet every other e.g., teams would have met 11 out of the possible 12 teams
- Review of the history of previous Seeding System –
  - First session winners from previous year were distributed across the heats, then others seeded.
  - Results of sessions are the basis for subsequent heat seedings
  - Very transparent
  - Top teams tend not to play each other until the finals
  - Desirability of a pretty good mix of teams through the heats with finals featuring well-matched teams
- What is the goal? We need a transparent, reproducible system –
  - Can GamesPro be adapted to use through MGScoreboard?
  - Should we switch to MG Scoreboard or use the previous Seeding System?

#### Discussion

- Essentially want the top teams to arrive at appropriate finals; every team should be ensured fairness
- Committee members tending to land on the side of re-adopting the old system which had become subject to claims of 'unfairness'
- Request for change from the old system came from the bottom teams who were not seeing themselves play against the top teams
- Concern: Individuals with its high number of riders results in time-consuming and unpredictable re-seeding between heats Response: There was never this type of seeding for Pairs and Individuals - it was historically completed by random draws
- Germany given as the example so Mats outlines pros and cons of MGScoreboard:

- Pro – Fairness: in big competitions with many riders, it is difficult to complete the seedings and fit everything in during the day; with MGScoreboard, everyone knows when they are riding and can plan accordingly
  - The old Seeding System is best for IMGA sanctioned team competitions
- Point raised that from one year to the next the composition of a team can alter drastically so it may no longer be the same team that won the previous season and was seeded accordingly
- Consider that IMGA pre-approve and clearly outline the processes that a country's organisers may select
- Consider that in either the Seeding System or the draw system, the first round is not perfect
- Note that pony allocations can have a major impact on a team's ability to be competitive even if strong riders
- Q: What do we ultimately want the system to do? A: Arrive at the Finals with top teams in the A Final, next in the B Final, etc. Opinion expressed that the Seeding System is the best for that as it prevents a team slipping into an A Final just through the luck of the draw
- One system produces possibility of exciting heats as top teams face off in early heats; in the middle group of teams, this will have an impact as top teams may knock each other out of the top finals
- Seeding produces guaranteed heats of top/middle/low in each; draw produces teams facing the highest possible number of other teams through the heats
- Reminder provided that the imminent decommissioning of GamesPro is the basis of this discussion with need for one of:
  - A replacement for GamesPro
  - Adoption of previous system
  - Maintenance of an offline version of GamesPro
  - Integration of GamesPro draw feature with MGScoreboard
- Suggestion made that it would be good to have all three possible and a requirement for bidding countries to indicate which system they will be using
- Questions regarding the possibility of combining GamesPro and MGScoreboard –
  - Can MGScoreboard incorporate the logic of the seeding system of GamesPro? Is this desirable?
  - What system to use for Pairs and Individuals so that riding times are predictable for large number of riders?
- Preference for a single principle so that there is clarity across competitions e.g., Referees and officials are clearly following the same system
- Question: Can something like a draw for the first session and then seeding for the subsequent heats take place? Opinions expressed include that a bad first session reduces the possibility of reaching a top final; draw done in advance then riders not showing up created havoc and a need for consultation with offsite expertise to reset the draw.
- Opinion expressed that unpredictability of heat-determined seeding is that there is the possibility of unacceptably short rest and re-organization periods between heats; discussion considers differences in situations for Individuals versus Teams
- For competition organisers, whatever system is used, it needs to be user-friendly; the use of two rings has its complexities:
  - GamesPro – optimizes being in uneven heats same number of times
  - MGScoreboard optimizes meeting majority of teams
  - Seeding optimizes merit-based placement in heats
- Question: Can Mats come up with a system that incorporates the desirable draw system?
- Doesn't matter which is the 'best' way as they each have pros and cons

**Action –**

- Technology Committee to develop and summarize the pros and cons for each of the three systems under discussion; Rory and Mats to consult regarding any potential of melding GamesPro and MGScoreboard features regarding seeding and draws.
- This summary to be presented to Reps. in advance of February's meeting so that a vote may be taken at the meeting.

**Chairperson's comment** – MGScoreboard is "brilliant", widely used across Europe, a valuable tool which is user-friendly. Highest level of thanks and appreciation to Mats for developing, maintaining, and advancing this system!

**Break** - 11:00 GMT / UTC

**Reconvene** - 11:21 GMT / UTC

### **Training and Qualifications Sub-Committee – Chair – Mark Crowe**

- Ran courses including 'Train the Trainer' course
- Summary provided of Assistant Referee and Referee trainings in 2022
- Moodle online course has been frequently used
- Full Referee qualifications – in-person course held at NTC resulted in eleven new provisional referees (9 USA and 2 Canada)
- Streamlining the exam so that it is the same across platforms and organisers can look at one list to find referees
- Alun working to establish the Referee Training Country Liaison role-
  - Five countries have responded
  - Liaison will run the courses if they feel up to it, otherwise the IMGA or a neighbouring country could provide training
  - Update the IMGA Chief Referee with the status of referees in their countries and what/how they're doing.
    - Note - The current spreadsheet doesn't address who should be upgraded or possibly downgraded
  - Meet potentially once a year; ensure that rules are commonly understood
  - Consider the possibility of becoming a trainer

### **Action-**

- If you have training taking place in your country, please send along this information to Mark e.g., Pierre-Luc completed full training at La Bonde, France.

### **Sponsorship and Promotion Sub-Committee –**

- Needs a chairperson

### **Discussion-**

- Suggestion made that IMGA needs to re-establish its Vision prior to seeking major sponsorships – be clear about our goals, etc., in order to encourage interest in sponsoring

### 3. Looking Forward to 2023 and Beyond

#### 3.1 Election of IMGA Officials for the next two-year period

##### Report – Chris Wheeler –

- No additional nominations received for positions open for election since publication of the Final AGM Agenda.

##### Nominations-

- Vice Chairperson – Candidate – Keith Martin as supported by Lizzy Frank (LUX)
  - Congratulations to Keith and thanks for the extensive behind-the-scenes support and work
- Officer for Finance and Administration – Candidate - Jens Martin as supported by Iain Hopkins (WAL)
  - Congratulations (note – Iain has stepped back from IMGA and his role as Rep. Chairperson Chris expresses thanks for all of Iain's work for IMGA and for Mounted Games over the years
- Communication Officer – Candidate - Eleanor Wheeler as supported by Elaine Trevor Jones (ENG)
  - An advert was sent out for this role with no response; Chris' daughter Eleanor kindly stepped in as a temporary person until a permanent 'two year' candidate can be identified. Eleanor attends many competitions so will have that perspective. Many thanks in advance, Eleanor.

##### Discussion –

- Election procedure reviewed re: one nomination for each available position

##### Action –

- Newly elected IMGA Officials begin their term starting today, November 19, 2022.

#### 3.2 Selection of Referees for 2023 IMGA sanctioned competitions

##### Refer to Annex 3.2 for the list of candidates

**Discussion** – Chairperson Chris comments that while perhaps a bit unwieldy, the selection system benefits from advance voting process.

**Note\*** – Changes in dates of some sanctioned competitions will require revision of the Referee selections to be completed after the AGM by IMGA Chief Referee, Alun Whitney, in consultation with qualified Referees. The results as reported below are based on voting prior to notification of the date changes and the IMGA AGM, and are provided as reference only for the results of the pre-AGM selection process.

##### Voting Results\*-

Voting ballots issued in advance, completed, returned, tabulated, and reported as follows:

- 1) World Team Championship 2023 - Mark Crowe and Margaret Welsby are confirmed as Referees selected through pre-AGM advance polling. Reserve Referee – Alun Whitney
- 2) Nations Team Championship 2023 – Mark Crowe is confirmed as Referee. Reserve Referee - Anthony Rowles-Jones
- 3) European Team and Individual Championship 2023 – date changes noted and their impact discussed

- 4) World Pairs Championship 2023 – Mark Crowe, Jan Christensen, Pierre-Luc Portron, and Alun Whitney are confirmed as Referees.
- 5) World Individual Championship 2023 – Luigi Irollo, Anthony Rowles-Jones, Michele Spina, Alun Whitney, Margaret Welsby, and Pierre-Luc Portron are confirmed as Referees. Reserve – none at this time.

### **3.3 Election of Rules Committee Members-**

**Rules Committee members to complete a two-year term**

**There are six places on the Rules Committee**

**Refer to Annex 3.3**

- Candidates-
  - Jens Martin supported by Lizzy Frank (LUX)
  - Warwick Slade supported by Paul Greiling (USA)
  - Margaret Welsby supported by Conor O’Leary (IRE)
  - Alun Whitney supported by Iain Hopkins (WAL)
  - Robin Donnay supported by Michelle Cruikshanks (CAN)
  - Mark Crowe supported by Conor O’Leary (IRE)
  - Eddie Surman supported by Elaine Trevor Jones (ENG)
  - Jake O’Connor supported by Conor O’Leary (IRE)
  - Will Robinson supported by Elaine Trevor Jones (ENG)
  - Rory Prime supported by Allister Hamilton (Northern Ireland)

### **Voting Results-**

- Note - Voting ballots issued in advance of the meeting, collected, counted, tabulated, and reported as follows:
  - Jens Martin, Warwick Slade, Margaret Welsby, Alun Whitney, Robin Donnay, and Mark Crowe are confirmed as the Rules Committee members starting their two-year term today, November 19, 2022.

**Action – Note that the newly constituted Rules Committee is activated as of November 19, 2022.**

### **Comments-**

- Rules Committee members continue as was the case for the previous term = continuity
- Question: Rider eligibility via parent’s passport. Answer: Please send question to Rules Committee.

### **3.4 IMGA Sanctioned Championships for 2023 and 2024 - Updates**

(Programme for 2023 shared on-screen)

#### **➤ World Team Championship 2023 Australia**

**Note From Australia-** Countries wishing to participate in WTC 2023 must pay a 10% deposit by 8/4/2023 and the remaining balance by 8/7/2023. Deposits will be refundable if the event is cancelled before 8<sup>th</sup> July. After the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, up to 20% may be retained to cover expended costs.

## Presentation – Warwick Slade (AUS)

- Must get deposit in on time to be able to access pool ponies.
- Warwick has had several inquiries regarding advance arrivals to assist with pony training or other tasks e.g., two to three months ahead of time. Their committee is putting together a brief set of criteria to approve candidates to include e.g.:
  - Minimum age is 17
  - Letter of reference from their country organization, etc.
- There will be accommodation potentially with a couple of families which is the equivalent of food and lodging – families might need some \$ help with that. Domestic travel from one family to another is the responsibility of the visitor.
- Website for information is [www.worldsdownunder.au](http://www.worldsdownunder.au) which includes details of:
  - Scheduling - October 8 – 15
    - Pony familiarisation – Monday, Tuesday
    - Opening ceremonies – Wednesday
    - Competition – Thursday to Saturday
    - Gala – Saturday
  - Link to the venue - Ex-polo field
  - Costs – e.g.:
    - \$5000 AUD team entry fee
    - \$3000 AUD per team pony fee (includes five ponies - any sixth ponies must come out of the pony pool as and when required)
    - Includes stabling and feed for seven days
  - Supporters' packages e.g.-
    - \$30 AUD/night for powered hookup
    - Meals 200 – 250
    - Suggestion to Google motor camper rental - approx. \$1000 AUD /week
    - Local hotel/motel expected to be \$140 – \$200 AUD/night
    - Air BnB – \$700 – \$1000 AUD per week; best to Google – Location: Wereby, Victoria.
  - Team accommodation-
    - On-site in caravans – depending on composition of team and gender mix
    - planning generally for three (new) caravans per team with housing for 4 – 6 each; again, based on the mix of gender.
    - Expect limited caravan amenities since teams get meals
- Organizing Committee is currently seeking sponsorship for caravans for teams and to have some caravans delivered to the grounds for team supporters
- Plan to book caravans six months in advance
- Plan to book flights now since the flight costs would only be expected to increase.
- Warwick confirms entry intentions with Reps. of countries from which AUS has not yet heard; several Country Reps. provide responses
- As of now, there are potentially twelve U18 teams and 17 or 18 Open teams for a total of 32 teams = a lot of ponies!
- Note that self-sourcing is permitted; reminder that the rider with whom you make arrangements needs to register that pony with the organisers – owners are aware of this requirement and how they are to do this

### Questions-

- Q: Fee for sourced pony – do you have to pay IMGGA Australia a fee and then cover the other pony costs?  
A: The \$3000 AUD is for the five ponies regardless of source – transport costs are covered for owners
- You don't pay a fee for the pony – IMGGA AUS members are aware that they will be receiving fuel costs and no fee for the actual pony
- Q: Medical coverage for visitors to Australia? A: Health coverage is not free:
  - travel/medical insurance is required for medical care – perhaps indicate horse-riding, not which type, on your policy application
  - Ensure that you have coverage for ambulance transport: avg. price is \$2000 AUD
  - Airlift is \$8000 AUD, so it's worth having ambulance coverage
  - Visitors tend to take out additional coverage on existing policies or purchase separate travel medical insurance

### Action –

- Send any questions to [IMGGA.Australia@mounted-games.org](mailto:IMGGA.Australia@mounted-games.org) – note that copy and paste is glitchy – drops the “l”, so ensure that the full address is included for your email

### ➤ Nations Team Championship 2023 South Africa

#### Presentation – Nick Sloane (RSA)

- Dates: Monday, December 11 to Sunday, December 17, 2023
- Location: Just outside Capetown - currently there are two short-listed venues
- Organisers working on ponies – so far about twenty available and increasing in number
- Finances will be available by February 2023 with commitment from teams expected by June/July 2023
- Currently offering Open unless there is sufficient interest to warrant expansion
- Nations' countries to include Mexico in the calculations for WTC 2023 and NTC 2023; Jésus (MEX) has indicated that Mexico plans to be active in 2023

### ➤ World Pairs Championship 2023 Denmark

#### Presentation – Signe Sehested (DEN)

- Dates: July 17 – 23, 2023
  - Arrival Monday, departure Sunday
  - Try ponies on Tuesday; Compete Wed – Sat. with celebration Saturday
  - Note change of date to avoid conflict with French Championship from which they derive many riders
- Entry Fee - uncertain about amount right now with recognition of worldwide financial strain; fee likely to be a bit higher than organisers would like
- Gala - Aiming for fun with larger scale party this year – 90's theme - at the same time focusing on presenting a world class, professional competition
- Further information: see [mounted-games.dk](https://www.mounted-games.dk) – World Pairs 2023; also look at Denmark Mounted Games Association Facebook page

➤ **European Team and Individuals Championship 2023 England**

**Presentation – Elaine Trevor Jones (ENG)**

- Dates: have changed due to double-booking by the original venue
  - Arrival - Monday, August 7, 2023
  - Individuals compete Tuesday, August 8 – Sunday, August 13
  - Teams start Thursday, August 10 Sat.
- Location: At Onley Grounds Farm, which features 200 permanent stables, cafeteria, restaurants, bars
- Efforts were made to book this facility for the original dates = not available.
- Arena 100m x 80m with small warmup area

**Discussion-**

- Date conflict with Dublin Horse Show was noted; Dublin tends to draw and hold younger riders
- MGA demonstration is closing out the Dublin competition, again drawing riders

➤ **World Individual Championship 2023 – France**

**Presentation – Jonathon Marion (FRA)**

- Dates: Awaiting revised dates due to the date changes for other IMGA sanctioned competitions. (Note – subsequent update):
  - Arrival - July 30-31, 2023
  - Competition - August 1 – 5, 2023
  - Departure – August 6, 2023
- Location: Domaine Équèstre de la Bonde, France

➤ **IMGA Sanctioned Championships – Programme 2024-**

- Europeans – Parc Équèstre Fédéral Lamotte-Beuvron - FRANCE
- World Pairs – Domaine Équèstre de La Bonde - FRANCE
- World Teams – Arezzo - ITALY
- World Individuals – La Scuderia - ITALY
- Nations Team – NEW ZEALAND

**3.5 Selection of hosts for 2025 IMGA sanctioned competitions**

Refer to Annex 3.5 for details of bids

**Note** – if the proposal from Ireland (**Item 4.4**) is accepted, it would be effective 2026 therefore not affecting the 2023, 2024, and 2025 Programmes.

**Bids submitted-**

- WTC (Open and U18) – Belgium (Ghlin)
- WTC (Open and U18) - France (la Bonde)

See Annex 3.5 Presentation information

### **Additional Information re: Belgium-**

- Reason for bid is to hold a big, international competition with the idea that this will serve as a major boost to the sport in Belgium
- Membership is on the wane so the feeling among the membership was that hosting a major competition would boost the sport
- Belgium will be running this as a much wider group - including Bepoclas, riding groups, and supporters
- Mid-July 2025 date is anticipated
- Main arena is 80 x 160 m (missing 3 m width but still intend 8 lanes which would be 30 cm narrower)
- Many amenities on site including permanent stabling; camping on grass, lots of hotels, BnB's and camping around the site
- Borrowed ponies – they have three years to procure ponies with recognition that overseas competitors will require competitive ponies; a special pony procurement group will be established; self-sourcing is permitted, of course
- €3700. per team is anticipated entry fee to include camping park for six, stables and shavings for six, Wi-Fi, six supporter packages

### **Discussion-**

- Question: Given arena dimensions, are eight lanes permissible? Answer: Additional discussion occurred re: who decides the number of permitted lanes:
  - Opinion expressed that IMGA should be ready with a response for clarity and consistency
  - Alun outlines that in previous years some adjustments were made
    - e.g., Individuals in England – Aston le Walls ran with seven lanes
  - Minimum dimensions are listed in the Rulebook – discussion has occurred over previous meetings; Chairperson Chris quotes from the Rulebook which does make allowance for some changes due to available arena space
  - Further discussion regarding variability of arenas and the adjustments that have been made in the past
  - Consider retaining minimum lane widths but change the rule to guidelines instead; could evaluate the lane range of often-used existing arenas to produce an arena 'certification' of sorts
  - Belgium reiterates that they are bidding with eight lanes; if IMGA requires it, they will readily reduce to seven

### **Additional information re: France**

- Review of the history of la Bonde's involvement in promoting and hosting IMGA International Competitions
- Would like to have country-themed days and e.g., feature that country's foods, etc.
- Refers to improvements and changes based on environmental goals at la Bonde e.g., rainwater collection for arena watering
- Will organize and promote local trips
- Anticipate enhanced cover and cooling in the event of extreme weather e.g., heat as encountered in 2022
- Entry fee to remain as was the case this year

### Discussion–

- Request to ensure that pool pony allocation process be followed; this year’s scenario reviewed - teams requesting two to four ponies rather than a full team. Alun confirms that process allows for this situation

### Voting – 18 Ballots

#### Voting Results-

Belgium – 84%

France – 16%

**Belgium is awarded the hosting of World Team Championships (Open and U18) in 2025.**

#### ➤ **World Pairs Championship 2025 – None**

- No bids received for World Pairs so this could remain open; suggestion made that if proposal for bi-annual competitions is accepted, then this could start with WPC on a year off.

#### ➤ **World Individual Championship 2025 – England**

- All age groups – England (Aston le Walls)
- Background - Aston le Walls – often-used venue:
  - current construction of new arena with hopes of completion by 2025
  - currently two arenas, one slightly smaller

### Discussion-

- Chief Referee suggests the small arena is not suitable for World Championship U12 and U15 so hopefully the new arena is big enough
- **Nations Team Championship 2025 (Open) – None\***
  - **\*Correction to Agenda – “None” to be replaced with:** Australia submitted bid for NTC 2025 to be held in the west of Australia
- **European Team (all ages) and Individual Championship 2025 (Open) - Ireland**
  - Expecting return to typical competition at Millstreet; this year there were some limitations due to Ukrainians on site
  - Ireland open to running this competition if there are enough teams to run ‘A’ and ‘B’ Finals
  - Viewed as way of gauging viability of International Championships
  - Feel strongly that four or five teams would be substandard to the ideal and that, in this case, the competition should be held at a European venue.

### Discussion-

- Commitment is a difficulty in general; has become difficult for Ireland to travel out, however, travel in from Europe remains the same
- Europeans in Wales this year turned out to be a great week but going into it, if there had been the prospect of low team numbers, they, too, would have reconsidered hosting
- Question: If ponies could be provided for European teams, would this be viable? Answer: For World Teams, it is easier to generate pool ponies since only one home team requires ponies; in the event of Teams and Individuals, Ireland would not have the pony resources to supply pool ponies
- Ireland is not looking for an answer to the broader situation, they are happily bidding now and are committed to accepting entries until six months prior to the competition start date; if sufficient teams do not enter, the event is cancelled with refunds provided

- Question: Should we consider having a European venue in reserve in the event of insufficient team numbers for Ireland? Answer: From Ireland's perspective, credibility is critical, and their riders would prefer to travel to a vibrant full-fledged competition on the European mainland than to host a reduced competition in Ireland; proposal for bi-annual competition viewed as a solution to issues presented by this bid for Europeans 2025
- Offer made by Quentin of layover in Normandy, France, for European teams as they travel to Ireland; appreciation expressed of layovers facilitated by Quentin

**Chairperson's Comment-**

- Will return to this matter upon completion of the voting process for **Item 4.4 Rescheduling our competitions**

**Break-** 1:31 p.m. GMT (UTC)

**Reconvene-** 1:55 p.m. GMT (UTC)

**3.6 2023 Meetings**

IMGA International Representatives' Online meetings 2023 - proposed dates are February, May, August (maybe at Europeans? – Elaine will explore possibility at the venue)

IMGA Annual General Meeting – November 2023

**Note** - the traditional meeting during WTC is not included due to WTC being held in October in Australia

**4. Important Discussions and Decisions**

**4.1 Proposal – Additional IMGA Sanctioned Competitions – Chris Wheeler**

Following the proposals put forward by **Andrea Piazza (ITA)** and discussed at our July meeting, voting on:

**1) U12, U15, and U18 European Individuals' competition to become officially sanctioned IMGA competitions**

- Note that currently only Open and U18 are sanctioned championships
- Andrea provides the history and background of this proposal - Promote and develop the sport for youngsters and their families

**2) Hosts of WTC to be allowed to offer U12 and U15 competitions if they wish**

- Andrea outlined basis for this proposal – ponies suitable for U12 and U15 are generally more available; increase engagement of youngsters and their families developing in the sport

**Discussion-**

- Opinion expressed that the addition of these divisions will cause degeneration of the overall prestige of the championship
- Observation that Open riders come to a point of choosing between career and hobby
- Risk that adoption of this measure will impact bidding process i.e., a country able to offer four divisions versus two could be expected to be awarded the hosting privilege

- Confirmation sought regarding the effective date of proposal 1) if approved; Andrea confirms his intent that this comes into effect for e.g., Belgium's hosting of WTC 2025
- Opinion expressed that the bidding process will be unavailable to non-European or countries with low numbers of ponies relative to the number required
- Observation that strategically and financially, more entries is better for the financial viability of a competition
- Consider possibility of WTC organisers offering alternative competitions in conjunction with the sanctioned competition in order to increase revenue and engagement
- Question: Which countries would be in a position to offer all four divisions with requisite ponies?  
Answer: "Likely France, Italy, and England" which suggests that those countries will be selected over any others
- Concern expressed that a rider may only compete at an interval of five to six years if the biannual competition schedule is adopted
- Rough calculation: 400+ ponies needed if a non-European country were to offer all four divisions
- Are there safety concerns inherent with U12 and U15 riders competing on unfamiliar ponies? Top Open riders may have had much pony experience
- Not every country has large numbers of riders from which to select i.e., there are only five eligible riders in the whole organisation
- Is WTC the occasion on which to do this special arrangement for the younger groups?
- Focus needs to be on developing and providing opportunities for the younger riders; Open riders in general are aging.
- Is it a consideration to hold WTC and WIC at the same time? Financially prohibitive?

**3) U12 and U15 competitors have half price entry to encourage more participation from younger age groups.**

- Andrea reviews the rationale for his proposal considering the reduced need for large, extensive galas etc., such that a discounted entry

**Discussion-**

- Question: What are the requirements for organisers when establishing entry fees for competitions?  
Answer: There are no set rules for determining entry fees
- Andrea proposed 50% entry fee discount but confirms that the intent is to help riders and their families – no requirement for 50%
- A current organiser cites that competitions are expensive and barely cover the costs or run at a loss – examples from two recent competitions provided; difficulty rationalizing a vote in favour of a discount when competition losses are described
- Question: Consider in principle supporting a discount whenever possible for the younger riders but avoid the restrictions inherent in dictating one amount or another?
- Under the *Guidelines for Hosting a Sanctioned Competition* list discounted entry as "should" i.e., Entry fees paid by riders in the U12 and U15 divisions *should* be discounted
- Considerations –
  - That the organiser develops a budget including the discount, around which entry fees are built
  - Use wording "encouraged" rather than "should"; the latter sounds imperative even though it reflects the defined wording of the "Hosting" document: "must", "should", "nice to have"
  - Chairperson invites Andrea's comment on possible revisions to the wording, noting the generally excellent support for the intent of Andrea's proposal

#### Additional Discussion –

- Re: 1) - Voted 'no' for this in 2014; opinion expressed that this may be a risk to filling out team membership
- Question: Organisers “must” offer or “may” depending on their circumstances? Answer: Andrea confirms that the intent is “may”.

#### Voting – 19 Votes

##### Voting Results-

**Proposal 4.1.1**      **Yes - 79%**      **No - 16%**      **Abstain - 5%**

**Motion is carried.**

**U12, U15, and U18 European Individuals' competition to become officially sanctioned IMGA competitions**

**Proposal 4.1.2**      **Yes - 42%**      **No - 42%**      **Abstain 16%**

**Vote is tied.**

#### Proposal 4.1.2

##### Revote due to tie – 18 Votes

**Voting Results:**      **Yes - 44%**      **No - 56%**      **Abstain - 0%**

**Motion is defeated. At WTC, U12 and U15 divisions will not be offered.**

#### Amended Proposal 4.1.2:

- Organisers are free to host additional competitions/activities geared to the U12 and U15 riders according to their preferences and ability to provide ponies and arenas, but these are not mandatory.

**Voting Results:**      **Yes - 68 %**      **No - 21%**      **Abstain – 0%**

**Motion is passed.**

**Action – Add the wording of Amended Proposal 4.1.2 to the *Guidelines to Hosting a Sanctioned Competition* document.**

#### 4.2 Do we need to have a vet on site? – Chris Wheeler

##### For Discussion

**Note -** In the *Guidelines to Hosting a Sanctioned Competition*, it states that “A vet must be on site.”

##### Discussion-

- If we don't have a vet on site, what are the alternatives since the cost is exorbitant to engage the services of a vet for the day?
- This is a significant animal welfare issue - cannot entertain the idea of an animal suffering for any period
- Variations on how each country handles this – example provided where a veterinarian must be on site to run a competition; another where veterinarian is advised and 'on call' for local competitions
- Chairperson Chris has sought answers and has not come up with any viable ones
- \$6000 is an approximate cost for having the vet on site – if this was mandated, entry fees would rise significantly
- Questions: Is it an idea to ask vets to offer sponsorship of their services? How could vets be expected to give up their customers as they attend on site?
- Noted that vets are generally unwilling to give up their business for the day to be on site at competitions

- Variations in expectations of attending veterinarian and equipment required - examples given of recent incidents of fractures where owners wanted x-rays prior to making a decision on the outcome; veterinarian would need to be equipped with portable x-ray equipment
- WTC 2023 - Australia is set with a long-time member acting as the equine vet for the duration of the competition, managing the stables as well, and they have engaged a backup for evening, etc.
- Currently organisers are generally 'stuck' with no way to afford vet services on site and yet absolutely in need of those services
- Brief discussion about the variation in legal requirements country-to-country of who may administer equine first aid/ medication
- There are sanctioned competitions for 2023 who may not have a veterinarian – what is the requirement for them?

#### **Motion – Chris Wheeler**

In the document, *Guidelines to Hosting a Sanctioned Competition*, we agree to retain the current wording ““must” have a vet on site during the hours of the competition and on call during practice and competition off-hours.”

#### **Voting -18 votes**

**Voting Results -            Yes - % 44            No – 39%            Abstain - 17%**

#### **Motion passed.**

**Action:** The wording “must”, with compliance expected, will continue in the *IMGA Guidelines to Hosting a Sanctioned Competition document*.

#### **4.3 The host country of Europeans to have the option of entering a second team – Chris Wheeler**

As happens in other equestrian sports, the host country enters two teams. In addition to increasing participation, the finances on the competition could be improved. **For discussion and vote.**

#### **Discussion –**

- This is geared to getting more teams into a competition; is this a good idea or a bad idea? Opinions sought
- One thought is to allow all countries to send a second team or to invite teams from non-European countries to enter Europeans
- Consider allowing a previous year’s champions to send a second team
- Run a parallel ‘B’ team competition as a way of developing additional riders and of boosting the numbers for the competition
- Opinion that ‘A’ finals would then tend to include two teams from the top three to four countries and never from countries having fewer and generally less competitive riders
- Concern expressed that continuing to exclude non-European countries while opening up entries to second teams from European countries, fosters a ‘second class citizen’ view of riders from outside of Europe
- Opinion expressed: perceived historical perspective that non-European countries have Nations Team Championship as their equivalent to Europeans is not valid
- Opinion shared that the current concept of ‘white flag’ riders - riding outside of a country designation - should be allowed for overseas riders to enter European Individuals

**Amendments to the motion: Note - This is a 'Europeans only' vote**

**Vote:** "Yes" or "No" - Eligible votes – 14 European votes

**Voting results:** Yes – 7% No - 80% Abstain – 13%

**The proposal is defeated.**

**Chairperson:** Are there other related motions at this time?

**Motion – Signe Sehested (DEN):**

- That European Individuals be opened to non-European riders on self-sourced ponies under the 'White Flag' provisions (independent participation, not linked to a specific country).

**Voting Results:** Yes - 56% No - 17% Abstain – 27%

**The Motion is passed.**

**Chairperson:** Is there a proposal for a "grass roots" competition to take place during the WTC?

**Discussion-**

- Considerations include the requirement for self-sourcing of the ponies for this type of competition
- Earlier during this meeting, we discussed the potential of having organisers hold some type of competition to boost their revenue
- Opinion expressed that we just voted down the inclusion of U12 and U15 as a part of WTC; Question: Isn't it contradictory to then set up for a development competition?
- Query regarding the work started by Signe and Conor prior to COVID to develop a Champions League
- Question: Is there a possibility of further discussing a Club Competition as described in a previous meeting? Those interested in joining this discussion to prepare a report for a future Representatives' meeting should contact Signe and Conor – Veronica indicates interest

#### **4.4 Re-scheduling our competitions – Conor O'Leary (IRE)**

**For discussion and vote.**

**Background to the Proposal-**

Attendances at our International Championships have declined by an alarming rate over the past three years. This is understandable when considering the impacts of COVID-19, Brexit, and increased travelling costs.

While Brexit is an easily surmountable issue, its associated cost, coupled with the increased cost of ferries and fuel, has now led to a very different set of affordability parameters for competitors and their families.

Championships require full attendance, not only for the financial certainty of the organising nation, but for competitor satisfaction and, more importantly, for authenticity from a public perspective.

It is now clear that our sport is in difficulty delivering any full scale, fully attended International Championships.

### **Proposal – Presentation – Conor O’Leary (IRE)**

- Conor outlines the extent to which discussions earlier in today’s meeting have referenced matters directly linked to this proposal
- Affordability, financial feasibility for organisers, legitimacy as a high-class set of competitions are current obstacles/challenges; rider satisfaction is reduced
- A move to every other year for these competitions would encourage full attendance at each of them
- Today’s discussions and the awarding of future competitions voted upon today are leaning towards an every-other-year scenario
- Looking to provide two competitions each season; the included are suggestions rather than prescriptive, finite positions

### **Proposal –**

- Mounted Games Association of Ireland proposes that IMGA move to the point of moving four of its competitions, namely:
  - World Team Championship
  - European Team Championship
  - World Pairs Championship
  - World Individual Championshipto run on a biannual basis.

### **Additional Information included with the proposal-**

1. A suggested approach would be to have World Teams and World Individuals on one year, and Europeans and World Pairs on the alternate year.
2. To facilitate non-European riders’ travelling to Europe for World Pairs, we might also suggest that these riders be afforded the opportunity to enter European Individuals at the European Team Championship of that same year.
3. On a year that WTC moves to a Nations Team Championship country, it might be an opportunity to host a summer European Club competition, giving opportunity for European riders to have two summer IMGA competitions.

### **Discussion –**

- Note the recent motion passed allowing for overseas riders to attend European Individuals as ‘White flag’ riders
- Concern expressed that if this proposal is passed, it will open the way for alternative organizations to draw riders away
- Concern that entry to European Teams is something to consider for non-European riders; the allowance for entry into European Individuals is a starting point
- Opinion expressed in favour of retaining Individuals and Pairs as annual events since they are parent supported and currently well attended
- Concern that for U12 and U15 riders, their limited time in a given age category leads to missed opportunities especially with managing pony changes expected through U12 and U15
- Financial loss at WPC 2022 as an indicator that Individuals and Pairs are currently significantly impacted
- Opinion expressed that cost and venue are directly tied together; difficult to find a venue that satisfies all but evident that those venues draw competitors
- Concern that if we give away our competition slots, they will be taken up by rival Mounted Games organizations

- Observation that Champions League IMGA idea of a couple of years ago did not occur and was picked up and developed by STRUK into a significantly popular event
- Opportunities for taking owned lorries back and forth to competitions have been much more achievable as time goes on; recognition that this is without doubt, more expensive
- Question posed re: possibility of using borrowed ponies for European Individuals
- Opinion that even if not voted on today, this issue will not go away and will return within the next few years; a sense expressed again that this proposal, if accepted, would be “the best news possible for STRUK”
- Recognition that riders need to make their own competition selections rather than being subject to restrictions such as “must attend competition x in order to attend competition y”
- Opinions put forward relate to the difficulty of holding competitions not viewed as fulfilling by riders; countered by view that while this may be the case for Teams, it is not so for Pairs and Individuals
- Note that it would be good to get a gauge of countries’ intentions to attend WTC, WPC, and WIC; anecdotal evidence that for particular countries, their riders are inclined to attend Individuals, if there are two large team competitions, their riders will only attend one of those; prestige of international competitions is noted by one country as appealing to riders
- Question raised about the probability of riders entirely leaving IMGA in favour of competitor organizations versus continuing to attend IMGA competitions in addition to other competitions
- **\*Proposal is essentially, do we wish to keep the competitions as they are now?**

**Voting – 18 votes**

**Voting Results:** Yes - 61% No - 33% Abstain - 6%

**The motion is passed. The proposal\* is accepted – Keep the competitions as they are now.**

### **Closing Remarks from the Chairperson – Chris Wheeler**

Well done, everybody! We have covered beyond the material included in the agenda. Please note that World Pairs Championship for 2025 is now re-opened for bidding since it has been confirmed, based on voting, that WPC will continue annually.

### **Discussion-**

- Question: From Ireland regarding their status as bidders for 2025 Europeans - Should a reserve venue/organiser be ready on standby if the entry numbers required are not attained?
- Feedback from Ireland is that they won’t get their required numbers due to the three other 2025 competitions taking place
- Point made that WIC 2025 being in England is geographically closer; note that logistics for travel out of Ireland is not easy
- Additional opinion - ‘travel fear’ is currently prevalent; separation of major competitions preferable to loading the two summer months
- Question: Could we get confirmed dates for Individuals in France to facilitate planning? Answer: Yes, Chris will get these from Jonathon.
- Chairperson suggests that Ireland must act as it sees fit given their own observations and the input from their Committee
- Prediction that the move to a few main countries hosting the competitions - previously GB and now possibly France in the future – negatively impacts on other countries’ ability to bid and host

- Suggestion made that competition quality may suffer due to complacency or inability of the same venue to maintain quality over time when resources are strained across limited personnel
- Suggestion that pre-competition checks be significantly tightened up and that standards be maintained; example Referee competition report 2022 notes overall improvement but substandard equipment and areas of the facility needing attention
- General sense that major competitions benefit from moving about, not just being hosted by one country or at one specific facility over time - this invites complacency
- Greetings and salutations shared amongst attendees

**Adjournment:** 5:42 p.m. GMT / UTC