



**EQUESTRIAN SPORTS**  
NEW ZEALAND

## **NEW ZEALAND'S FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED FEI FORMATS FOR EVENTING AT THE OLYMPICS**

### **1. PROPOSAL: Three horse/rider combinations per team and the removal of the drop-score:**

**ESNZ does not agree** with this proposition for the following reasons:

- a. Risk of teams not completing (due to elimination, retirement or withdrawals) would be too high as clearly shown by the Equi-ratings figures. A high non-completion rate undermines the competition and doesn't provide for good watching/spectatorship. Equally, the introduction of a penalty point system to counteract non-completion would only make the sport more confusing - the notion that an eliminated rider comes back and completes a showjumping round as part of a team is difficult to explain/understand. This does not happen in any other Olympic sport to the best of our knowledge.
- b. Eventing is significantly different to Dressage and Jumping because there is a much higher risk of non-completion due to the endurance requirement of the cross-country and across the three phases, and due to the higher risk of technical eliminations that can occur over the three phases. For those reasons, Eventing shouldn't necessarily adopt the three person team format as the other disciplines may do.
- c. Horse Welfare becomes a more significant issue where there is no drop-score because riders will feel significantly pressured to complete irrespective of horse health and best-practice horse management;
- d. Reducing the riders to three will change the nature of the sport from being a competitive, exciting sport to watch to one wherein teams will take multiple cross country options in order to ensure a total team score can be posted. We are concerned that removing the drop-score will put the integrity of the cross country challenge at risk.
- e. Other sports have a drop rider (team cycling) or a drop race (yachting) or engage in team tactics with riders sacrificing themselves for the team leader (cycling road races). Four per team in eventing, with a drop score, is no different to these

#### **Equestrian Sports New Zealand**

Ground Floor, 86 Customhouse Quay, PO Box 6146  
Marion Square, Wellington 6141, New Zealand  
Tel +64 (4) 499 8994, Fax +64 (4) 471 0813  
nzef@nzequestrian.org.nz



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sports, and team tactics come into play potentially where one rider plays it safe to ensure that more likely medal contenders in the team can succeed. This is no different to the cycling road race.

**2. PROPOSAL: Dressage & Cross-Country in one day each**

**ESNZ agrees** with this. Obviously details/logistics to be further discussed, particularly around the dressage test and feasibility of judging so many tests in one day.

**3. PROPOSAL: Show-Jumping (Individual and Team to be in one day)**

**ESNZ agrees** with this. We prefer the team jumping and medal ceremony before the individual jumping final and medal ceremony as there seems little to be gained from reversing the order. This allows for a slightly softer track for the team jumping (allowing lesser nations to complete comfortably) with the pinnacle of the sport to be the individual final.

We believe that Team jumping should follow one on from the other in reverse team order to help build excitement and provide for easy following of team scores. We also do not see that there is any advantage in having the warm-up area in the main arena – it detracts from the competition spectacle.

If the team is to jump one-after-another, allocated team fences/warm-up areas would be preferred.

The individual jumping competition should simply be the top 20 for excitement.

**4. PROPOSAL: Name Change**

ESNZ are not averse to a name-change, provided that such a change does not come at significant financial cost. We support Equi-Tri as Equestrian Triathlon is too long. Suggest that other Equestrian Disciplines should become Equi- Dressage and Equi-Jumping for ease of understanding across the whole sport.

**5. PROPOSAL: Increasing Universality**

ESNZ believe that to truly increase universality and increase the number of flags at the Olympics that the FEI should be looking at change from a wider angle than simply the Olympic competition. Better pathways to enable emerging nations to participate in Eventing and to gain experience and qualification should be made available.

There specifically needs to be a focus on the expense in running FEI events, as this



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significantly inhibits emerging nations from getting into or progressing with the sport of eventing.

ESNZ also believe that a review of the allocation and qualification criteria might also enable increased universality.

#### **6. PROPOSAL: Changing the Medal quotas available**

Given the significant cost implications of having separate competitions for individual and team medals (including separate cross country and jumping efforts, additional judging days and cost of travelling and accommodating extra athletes and horses), ESNZ wholly support the notion of having one competition for both team and individual medals. ESNZ also believe that all participants in a team should receive a team medal (whether they are a contributing score or not, they will certainly be contributing effort in the competition).

#### **7. PROPOSAL: Increasing spectatorship and popularity of eventing**

ESNZ believe that the spectatorship and visual appeal of eventing can be significantly improved via the means by which it is presented, formatted and commentated upon. The use of onscreen graphics and technology in eventing could enhance viewer experience. Shuttling between cameras on the cross country causes confusion unless very well commentated – perhaps investment in training effective commentators (multiple languages) would be good use of resources. We believe that it's not necessarily the format of the sport itself that requires significant change, but the way in which it is televised and presented to the audience. The Master Series being held and televised in the UK this coming season should be utilized and assessed in terms of the way in which it accesses the public and presents the sport – and perhaps used as a model for further Olympic presentation, for example having the cross country in reverse order enabling a condensed viewing of the competitive part of the competition.

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