



**INTERNATIONAL
MOUNTED GAMES
ASSOCIATION**



Agenda: IMGA online meeting Saturday 10 February 2024

20:00 CET

Meeting convened: 20:10 CET

Attendance:

- Chris - Chairperson, IMGA
- Mark – Chief Referee, IMGA
- Apologies:
 - Quentin G. – Sweden
 - Signe – Denmark

- Andrew – Australia – joined in progress
- Rachel – Austria
- Robin – Belgium
- Michelle – Canada
- Elijah – China
- Elaine – England
- Jonathon – France
- Volker - Germany
- Conor – Ireland
- Andrea – Italy – joined in progress
- Sue – New Zealand
- Stian – Norway
- Veronica – Scotland
- Marino – Switzerland
- Quentin – Switzerland
- Paul – USA
- Alun – Wales

Chairperson's Opening Comments:

What's New?

- Behind the scenes, committee work and discussions with countries interested in joining IMGA, are ongoing:
 - Nigeria – in contact with a group of doctors keen to get together with Mounted Games
 - Finland – some riding schools are interested – they already do a bit with Mounted Games and want to do more
 - Nations countries have been busy refining guidelines specific to NTC for inclusion in “Hosting” document
 - Health and Safety Committee is considering competition temperature limits
 - Training and Qualification committee – is developing and piloting coaching certification program which will become broadly available
 - Compliance Committee – compliance checklists have been coming in – congratulations to those who have completed. Countries that have not yet submitted their Compliance Checklist are not voting today as per IMGA regulations

Venue for 2024 November AGM:

- Offers from:
 - USA
 - China (please see attached PowerPoint)

Discussion:

- Q.: What kind of attendance would be expected? A.: Chairperson Chris's comment - Agenda tonight is to decide on the venue, then follow-up for confirmation from IMGA countries of their intent/ability to attend
- Q.: If the AGM is not hosted in China, will the competition still go ahead there? A.: China's Representative Elijah - Current plan is to hold two competitions, one pair and one individual since numbers of riders are too limited for teams; the competitions may be modified if the AGM is not held at the venue
- Q.: For those unable to attend the proposed one-week schedule from China due to work commitments, and with the AGM scheduled for midweek, is there a possibility of shifting the AGM to the weekend? A.: China's response - maybe change meeting to weekend during the night with the competition taking place during the morning and afternoon. Recognizes that this schedule is built as more of a holiday.

- Chairperson Chris – for those representatives unable to attend in-person in China, the meeting would need to be the weekend for the remote attendees who generally have work commitments during the week
- Opinion expressed that the AGM should be held as a stand-alone event rather than in conjunction with a competition – 2023 AGM attendees were in and out of the meeting due to the competition
- Range of opinions exist as to the pros and cons of holding the meeting in conjunction with a competition e.g. some Representatives only able to attend the AGM in person due to their attendance at the competition
- USA Representative Paul – “Would love to host everybody” at St. Petersburg in Florida. The resort features a private beach, many restaurants, other sights of interest. The USA hosted a previous IMGA AGM in the area but not at that facility.
- Q.: Procedure - Is a vote possible? No previous meeting presentation from bidding countries; point made that the agenda included the hosting offers on previous agenda therefore a vote is possible
- Chairperson reiterates regulation stipulation that countries not having submitted their Compliance Checklist are temporarily suspended and therefore not permitted to vote.
- Discussion regarding this stipulation followed. See next item.

IMGA Compliance forms:

As presented at the opening of the meeting – Slide 3 - note that those countries which have not completed their Compliance form are suspended and therefore cannot vote.

Discussion:

- One representative whose Compliance Checklist has not yet been received by IMGA objects strenuously to vote being prohibited today
 - Their country participates significantly at all levels at all competitions and should not have to complete a Compliance Checklist as an established IMGA member
 - Second country with same circumstances also objects to imposition of regulations
- Chairperson suggests that a proposal could be put forward in the future to change those rules - in the meantime, the current Constitution and Regulations apply
- Q.: Can we delay voting on this meeting’s items until the (Compliance Checklist) forms have been submitted so as not to offend these countries that are so active in

IMGA. A.: This would be a community decision, noting that IMGA Finance/Administration Officer, and Vice-Chairperson/ Compliance Committee Chairperson are not present to offer suggestion or ruling

- Scotland's Representative is willing to propose "that the voting be delayed by two weeks."
- For the polling, options are: In favour of the proposal, Against the proposal, or Abstain
- Chairperson: France and Italy may vote on this proposal

Voting Results:

- 75% in favour of two-week delay for voting on items arising out of this meeting agenda

Action Item: Chairperson Chris will distribute voting ballots via email to International Representatives to be completed by two weeks from this date, such that countries not yet having submitted their Compliance Checklist may do so within this time period and complete their voting ballot. February 24, 2024 deadline.

Additional Discussion:

Compliance Checklist - document and completion requirement

- Suggestion made that a proposal could be put forward for the AGM: fully discuss the Compliance Checklist process
- Opinion expressed that the requirement for established countries to complete the entirety of the document be waived and that countries within their first five years of membership would need to fill in the full form
- Opinion expressed that verifying compliance continues as the way to ensure that countries are fulfilling membership requirements; if non-compliant, new organizations within a country can take steps to gain membership with IMGA, there is a procedure
- Exchange of opinions took place .

Action Item: With thanks for opinions expressed at this time and given the potential for extensive discussion of this as a meeting Agenda item, submit to the Compliance Committee Chairperson, Keith, your ideas for a streamlined process and your suggestions for documentation required for IMGA membership.

Chairperson's comment:

Re: the 2024 AGM venue selection vote, with apologies to Elijah and Paul for the delay, we expect to complete voting within the next month; Alun suggested that the vote could be completed individually by International Representatives. If potential hosts wish to update their proposals, please feel free to do so and send any amendments to Chairperson Chris.

AGM action point 4:11

If a rider fails the breathalyser on a practice day, they are subject to the consequences that are in place for when the competition starts. Discuss and vote on this.

- Q: Confirmation sought that all the votes from this agenda are delayed for two weeks? A.: Confirmed
- No further questions – discussions began at the 2023 AGM at Lamotte-Beuvron but there was no vote held so the matter will be voted on by the Individual International Representatives via an email ballot to be distributed by Chairperson Chris.

AGM action point 4:13

IMGA to fund development of Mounted Games? Discuss and vote on this.

- Should IMGA fund development of Mounted Games? For example, send a welcome pack of equipment to new countries: e.g. sword rings, bank numbers, bank number holder, hi-lo net, pony express letters?
- Pay some expenses of trainers to coach in new countries?
- New countries wishing to join IMGA to have five years of free membership?
- Consider proposal that U12 riders not pay entry fees?

Discussion:

- Example provided of recent new country and their significant difficulty learning of methods/strategies for corrections of errors; for them, the equipment could be figured out - the rulebook is very specific about equipment

- Chairperson Chris confirms that this would speak to benefits of training and support of new country coaches e.g. having a trained coach visit to provide guidance and support would have been useful in the example given
- Alun notes that each country now has an Assistant Referee and Referee Liaison so questions from new countries' understanding of rules and strategies can be directed there
- **Development Officer Andrea:**
 - new countries don't need equipment but rather time for riders to develop and to train ponies
 - free membership is a good idea but not for five years - allow enough time with free membership for the new country to send riders to international competition
 - relates his own past history of travelling in order to observe and learn in other countries' competition
 - Envisions sending a questionnaire to each country to identify their specific needs to support mounted games development i.e. first identify the problem areas before putting forward proposals to address concerns e.g. decreasing membership in existing countries and their wish to improve that status
 - Suggests potential for proposal that if IMGGA wants to provide financial support for new nations, to have free entry for an individual to attend WC with all countries working to provide the pony; one rider and one trainer then return to their country with much to improve their progress; elaboration on ideas about provision of equipment as an eventuality; Andrea is currently exploring ways of providing free entries with his
- Q.: What is the source of financial backing for this idea of funding? Questions arise about structuring the funding – how much?, to whom?, how decided?; how is this funded?
- Equipment suppliers should be encouraged to get involved as it would be in their best interest to do so

Chairperson's Comment:

Action Item: Ideas and suggestions sought from International Representatives and their country organizations regarding this item – please send them to the Development Officer, Andrea (ITA) e.g. free entries as incentive, provision of coach training, other concerns, or problems that you have come across in developing games programs, that perhaps our community can help solve.

Election of a Rider Representative onto IMGA Rules committee

Note: Voting on this item will be a ranked ordering of preference i.e. first, second, third, and fourth choice

- **The Four Candidates:**

A. Marino Kammerman (Switzerland)

As a Rider and Referee, I personally think that I would be well placed in the Rules committee. Me being present at most of the IMGA Competitions should let me be able to see most of the problems or adjustments that we have in the IMGA rulebook. I am sure having someone in the committee that knows the rules from two different sides will be a big benefit for everyone, especially riders and referees.

B. Ulle Voeltzel (Sweden)

I've been the chairperson of Sweden MGA since 2021. As such I have developed a growing interest towards refereeing and rules in general. So when this opportunity presented itself I found it obvious to apply. As I'm moving towards the former-rider side of things this is definitely something I'd like to continue working on and being a part of as it makes huge differences to the people taking part in our sport.

C. Jake O'Connor (Ireland)

I have been competing internationally for Ireland since 2009 making over 35 appearances in IMGA competitions. Having competed at this level for such a long time I have experienced many different arenas, sets of equipment, rule changes, even a tremi final!! With this wealth of experience I could bring a new perspective to the committee. Still being heavily involved in the mounted games scene I have regular contact with current riders all around the globe and feel I could bring forward not only my own but also the ideas of many riders. If I was to make it onto the Rules Committee I would aim to help make the rules easily understood and interrupted by all members old, new, and prospective. By doing this hopefully the referees' decisions will leave less opportunity for debate and leading to less "time out of play". I feel I could bring an alternative view to help with any future changes.

D. Eddie Surman (England)

I would like to put myself forward to be on the IMGA rules committee, as the riders representative.

I believe I meet the criteria to apply for this position, I have ridden at three international competitions in the last 3 years, I've been riding in MGA for over 20+ years and competed in many international Team, Individual and Pairs competitions.

I have ridden worldwide including New Zealand, America and most recently Australia World Teams, this experience has provided me with good knowledge and insight to different types of arena, equipment, riding a borrowed pony and much more.

I feel I would be an asset to the rules committee, firstly being an experienced rider, having ridden through the age groups. Seeing things first-hand I think really helps, also I've done a fair bit of training, assistant refereeing and judging over the years and feel I have a wide knowledge of what's required. I have experience in running a competition, Xzony Championships and have helped the North of England and England MGA including the recent European Championships.

Whilst in the ring competing, you have a completely different perspective how the rules impact many aspects of the competition, safety, speed, equipment set up, fairness and much more.

I think I'd help to provide a good balance on the rules committee in discussions over all sorts of races and feel I have some great ideas to bring to the table. I was after all the creator of Litter Scoop, that I like to call Ed Scoop to this day.

I know plenty of people all over the world involved in Mga and have a good relationship with many countries that I feel would give me an un-biased take on the rules and in turn helping push IMGA forward.

Thank you for your time reading this.

Action Item: Voting on this item to be completed by email by February 24; Chairperson to distribute ballot to International Representatives

Proposal:

New countries wishing to join IMGA will have five years of free membership. Discuss.

Discussion:

- Limited discussion including:
 - that five years may be too long a period of time for free membership
 - That other forms of support for developing countries may be more beneficial
 - Ideas have been requested of the International Representatives and their respective countries – with thanks, please direct these to Development Officer Andrea
 - See discussion points:: Agenda Item 'Funding For Country Development'

Proposal:

U12 riders do not pay IMGA rider fee. Discuss.

- No substantive discussion

Update:

Charity Day at Europeans:

- Orange day – last year, just over £1000 raised for the Stroke Foundation; year prior, £1200 for Air Ambulance
- For France 2024, Stéphane has chosen Colosse aux pieds d'argile –
 - *The Colosse with Feet of Clay association fights against sexual violence, harassment and hazing in sports. Its missions are to raise awareness among the general public, train professionals supervising children and provide free psychological and legal support for victims and collateral victims.*
- Jonathan describes the nature of the charity's work – set up by a person abused by their coach when younger, as a result all trainers and coaches are spoken to by this charity to avoid further possibility of this kind of abuse.
- Completed through the French Federation.
- Recent national headlines in France regarding mental and physical abuse of young athletes under the care of their coaches. This is of high interest for the FFE.
- Interventions needed; training is interesting and morally tough
- Thanks, Jonathan, for providing description of the Orange Day charity to be featured at Europeans 2024 at Lamotte-Beuvron

AGM Action Item 4.7:

IMGA will have a pony soundness examination at competitions:

A soundness examination at the start of each IMGA competition to be conducted by a qualified vet, the competition's Chief Referee and an IMGA appointed Official. The vet has the final decision regarding the ponies' fitness to compete. The trot up examination needs to be done on a firm surface - concrete or tarmac preferable- 30 metres to be able to see about 10 strides each way. Trotted 3 times minimum up and down. Additional examination(s) may also occur in case of any concern arising during the competition.

- Chief Referee Mark indicates that the key wording: the trot up examination needs to be done on a firm surface – concrete or tarmac preferable – 30 metres to be able to see about ten strides each way. Trotted three times minimum up and down.
- Mark notes that the time requirement is an unknown and also that the tack check being a proposed time to complete this may not be optimal; Mark and Andrew concur that the ship in day could be a good time to complete the initial assessment.
- Q: is this a daily occurrence? A.: Yes, if something shows up, the pony would be rescheduled for a subsequent soundness examination
- Marino noted that Swiss military completes a weekly check of their mounts – feels that this assessment can be completed relatively quickly

Initiative:

Health and Safety Committee – Conor (IRE)

Presentation:

- **Safe Competition Temperatures** – temperature/humidity chart presented which also includes a measure of the amount of sunshine as used by the horse racing industry. In summary, if the total of Temperature and Humidity is less than 160, racing is allowed to continue. For example, at a temperature of 35C, if humidity was 65% then racing could continue.
- A wet bulb globe thermometer HT30 which measures sunlight, humidity, and temperature provides a definitive onsite reading with a readings interpretation chart to define actions to be taken
- this is a £200 piece of equipment and is used by FEI so could be counted on to have good science behind it. Objective and accurate measurements provide reasonable assurance to competitors of any limitations being placed on the running of a competition.
- Chief Referee Mark would value such an instrument as a definitive indicator, the use of which would allow objective decision-making based on accurate site-specific measurements and corresponding interpretation
- Suggestion made that IMGA purchase such a meter and implement a corresponding rule to support decision-making by the Referee on the basis of temperature/humidity/sunlight readings

- Q: Chief Referee Mark – should this be in the rulebook? A.: Past CR Alun and Chairperson Chris concur that this procedure and accompanying rule(s) be included in the IMGA “Hosting” document for immediate implementation
- Q: For southern hemisphere competitions, should/could these organizers expedite purchase of the wet bulb thermometer to have this in place for the remainder of their season? Still expected to have some hot days prior to season end. A.: Inconclusive – shipping timelines may impact ability to begin use of the meter
- Q: Given the planned locations of France/Italy competitions this summer, would it be prudent to ensure that competition temperature/humidity/sunshine monitoring take place? A.: The FEI has developed condition-based guidelines and Conor would see that this full FEI wording be distributed to all involved and put in place for this season

Regarding WTC and WIC 2024 Italy, Andrea notes that all equestrian sport in Italy is run under FEI rules, focused on the well-being of the pony

WTC being held adjacent to a vet clinic which is available to assist; the type of weather at the time of the competitions is being anticipated and timetable planning is taking this into account, flexibility and ability to respond to the expected conditions are being built in.

Initiative:

Training and Qualification Committee – Mark (IMGA)

- **Train the Trainer program** - Chief Referee Mark describes twenty-two page ‘train the trainer’ coaches manual for use by countries in developing their coaching capacity and level of skill.
- Warwick modified existing Australian Pony Club document for use by IMGA
 - Trialled by Warwick in China over December holiday
- China’s request following completion of the program – Possible to issue a certificate of completion? Provide a listing of qualified coaches?
- Main idea of program is to have three levels of coach qualification starting with ‘introductory’ and advancing from there
- Coach candidates are expected to already have some level of equestrian coaching qualification including lesson planning, health and safety knowledge, horsemanship, etc.
- Warwick has sent the Coach Training manual to the Training committee members for comment

- Alun suggests setting a time limit for qualifications to be attained since a strictly voluntary system may not yield desired result of all coaches seeking qualification
- Austrian training resources mentioned at AGM would continue to be valuable as an additional resource

Update:

Nations Countries' Competition Amendments – Michelle (CAN)

- Nations' countries have collaborated closely since AGM and drafted expanded details for hosting Nations Team Championship competitions.
- Changes to the "Hosting" document proposed to increase viability of the competition while maintaining its unique family atmosphere
- Facilitate and encourage eligible teams to attend or send single riders to form a composite team
- In summary, Nations countries agreed to the following:
 - Nations Team Championship to be held annually between mid-September and mid-October
 - Hosting determined by rotating roster:
 - 2024 New Zealand
 - 2025 Australia
 - 2026 United States
 - 2027 South Africa
 - 2028 China
 - 2029 Canada
 - A composite team, known as the United Nations team, comprised of single riders from Nations' countries unable to field a full team to be formed. If spaces remain, then travelling reserve riders from attending countries, will be included on the UN team
 - The number of ponies able to be provided by the host country determines the number of teams that can be hosted:
 - Priority given firstly to eligible countries' teams, then to the United Nations team and the host country's second team followed by additional second teams from participating countries
- The host country will distribute an Expression of Interest to Nations' countries six months in advance of the competition, inviting eligible countries to respond with their intent to send a team or to nominate one or two riders to the United Nations team. Countries are to respond with their intentions by three months in advance of the competition.
- Based on the EOI responses above, if a United Nations Team is composed, then an Expression of Interest directed at potential coaches from IMGA member

countries is to be distributed by the host country and/or IMGA. Coach selection made by review of applications and decision of the Nations' Countries committee.

- Commencing in 2025, all teams to ride on borrowed ponies
 - Seeking to level the playing field
 - Given the limited number of involved countries, this is more readily accomplished than at a larger competition

Other Business:

- Past CR Alun reiterates concern introduced and discussed at the November 2023 AGM regarding speed and safety of riders returning to the finish line:
 - Running through the security box at speed, without attempts to reduce speed or maintain a straight line from the finish line to the security lane
 - Alun expresses the strong sentiment that this increasingly noticeable development over recent years “is an accident waiting to happen.”
 - “The lengthening of the arena over time was designed to provide ample space for riders to stop in their lane”
 - Noted that IMGA considers breathalyser testing and pony drugs policy as measures for maximizing sport safety – the issue of speed and direction after crossing the finish line, is likewise a significant safety concern and warrants serious attention.
- Another viewpoint expressed: action of running ponies through to the box at the end of the security lane clears the lane for safer changeovers – reduces the number of riders occupying space in a high-traffic area.
- Thirty-five riders in a field are increasingly riding in sand having shorter lanes therefore limiting available space while maintaining speed
- Additional agreement expressed about increasing risk – noted 2016 Millstreet WTC where an extra runout area provided space and seemingly increased the tendency for riders to speed up and kick ponies crossing the finish line because it's 'cool'.
- Chief Referee Mark recalls WTC in Ireland where rider briefing included a specific request for riders to pull up their ponies where possible prior to heading into the extended security lane
- Chairperson Chris - Q: any ideas of going forward? A.: Alun suggests that a rule prohibiting re-entry to the field of play from the corner zone once that area has been entered, would lead to a significant change in attitude and approach; i.e. once in that area, no possibility of exiting to correct errors

Action Item: International Representatives are asked to continue this discussion by sending/sharing ideas and concerns to/with Alun.

Chairperson's Closing Reminders:

- Assistant Referees are needed – encourage your members to keep getting their qualifications – online course is available with access through the IMGA website
- Pony/Rider Height weight – verify ahead of travelling to competitions
- Additional new games requested – send your members' ideas to Jens of the Rules Committee
- Send also suggestions for improvements to modified games rules
- **Thursday, May 9 is next proposed online meeting of International Representatives**
- Chris will send out voting emails over the next two weeks regarding the items for which votes are needed - encourages countries still finishing their Compliance checklists to complete these and submit them.

Adjournment: 3:20 PM CET