

## Session 3 - Dressage Future

### I - INTRODUCTION

The FEI Dressage Committee and department have spent the last few years more with internal issues, to secure that all processes and rules have the necessary quality. In the year 2014 the Committee has started a discussion on the future and especially the marketing of the sport.

Dressage is in a good position, with the Freestyle selling full houses in several countries and winning increased interest for Dressage. However we have to realise that we are not a big player in the world of sports. Important is to be one of the main equestrian sports and we should realise that, if we want to be, we must have an open mind for necessary changes in the interest of the Dressage sport in general. 25 years ago some visionaries had a hard job to introduce the Freestyle, today we can say that this test saved the sport.

We know that it is not always easy to attract new spectators, sponsors, extended media interest etc. which is the only way to make Dressage more attractive.

The NFs and all stakeholders need to be aware that the Dressage Sport requires some changes, not all of which might be welcomed or in the end work out, but some degree of trial and error is unavoidable in this process. The aim is to increase the interest in Dressage without losing the current core fans.

#### Core Values of Dressage

- The welfare of the horse is paramount.
- The development of the horse into a happy athlete through harmonious education, resulting in making the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible, and also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the Athlete.
- To be a test of the horse being correctly trained in accordance with classical traditional principles.

#### Survey Repucom

The Dressage Committee initiated a survey to get in-depth insights into the motivational structure of the discipline Dressage and the perception and image of this sport among the different target groups

The survey was made by Repucom in autumn 2014 and the conclusion of the survey is:

- The adaption of new formats (shorter both for the whole event as well as for the exercises) is crucial
- Explanation (commentary / graphics) would be necessary to help new audiences to understand the sport
- Using key Dressage events to 'hook' new audiences is essential.
- Modernizing, and giving more freedom with the dress code and music is likely to appeal to a wider audience as long it remains fitting and appropriate to retain the core Dressage friends.
- Human interest stories in the media will broaden interest to wider audiences. Convince riders to make themselves and their horses more accessible.

#### Survey findings:

86% of reasons for people having an interest in Dressage are summed up by the concepts of:

- Beauty
- Relationship horse & rider

- Horse itself
- Grace
- Elegance
- Fun

Only 24% are interested because of concepts like:

- Discipline
- Control
- Training

Key motivators:

- Aesthetics
- Admiration
- Atmosphere

Fascination with Dressage involved with:

- Grace
- Beauty
- Aesthetics

Challenges of Dressage:

- Media exposure
- The perception of animal abuse
- Difficulties to understand the judging
- Boring to watch
- Too expensive

## **II – GAMES & CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Identify the issues for Olympic Games, WEG and other Championships and Games

- We need to limit participation whilst maximizing number of nations (flags).
- We need to create better sport entertainment and drama excitement.
- We need to consider horse welfare.
- Although maximizing flags the quality of sport needs to be of the highest level.
- We need a very clear avenue for nations to qualify.
- We need to take into account the different levels of development in the world and transport and quarantine issues in relation to qualifying.
- For the Olympic Games, move from a sport-based to an event based programme; Regular reviews of the programme to be based on events rather than on sports. Foster gender equality. Organisation to be responsible for running self-evaluation on a regular basis.
- We need to harmonize the formats of the Olympic Games and the FEI Championships.

### **OLYMPIC GAMES**

Considerations

- Teams of 3 athletes, no drop score:
  - o More flags
  - o Decreases excellence
  - o No drop score increases drama and sport entertainment
  - o Grand Prix used only for qualification

Possible formats:

60 athletes (xx team athletes [xx teams of 3] + xx individuals) each with 1 horse and xx reserve horses (in addition to the 60)  
Teams cannot send additional individuals  
Maximum 2 individuals per nation

**Current format:**

- 3 or 4 member team, 3 counting
- Day 1-2: Grand Prix (all competitors)
- Day 3: GPS – 32 competitors – Team medals.
- Day 4: GP Freestyle – 18 competitors – Individual medals

**Proposal A**

- Teams of 3 competitors
- Day 1-2: Grand Prix (all competitors), qualifier only
- Day 3: rest day
- Day 4: GP Freestyle – 18 competitors – Individual medal
- Day 5: Team medals:
  - o GPS – 8 Teams, 1 competitor per Team
  - o GP Freestyle – 8 Teams, 2 competitors per Team

**Proposal B*****Alternative 1:***

- Teams of 3
- Day 1-2: Grand Prix (all competitors), qualifier only
- Day 3: rest day
- Day 4: GPS – 14 individuals and 6 Teams of 3 competitors - Team medal
- Day 5: GP Freestyle – 18 competitors - Individual medal

***Alternative 2:***

- Teams of 3
- Day 1-2: Grand Prix 60 competitors (qualifier only for Teams and Individuals)
- Day 3: rest day
- Day 4: Grand Prix Special 30 competitors – Team medal
  - o Top 6 teams plus 12 individuals
- Day 5: Grand Prix Freestyle 15 competitors – Individual medal

**Possible Future concept/alternative**

- Teams of 2 or 3 competitors
- Day 1-2: Grand Prix (all competitors), qualifier only
- Day 3: rest day
- Day 4: GP Freestyle – 18 competitors – Individual medal
- Day 5: Team of 2 or 3 – Pas de Deux or Pas de Trois - Team medal

Pas de Deux/Trois:

Practical judging for Pas de Deux or Pas de Trois, also for Freestyle:

- o 3 Judges judge the Technical part + the Harmony and the Degree of Difficulty
- o 2 Judges judge the Choreography and the Music

**Evaluation of proposals:**

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More flags</li> <li>- Individual and team competitions are separate</li> <li>- No drop score increases drama and sport entertainment, more unpredictable results</li> <li>- Grand Prix used only as a qualifier*</li> <li>- Changing recommended rest day to between competition 1 and 2 gives all at least one rest day before commencing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants may have different number of rides before the final competition in the proposals</li> <li>- Decreased excellence as top nations may bring fewer participants</li> <li>- Big consequences for a team if a horse is eliminated/disqualified</li> <li>- Grand Prix not counting, only a qualifier</li> </ul>

\*in order to increase the attractiveness of the Grand Prix for media and spectators, using a shorter test (approximately 4 minutes) has been evaluated. It is technically possible, but the feedback both from the stakeholder clubs and the survey shows that the risk for negative reactions from today's insiders is too high to propose this at present. As a consequence all the proposals have the Grand Prix as a pure qualifier.

**Exemple of Qualification**

- According to the existing Olympic Groups:
- Teams: 10
  - o Host Nation 1
  - o WEG 3
  - o Olympic Groups A+B+C: 3 (European Championships)
  - o Olympic Groups D+E: 1 (Pan-Ams), excluding teams qualified above
  - o Olympic Group F+G: 1 (WEG)
  - o Olympic Group F+G+ certain C NFs: 1 (Special Qualifier)
- Individuals: 20
  - o Olympic Group A+B+C: 6 (Olympic Ranking)
  - o Olympic Group D+E: 4
  - o Olympic Group F+G: 4 (Olympic Ranking; Special Qualifier)
  - o Overall Olympic Ranking: 6

**WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES**
**Considerations**

- Should be same format as Olympic Games (= Olympic qualifier for teams) to make Dressage clearer and easier to understand.
- 3 teams from WEG qualify for Olympic Games! (= 30% of team quota for Olympic Games qualify from WEG); 7 teams (70% of team quota for Olympic Games) qualify on regional criteria (home team and 6 teams from Groups A through G). We need to apply as much as possible the Olympic Format. So WEG Format will depend on what has been accepted and approved for the Olympic Games.
- We need to limit WEG participation for organisational reasons but also for sport excitement.
- The format for European Championship Seniors should be the same format with the same arguments as for WEG.

1 or 2 rest days (to be decided).

The timetable would need to be established taking into consideration the program of the other disciplines (Jumping).

**Qualification**

**Proposal 1:**

- Teams:
  - o Host Nation 1
  - o *xx Teams qualified according FEI Nations Cup™ series*
  - o Remaining to be filled by a Ranking for Nations
  
- Individuals: xx According to the existing Olympic Groups:
  - o Olympic Group A: x (World Rankings)
  - o Olympic Group B: x (World Rankings)
  - o Olympic Group C: x (World Rankings)
  - o Olympic Group D: x (World Rankings)
  - o Olympic Group E: x (World Rankings)
  - o Olympic Group F: x (World Rankings)
  - o Olympic Group G: x (World Rankings)
  - o Overall World Rankings: xx
  
- For both Teams and Individuals, it is the NF that qualifies, not the Individual Athlete

**Proposal 2:**

- Increased Minimum Eligibility overall
- The individual Athlete qualifies as today.

**III - FACTORS TO INCREASE ATTRACTIVENESS OF DRESSAGE**

**a. INTERACTION and EXPLAINING THE SPORT**

<b>Increased Interaction</b>	Using all new media technology possible – live streaming, phone applications. Possibility for audience to judge (app). Develop a demo app. Free Wi-Fi at shows. Moderator answering questions on twitter or online during events.
<b>Emotions</b>	Audience (at shows and watching on TV/online) will feel more engaged if there is a more personal connection with the riders – interviews, background stories
<b>Explaining the sport</b>	At shows and on TV/online – the basics for new people as well as the different movements. Split-screen technology to compare movements. Use a guinea pig at events.
<b>Statistics on World and other Records, score statistics</b>	Spark interest by giving a reference to the highest scores achieved and comparisons with own previous results and other athletes' results
<b>Judging system</b>	Apply the rules more clearly. To have

	a clear and high standard of judging.
<b>Welfare of the horse</b>	Work with Stewards to avoid any negative perceptions on horse welfare issues

#### b. SOCIAL MEDIA

<b>Social Media</b>	Promote Dressage year round, not only at events.
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#### c. MUSIC

<b>Fitting Music</b>	Emotional aspect, enhances the experience for the audience also for the standard tests
	Eliminates the hushed atmosphere

#### d. TESTS – TIME

<b>Shorter tests - pros</b>	Spectators maintain interest throughout each ride
	Media (TV) friendly
	Repucom survey: effectiveness of 8, threat of 6
<b>Shorter tests - cons</b>	Stakeholder groups against shortening the Grand Prix.
	The GP may not be televised in any case and should serve as a qualifier.
<b>Reduce time between rides</b>	Reduce the time gap between rides by technical solutions, e.g. new GPFS scoring and/or logistical solutions, e.g. horse exiting at C.

#### e. FORMATS

For Olympic Games and WEG format proposals, please see point II above.

Other formats/competitions:

<b>New formats</b>	To make sport faster, more fun and exciting, to complement current tests. Provide organisers with a range of other formats they can use, i.e. knock-out, Pas de Deux, Quadrille, Derby, top 10, group (5-6 horses in arena simultaneously, showing movements consecutively). Have combined discipline competitions (e.g.
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	dressage and jumping)
<b>Harmonize Championship/Games formats</b>	To make sport clearer and easier to understand
<b>Multi-discipline cooperation</b>	Support events where several disciplines are run together

#### f. QUOTA

<b>Limit numbers</b>	Limit FEI CHs to max 80 starters. Options: increase Minimum Eligibility; quota by geographical spread; quota by rankings; reduce number of competitors per team; various combinations of the above.
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#### g. OPEN SCORING

<b>Open scoring at shows</b>	Engages the audience, provides excitement. A must for major Championships, Finals and 4/5* level. Aim to have also for Freestyle.
<b>Online streaming with live scores</b>	Enables those not at the event to follow as closely as if there. Encourage TV to show open scoring and make it technologically easy.

#### h. DRESS

<b>Redefine the dress code</b>	Possibility for different dress code at certain events/classes (e.g. Team competitions, to show which country the Athlete represents)
	Riders should have more freedom, without giving impression of being a member of a circus.

#### i. CREATE STARS

<b>Create more stars – athletes and horses</b>	Stars and stories/drama increase the interest in the sport, both by media and by spectators, attracting audience to shows as well as to media.
	Cultivate media relationships/contacts in the different NFs, provide material

#### j. LIFESTYLE

<b>Attractive lifestyle</b>	Attract fans more interested in the lifestyle factors – fashion, interior
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	design, stories about riders. Behind the scenes stories – life and hobbies of riders.
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#### k. HIGHER PRIZE MONEY & MORE ATTRACTIVE PRIZEGIVING CEREMONIES

<b>Increased prize money</b>	Increased participation of riders
	Increased investments by owners and sponsors
<b>Prize giving ceremony</b>	Invite famous people to the prize giving ceremonies and to be “patron” of a class to catch media interest
	Invite winners of GP classes to participate in the prize giving of lower classes
	Introduce a prize for the favourite combination of the audience and/or a prize for their favourite freestyle combination to increase public involvement

#### I. YOUNG ATHLETES

<b>Development of sport</b>	Support the development of the sport among young athletes to create a strong fan base.
<b>Prestigious events</b>	Support the creation of a World Cup Final or similar for young athletes to promote attractiveness and prestige of Dressage among them.