

International Vaulting Seminar in Glasgow

The main subjects of this year's FEI Vaulting Seminar were the Horse Score, case studies concerning the essence of the compulsory exercises and potential ways to increase the number of CVIs in the future. The new Rules and Guidelines were also discussed and some further clarifications are to be published by the FEI within the next few weeks.

Fifty participants from 17 nations attended the FEI Vaulting seminar from 6th till 8th February in Glasgow.

As the first presenter, **Jeff Moore** (USA) introduced a common glossary to be used when judging vaulting horses, which will help improving communication by clarifying the terms used to describe the canter and the way of going of the horse. This will not only be useful for discussions among judges but also between judges and trainers/competitors.

Jeff also presented a way of interpreting the grid displayed in the Guidelines (II.), which is based on the seven sections of the Training Scale, and is currently used to evaluate the horses and define the Horse Score. His proposal is based on the American system of splitting the score into three sections: one for "Gait", one for "Way of Going" and one for "Deductions". This system will continue to be discussed on an international level and might indicate a way of dealing with the Horse Score for the future (see Jeff's presentation: "Vaulting scoring methodologies").

Helma Schwarzmann (Ger) took the participants on a short trip around the wonderful world of compulsories. While stressing the essence of each exercise, some were analysed more in depth.

- Mount: when mount is executed to (or almost to) handstand-position, the deduction for the left leg not being parallel to the right one should be around 0.5 points.
- Basic seat: the judges were encouraged to use the full range of scores, depending on the observed deviation from the optimal execution of the exercise.
- Mill: the dismount after mill needs to be started according to the same four-stride-count as the rest of the exercise, but there is no regulation as to when the vaulter should reach the ground.
- Scissors – first part :
 - o The correct scissors movement and the height are the two essential criteria for judging the scissors. The requirement set in the Guidelines is that the vaulter turns the **hips** by a quarter turn reaching the point of maximum elevation. If no hip rotation is performed at all before the highest point, the **basic score** for this first part of the exercise will be **5,0** (minus deductions for other deviations from the optimal technique).
- Scissors – second part (2*) and Swing rearways (1*):
 - o Sitting on the surcingle before executing the second part of the scissors/swing is considered as a major fault and therefore up to 3 points will be deducted from the score for this part in this case.
 - o For Pushing up the stomach to show imaginary height (meaning pushing up the hips while the legs are going down) up to 2 points will be deducted.
 - o The optimal height for a basic score of 10 is reached, when the angle between upper arms and upper body is at least 90° ; there is no more requirement for the angle between legs and upper body (a closed angle in this area would stop the further evolution of the exercise towards the maximum height).
- Stand: For the heels being lifted off the horse, the deduction will be of 1 point.
- Trot during an exercise/part of an exercise not performed in canter: the deductions for this situation have been changed and the Guidelines will be modified accordingly within the next few weeks by the FEI Vaulting Department.

Generally speaking, a few amendments are to be made to the Guidelines. We will publish an article about all changes to the Rules and Guidelines for 2009, as soon as the last clarifications will have been finalised by the FEI Vaulting Department.

Just a short summary concerning the new Technical Exercises in advance (more detailed information in the article about the new Rules and Guidelines as soon as available):

- Sideways Stand facing outside : hips parallel to the longitudinal axis of the horse, upper body upright, face of the vaulter facing inside, preferably both feet on the pad, arms static for 4 strides (in any position).
- Push up rearways : hands on top of the grip, straight body facing upwards, supported on one leg, the other leg may not touch the horse (otherwise the score is 0).

Erich Breiter (Aut) presented the new FEI Education System for Vaulting Judges (see all details in the presentation "FEI Education System"). The aim of this system, developed by Erich for the FEI according to similar programs used in other equestrian disciplines, is to standardise a curriculum in detail, which will provide highly knowledgeable as well as experienced judges for international competitions.

This curriculum contains four levels:

- Level 1 : for National Judges
- Level 2 for International Candidate J
- Level 3 for International Judges
- Level 4 : four specialisations (Horse Score, Composition Score, Technical Scores, Organisation) needing to be acquired to become an International Official Judge)

The FEI will also support National Federations in preparing interested people to become national judges and to increase the understanding in Horse Sports and Vaulting of coaches, lungers and officials in developing countries (this means Level 1 courses can be organised either by the FEI or by NFs and recognised by the FEI).

This program will ensure the continuity of competences from the national level on, to the international level, up to Official International Judges.

The participants of the seminar in Glasgow also spent half a day on brainstorming around the following subjects:

- Should there be more Master-classes in the future
- What strategies can be put in place and actions can be taken to increase the number of CVIs
- How to achieve more media coverage
- How to generate more sponsoring

We will publish a summary of the participant's views and suggestions as soon as the FEI will have issued its summary.

A short comment on the Riding Centre of Ingliston next to Glasgow, where the first day of the seminar was held: a terrific, brand new facility with amazing hospitality.

And congratulations to Jenny Leggate and her team for having provided a comfortable, professional and very welcoming frame for this event (including excellent crisis-management : a private joke for participants, who will understand).

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