



USHJA Children’s Adult Hunter Task Force Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2019, 4:00 p.m. ET via
Teleconference

Task Force Members Present: Tobey McWilliams (Chair), Otis Brown (Vice Chair), Jaime Gibson, Monica Hunt, Hunter Messineo, Simone Starnes, Sharon Stewart-Wells (7)

Task Force Members Not Present: Audra Glenn (1)

Others Present: Heidi Kurpaska (USHJA Sport Program Assistant), Jennifer Osterman (USHJA Assistant Managing Director of Sport Programs) (2)

I. Roll Call

Ms. McWilliams called the meeting to order and Ms. Kurpaska called roll. With 7 members present a quorum was met.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2018

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December 12, 2018; Ms. Messineo seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

III. Approval of 2020 Blackout Dates

Ms. Kurpaska explained that some of the dates have not been approved yet but will be available at the time of selecting championship hosts.

Mr. Messineo made a motion to approve the proposed 2020 Blackout Dates; Ms. Stewart-Wells seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

IV. Discussion of 2020 Championship Specification Changes

Ms. McWilliams opened the floor to discuss any championship specification changes. Ms. Kurpaska explained to the Task Force that the USHJA pays for the Chefs d’Equipe and staff expenses, but the host competition pays for and provides the judges and other officials as per their host contract. The main topic of discussion was to decrease the number of required judges from four to two. Mr. Brown expressed the importance of decreasing the number of judges to encourage events to apply to host. He also expressed that having the judges sit together will provide simple and more accurate judging, as opposed to them sitting separately. The Task Force was in agreement with having two judges and sitting them together. Ms. Kurpaska explained

that this will also affect the judging system, scoring, and tie-breaking procedures that are listed in the specifications. Mr. Brown suggested that a more simple judging system would be very beneficial to the program. This would also simplify the tie-breaking procedure (Section X.A and X.B of the current specifications).

Ms. Kurpaska walked the Task Force through the sections of the specifications that would change by decreasing the number of judges to two. She began with section IX.A.1. and explained that the language about judging panels switching between Team and Individual competitions will be removed. This section would now just explain that the riders are judged by the one panel, what they are judged on, and how the riders are grouped.

Ms. Kurpaska explained the new deadlines as per the MOU with USEF. These changes will need to be sent to the Hunter Working Group on their February call. She called on Ms. Osterman to finish writing up the changes to the specification that the Task Force discusses on this call, and then perform an email vote later on before sending forward. After the Task Force approves, the Hunter Working Group will review and provide their recommendation to the Executive Committee. Who will review and then either approve or send back for additional changes. Once the Executive Committee has approved, the specifications are finalized. Ms. Kurpaska also explained to the Task Force that all changes sent forward are accompanied by a memo to explain the intentions of all changes.

Ms. McWilliams reached out to the Task Force for other ideas. Mr. Brown brought forward the idea that riders should be able to compete in any Championship, regardless of their home zones. The Task Force was in favor of the idea for qualified riders to choose the championship while still obtaining qualifying points in their home zone. The goal is to open the Championships up to those who cannot or do not want to travel far and encourage more participation. Ms. Kurpaska explained how the 2019 Championship locations and combining zones were selected. Zone 8 did not have any applications and Zone 7's application was in Lake St. Louis, MO. Zone 8 chose not to combine based on that location and applied to host their own Championships, but they were denied because they do not have the minimum number of Children's and Adult Amateur riders required to host their own championship.

Ms. McWilliams shifted the conversation to the possibility of broadening the Championships to include a 2'6" section in addition to the 3' section already in place. Adding this would broaden the population that the Championship appeals to. A Task Force member expressed that it give hunter riders a way to grow from the 2'6" height and move up to the 3' the following year. They feel that it is important to encourage the exhibitors to move up and give them a valuable experience and venue. Mr. Brown brought up the issue that adding classes would lengthen the day and many show managers might become discouraged. This discussion will be continued on the next call.

A Task Force member brought up that the jog being mandatory. Ms. Kurpaska explains that the jog does not take up too much time, but the division does not require a

jog at regular horse shows so it may be possible to remove it. She expressed that this topic would need to be discussed with Mary Babick, the USHJA President. Ms. McWilliams provided positive feedback from exhibitors that having the jog and riders meeting build comradery.

Mr. Brown started the discussion on education and expressed that he has found the most educational piece for the hunters is an “Ask the Judge” session. This gives the judges an opportunity to explain why they scored the way they did and exhibitors a chance to ask questions. The idea of adding a judge’s clinic into the Championships was brought forward. This idea would also be enticing to members to participate. Ms. Kurpaska gave the Task Force an idea that this could happen at the end of Team Day (the first day), and the Chefs d’Equipe and their teams could get together with the judge(s). This education could also include information on what a Chef d’Equipe is and why they are there. Ms. Kurpaska explained that this educational piece would be possible for the 2019 Championships because there is nothing written in the specifications that we can or cannot make these changes.

Ms. Stewart-Wells brought forward the idea that any qualified rider can enter up until the date of the Championships. Ms. Kurpaska explained that the issue of validating points because USEF needs a certain amount of time to process points, and that is originally why the qualifying close date is 60 days prior to the Championships. It was brought up that the Jumper Championships are set to 45 days. Ms. Osterman explained that USEF has 10 days to receive results from a competition and then there is additional time of processing those points. The shortened time frame limits the USHJA staff to send acceptance materials, organize ribbons and swag, and confirm qualified riders. The discussion shifted to improve communications with personalized emails, and Ms. Osterman said that she is willing and able to provide that to eligible riders.

Mr. Brown discussed the possibility of creating separate or standardized entry blanks for the Championship classes, instead of them being a class number on a regular horse show blank. Ms. Kurpaska explained that this could be added into the host contracts with each competition and the Task Force would provide that entry blank to the host management. This could be discussed during the time that the host applications are open.

Mr. Brown then brought up the possibility of sending “Wild Card” rider from the hunter championships to the USHJA National Championships in Las Vegas. He also discussed the educational brochures going to horse show staff and management. The Task Force agrees that these should be readily available in the horse show office. The Task Force touched on having the Championships be hosted at the same venue for two years, instead of one. The last topic brought up was that the Championship should reach out to more Affiliates and encourage participation through those organizations.

V. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

VI. New Business

No new business was discussed.

VII. Adjourn

Mr. Brown made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Stewart-Wells seconded. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm ET.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Osterman

USHJA Assistant Managing Director of Sport Programs