



**INTERNATIONAL
MOUNTED GAMES
ASSOCIATION**



Minutes: IMGA online meeting Thursday 22 MAY 2025 20:00 CET

Jemima Gardiner	Australia
Rachel Lechner	Austria
Robin Donnay	Belgium
Michelle Cruikshanks	Canada
Quentin Voeltzel	Denmark - proxy
Elaine Trevor Jones	England
Jonathan Marion	France - proxy
Valentin	France
Conor O'Leary	Ireland
Lizzy Franck	Luxembourg
Sue Robertson	New Zealand
Anne Ström	Norway - proxy
Veronica Dodds	Scotland
Tanya Menhinick	South Africa - proxy
Quentin Voeltzel	Sweden
Quentin Gargallo	Switzerland
Paul Greiling	USA
Nikki Beach	Wales

Chris Wheeler - IMGA Chairperson
Quentin Voeltzel - IMGA Vice Chairperson
Mark Crowe - IMGA Chief Referee
Lizzy Franck - IMGA Communication Officer

Apologies

Germany
Jens Martin - IMGA Administration and Finance Officer

Absent

China

Guests

Clare Cole - South Africa (interest in Nigeria)
Bridget Scott - Scotland

Proxies and Quorum

- Awaiting additional representatives – eleven (11) in attendance as of 20:11 CET
- Several join within the following ten minutes
- Proxy information from Nick Sloane (RSA) received - 20:31CET
- Anne confirming her proxy for Norway via message to Stian

Chairperson's Comments – Chris Wheeler

- Welcome to new representative, Nikki Beach, from Wales after their recent restructuring.
- Norway has had to unfortunately pull out from hosting the 2026 WTC – the arena won't be ready; they have decided to withdraw due to this problem.
- Quentin Voeltzel (SWE) is working on this matter:
 - Update from Quentin
 - Went to see the venue being used in 2027 for Europeans and had been in communication with Norway ahead of their decision.
 - Norway, Denmark and Sweden are meeting next Thursday and will spend time working on Europeans 2027 and Teams 2026 considering a potential arena in Denmark
- Chairperson Chris congratulates Quentin on having been active right away on the news of the cancellation.
- Quentin indicates that he was happily in the right place in the right time. Also looking to include Germany with the Norway/Denmark/Sweden planning since there had been an alignment in regard to the dates to facilitate timing for each of the involved competitions
- Chris has been in ongoing discussion and reports that there is good enthusiasm in Nigeria for developing and growing their beginning Mounted Games program

Update on status of provisions for Corné - Chris (IMGA), Stéphane (FRA)

- Chairperson Chris relates that email received from FFE declines responsibility for governance of the competition since Corné personnel are the organisers, but they will send a representative to monitor.
- From Stéphane, there was confirmation of the sport ministry sending two representatives to the competition.
 - Stéphane: there is not much to add to the information already provided - the FFE will send a delegate and there will be a federal presence. Service de Sport (Federal) is exercising oversight.
 - Valentin is the representative of the FFE and will be on site. Youth Sport ministry will have a delegate. Reminds attendees that the French Pairs competition was held there in April without major problems.

- In parallel, the FFE will be running training on site to do with Violence in sport - officials will be trained to be able to identify aggressive/inappropriate behaviour

Discussion:

- Never have had a problem at Corné - Implication is that IMGA would then need to be prepared to exercise the same rigour of background examination of organising personnel for future competitions. Jonathan continues, raising question about the legal right to check into the organisers.
- Chief Referee Mark recalls that the original bid from Corné included the FFE as supporters of the bid, and questions how they are now withdrawing from any involvement. Shares view that, as in other countries, there is a strict set of examinations of background for all organisers. Provides specific example of DBS in UK, and Garda vetting in Ireland
- Request for Quentin to provide examples of what the problems have been:
 - Details of a number of examples provided - his observation of a "steady stream of ambulances", one of his riders sued by a young woman in attendance who made allegations of inappropriate behaviour.
- These examples countered with the argument that they "have no bearing on the matter in discussion at the moment".
- Regarding the French Pairs Championship held in April, 156 pairs were in attendance across all age groups
- Regarding FFE's responsibility for competitions - Stéphane (FRA) for the FFE notes that the details of organising are left up to the organisers whether at La Bonde, Corné or anywhere in France.
- Chief Referee Mark reiterates the position that governing federations in IMGA countries should bear some responsibility even though competition details are left to the organizers.
- Chairperson, Chris references FFE email - "Corné effectively responsible for the safety of the riders."
- Clarification sought regarding identity of the organizers at Corné - Jonathan responds with FFE position that organisation in this case is a group effort and that the FFE doesn't require that staff be individually named. Staff includes Leah and others. Leah Bourbonne, CEO of the company, is the named organiser. Jonathan clarifies that the FFE still supports the holding of the Pairs at Corné but cannot hold the responsibility for details of the competition planning, security, and implementation.
- Noted by Quentin V. that Valentin, a well-known and strong organiser, will be there for the FFE.
- Clarification sought: What is the role of the FFE and Sport Ministry representatives? Stéphane notes that in the case of any incident, it is the police who are called, the FFE

is not the police and don't replace the state in such matters; Sport and Youth delegates would also be involved

- Clarification sought: Are there any restrictions in place to do with the two individuals? Chris redisplayes the email from the FFE which outlines that there is a ban on the individuals' organising. The lawyer of one of those individuals indicates that there are no prohibitions. Information is contradictory.
- Clarification sought: Did the FFE organize the French pairs?
- Quentin V. outlines the depth of the apparently very specific contractual agreement required by the FFE. The FFE is responsible for deciding the format of a competition e.g. races, number of sessions, semi's, finals, etc. but not the other details surrounding the competition in the arena.
- Noted that the FFE is continuing to endorse the use of Corné by all age groups for games and other equestrian sports
- Discussion continued with descriptions of alleged improprieties, etc.

Administration and Finance Officer Jens provides summary of options:

1. Strip Corné of hosting rights and face potential legal action from them, etc.
2. Carry on with the competition with the hope that all goes well mindful of potential significant impact in the event of an incident
3. Carry on with the competition, providing full disclosure of the facts, and let the riders vote by entering or not; notes the potential for loss of reputation

(Noted that there may be other options available)

- Suggestion made that another option include banning both named parties from being present for the duration of the competition; review of the right of one of the individuals in question to be present on his own property.
- Discussion occurs about the order of the proposal voting at this time including the possibility of switching the order of the voting:
 - Compete at Corné or not?
 - Seek legal advice or not?
 - Do we switch the order of votes?
- Stéphane and Jonathan believe that the FFE has expressed the full extent of their position and are not going to change this. The organizers are insured and will take on full responsibility for anything that occurs whether accident, criminal activity, etc. They will be subject to investigation and action from the state.

(Note Paul (USA) has joined)

- Question: Does IMGA hold Directors' and Officers' insurance? Response of "no" results in discussion re the advisability and possibility of doing so.
- If the current position results in no hosting of the competition, there will be impact on future competitions. FFE organised last year's Europeans at Lamotte because that is

their home site. In the future, they are not the organisers at other French venues – it is not their responsibility – this falls on the organisers at the particular events.

- Discussion with varying opinions and experiences about the responsibility held by different countries' overriding sport organizations e.g. Ireland and other equestrian governing bodies have strict requirements for background checking whereas some e.g. Canada do not.
- Summary includes that a vote as soon as possible is sought; that Chairperson Chris has additional information on paper which he feels is contradictory. This can be forwarded to interested Reps.

Further discussion includes:

- Question regarding FFE's awareness or lack thereof of the ban on these individuals from Corn  at the time that they supported the bid by Corne? IMGA clearly did not know of the ban.
- On the part of the FFE, a reminder that during the legal process which took place, the FFE cannot replace the state and must await the end of that process. Pending receipt of the results - the ban - they allowed continuation of events at the venue.
- Question: At what point did the FFE become aware of the ban, once the judicial process was completed? Response: The ban on organising was placed quite recently once brought to the relevant authorities by the IMGA Vice-Chairperson.

Continued discussion includes:

- Third option as being full disclosure of the facts with riders making the decision through their entries.
- Reiteration of there being no requirement for a written contract for hosting of IMGA Championship competitions. Minutes of meetings and the setting of calendar dates along with verbal agreement constitutes a binding contract (in France, for example, this is legally the case)
- Question: Do we return to Corn  with IMGA's final requirement that the named party be off site for the duration of the competition?
- Vice Chairperson Quentin V. states that he sought and received legal advice resulting in a lengthy document that he feels is clear.
- Question: Does this legal advice give a way to go forward through the present scenarios.
- Question: Has Quentin gone to e.g. the FEI which is above FFE. No.

Discussion continues including:

- What are the questions?
 - Do we have a contract?
 - Is IMGA liable for anything that happens at the competition?
 - What is the current account amount of IMGA? A: £75K
 - Requested expenditure is €2500 + €2500 to send a letter to the FFE Ethics Committee

- Reiteration of the understanding that there is no ban for these individuals to be on site, they are only banned from training/coaching and organising; assertion that both are on site and continuing to organise and run equestrian events
- Reiteration of the bodies having oversight: The Sport/Youth ministry or police enforce - the prefecture of the state; the lawyer and the local authorities provided letters indicating "all is okay".
- Review of the case, noting the apparently contradictory nature of the 'official' opinions/statements provided by the FFE
 - For the FFE, note that they clearly hold the position that they do not at all condone the crimes committed by the individuals
 - Note that the specific details of the case were revealed through the actions of the lawyer engaged by Quentin V; they had not generally been made available to FFE and others.

Vote on IMGA obtaining legal advice on this matter - "Yes" or "No":

Voting Representatives - Seventeen (17)

Voting Results -

Yes: 13/16 (81.25 %)

No: 2/16 (12.5%)

Abstain: 2/16 (12.5%)

The motion is carried.

Chairperson's Comments - Fair enough for International Representatives to say to their country's riders that there is a process underway and that July 16 is the competition entry closing date. We cannot make an official IMGA statement at this time. We voted to ask for legal advice so will now need to wait for that.

The attendees acknowledge and thank Chairperson Chris for his efforts at this meeting.

Adjournment - 22:50*

(*Items Tabled to a future meeting of IMGA International Representatives:)

1. Updates for our remaining 2025 competitions:
 - i. Europeans, World Pairs, World Teams, Nations
2. Newsletter
3. Updated *Hosting a Sanctioned Competition* document
4. AGM Austria - November 15 and 16, 2025
5. Update from our Rules Committee - bitless bridles - Bridget Scott
6. Rule Books

7. Updates of our Action Items from 2024 AGM:

- i. **Action Item:** Assigning an additional official at the warmup arena(s) to monitor and assess pony soundness and welfare.
- ii. **Action Item:** Consider further refinements to the breathalyser testing process so that identification is confirmed. Ideas needed for this.
- iii. **Action Item:** Margaret W. (NZ) - to consolidate rulebook and supplemental page of bits to ensure consistency; any persons having data and evidence regarding bitless bridles to please forward to Margaret.
- iv. **Action Item:** Country Representatives to ensure that their organisation contacts the winning rider/pair/team such that the trophy/cup is returned, engraved, and in good repair onward to the next competition.
- v. **Action Item:** Worldwide Games. Chris will work to move the general concept forward to implementation, while technology is being developed by others; initial goal of holding Worldwide Games three times a year. Volunteers needed to help check timings, please.
- vi. **Action Item:** Conduct a publicity drive regarding the rule change request process - still maintaining the set list of who may submit a request - International Representatives and Referees - remind membership that they may contact the Committee with questions and ideas.
- vii. **Action Item:** International Representatives to send ideas to Chris for getting trainers into those developing countries.
- viii. **Action Item:** Mark - develop a reference card of common, important IMGA procedures relevant for score box personnel.
- ix. **Action Item:** Request of each member country to indicate their major exams, terms, term holidays with a view to creating an overall calendar for reference by all involved in major competitions.
- x. **Action Item:** Veterans competition: International Representatives - share with country organizations and direct inquiries and suggestions to Chris who is coordinating discussion by interested parties.
- xi. **Action Item:** Quentin Vice Chair to gather additional committee members to begin the work of the Sponsorship and Promotions Committee.
- xii. **Action Item:** Establishment of a Pony Welfare Commission. French to take chair/leadership role.