

FEI PROPOSAL TO IOC TO RETAIN EVENTING IN THE OLYMPIC PROGRAM FOR THE GAMES OF THE XXIX OLYMPIAD BEIJING 2008

Presented to the IOC 23 October 2002

The FEI is deeply concerned by the announcement of the IOC that the IOC Programme Commission recommends, together with other named sports and disciplines, the exclusion of the Eventing equestrian discipline from the programme of the Olympic Games of the XXIX Olympiad.

It is of the utmost priority for the FEI that Eventing is maintained in the Olympic Programme, as the consequence of exclusion would be most detrimental for overall equestrian sport. As part of the Olympic Programme since 1912, Eventing has grown and evolved with the Olympic Games and its exclusion would affect development and growth that have been very positive over recent years. Eventing would most probably stop in many countries as the lack of the Olympic Games as a target would cause an important and immediate reduction of participation in international sport, fewer sponsors and fewer broadcasting possibilities.

The FEI believes that **Eventing fulfils all Olympic sport specific considerations**; Eventing is of great social value, has no discrimination between men and women (indeed is part of the only Olympic sport where men and women compete on equal terms) and has an integrated structure of competitions all the way through for all age groups. Its environmental impact is extremely positive as it takes spectators close to nature and outdoors and it has evolved from the ancient tradition of a horse and rider crossing natural country. Moreover, the relationship between horse and rider demands a sense of responsibility from those that ride at Olympic and all other levels; this helps considerably in the development of young people active in the sport throughout the world.

The IOC Programme Commission stated the following reasons for proposing the exclusion of Eventing:

- Very high costs for venue preparations and operation for the OCOG, as a result of the amount of land required.
- Difficulty for the discipline to reach global participation, as venue requirements are too costly and complex.
- Safety of athletes (riders) and horses.

The **FEI fully understand the motivation of the IOC to contain the inflation** of cost of the Olympic Games and agrees with that principle.

In addition, the question of "cost of Eventing" is a particular issue when the Olympic Games are held in a country with little specific tradition, and/or where the natural state of the ground/soil is not suitable for horses to gallop and jump.

Such countries are also those where the revenue that can be generated from the Eventing competition is much lower than would be the case in developed equestrian countries where Eventing is rightly seen as a positive contributor to the OCOG budget. To be noted that the **spectator interest for Eventing Cross Country Day** in the past two Olympics has been so immense that the Organiser's had to set a higher limit for safety and security of spectators to 30'000 in Atlanta and 50'000 in Sydney. It should be noted that more tickets could have been sold at both the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games.

The FEI wishes to emphasize that already for the **Athens 2004 Olympic Games, it has taken the problem of cost reduction extremely seriously** and has requested several meetings with ATHOC to review the budget of the infrastructure for the equestrian competitions, and is pursuing these discussions.

Specifically for **Eventing a number of changes have already been made for the Athens Olympic Games in order to address the concerns of the IOC after Sydney 2000:**

- The quota of riders for Eventing has been reduced from 100 to 75. (25% reduction).
- As a result of the deletion of the separate Individual competition the number of competition days has been reduced from 7 to 4 (more than 40% reduction).
- The distance of the overall Cross Country test has been reduced from 25'000 metres in Sydney to 18'500 metres for Athens.

As the above have not fulfilled the IOC expectations, the FEI proposes now, further to a unanimous decision, **a different Competition format for Eventing to address effectively the cost** and complexity issues raised in regard to Beijing 2008 in the IOC Programme Commission's report.

SHORTER COMPETITION FORMAT (current FEI World Cup competition format)

To address this issue the FEI proposes to use the other existing short competition format of Eventing for the Olympic Games.

- o **Tested Format**: This short format already exists and is extensively used worldwide. It is the one used for the FEI Eventing World Cup and is the most appropriate for competitions to be held in countries with little specific tradition, and/or where the natural state of the ground/soil is not ideal.
- o **Competition**: This short format includes only one of the 4 phases of the Cross Country test (cross country obstacle course) – no Steeple-Chase or Roads and Tracks are required. CIC 4 Star level Olympic Competition
- o **Team and Individual competition** to be run concurrently for the 3 traditional tests. All 3 tests to be ridden by all the competitors with the same horse (Dressage - Cross Country and Jumping) to determine the Team medals
- o **Individual Final**: The best 25 riders (maximum 3 riders per nation) classified in the team competition will be qualified to participate in an additional show jumping test to determine the Individual medals. This Individual Jumping competition will be different from the team Jumping competition and will take place later on the same day as the team Jumping. Results will be carried over from all competitions for all riders for the final result.

As for the format agreed to for Athens Eventing competition, the advantages of this format are:

- In accordance with IOC requirements not to award two medals for one effort.
- The competition format is in line with the 2 other FEI Olympic disciplines, for the easy comprehension of the public
- Format will avoid the problem of the transfer of riders from one competition to the other
- In both Individual and team competition, the best combinations (horse/rider) in the world will be able to compete.

COSTS FOR VENUE PREPARATION AND OPERATION: The FEI proposes a reduction up to 50 % in cost and land requirements.

- **Land requirements:** This short format causes a highly significant reduction in land requirements of up to 50 %. The Cross-country test requires only 30/40 hectares (subject to topography) for the Cross-country obstacle course. Total length of course is reduced from 20'000m to approximately 5'000m. Additional functional areas are greatly reduced (C & D box are not required any more, nor extensive facilities for cooling horses after the steeple chase. This short format would imply up to 50% saving on land in comparison to Athens (60/80 hectares reduced to 30/40 hectares) and up to 75 % in comparison to Sydney (120/160 reduced to 30/40).
- **Operational costs:** The general managing of only one of the 4 phases cuts down significantly the number of personnel involved for the running of the competition (officials, veterinarians, medical staff, timekeepers, volunteers). **The short format implies approximately 75% reduction of personnel** used in the long format. (e.g. 50 officials instead of 130, 12 Veterinarians instead of 70, 4 Timekeepers instead of 16).
Volunteers: It is clear that the reduction of required volunteers will be broadly proportional to the reduction of the competition area with a course reduced from 20'000m to approximately 5'000m.
- **TV Broadcasting cost:** also television-broadcasting costs are significantly reduced as fewer cameras are required to cover the cross-country test. No cameras are needed for the steeplechase phase and fewer are required for the Cross-country obstacle phase that is reduced approximately 2'000 m from 7'500.
- **Reduction of the duration of the Cross Country test competition:** With the long format the time of the Cross-country competition (based on 75 riders/horses) is 6 hours 36 min. With the short format the time of the competition (based on the same number of riders/horses) is 3 hours 54 minutes that means a reduction of more than 40%.
- **Best athletes and horses participate in the Olympic Games:** It is important to note that the FEI believes that the introduction of this short Eventing competition format for Olympic Games does not compromise the essence of the discipline in any way. Appropriate qualification (individual minimum standards) will still ensure the participation of the best horses and riders in the Eventing Olympic competition.
- **Comprehension of the competition:** As an added benefit the short format of the competition will surely provide better comprehension for the public and media as the Cross Country test will consist of only one phase.

HIGH GLOBAL PARTICIPATION: Eventing has a high global participation.

Eventing is already practiced on all continents and meets the IOC requirement as the sport is organised at different levels (including for children) in most countries affiliated to FEI. The short format of the competition, already in use in many countries, is currently increasing the number of events worldwide, because it is less expensive and easier to organize.

In 10 years, the number of International events organised worldwide have increased by 423%:

- In 1991: 48 International competitions were organised in 18 countries with riders representing 35 countries.
- In 2001: 251 International competitions were organised in 31 countries with 9319 riders representing 54 countries.

The short format (CIC) was introduced at international level in 1998

- In 2001: out of 251 International competitions, 112 were organised in the long format (CCI) and 139 in the short format (CIC).

These statistics only refer to International events but are significant for a trend of a very substantial increase in participation also at national events worldwide. In addition, many countries only organise National events, and this overall number is very significant.

The use of the short format in the Olympic Games will encourage more countries to believe that participation in the Olympic Games is a realistic target and further encourage a high global participation in the discipline.

Except for the major championships Eventing Cross Country competitions are usually organised in areas and on land where very little ground preparations are necessary and the course does not necessarily require grass footing. In most countries regular national competitions are organised on a very restricted budget (obstacle construction and ground preparations).

SAFETY AND WELFARE OF RIDERS AND HORSES:

For the FEI, Safety of riders and horses is paramount.

The safety and welfare of riders and horses is and has always been the highest priority for the FEI.

These challenges have been specifically met in the FEI Eventing Safety Program which has been formalized and much extended since the Sydney Olympic Games, but which has perhaps not been sufficiently communicated outside the Equestrian community. It includes ongoing research and consequential measures to constantly reduce risk factors on the Cross-country obstacle phase.

Experiences from other sports, such as downhill skiing and Formula One racing has been taken into account when setting up this safety program.

Current studies have lead to many specific safety rules, which have been enforced in the rules for Eventing, and any new relevant findings are taken into account immediately to be implemented in the rules.

The short format of the competition for the Olympic Games will further reduce the risk of having tired horses and riders.

General Research programs:

- o **Research work to improve the safety of the sport through modified construction of obstacles:** countries involved in Eventing together with the FEI have carried out enormous research programs to improve the safety of the sport. An independent Laboratory (Transport Research Laboratory - Great Britain) has been appointed by the FEI to assess all new suggestions of safety devices for Cross-country obstacle construction before experimental implementation. This is an ongoing process as other ideas are forthcoming and continually assessed.

Safety frangible pins for Cross-country fences have been developed in Great Britain and in 2002 have been introduced at the international level within a controlled program. A similar strap device is being investigated in a German project. The Netherlands has also contributed largely in investing in a breakable fence project.

- **Monitoring and understanding of falls of horses and riders:** The FEI has also initiated with the Transport Research Laboratory a cooperative agreement for monitoring and understanding falls of horses and riders worldwide in order to be able to adopt better safety measures and methods.

National studies have been launched by several countries in regard to accident monitoring; centralized by the FEI to obtain and distribute information to improve safety

- **Studies of risk factors associated with falls of horses and riders in Eventing:** two major independent studies are underway by Liverpool University in Great Britain and Rural Industries Research and Development Cooperation in Australia.
- **FEI Eventing Database:** the FEI has introduced a centralized database to monitor results and qualification of horses and riders

Details on these studies are available on request.

Changes to FEI Eventing Rules

The attention of the FEI to the safety and welfare of horses and riders has always been reflected in the Rules and the following are examples of rules that have been changed in the last years specifically to address safety requirements.

- Complete review of the qualification system for horses and riders; a complete new philosophy has been introduced based on reaching minimum standards of the rider/horse in each of the three tests of Dressage, Jumping and Cross Country.
- Penalties and elimination for competitors riding irresponsibly
- Compulsory international standards of protection helmets
- Elimination for 1st fall of horse in the Cross Country or Jumping test
- Briefing for riders before the cross country day
- Reducing maximum cross-country speed from 600 m/min to 570 m/min
- Introduction of additional pauses in the warm-up roads and tracks for monitoring of the physical condition of horses

CONCLUSION

The FEI fully understands and agrees with the general problem of the necessity to reduce costs for Olympic venues.

The FEI is prepared to review minimum requirements for Eventing and for all equestrian Olympic disciplines.

The short format proposed for Eventing contains all the elements to counter act the recommendation of the IOC Programme Commission to exclude Eventing from the Olympic Programme in Beijing.

2004 Athens Olympic Games

In order to be proactive in regard to the general issue of reducing the costs for Olympic Games and specifically to address the cost issues that have already been raised by the Organising Committee of the 2004 Olympic Games the **FEI is**

prepared to introduce this short format for the Eventing competition already for Athens 2004 if the IOC and/or ATHOC would so require.

2008 Beijing Olympic Games

In regard to Beijing 2008, the FEI was shocked over the figures announced in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games bidding documents for the construction of the Equestrian venue of an amount of US\$ 150 Million, an amount which certainly does not correspond to the needs of Equestrian to organise Olympic competitions. The recent World Equestrian Games in Jerez (ESP) where infrastructure for 7 FEI disciplines was build up (850 horses), including an hotel and a multi sport complex, for the 1/3 of the mentioned amount by Beijing Organising Committee.

The **FEI endeavours to do its utmost to provide all necessary assistance to the OCOG of Beijing in order to be early involved in the establishment of the Masterplan** of the Equestrian venue; resulting in realistic figures for the requirements of an Olympic competition and the FEI kindly asks for the support of the IOC in this task.

The FEI also recognises that many of the cost figures reported for Olympic Games have always included substantial items that are not directly part of the costs of staging the sport or discipline.

Further detailed information is available on request.