



Session 6 – FEI World Championships 2022

status update & digital activations on the horizon

Introduction

The session concentrated on an update on the progress for the preparations for the FEI World Championships in Herning, Prato and Verona and the possibilities around digital promotion related to these events. The session noted that the FEI Championships are a key opportunity to promote equestrian sport and some key statistics were used to illustrate the changes in sports consumption habits:

- The viewing time of sports content in 2015 was 7 hours and 44 minutes on average, while in 2021 the average viewing time per week was reduced to 6 hours and 22 minutes.
- Only one of three members of Generation Z (aged 9 to 24) watches linear TV, while 67% of baby boomers still consume sports on linear TV.
- Half of Generation Z watches sports on Over The Top (OTT) channels, but only one out of five Baby boomers watch sports this way.
- One out of four members of Generation Z consumes sports on social media while only one out of 10 baby boomers consume sports on social channels

For the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games there was a 139 per cent increase from Rio 2016 in terms of digital platform views across the Olympic broadcast partners. The importance of keeping up with the changes in sports media consumption habits was stressed so as to better assess the choice of communication channels for the organisation. It was also noted that while there should be a lot of focus on digital, linear television is still important and that we should not forget about this medium when looking at ways of promoting the sport.

The digital activations during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games provided some key learnings for the FEI World Championships. A key takeaway from the Tokyo 2020 digital activations was that all campaigns must be integrated and each stakeholder has a role to play in sharing and amplifying content, and promoting each other.

FEI World Championships Herning 2022

Casper Cassøe, CEO Operations - FEI World Championships Herning 2022 and Jens Trabjerg, CEO Sport - FEI World Championships Herning 2022 provided an update on the FEI World Championships in Herning where the disciplines Jumping, Dressage, Para Dressage and Vaulting will be organised. Jens and Casper specifically addressed the initiatives carried out by the Organising Committee in the area of sustainability to ensure the event is organized in the most sustainable way. Commercially the event is already very successful with the sponsor portfolio currently on board and strong ticket sales. Hospitality is almost sold out which is another indicator that the event is in high demand.



FEI World Championships Pratoni 2022

Simone Perillo, Secretary General Italian Equestrian Federation (FISE), gave an update on the progress for Pratoni, where the disciplines of Eventing and Driving will be organised. The Organising Committee has made good progress and planning is on track with test events about to take place in May. A specific reference was made to the agreement with SAP who will provide specific fan engagement services during the event as part of their sponsorship.

FEI World Championships Verona 2022

Maria Baleri, Executive Coordinator - FEI World Championships Verona 2022 outlined the progress made on the organisation for Verona where the FEI World Endurance Championships will be hosted. With extensive experience from Fieracavelli, Maria presented the venue and some of the key activities the Organising Committee is focussing on to make the event successful.

Best practises in Digital Promotion

Jonny Murch, the CEO of RedTorch, an award winning research, digital and social media agency, took to the floor to provide an update on digital campaigns promotion.

It was forged on his experience working with multiple summer and winter Olympic sports and watching closely the trends within our industry.

He presented their 2022 *Sport On Social* table that monitors the performances on social media of International Federations within the Olympic programme and highlighted the solid 9th place overall, improving its position by one place, sitting ahead of Tier A Olympic sports such as Swimming and Gymnastics.

The following six trends in sport driving innovation on digital and social media were emphasised:

1. To ride the wave of growing interest in women's sport
2. Think lifestyle as well as sport in order to build community
3. Make athletes your social media stars
4. Build direct fan relationships to grow commercial potential
5. Align with the interests of young people to create positive change
6. Keep an open mind about technology.

All of these elements are relevant to be implemented by National Federations.

FEI Digital Promotion

Following this presentation, the reasons behind the FEI's Digital growth and the increase in engagement rates was explained.



The page views on FEI.org increased with 646% since 2015 to over 26 million on 2021. The video views saw an even larger increase with over 700% growth since 2017 to over 343 million in 2021. The most important KPI for the FEI is the engagement, which increased with close to 400% to over 21 million engagements in 2021. Some of the key learnings for increasing engagement rate are as follows:

- Photos generate on average 2 times more engagement than videos;
- To make story telling unique for each channel and to adapt the content to each channel;
- To separate discipline, content, channels and community and to have a social media presence which caters to each one individually;
- Encourage direct feedback from fans to get an idea of what works and what does not.

Since 2021, the FEI has also broadened its advertising strategy, opening up its digital channels to organisations to advertise on FEI channels and not just to have traditional sponsorship opportunities at equestrian events. Not only does the FEI open up its channels for advertising but it has also now become content creator, helping brands get closer to the equestrian audience. What is absolutely essential with these campaigns is that they are authentic and that are meaningful to the equestrian community. The FEI is currently in discussion with numerous different brands, to produce campaigns that have relevance to the equestrian community which drives viewership and engagement.

The key ingredients for the success of a digital campaign were explained based on the FEI experience of the #FortheLoveofEquestrian, #WeDontPlay and the #TimetoBeat campaigns. All have the key elements of good story telling, design and creativity and the right choice of channels and technology. The importance of collaboration and content exchange was stressed for the distribution and amplification of content to make a campaign successful.

The promotional campaign for the FEI World Championships 2022 was presented – “Thousands of Heroes. Champions As One” – which was created to honour all those who contribute to the journey of a champion.

Questions and Answers

During the Q&A session the delegate from Colombia suggested translating these campaigns into other languages in order to increase their reach. This is particularly important for National Federations that do not have the required budget.