

Eventing Risk Management (NSO) Seminar Aintree (GBR), 26 January 2020

A total of **67 Safety Officers and NF Representatives** from 25 countries (AUS, AUT, CAN, DEN, ESP, EST, FIN, FRA, GBR, GER, GUA, HKG, HUN, IND, IRL, ITA, JPN, NED, NOR, NZL, POR, SUI, SWE, , USA) (*see participants list – Annex I*) attended the 13TH Annual Eventing Risk Management Seminar at the Aintree Racecourse (GBR).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 1. Reviewed Frangible Device Standard**
Feedback to be given by NSOs on implications especially regarding front pinning
- 2. Horse injuries** - reporting and statistics to be improved
- 3. SIM Plan and medical events requirements** - to be used by each NF
- 4. FEI Campus**
 - Course and test for Eventing Rules available for athletes
 - Coach Education to be developed
- 5. Statistics** – Both non-rotational and rotational horse falls are at the lowest percentage ever reached
- 6. National Statistics**
 - Data from National Federations to be split in Long and Short Format to allow a better understanding of the fall rates
 - Number of athletes in China was increasing
- 7. Communication** with NSOs to be by email and Facebook in future

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1. WELCOME – Introduction by David O'Connor, Chair Eventing Committee

The Chair of the Eventing Committee Chairman welcomed the NSOs. He thanked and encouraged the participants to share their feedback regarding the matters and findings shared during first two days of the Future of Eventing Forum.

2. RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

The Chair of the FEI Eventing Risk Management Steering Group Geoff Sinclair (AUS) took the opportunity to thank the members of this Steering Group for their contribution and investment in their efforts to find solutions to reduce horse falls and risk in Eventing

Geoff Sinclair reminded the reviewed frangible standard would soon be put into place across all levels from January 2021 and would have implications. He encourage the NSOs to provide feedback especially regarding the implications on front pinning related to the new standard which would be published in the next weeks as well as the fitting of current frangible devices.

Jonathan Clissold (NSO GBR) confirmed that having a fence front pinned potentially made it safer. He recommended that a transition period be included in the case a currently approved Frangible device did not meet the new standard. It was important that fences currently fitted with frangible devices not be changed to non-frangible fences. The phasing out should be done over a period of time, and 12 to 18 months was suggested.

Jonathan Holling (USA) reminded that the management of number of frangible devices available could be an issue in certain countries in order to be able to implement the Frangible devices on time.

The statistics in regards to penalties related to breaking frangible devices showed a low percentage compared to the number of starters.

David O'Connor explained that statistics also showed that the release of frangible devices wasn't frequent (i.e. 1/100 starters in the 3*-S, 1/25 starters in the 4*-L), which did not support the belief that frangible devices were releasing too easily.

Jonathan Holling (USA) added that studies and video evidence showed that horses hit the fences with frangible devices much harder than riders think

Geoff Sinclair (AUS) reminded that corner fences created most falls (2013-2019). A frangible device option fitted on a corner fence had now been developed and approved.

Pierre Michelet (FRA) explained that good ground lines helped to reduce horse falls also at corner fences.

The statistics on the use of frangible devices 2013-2019, confirmed that numbers of fences had increased. Reverse-pins were still being used although declining. The use of front pins had considerably reduced and the use of MIM clips had increased.

The NSOS were encouraged to review the video on the use of the Kettlebell published on Youtube (https://useventing.com/news-media/news/frangible-fence-equipment-test-developed?fbclid=IwAR0_xaJuj1zHvujTIp3-BJCg903y02Uf0Cc1vrgk0HEJFEft1i8tlzjlxTE), being easy to use and handle, for testing devices on fences.

It was suggested that NSOs increased their communication and expressed that emails was the preferred tool to communicate and share information.

Body protectors

As regards to the decision of the FEI to have compulsory body protectors standards, NSOs commented as follows:

Philine Ganders-Meyer (GER NSO) recommended that the implementation of body protector standards allowed the use of flexible type of body protectors.

Rob Stevenson (CAN NSO) explained that Canada had undergone the review of the certification process for body protectors. The objective was to ensure that the body protector/air vest would allow timely separation from the horse in case of a fall. Following the video analysis more information would be ready and the findings could be shared in a year or two. Body protector standards to be recommended by the RMSG further to the FEI Medical Committees' advice in the near future.

Rider Representative

The importance of Rider Representatives was raised, more presence and attendance during Officials' meetings at Events needed to be ensured and their function could be expanded to walk the Cross Country course with the Officials.

Karl-Heinz Nothofer (GER) reported that Germany encouraged the Rider Representative to be on-site before the start of the Event to give input and feedback prior to competitions

Gert Naber (NED) reminded that at some Events, it was sometimes difficult to find the Rider Representative during competition as too busy or unavailable to fulfil the role also depending on the category of event. David O'Connor (USA) suggested to include a non-competing athlete as Rider Representative during Short Format competition as these types of competitions were run in a more intense way allowing less interaction with the much quicker way.

Horse Injuries

The NSOs agreed that horse injuries' reporting should be improved. A coordination between FEI Eventing Department and FEI Veterinary Department would need to be developed in order to improve injury reporting. Veterinary Delegates had to report back all injuries during competitions through the online Veterinary Report. Follow-up was essential to ensure all competitions were included as well as the quality of the data for injuries related to a fall, the data was to be linked to the information received in the TD reports and Fall report forms.

Hamish Butler-Gallie (NZL) mentioned that New Zealand racing had been using app to monitor horse fall related information during races. This could also be used for Eventing.

Jonathan Clissold (GBR) Veterinarians reported back horse injuries to the FEI, however, the information was not shared with the TD and/or NSO. He suggested that this data be shared.

Geoff inquired how to make sure Medical Events requirements and SIM plan were used in each country, the following comments were given:

Philine Ganders (GER): a checklist and a booklet were available for the Technical Delegate to be reviewed at an Event with the Medical teams. Schooling for CMOs and Medical teams was also available.

Teun Platenkamp (NED): Our country also used a checklist and all points needed to be ticked off and signed by the OC Chairman, the CD and TD before the Event.

A similar checklist could be made available for all NFs in the future.

FEI Campus

It was suggested to include a Course and test on Eventing Rules available for athletes. It was felt that many of them didn't have an extended knowledge of the Rules or didn't keep up to date with the updates.

In addition, there was a strong recommendation to include Coach Education on the Campus as this would be very beneficial.

3. NATIONAL FEDERATIONS PRESENTATIONS

3.1 AUS NSO – Meredith Chapman

Annex III

Meredith Chapman recently appointed, as full time AUS NF National Safety Manager, using her experience from the health and safety industry, PHD candidate, breeder and rider, presented the AUS updated Risk management program including:

The MER qualification system with additional criteria, further to the involvement of EquiRatings® since two years and well as XC Guidelines, Concussion Protocols, Frangible devices and PPE (Personnel protection Equipment). Safety management was now a constant involvement point, which required well trained and effective officials, effective reporting as well as competent risk awareness of competitors and coaches.

Safety initiatives including communication with Rider Representatives, implemented job description for the Rider Representative, leadership programs, electronic reporting options, enhanced communication with the Rider Representative, 3min. response medical guidelines, officials' education, standards across all courses, field assessments, helmet tagging, Coroner inquest reporting the 31 recommendations were key points to make the Equestrian community aware and responsible for reduced risk.

Horse falls had reduced significantly in Australia in the last year. Building on current programs, lessons learnt, athletes' role in risk management, ensuring sustainable funding programs and continuing to develop best practice worldwide were main points the AUS NF were striving for.

The Swiss cheese model was reiterated that not only one aspect will make an effective change, several layers will need to be triggered.

3.2 AUT NSO – *Katrin Eichinger-Kniely*

Annex IV

Katrin Eichinger-Kniely (AUT) reminded that Austria was not a Horse Country, as the country was more focused on winter sports. Nevertheless the AUT NF risk management program for Eventing was effective, could be continued and improved.

Although a reverse qualification system had been put into place, in 2019, a large number of non-related fence falls was recorded.

There had been less competitions, but more rider falls and more horse falls. The number of falls were still too high in Austria, but there were no serious incidents. It had been identified and recognised by the AUT NF that the major issue was athletes' education and lack of risk awareness, education was crucial to reduce the risk.

The AUT NF had organized an important seminar with 100 attendees to review falls linked to educational problems (training athletes to ride properly, not too fast, correctly riding under bad weather and safely).

3.3 CAN NSO – *Rob Stevenson*

Annex V

Rob Stevenson (CAN) thanked the FEI and the attendees for making the Forum happen. He reminded that Canada was a small Eventing nation with a small number of starters. The most important aspect of risk management in 2019 had been the follow-up of the use of body protectors.

Most falls were reported as separation of horse and rider at the lower level. The warm up areas had been identified as high risk areas at National Events. The concussion data review had concluded that there were 60 concussions reported for 2019. For Eventing, there was one concussion every 1077 starts and one every 1071 starts in Hunter/Jumper, demonstrating that the number of concussions were very similar.

3.4 FRA NF Representatives – *Laurent Bousquet and Pierre Michelet*

Annex VI

Following several serious accidents in France in 2019, a safety meeting had been set up in October 2019, followed by a summit in December 2019 where the Steering Group was created. It included a panel of experienced people involved in Equestrian (parents, trainers, sponsors, owners, officials, etc.), as well as Estelle Chavary, a Skydiving safety specialist. Much can be learnt from the skydiving community. Their post-accident reporting protocol which included a skydiving internet platform for all involved to provide comments, learnings and information.

The FRA NF had set up a Risk Management Policy which included 4 pillars, Security policy and objectives, Risk Management, Maintaining Security and Safety Promotion, the Swiss

cheese model (cheesecake) was referred to. Different working groups were created (50 people including athletes, coaches and officials) to cover all the Risk Management related topics. A presentation given by Professor Fournier (head trauma neurosurgeon) was referred to. He had a daughter who rode in Eventing and didn't want her to ride with an air vest, as the body protector had the turtle effect on the rider and made it too difficult for athletes to evacuate before the horse fell. He confirmed that for motorcycling patients with a head injury trauma, the medical assessment was always worse when the helmet wasn't broken. The FEI Eventing Department suggested to invite the Professor for the next NSO seminar.

Following the meeting in December, short-term actions had been put into place for immediate implementation including elimination after Dressage if score is above a certain mark, penalty points if riding too fast and elimination in case of second attempt on quick option after a refusal and increased qualification system, especially for the young riders.

Athletes also had the possibility of using a heart rate monitor for their horse on Cross Country.

The FRA NF followed the FEI procedure with the reverse qualification process.

Philine Ganders-Meyer (GER NSO) raised the question if it should be mandatory that each NF to have compulsory MERs for all National riders at certain level before allowed to enter an FEI 2* competition?

3.5 ESP NSO – *Felicísimo Aguado*

Annex VII

Felicísimo Aguado (ESP) thanked the FEI for providing so much information to the NSOs.

He reported that the ESP NF had put in place the FEI recommended measures for Risk Management in Eventing and improved communication between medical and officials. Frangible devices were now used in several competitions at National level.

The reporting system was still an issue, due to the difficulty to collect information, the TD Report had been improved for National competitions, but the Officials still felt that too much reporting was needed for a one day competition.

The NSO stated that in his view, if the criteria for qualification was too strict, it reduced the number of competitors. The number of starters had been increasing in the past two years in Spain (2000 starters and 200 competitions). The number of National competitions had decreased slightly as more International competitions were now being organized. He highlighted that more stewards were needed in Spain. Seminars and courses were being organized.

A seminar would be organized this year for the Technical Delegates and a coaching program would be developed. Last year, a seminar had been organized to review roles and responsibilities and safety related issues in regard to coaches and coaching programs.

3.6 EST NSO – *Madli Murel*

Madli Murel (EST) had a new role as NSO in addition to her other roles with the EST NF.

She reminded that Estonia was a small country in Equestrian with 5000 sport horses in total. Nevertheless, in the past 10 years, the number of Eventing starters had almost doubled to reach 380 starters in 2019, 6 – 7 events were organised per year. . . ,

TD Reports were now requested at National level, so the National Federation was hoping to be able to provide statistics and analysis in a couple of years in regard to safety. Frangible Technology had been used for the last two years. Reverse Qualification and riding too fast penalties had been put into place. The National Federation would continue to improve requirements to improve safety through education of riders and Officials.

3.7 FIN NSO – *Kalle Nykänen*

The military history and small Equestrian background of Finland had made the Cross country courses still old fashioned. There had been no bad falls in the past years. The design of the Courses had improved in the past two years, the implementation of the Nordic Baltic

Championships had largely contributed to this improvement and Finland was better than Sweden in Ice-hockey for the moment.

3.8 GER NSO – *Philine Ganders and Karl-Heinz Nothofer* Annex VIII

The German National Federation had endorsed a Cross Country Course Design guideline finalised in 2018. The brochure could be shared with other NFs if there was an interest.

235'000 Euros had been spent via funding and sponsorship to fund equestrian safety and education in Germany. Regional seminars had been organized by the National Federation and seven hundred MIM systems had been installed for National Events.

The National Federation had concentrated their work on building and delivering more portable fences for National and International Events. Fence construction and delivery to the Events was financially endorsed by the National Federation.

The Klengel System was presented (frangible device using a pole, pin spring and rope). It had been tested by the GER NF with the GER pendulum and Professor Katona, was ready to be approved, and would now seek FEI certification. Unfortunately, Mr Klengel had passed away recently. The advantage of the Klengel system on a pin was that it released quickly whether the impact come from the side or the top of the pole. Penalties were not awarded to combinations in National competitions for the release a frangible device, so a quick release had no impact on combinations' score, and was admitted safer.

A safety seminar for youth and parents (200 to 400 attendees) in an indoor school had been organized by the National Federation with the participation of trainers and equestrian professionals covering aspects such as coaching, proper use of tack and saddlery. It had proven to be very efficient, nevertheless the aim was now to reach a larger public. The National Federation would prepare short videos available in social media liked to safety.

The NF and Chris Bartle had produced a safety seating video available in German and English.

The National Federation still wanted to improve coaching Education.

It was highlighted that German athletes were wanting to compete abroad as the quality of the Cross Country Courses was judged of a better quality abroad. The National Federation were working on improving German Cross country courses and Events, involving the athletes in National Cross Country Courses at Events and asking them for feedback throughout the Event.

3.9 GBR NSO – *Jonathan Clissold*

Jonathan Clissold (GBR) reminded that Great Britain was one of the biggest Eventing Nations. National Events were run from 80cm to 1.20cm high. The National TDs were required to fill in all course data (fences, fall reports, cross country course data) and entered in the GBR NF Database.

In 2019 the reverse qualification rule (similar to the FEI Rule) was implemented and proved to be successful. Medical Coverage had been reviewed 2019 (i.e. paramedics requirements and medication available on-site at an Event).

An audit had been conducted in regard to the AUS NF Coroner Inquest to make sure the GBR NF was covering the requirements listed in the report.

The National Federation also insisted that a Health and Safety Officer be appointed at each National Event, independent of the Organising Committee.

3.10 British Eventing Guest– *Heather Cameron-Whytock* Annex IX

Heather Cameron-Whytock (GBR) from Equine & Sports Science at Nottingham Trent University proposed to NSOs the possibility of providing feedback as to what direction the risk reduction research should be heading.. She reminded the assembly that she was available to share her contact details to retrieve and exchange any information in order to define a research direction that would be the most efficient in the NSOs' view. A form was available to provide feedback on Eventing Risk Research:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xcLLiu3Ix0KBabpDig2-L5xTaNk9UDxAk1jrRmzoH95UNjJZTjIVS0tLMTUwTUcyWkZJUIVYRzRNRS4u>

3.11 HKG NSO – Alice Mak

Annex X

Alice Mak (HKG) presented the development of Eventing in China. The first CCI was run in 2019 so it had been difficult for the National Federation to determine a qualification system. Following support from the FEI Solidarity Department and other National Federations, the Hong Kong Federation had implemented a nine month examination program for Chinese athletes in 167 riding clubs (mainly in Beijing) during which 971 horses and 5052 athletes applied to participate, in order to define combinations able to enter a first CCI in Hong Kong. On the 5052 entries in 2019, 3766 passed (74.5 %) so a great potential for the evolution of Equestrian Sport.

The examination was taken mainly by young riders and 74.5% had passed the examination. The attendees agreed that this examination program would considerably participate to the increase of Equestrian Sport in Asia.

3.12 IRL NSO – Alison Packman

The statistics for 2019 were similar than the 2018 ones but the fall (athletes and horses) percentage had decreased.

A stewards' course was organized by the National Federation to keep Officials up to date with FEI Rules.

All IRL National Officials were accredited every two years. If they didn't reach the requirements in time, they would be downgraded one level.

A watch list was sent every week to the Officials officiating at an Event using the EquiRatings® system monitoring athletes and competition starts. After the Event, the falls are reviewed and added to the IRL NF data. Two consecutive falls over the past two runs would induce a reverse qualification. Hospitalised athletes would need to have a discharge signed off by the hospital and CMO before they can return to competition.

Entries were limited to 300 and there were now minimum Cross Country times implemented put into place.

In 2020, the National Federation would implement fence data collection to be entered by the Officials at Events, make sure that all Events are up to standard and that all Chief Steward Report recommendations are carried out.

The National Federation also wanted to ensure that more people were involved and communication between officials.

3.13 JPN NSO – Shigeru Hashimoto and Keiko Kabashima

Annex XI

The JPN NF's focus this year was the organization of the Olympic Games and providing the best for the Games in Tokyo.

The focus was also based on the development of Eventing after the Olympic Games in Japan, via collaboration with Japanese Universities, increased coaching, grooms' education and collaboration with JRA for racehorse retraining and horses' conversion for Eventing.

3.14 NED NSO – Teun Platenkamp

Annex XII

Teun Platenkamp (NED) presented a philosophical theme on whether Eventing was an Art or a Science.

The NED NF wished to focus more on Horsemanship. Applied science was technology and applied art was decoration. Technology and decoration made Eventing easier with a better picture. He defined horsemanship as follows: it was the consistent use of judgement and developed skills to accomplish Eventing objectives, keeping in mind risk awareness.

No compromise was acceptable in Eventing in regards to Safety and its' awareness.

Comparing the Boeing 737 Max damages to unprepared Eventing athletes, if the plane technology was not correctly fitted and the pilots not prepared enough to manoeuvre such technology, in the same way athletes needed to be well educated in order to prove to be successful on Cross Country.

Teun Platenkamp (NED) announced his hand-over his NSO role for the future to Gert Naber (NED).

3.15 NZL NSO – *Hamish Butler-Gallie*

Annex XIII

The NZL NF had undertaken activities for the benefit of Risk Management and safety, including the development of a Cross Country Guide in New Zealand that was nearly ready to be published.

Also, the Seminar System had been reviewed for improved officials' education and a new performance evaluation system had been installed. Risk Management and Safety has become a key pillar within the Seminar system. A new performance evaluation system has been implemented for the promotion of Officials.

Data analysis had shown a decrease of horse fall rate from 32 last year to 13 in 2019.

The concussion and return to play protocol was part of the protective activities put into place. Identified concussed athletes were given a blue card and medical clearance before return-to-play was mandatory. In addition, high medical standards, mandatory medical cover and equipment check by the Technical Delegate at Events, body protector standards would be implemented in August 2020 as well as the compulsory presence of Safety Officers at every Event.

3.16 SUI NF Representative – *Heinz Scheller*

Switzerland had encountered falls of athletes and horses, but not serious injuries had been registered in 2019. A coaching system would be offered by the SUI NF nearly free of charge to Athletes at each National competition. A larger system would be put into place by the SUI NF for athletes under 25 linked to senior athletes helping them plan and prepare their season.

3.17 SWE NF representative – *Mats Andersson*

Annex XIV

The SWE NF had decided to implement the requirement that all covered spread obstacles without a brush spread must be fitted with frangible devices.

Table type fences which were not fitted with a MIM clip had to comply with specific measurements (the length of the obstacle at the top must not exceed 50 % of the maximum top spread for the class).

The use of frangible devices was still a focus for the SWE NF. MIM system had been put into place, as well as adapted ground lines.

In 2017, a rule had been implemented imposing frangible devices on open oxers, open corners and uprights.

Following difficulties to fit frangible devices on box fences, the rule would be modified for table kits to: "without a MIM table kit, the length of the obstacle at the top must not exceed 50% of the allowed Maximum Top Spread for the class."

Fitting exceptions were granted to Roll Top obstacles. The definition of Roll tops and angles of the curve had been reviewed, in addition to Missing a flag definition, flag poles, their attachments on obstacles (to be tested and evaluated in 2020), penalties for knocking a flag with the athletes' foot and obstacle widths

3.18 USA NSO – *Jonathan Holling*

Annex XV

Jonathan Holling (USA) presented a new frangible device with a ball bearing and spring system. The system had been tested with the kettlebell. The device was ready to be tested and some Designers were already testing on-site.

He referred to the USA fatality at a national event during a warm-up. The fence had been secured but not staked down in the ground. He suggested that the way of fixing obstacles to the ground safely and dressing warm-up obstacles should be better defined and improved.

Jonathan Holling and David O'Connor (USA) reminded that it was encouraged to secure and build schooling fences with the same standards as a fence that would be used for a competition Cross Country Course.