Welcome to the first edition Endurance Update (EU). The goal of the EU is to improve communications within the FEI Endurance fraternity by discussing the issues that the discipline faces, explaining rule changes and the reason for such changes and answering questions from athletes and officials on matters relating to the conduct of the competition. Any questions from any member of the Endurance fraternity are welcome and should be addressed to our sport’s director, Manuel Bandeira De Mello.

WEG and Task Force Reviews

By far the biggest challenge the Endurance Technical Committee has to contend with this year are the recommendations of the WEG and the Task Force Reviews. The WEG recommendations covered all disciplines whereas the Task Force Review was solely Endurance based.

The main recommendations from both reviews are:

- Improve the quality of the competition with tighter qualifications
- Reduction in the number of athletes competing with a maximum cap on athlete numbers
- Reduction in the costs associated with the WEG
- Increased patronage from spectators
- Better media access to the competition
- Better appeal to sponsors

A change in format to achieve the recommendations which will allow the competition to provide a true show case of the discipline

A review of the profile of Endurance at Normandy is disappointing when compared with other disciplines. For example:

The Endurance competition was limited to one day whereas other disciplines who featured in the programme competed on average over 5 days including rest days.

Spectator attendance for Endurance was a disappointing 6 thousand compared with Eventing attendance of 90 thousand spectators and Jumping with 110 thousand spectators.

The Endurance venue was a minimum of a 3 hour round trip from the main competition

The completion rate for Normandy was a miserable 22%. This low completion rate, although due to a wet difficult conditions, reflects the trend over recent championships to lower completion rates in combination with increased speed as demonstrated by the charts below.
Format Change for WEG

To meet the recommendations of both the WEG and the Task Force Reviews, the Technical Committee examined possible format alternatives to the 160km one day competition - conscious that the160 has been the gold standard for many years. The only format that aligns with the review recommendations, comes close to the 160 km World Championship in skill requirements for both athlete and horse and is compliant with our current rules, is a two day 100km per day competition. This new format for WEG does not apply to the 160km World Championship which is a standalone event. So, similar to other international sports, Endurance will now have two championship titles – a World Champion and a WEG Champion.

Qualification Change

Another significant recommendation of both reviews is the reduction of athlete numbers and increasing the quality of the competition. For a number of years the minimum speed requirement for qualification is 14 km per hour. This minimum speed remains unchanged. However there is now an extra qualification requirement recommended for the WEG. The combination now must also complete the qualifying ride within the winning time of the first successful horse plus 20% at a minimum speed of 14km per hour.
The reasonable question is why have both qualifying criteria? Without the 14km minimum speed it is possible for the winning combination to qualify at a slow event with winning speeds of below 14km per hour. Maintaining the minimum speed requirement makes the qualifying criteria fair to all combinations worldwide.

The pie chart demonstrates the effect of the 2 criteria. This pie chart looks at the statistics of thirty-one 160km events. The outer circle demonstrates the success rate applying our current rules with 45.1% of competitors being successful. When the additional ranking criteria of winning time plus 20% is applied to the successful horses, the inner circle in green, the number of ranked horses is further reduced. This dual criteria raises the standard of qualification.

![Pie Chart](image)

**No Drop Score**

Unlike the 160km Championship there will be no drop score for team events in the 2 x 100km Championship. This means that all members of the team must complete successfully for the team to be in the running for medals. Teams will be limited to 4 horses with one spare. The no drop score applies to all disciplines bar Vaulting.

**Grand Prix Finish**

A Grand Prix finish means that the competition effectively finishes when the first 3 place getters in both individual and team competition have successfully completed the course and passed the Final Inspection.

All other combinations on the course will finish the competition at their next vet gate and if successful will be classified accordingly.

The main challenges that endurance faces day in and day out is protecting the welfare of the horse, maintaining the integrity of the competition and holding officials, athletes, trainers and grooms accountable for their actions and omissions. This sport has been built on a long tradition involving an athlete and a horse in combination. Above all else, whatever rules we
put in place, we must protect the welfare of the horse by ensuring that competition is within the horse’s capabilities. Balancing the welfare of the horse and competition rules is a constant challenge.

The Endurance Update serves a significant role by improving the communication between the Technical Committee and the endurance fraternity. I welcome your contribution to this Endurance Update.

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