

Session 7 - Dressage Judging Working Group findings

The first findings of the FEI Dressage Judging Working Group (DJWG) were presented. Richard Davison, member of the DJWG, made an interim report on his research on the human cognitive processes in relation to judging Dressage. The final report would be ready at the end of the year.

The following main topics were mentioned:

- **Presentation of the DJWG's brief and its main working points:**
 - Art 437.2 Use of 7 Judges for specific higher level Championships – recommended;
 - Art 438 6% difference – under revision; depending on HiLo outcome;
 - Judges' huts warning button – implemented (Art 429.6);
 - Code of Points (CoP) and update of Handbook – ongoing;
 - Video Handbook – ongoing, to be worked on once CoP ready;
 - Judges Dashboard – implemented (July 2017), evaluation foreseen in August;
 - Education System – ongoing;
 - Use of modern technology – DoD, e-scribe etc. Also looking to other judging sports;
 - Selection and remuneration of Judges.
- **Presentation by Richard Davison**
 - Five pillars of a judging system: the DJWG had identified fundamental criteria needed to underpin a judging system, as follows:
 1. **EASY TO UNDERSTAND** by all stakeholders
 2. **TRANSPARENT**
 3. **FAIR** (applied consistently & objectively to all competitors)
 4. **EASY TO USE** by all levels of judges (expert & non expert) on a global scale
 5. **EASY TO REVIEW AND ADJUST** (content of CoP and application routines)
 - Cognitive processes/demands of Dressage judging:
 - A. **Judgement** (information from visual search compared with FEI Regulations, Code of Points, and previous experience)
 - B. **Decision making** (conclusion of judgement followed by action e.g. eliminate, award mark, while continuing to visualise horse's ongoing performance, including management of biases)
 - C. **Verbalisation** and interaction with scribe & computer operator (while continuing to visualise horse's ongoing performance)
 - D. **Repeat and sustain** (Potential for sustainability e.g. repetition 30/40 horses x7 minutes x35 movements). Use evidence base guidance.

- Fundamental requirements for effective & consistent judging practice:
 1. Standard reference (CoP)
 2. Standard visual search routines
 3. Realistic & sustainable cognitive processing demands
 4. Objective system for review judge performances & system
- Focus has been on Horse and Athlete preparation; that of the Judges and their fitness should also be considered (time of day, jetlag, hydration, food, sleep deprivation, medication). Much data already exists and is transferable.

Code of Points (CoP) – COPPSAG:

- Draft CoP prepared for some movements; Education Working Group tasked to finalise it. CoP to have a guide for deductions also.
- Aim to have videos linked to the CoP, which would be the base for a Video Handbook.

To ease the cognitive load on the Judges, it was proposed that Dressage tests be shorter and repetition of the same movement be avoided. If a combination had not reached a certain percentage halfway through the test, it could be eliminated (cf two-phase system in Jumping). Shorter tests would also be in the interest of horse welfare.

The timeline for implementation of the CoP was not yet determined, but would likely be after the 2020 Olympic Games. Thorough testing was needed before implementation.