

International Mounted Games Association

Minutes of Online IMGA International Representatives' Meeting – Friday, July 22, 2022

Held In-Person and remotely via RingCentral Meeting on Friday, 22 July, 2022

Meeting opened by the Chairperson, Chris Wheeler, at 19:20 CET

Participants - IMGA Officials:

Chris Wheeler	Chairperson	
Keith Martin	Vice Chairperson	
Jens Martin	Finance/Administration	Remotely
Megan Tutt	Communication	Not present
Pierre-Luc Portron	Development Officer	
Alun Whitney	Chief Referee	Remotely

Participants and International Representatives:

Warwick Slade	Australia	
Rachel Lechner	Austria	
Robin Donnay	Belgium	Remotely
Thierry Constant	Belgium	
Michelle Cruikshanks	Canada	Remotely
Alžbeta Mašková	Czech Republic	Not present
Signe Sehested	Denmark	Remotely
Elaine Trevor Jones	England	
Nathali Lancereau	France	
Jonathon Marion	France	
Stéphane Tardif	France	
Volker Baasch	Germany	Not present
Mark Crowe	IMGA	Chief Referee-WTC
Conor O'Leary	Ireland	Remotely
Andrea Piazza	Italy	
Lizzy Franck	Luxembourg	Not present
Sue Robertson	New Zealand	Remotely
Allister Hamilton	Northern Ireland	Not present
Lisa Tofterburg	Norway	
Karen Houge	Norway	
Veronica Dodds	Scotland	Not present
Pat Reece	South Africa	Remotely – Represented by Tanya Menhinick
Nick Sloane	South Africa	
Judith Porcel Follet	Spain	Not present
Caroline Claeson	Sweden	
Caroline Parmelin	Switzerland	Represented by Quentin Gargallo
Paul Greiling	USA	Represented by Carol Jones
Iain Hopkins	Wales	Regrets – Represented by Alun Whitney

❖ **Welcome from the IMGA Chairperson, Chris Wheeler:**

Great to see riders, parents at World Team Championships. Great to have United States, Australia, and New Zealand from overseas. Welcome to all.

Thank you to Quentin for providing the room for the meeting and for all of his great efforts at hosting the IMGA World Team Championship 2022.

❖ **Agenda Item 1 – 2025 Bids for Competitions - Reminder of October 19, 2022 deadline – Chris Wheeler:**

October 19 is the deadline for 2025 IMGA sanctioned competition bids to be submitted. No bids, please, on the day of the AGM. Please put in bids for the competition well in advance to ensure the full consideration of voting members of IMGA.

❖ **Agenda Item 2 – 2022 IMGA Annual General Meeting Florida, USA: Who Is Going? – Chris Wheeler**

November 19 and 20, 2022 are the scheduled dates for this year's AGM in Florida. Please reply to Paul Greiling with your intent to attend so that he may make bookings of rooms and a suitable Conference room. Keep thinking about this and looking at prices of flights and hotels. Our next meeting is the AGM with no scheduled International Representative meeting in the interim.

❖ **Agenda Item 3 – Development Of New Generations - Proposals from Andrea Piazza (ITA):**

"We are all aware that the real show in our sport is the Open (division) but we know that these Open (riders) were U12, U15; you can't be a real Open rider if you don't do your apprenticeship in those categories. I see less and less presence of new riders in the International arena and I believe it is necessary to do something."

"I list some proposals to discuss at the next IMGA meeting:

- 50% reduction in entry fees for categories U12 and U15
- Increase the number of official IMGA competitions for these age groups (why only European Individual Open and not officially also U12, U15, U18?)
- Why not leave free choice to the states that organize the team world Championship to also do the U12 and U15 World Championship? For example, in Italy we have a lot of pony clubs and we don't have too much difficulty in supplying ponies to these categories
- Benefits of the new members states for Individuals/ Pairs U12, U15, free registration for the best rider in the state?
- We have to think much more about new generations for the future of Mounted Games"

❖ **Agenda Item 3 – Development Of New Generations (cont'd.) - Introductory Comments - Andrea Piazza:**

The preponderance of youth in Mounted Games as seen in the past is no longer the case which concerns (Andrea) as he views these as the future Open riders; important to develop something for them since 12- and 14-year-old riders are at the age of deciding what they wish to take part in. Currently it is much more expensive and complicated for the youngest riders to participate as they need to have parents and suitable accommodation. In Italy they are working on increasing the number of teams at Europeans – this year, four teams and fifteen individuals. This is one example of an approach to boost attendance by younger riders i.e., the Organizer decides if a competition is World's or a Master's based on the number of arenas to be used and their compliance with competition specifications.

Discussion:

- An observation - that removing the Gala expense would be a significant factor in reducing overall cost for participants
- An observation - that the gala is held to be important by the riders as a time to connect; time to relax and just be together as riders. This kind of time and opportunity to connect is minimal these days. Maybe plan for simple solution based on space and time available
- Now there are more teams in attendance at WTC, whereas previously only Open Teams were featured
- Discussion about the history of Europeans – Open, U18, U15, U12, noting that Individuals is not currently categorized as a Championship for other than the Open division
- Opinion expressed that the best riders are selected for country team representation therefore the Individuals would not necessarily feature the best riders from a given country; note that this is currently the case for Opens at Europeans so has continued as a factor to be considered
- Great to expand participation however it may be a drain on the other sanctioned competitions – Individuals and Pairs – as there is a limit to a rider's financial ability to attend the full number of competitions offered
- Reiteration of desire to hold WIC/WPC on an every-other-year basis
- Comment that non-European countries have Nations Team Championships as their alternative to Europeans
- Comment that there is no comparison between Nations and Europeans; financially a huge commitment to run Europeans; Nations is not at all on the same scale
- Objection raised to the assertion that overseas riders “always have Nations” to attend in a year off other sanctioned competition
- Seeking to change the name of Europeans to Championships – maintaining the age groups included in the competition
- Conjecture that the future will bring less financial capacity for riders to keep more than one pony and therefore compete in the full roster of sanctioned competitions
- A consideration – what is the ability of a country to provide a second compliant arena? i.e., if IMGA gives up those competition – offering only every other year - outside organizations like STRUK would fill in the gaps with their competitions

- Projections could be made for the future – countries may not wish to bid due to these other competing events and e.g., WIC where the cost is high, and revenue is relatively low making for higher financial risk
- Revisiting the original proposal of expanding championship categories: this is great and contributes to a festival atmosphere

Chairperson Summary: good viewpoints have been expressed and discussion items to take back to your home organizations and committees; some discussions to take place at the AGM

Discussion Continued:

- Question for consideration: is the provision of ponies a prohibitive factor or the opposite? Should organizers be free to organize as best suits their competition circumstances? Does this result in a different kind of competition? This approach changes the look of competitions – illustrates fundamental differences in how we view the rules
- Observation that reduction of entry fees proposed for younger age categories - if all competitions are open to all categories and the fees are reduced - then countries are faced with choosing from among available competitions for their limited resources, which could reduce registrations
- Reference made to the original discussion - Individuals competition is much easier to draw riders due to its ease of organizing; additional effort may be required to keep a focus on the original IMGA basis of operation as Teams. Example provided of one country where Individuals is currently more popular due to the ease with which riders can organize themselves

Chairperson Summary: Andrea is suggesting that the flexibility to organize as best suits a country's needs is preferable to the current set of rules which don't allow for this possibility

Discussion: Agenda Item 3, Proposal #5 - As a benefit for new IMGA member states for Individuals/Pairs U12, U15, provide free registration for the best rider in the state.

- Andrea elaborates on the growth of building a team one rider at a time - essentially hold competitions of individuals or pairs within a country and then send the top competitor to e.g., Europeans or Worlds
- Even this close - two weeks out - to this year's Europeans, this proposal could be supported as there are a couple of spots available

Chairperson Summary: This is a beautiful idea worth considering; enhancing the experience by including extra activities could be very feasible for Organizers and something to include in their bids for sanctioned competitions.

❖ **Agenda Item #4 - Referee Expenses proposal by Alun Whitney:**

“Whilst referees are happy to freely give up their time to officiate at IMGA sanctioned competitions, they do not wish to be totally out of pocket as well. The current expenses' policy was drawn up at a time when host countries wherever possible looked to provide or compensate referees with traveling and accommodation. This remained in place until last year as events were rolled back due to COVID.

Therefore, it only came to light last year that the agreed upon travelling and accommodation compensations payments from IMGGA whilst adequate for planes, taxis, public transport, and hotels, left referees who used their **own transport** which was also their accommodation majorly out of pocket. The only expenses allowable was the 25p per km travelling which does not even cover the cost of diesel (even before the dramatic price raise)

Referees are also keen to reduce cost and will use whatever mode of transport that is most economical but whilst at the event, which is sometimes over four or five days, they do need a place to be able to rest and relax. Hotels off site sometimes are the only option. They are not ideal as you become reliant on lifts or taxis (car hire is and even bigger cost). Also, a lot of what we do it for, the atmosphere and mixing at the event, is missed.

When it is cost effective for referees to take their own accommodation i.e., caravan, motorhome or horsebox, I propose that the towing rate **of 60p per mile (40p per km) is paid to referees if their mode of transport is also their accommodation.** (This is the rate that is paid in GB for towing vehicles). Whilst we do not expect to claim for family, having family with you should not affect referees' right to claim expenses.

When a host country wishes to provide accommodation, it needs to be of an acceptable and comfortable standard for the duration of the stay."

Chairperson Commentary: Chris reviews the current expense reimbursement rules which preclude reimbursement of lorry expenses used as transportation and accommodation by Referees travelling with family rider(s) and ponies.

Reading of Proposal (see text above) – Chris Wheeler:

- Review of discussion on this matter at April's meeting
- Currently, we'll revisit the item with a brief debate, then take a poll via online and in-person voting
- Chris will officiate the in-person voting on site. Alun will officiate the online polling.

Discussion:

- Concern expressed that the maximum payable would be the amount equivalent to the most economical means of transport; Alun reiterates that it is not the Organizers, but IMGGA that will be responsible for these expenses. The example case in the proposal represents an anomaly.
- Observation made that this is a reasonable proposal and maybe future consideration of travel and accommodation costs be included with referee bids to officiate sanctioned competitions i.e. refs at the least should provide at the earliest possible opportunity the costs that they are going to incur for transportation to the competition
- Concern expressed that low cost versus quality should not become the basis for selection of referees
- Review of rider fee as being the source of funds for supporting travel costs of referees; review of set fee across competitions and riders such that small competitions (like Nations) are supported by the larger

❖ **Agenda Item #4 (cont'd.) - Referee Expenses Proposal by Alun Whitney:**

Chairperson's Summary: Reminder that only those with country voting privileges are to participate in the vote.

Motion as proposed – Agenda Item 4 – Voting:

Seven (7) in-person voters as recorded by Chris on site

Five (5) online voters as recorded by Alun remotely

Vote: 100% in favour

Motion is carried.

Note – implication that the rider fee may be increased slightly as required

❖ **Agenda Item #5 – Role Of An IMGA Official - Proposal by Alun Whitney:**

“An IMGA official representative needs to attend these sanctioned events, often it is the same official that has to attend all the sanctioned events. This is financially unsustainable, and they should be compensated in the same manner as referees.”

Discussion:

- Concern about the financial impact based on the description of “IMGA Official” as being the IMGA Chairperson
- Who can be an IMGA official?
- Chairperson suggests that the Chair or Vice-Chair or an appointed person, or the Country Representative would be suitable to handle all of the many extraneous “ask the Referee” matters that arise. Currently, Referees are essentially swamped with all matters and have the highest level of responsibility. In fact, the Referee’s time is limited – these extra duties should not take away from the Referee’s focus on the activities on the field.
- Clarification sought: Is the proposal to institute this Official or to compensate them? This person would need to be outside of the Organizing group i.e., if the concern is to do with the organization of the event, bias must be eliminated.
 - Referees are compensated, this person should also be covered for their transportation and accommodation
 - IMGA Chair and Vice-Chair could not sustain the financial drain over and over
 - Question of first establishing cost of this?
 - Discussion of neighbouring country Official(s) fulfilling this role to reduce costs
- Could a role description be put together for this Official? Currently at World’s, this would be all the items that Chairperson Chris is handling - He can’t be expected to continue that pace
- Clarification sought: Is the proposal for a person to be required or to compensate said official? Historically it has always been the Chairperson who has attended.

❖ **Agenda Item #5 (cont'd.) – Role Of An IMGGA Official - Proposal by Alun Whitney:**

Motion as proposed – Agenda Item 5 – Voting:

Six (6) out of eight (8) in-person voters In Favour as recorded by Chris on site

Six (6) out of six (6) online voters as recorded by Alun remotely

Vote: 86% in favour.

Motion is carried.

Closing Remarks from the Chairperson: Great to see everyone in person and remotely!

Adjournment: 21:45 (CET)