Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – March 2, 2020

USHJA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2020 – 6:00 p.m. ET via Teleconference

Members Participating: Mary Babick, John Bahret, Katie Benson, David Distler, Joe Dotoli, Margie Engle, Dianne Johnson, Britt McCormick, Robin Rost Brown, Cheryl Rubenstein, Charlotte Skinner-Robson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kevin Price, Leigh Anne Claywell, Mary Hope Kramer, Marianne Kutner

I. Roll Call
Roll call was conducted and a quorum was met.

II. Adoption of Agenda
A motion as made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes
A motion was made and seconded to put the February 3, 2020 and February 10, 2020 meeting minutes on the floor for discussion and vote. The motion was unanimously approved. The Executive Committee then voted unanimously to approve both sets of minutes, with two abstentions noted (one on February 3 and one on February 10).

IV. Conflict of Interest
No conflicts of interest were identified on the part of any committee members present.

V. Consideration of Mileage Exemption Requests
A motion was made and seconded to place consideration of the mileage exemption request on the floor for discussion and vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

Old Salem Farm September Show (“Applicant Competition”) vs. American Gold Cup (“Priority Competition”)

No conflicts of interest on the part of any Committee member present were identified with respect to this request.

The USHJA Executive Committee recommended approval of the Applicant’s request to conduct its 2020 competition (September 8-13, 2020) at the Level 3 Jumper rating, HOWEVER, if the American Gold Cup is not able to find an alternative 2020 venue by June 1, the Committee recommends Old Salem be approved at the Level 6 Jumper rating. Further, the Committee recommends that the Applicant competition not be permitted to offer FEI classes, nor to use the American Gold Cup name. This recommendation is based upon the following reasons:
• The committee noted the radial mileage between the Applicant and the Priority Competition is 0 miles with a mileage boundary of 125 miles.
• The committee noted from the materials provided that the mileage conflict involves the Jumper Level rating only.
• The committee noted from the materials provided that the Applicant Competition is scheduled to be held at the same location as the Priority Competition.
• The committee acknowledges that the Priority Competition will not be held at Old Salem Farm due to footing concerns, and that they have granted permission for the Applicant Competition to be held as a Level 3, non-FEI competition for one year only.
• Therefore, the committee feels that the Applicant Competition should be approved for a Level 3 competition with no FEI classes, but if the Priority Competition is not able to secure an alternative location by June 1, the Applicant Competition may be allowed to be held at a Level 6 Jumper rating.

The committee members present unanimously approved the mileage exemption request for Old Salem Farm September Show to conduct its 2020 competition at the Level 3 Jumper rating. **H O W E V E R**, if the American Gold Cup is not able to find an alternative 2020 venue **b y J u n e 1**, the Committee recommends Old Salem be approved at the Level 6 Jumper rating. Further, the Committee recommends that the Applicant competition **not be permitted to offer FEI classes, nor to use the American Gold Cup name.**

VI. Consideration of Mandatory Fee Collection Request

A motion was made and seconded to place the Mandatory Fee Collection requests on the floor for discussion and vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

The discussion of mandatory fees began with a general overview of where USHJA and USEF are headed with respect to these requests. Ms. Babick mentioned that it was likely that mandatory fee requests would be consistently turned down by USHJA going forward. It was also noted that the USEF Board planned to consider limiting the collection of mandatory fees to Recognized Affiliates only, removing this option for Alliance Partners.

The committee members discussed mandatory fees at length. Concern was expressed regarding the passing on of fees when mandatory fee requests were not approved (or applied for), particularly by burying additional fees in a show’s “office fee” or other line item, with that revenue being sent back to the association. A suggestion was made that language could be created to specifically prohibit such hidden fees. The high expense of participating in recognized showing was revisited, particularly with regard to how additional fees contribute to that high cost. It was noted that many organizations were able to exist without collecting mandatory fees by securing sponsorships or finding other creative sources of funding to meet their needs. Ms. Babick referenced a discussion with Bill Moroney regarding the idea of allowing organizations to collect fees so long as they held no more than double their operating budget in reserve. This would require some organizations to spend down their reserve for quite some time until they fell below the threshold. It was pointed out that there are many medal classes which yield additional fees, and Ms. Babick commented that USEF considers the medal fee to be a mandatory fee.

**• 2020 San Fernando Hunter Jumper Association**
Charlotte Skinner-Robson identified a conflict of interest with respect to this request and recused herself prior to discussion and vote.

The Executive Committee members present voted unanimously to **disapprove** the Mandatory Fee Collection request for the 2020 San Fernando Hunter Jumper Association, with an abstention noted from Mr. Bahret.

Ms. Skinner-Robson returned to the call.

- **2020 NorCal Hunter Jumper Association**
- **2020 Arizona Hunter Jumper Association**

The Committee decided to vote on both requests concurrently.

The Executive Committee members present voted unanimously to **disapprove** the Mandatory Fee Collection request for the 2020 NorCal Hunter Jumper Association and the 2020 Arizona Hunter Jumper Association, with one abstention noted.

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**VII. Consideration of HOTY Points for Limited Entries Request**

A motion was made and seconded to place the Limited Entry HOTY Points requests on the floor for discussion and vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **2020 Markel Insurance Jumper Series Final**

  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. Ms. Babick noted the event included a series of Blenheim shows and one from Santa Fe. It was noted that the Jumping Sport Committee had discussed this request and had hoped that there would be more chances for other show management groups to run the class. It was also noted that a representative from Blenheim had communicated to an Executive Committee member that they would welcome further participation from other show management groups in qualifying for the finals, and that they would be willing to advertise if USHJA wished them to make the option to participate more public.

  There was also a brief discussion of whether the Executive Committee had a conflict of interest with respect to this request since the event was held at the same time and location as the USHJA National Championships (but was not a part of the Championships). Legal counsel Marianne Kutner felt that this was not a conflict of interest, and the committee members agreed with her assessment.

  The committee voted to **approve** the HOTY Points for Limited Entries request for the 2020 Markel Insurance Jumper Series Final, with one vote for disapproval noted.

- **2020 West Coast Young Jumper Championships**

  Ms. Skinner-Robson identified a conflict of interest with respect to this request and recused herself prior to discussion and vote.

  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. Ms. Babick noted that this was an incentive program involving enrollment which in turn allowed free entries to enrolled horses; she continued to point out that this series involved both Blenheim and Langer shows.

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Discussion turned again to the process of approving or disapproving mandatory fee collection requests in general, and the concept of having a more structured criteria for making these decisions. Ms. Babick added that the Jumping Sport Committee felt strongly that multiple show managements needed to be involved with these requests, and that there should be open opportunity for other management groups to hold classes leading up to the limited entry event. In such cases the Jumping Sport Committee was open to allowing HOTY points.

Executive Committee members agreed they would be inclined to approve this request with the stipulation that a concerted effort be made to offer the qualifying classes to other management groups, to make them fully aware that they could hold qualifying classes if they chose to do so. There was also some discussion about Blenheim collecting the enrollment fee while qualifying classes were offered for free to enrolled horses, noting that there might not be much incentive for other shows to hold qualifying classes since they would not be collecting fees.

A motion was made to approve with the stipulation that Blenheim communicate with other show management groups to ensure their awareness of the fact that all management groups may hold qualifying classes. The committee voted to approve the HOTY Points for Limited Entries request for the 2020 West Coast Young Jumper Championships, with the stipulation that Blenheim communicate with other show management groups to ensure their awareness of the fact that all management groups may hold qualifying classes.

Ms. Skinner-Robson returned to the call.

VIII. Discussion of Technical Delegates

Ms. Babick mentioned that she had worked on the Technical Delegate document with DiAnn Langer and Charlotte Skinner-Robson, as well as with the USEF Legal Department and Bill Moroney. She noted that USEF felt strongly that for any rules-based issue the Technical Delegate should confer with the steward and not make decisions on their own. For specifications-based issues, the Technical Delegate should confer with another designated individual. It was noted USHJA had used Technical Delegates in the past for certain medal finals.

There was significant discussion about the need to give Technical Delegates the authority to make final decisions without requiring them to discuss with others. Concern was expressed at the concept of requiring the TD to call designated individuals who were not in attendance at the show to validate decisions. It was argued that such a policy eliminated the need for a TD; instead, the designated individuals could be called directly for their opinion on a matter. Discussion turned a situation that occurred at the Maclay Regionals in California, where a TD was in attendance. At this event the lighting changed and a number of horses stopped at a particular jump, so the TD paused and restarted the class.

Ms. Babick summarized the changes needed to the document. In the section for Duties/Responsibilities, under item 1a, she struck “after consultation with the USHJA President or President’s designee.” Under item 1c, she struck the language stating the TD would consult with the USHJA President prior to rendering a decision. Committee members indicated that they wished to include language stating that the TD would reserve the right to consult with USEF stewards and
judges, but that this was not to be mandatory. Ms. Babick continued to point out that further discussion would be necessary as the Committee had not yet discussed significant items such as whether a TD would be present at all USHJA Finals and Championships, the impact on the USHJA budget, and the criteria to determine who would qualify to serve as a TD.

Ms. Babick suggested that the Technical Delegate document should be postponed for further amendments, and return for consideration at the next Executive Committee meeting.

*A motion was made and seconded to postpone the discussion of Technical Delegates until the April meeting of the Executive Committee to allow for revisions to be made to the document. The committee unanimously voted to postpone the discussion of Technical Delegates until the April meeting of the Executive Committee to allow for revisions to be made to the document.*

IX. Consideration of Zone & Sport Program Requests

A motion was made and seconded to place the Zone & Sport Program requests on the floor for discussion and vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **2020 Zone Championships Date/Location Changes**
  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. Ms. Babick noted that Zone 1 had requested to move their Championship dates in response to a USEF request, and that Zone 5 was requesting approval for a location change to Lamplight Equestrian Center due to the potential sale of HITS Balmoral.

  *The Executive Committee members present unanimously approved the 2020 Zone Championships Date/Location Changes.*

- **2021 Young Hunter Pony Championship Specifications**
  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. It was noted that the introductory memo in the meeting packet omitted the word “Pony” in the subject line. Changes were noted as follows: stating that classes are open to ponies not exceeding 14.2 hands, allowing adults to handle in Adults on Hunter Ponies 7 and Under **Division** (it was noted the word Division needed to be amended to **Section**), adding language regarding fence height for Adults on Hunter Ponies 7 and Under, updating point charts, and allowing the Championships to be run at any level of competition other than local.

  *The Executive Committee members present unanimously approved the 2021 Young Hunter Pony Championship Specifications, as amended to correct 1D, changing the word Division to Section.*

- **2021 Pony Hunter Derby Class & Championship Specifications**
  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. Ms. Rost Brown briefly presented on this topic, noting that the Hunter Working Group had discussed the qualifying period at length. The group also recommended restricting to ponies that have placed in the top 12 of a PHD during the qualifying period, so that entries would be limited to a reasonable number. Some Executive Committee members expressed concern at making significant changes to a program after just one year. A suggestion was made to leave the qualifying period as open as possible, but to limit entries to ponies placed in the top 12 of a Pony Hunter Derby during the qualifying period.
A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2021 Pony Hunter Derby Class and Championship Specifications, leaving the qualifying period as open as possible but requiring a top 12 placing in a Pony Hunter Derby during the qualifying period. The Executive Committee members present approved the 2021 Pony Hunter Derby Class and Championship Specifications, leaving the qualifying period as open as possible but requiring a top 12 placing in a Pony Hunter Derby during the qualifying period, with one vote of disapproval noted.

- **2021 3’3” Jumping Seat Medal Class & Finals Specifications**

  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. It was noted that changes for the Finals included using FEI schooling rules, stating that riders who have jumped 1.30m or above or participated in a USEF Talent Search class at a Premier show would not be eligible to compete, requiring riders to compete on the same horse in all phases (no substitutions), adding language about disruptions, noting that ties would be broken from Phase III (Jumping Phase), noting that trainers and coaches are permitted to ride and school competitors horses and walk phases 2-3 with competitors, eliminating High Performance athletes as judges, and adding Technical Delegates.

  Concern was expressed at requiring an FEI steward to oversee schooling for the Finals, as USEF and FEI schooling rules were already very similar for jumpers, and this might be an unnecessary hindrance. The suggestion was made to strike “FEI schooling rules will apply at the Finals” in section 5B of the Finals Specifications, and to instead indicate that USEF Jumper schooling rules would apply; it was also suggested to unstrike and add back the language indicating that “schooling fences will be flagged and must be jumped in the correct direction.”

  Continuing to review the Class specifications, it was noted that changes included stating that riders who have jumped 1.30m or above or participated in a USEF Talent Search class at a Premier show would not be eligible to compete, requiring riders to compete on the same horse in all phases (no substitutions), and adding the language about disruptions.

  The Executive Committee members present unanimously approved the 2021 Jumping Seat Medal Class & Finals Specifications, as amended with regard to section 5B of the Finals specifications: striking the language which stated “FEI schooling rules will apply at the Finals,” adding language to indicate that USEF Jumper schooling rules would apply at the Finals, and adding back the language stating that “schooling fences will be flagged and must be jumped in the correct order.”

- **2021 Host Application Changes**

  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. It was noted the Young Jumper Championship host criteria and application was also attached for review. A question was asked as to whether the host applications were consistently for a certain number of years, or if there was variation. It was noted that there was variation but most were for two years (though some, particularly newer programs, might be just for one year). Ms. Babick replied that she would follow up with USHJA Sports Director Katie Patrick to review a list of one and two year approvals.
The Executive Committee members present unanimously approved the 2021 Host Application Changes, as presented.

- **2021 Gladstone Cup Specifications**
  The committee reviewed the materials provided within the meeting packet. It was noted that the name was changed, the word “style” was added in the competition format section, language was added with regard to jump appearance, the language was struck indicating that jumps must be numbered, language was added specifying the course requirements for the Classic Hunter Style Course (first round) and Handy Hunter Course (second round), and the mention of the perpetual trophy was removed.

The Executive Committee members present unanimously approved the 2021 Gladstone Cup Specifications, as presented.

X.  **Old Business**
None

XI.  **New Business**
There was some discussion about course designers being asked to contribute courses to shows that could not afford to hire a designer. Concern was expressed about liability for the course designer who donated a course, especially if they or their designated representative were not present at the ring to ensure that the course was set correctly. Additionally, a comment was made that some designers had received course contribution requests directly from USHJA. Ms. Babick and Kevin Price indicated that they were not aware that this had occurred, and agreed to look into the situation immediately.

XII.  **Adjournment**
There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m. EST.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Dianne Johnson, Secretary