



**USHJA Competition Standards Committee Retreat #2**  
**June 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Monday, 12:00-6 pm, Tuesday 8am-2pm CST**  
**Four Points Sheraton Chicago, Illinois**

**Members Present:** Katie Benson, David Burton, Frank Madden (Chair), Ken Okken, John Rush, Katlyn Sacco (NVA), Skip Thornbury, and Lynn Walsh (Vice) (8)

**Members Not Present:** Naomi Blumenthal, Patrick Boyle, Chris Collman, Ned Glynn, Karen Golding, Michael Morrissey, and Charlotte Skinner-Robson (7)

**Also Present:** Dianne Johnson, Bob Bell, Laurie Birnbach, Britt McCormick, and Stephanie Wheeler

**Staff Present:** Whitney Barnard (Committee Liaison), Katie Patrick (USHJA Sports Director), Mary Babick (USHJA President), Bill Moroney (USEF CEO), Meredith Monti (USEF Compliance Manager), Kelsey Shanley (USEF Director of National Affiliates), and Lisa Owens (USEF Competition Services Managing Director)

**I. Welcome and Roll Call**

- Frank Madden called the meeting to order at 12:15pm CST and Whitney Barnard performed roll call. A quorum was met with 7 voting members present.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 9-10, 2018**

- *Mr. Rush moved to approve the minutes from April 9-10, 2018. Mr. Thornbury seconded and the motion passed.*

**III. Review of USEF queries**

**June 18th, 12-1pm**

Mr. Madden asked Ms. Babick to provide the committee with a query update

- Ms. Babick compiled data shared by USEF showing competitions throughout the country by week, rating, and number of horses
- To access the maps, click [here](#)

The committee again discussed the “food truck model” and talked about the difference between safety versus experience. Mr. Madden pointed out that “experience” needs to be quantifiable.

Mr. Moroney offered an explanation of the USEF Standards Task Force in comparison to this committee. The USEF Task Force is interested in the licensing process in relation to compliance, whereas this committee is tasked with identifying the standards. The Task Force is small and has no LOs, managers or licensees. One of the biggest issues they are addressing is footing. Management needs to be able to identify ways to address major issues when they occur.

Is being Premier about prize money or about filling AA sections? Mr. Bell suggested that top shows are already great. He suggested all Premier and National competitions should be National and let the greatest shows stand out on their own.

### 1-2pm

Mr. Madden suggested assigning “points” to each standard and each competition must attain a certain “grade” to achieve Premier status.

This committee must consider jumpers when addressing the HJ standards.

Ms. Birnbach pointed out that their B competition has lower turnout because B rated points don't qualify for Pony Finals or Junior Hunter Finals. Many people avoid their Regional competition in search of qualifying points even though their B rated event is just as nice as their A rated event.

- Adjusting the points would help boost B rated shows
- Perhaps this is a discussion to be had with the Pony Committee

Perhaps this committee should look at the top 30 competitions and see what qualities they have in common that makes them special and work backwards.

### 2-3pm

Until footing is defined by USEF, it should not be considered in the standards. There are too many variables and unknowns at this time.

Competitions must choose from the Options List when applying for their rating. Currently, no one receives a list to verify that the competition has the specific items they listed on their applications. Going forward, stewards should receive a list of the items identified by the competitions and he/she should verify that those items exist. If this committee wants this to be a requirement, it must be written in the rule.

Top shows are doing well, the low/mid-level competitions are struggling

- People attend unrated shows due to cost
- We must create an incentive to join rated competitions

### 3-4pm

When pulling USEF queries, do we need to separate unique horse totals by hunter versus jumper to get an accurate picture of horses attending hunter competitions?

There are 25 available A-rated sections. Should competitions be required to fill 2/3 at a minimum to reach Premier status?

Other considerations for Premier status:

- Number of years hosting a quality event
- Have community involvement
- Prize money, etc

Should Premier status be applied for, much like WCHR?

4-5pm

Should filling rated sections be a requirement at every level?

- No, let lower level shows do what is best for business
- For National, a horse count shouldn't matter but filling sections does

Don't adjust points as people will flock to Premier events to flood horse numbers and increase the points.

*Mr. Thornbury motioned to require National competitions fill five A-rated sections and remove the horse-count requirement. Mr. Rush seconded and the motion passed.*

5-6pm

When looking at ring sizes, should standards be adjusted to accommodate more current facilities to avoid exemptions?

Can an auto-email be generated and sent to exhibitors after a competition when results come back to USEF? A survey could be tied to a person's member number so it can only be submitted once per person.

The Options List must be refined:

- Better define terms such as "shelter": a tree vs tent vs building
- Review items on a license application and compare/verify via the Stewards Report
- Get points for having more items than required
  - Competitions start with a base score (70 for example)
  - Add or deduct points depending on what they do or do not have
  - Stewards to check off the items on a list. This is not subjective and should not create concern for reprisal (i.e. loss of job, etc)
  - Next step: the affiliate will score "quality"
- Menu Options Ad Hoc
  - Britt McCormick, Frank Madden, Ken Okken, John Rush
  - USEF: Katlynn Sacco, Lisa Owens

USEF will handle licensing and rating while USHJA will handle (eventually) an experience score or amenities rating (Yelp).

- Must be reviewed to ensure it is worth the time and cost
- A Program Proposal must be completed to flesh out need, costs, time, etc

June 19th, 8-9am

Recap: Competitions must fill required sections- good  
 Rating/scoring system- good  
 Sell concept to managers and other members- concern

Why do I want my competition to be "Premier?"

Why do exhibitors want to compete at a National versus Premier competition?

- There is a stigma tied to the name

- Perhaps we should break down shows by personality (1 day shows versus 4 day shows)
- Use Premier events to make hunters exciting
  - An intro to the sport
  - Advertising
  - Exciting
  - Create a hunter “pathway”?

#### 9-11am

The committee spent a lot of time reviewing horse-count data at various competitions.

Consider another tier of A shows to address quality levels within the current National rating?

- Premier, National I, II, III, Regional, Local?
- Are we just renaming what we already have?

Horse welfare: does HOTY encourage over showing?

- WCHR is a better model?
- Do people go to WCHR competitions and not participate in that specific class because WCHR simply means it is a better quality show?

Are hunter rules restricting us? Must think outside the current rules and/or way of doing things?

Is the Options List outdated?

- Should Premier shows be required to have ALL the options?
- Define the requirements
- Look at the HJ requirements too
- Consider the jumper “rated” classes (aka HOTY)

Query: look at shows with 200 drug fees with rated sections filling at 15, 18, and 20 for National and 15, 18, 21, 25 for Premier

- Remove the horse count requirement for Regional competitions
- Open the door by allowing riders to qualify for Pony Finals and Junior Hunter Finals?

*Mr. Okken motioned to require Regional competitions to fill three rated sections and remove the horse-count requirement. Ms. Benson seconded and the motion passed.*

#### 11-12pm

Stewards are the first line of compliance confirmation.

- Let Ms. Monti test the draft of the new Options List to ensure that it is measurable
- Consider jumper competitions when defining the options because hunter and jumper competitions are often combined
- For the list, look at what exists versus what should be

Ms. Birnbach indicated that she had professional connections with people who could provide input and recommendation on a “star system” or Yelp concept.

This committee will schedule several short meetings to review and discuss upcoming queries; no further retreat is necessary at this time.

Next steps:

- Wait for USEF data
- Ms. Monti, Ms. Sacco, and Ms. Owens to work on the Options List definitions initially
- The ad hoc will review the definitions and assign scoring
- Ms. Babick with work on Pony and Junior Hunter data
- Several short calls will be scheduled to address data and make fast decisions

**VI. Old Business**

- There was no old business to discuss

**VII. New Business**

- There was no new business to discuss

**VIII. Adjourn**

- *There was a motion to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 12pm CST.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Whitney Barnard  
USHJA Assistant Managing Director of Education/Committee Liaison