

As the Organiser of a 4 star CCI (FEI Classics event) I would like to comment on just a few of the matters under discussion – specifically not the format at the Olympic Games!

Name of the Sport/Discipline: I am in favour of a change. Because the sport within the Olympic Games is known as 'Equestrian', with three disciplines, ie Jumping, Dressage and Eventing, I think there is considerable logic in our discipline being known as 'Equestrian – Triathlon'. Within that overall name, an individual competition can easily continue to be known by its traditional name, eg 'Badminton Horse Trials'.

The Star System: I well understand the need for a new 1 star level. Logically this would mean that our event would 'move up' and become 5 star and there would be considerable advantages in that; lining up with Jumping; understanding for the general public, for whom '5 star' is a frequently used term to denote top quality (eg hotels, restaurants etc). While the term 'Classics' is perhaps acceptable in Great Britain I understand that it is not understood as a mark of top quality everywhere in the world and so should probably be discarded. While I understand the wish to decouple these few 'special' events from the star system I suggest that this should only be done if a new name acceptable to all organisers can be found; for consideration, in golf and tennis the word 'Majors' is widely used.

Team/Individual Competitions: I think that the (existing) 4 star cross country level should be explicitly reserved for individual competitions. I have had wide experience as a course designer and technical delegate all over the world and I firmly believe that team competitions should be run at the (max) 3 star level in order to promote inclusivity, giving new nations a reasonable prospect of completing the competition. It has never proved possible to accommodate the wide range of experience/ability found in team competitions if a 'true' 4 star course is used; while at an individual event the qualifications can be set in such a way that nationality is not a relevant factor in deciding who can enter.

Long/Short format: I am not in favour of the introduction of a short format (CIC) category for the top level (4 star/Classics or whatever). I believe the top level should always have a relatively long cross country course and should always have the traditional order of the phases, ie finishing with Jumping. In this way it will remain the ultimate test of horse and rider for the relatively few combinations that are capable of taking part. At this high level, it is the quality of the participants that is of paramount importance, not the number of them! Nothing should be done to make this level 'easier', or it will quickly lose its attraction to the media and the public.

Meetings of FEI Classics organisers: I suggest the FEI facilitates further meetings of the Classics organisers, with both the FEI Eventing and Commercial departments. These meetings were very useful to all parties.

Presentation of the Sport: The organisers of the FEI Classics have more experience of promoting Eventing to very large crowds of spectators, TV and Radio, local, national and international media than any other group of people involved in our discipline. I suggest their expertise would be very useful to the FEI. It is disturbing that the FEI is apparently discussing the presentation of our sport without involving any of the eventing community at all.

Hugh Thomas
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Wednesday 4th - Sunday 8th May, 2016
Cross-Country Day – Saturday 7th May
www.badminton-horse.co.uk



Tuesday 3rd – Wednesday 4th May 2016
www.mitsubishimotorscup.badminton-horse.co.uk