



Fédération Equestre Internationale
M. Ingmar De Vos
Président
Chemin de la Joliette 8
1006 Lausanne
Suisse

9 March 2017

RE: Jumping Owners Club's position with regards to the CSI/CSIO entry fees harmonisation, the future of the Nations Cup series and the Memorandum of Understanding with GCT/GCL

Dear Ingmar,

As horse owners, we wanted to voice the position of the Jumping Owners Club towards some recent very worrying developments in our sport.

The future of the Nations Cup series

Owners are the primary sponsors of equestrian sports and the Nations Cup series is a major reason for Horse Owners to invest in the sport. Without the Nations Cup series, a number could simply stop investing.

There is a long tradition in organising Nations Cups. It always was and still is a wonderful product. It is agreed that changes have to be made to modernise it, to make it a more attractive and sellable product. However, the FEI has to make all efforts to improve this product and make sure it keeps its prestige. The FEI must improve the Nations Cup series to prepare it for the future. As one of the most prestigious series in the sport, we request that the FEI ensures the viability of the series and makes sure to find a suitable sponsor. The Nations Cup enables riders and horses to compete for their countries and promotes the sport to the young generation in a very unique and positive way, and is vital for the future.

Memorandum of understanding between GCT/GCL and the FEI

The Jumping Owners Club takes note that the conflict between the FEI and the GCT/GCL came to an end and that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the parties. Such a conflict was counter-productive to all parties and could have deteriorated the image of the sport in the media and on the international sports scene.

However, the Jumping Owners Club is strongly opposed to the way this conflict was solved. The precedent created by this agreement between the FEI and GCT/GCL will have a major negative impact on all 3/4/5* shows in the world and therefore on the future of our sport.

In 2016, the Invitation system rules were clearly set for all level shows and applied to all events without exception. With this agreement, the FEI has chosen to set those rules aside for a particular shows organiser.

In your email dated 13th February 2017, sent to many EEF stakeholders, you stated that: "**We will not serve the future of our sport by protecting the Nations Cups against other initiatives with rules that are unfair and not acceptable to antitrust regulations**".

However in our opinion the FEI has, by signing this agreement between the GCT/GCL and the FEI, provided the GCT/GCL with very privileged conditions in comparison to other 3/4/5 star events which can only be detrimental to the sport. With this precedent in hand other 3/4/5 star events will follow suit by forming some sort of series with other shows to perform their events under the same conditions as the GCT/GCL.

In the case of the GCT/GCL, the best 30% of the world ranking list are invited in descending order to compete in the GCT which are 15/17 riders. 10% of home riders including some FEI supplied wildcards which counts for 6/7 riders. And the rest 60 % of the riders can NOT compete unless they are part of a team. And for a team a contribution of €2.000.000 must be paid. How can the FEI explain that these payments are no pay cards? This is contrary to the fight of the FEI against pay cards.

Once again, owners are bearing these costs, in addition to many other costs. This raise of entry fees is unacceptable and might lead owners to renounce owning top level horses and continuing investing in our sport.

The Harmonisation of the CSI/CSIOs entry fees

As mentioned in a recent email to your attention, the Jumping Owners Club had received additional feedback from members of the club and all of them are strongly opposed to the project of worldwide harmonisation of the entry fees. In fact, this project would result in a very large increase rather than a harmonisation of the entry fees in all areas of our sport, with the possible exception of the USA. Indeed, it is paramount, when harmonising those fees, to limit the potential increase to a strict minimum and this for obvious reasons such as the promotion of the sport in the less advanced regions, the democratisation of the sport that needs to be accessible to everyone and not to an elite only. We know that the FEI is working towards developing the sport to increase the number of nations at the Olympic Games.

Besides, the entry fees are generally covered by the owners and too big a raise of the entry fees would be detrimental to ownership and this could lead owners to choose certain competitions based on the prize money offered. Such a harmonisation does not take into account the social and economic context as well as the culture of the equestrian activities in various parts of the world. Therefore, the Jumping Owners Club strongly recommends the FEI to oppose a massive raise of the entry fees proposal. Otherwise, we will probably face strong reactions from the owners and the riders.

The Jumping Owners Club and myself remain at your disposal for any further information or for a discussion. We look forward to being of assistance in the shaping of our sport. Like most stakeholders, we look forward to working hand in hand with the FEI.



Christian BAILLET
Président