

**ENGLAND MGA
MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7.45pm ON STARURDAY 25 APRIL 2015
AT DALLAS BURSTON POLO CLUB**

Present: Nathan Turner (Chair), Paul Adcock, Michelle Aylott, Nikki Carter, Matt Fullbrook, Jess Hindle, David Ridler, Dawn Stamp, Malcolm Trevor Jones

Apologies: Marcus Capel (proxy to Nathan Turner), Les Edwards, Alastair Elliott (proxy to Malcolm Trevor Jones), John Scott (proxy to Malcolm Trevor Jones)

John Scott had sent a letter (appendix 1), which was read at the meeting.

SHOULD ALL OPEN RIDERS GO TO TRIAL?

There was discussion about whether the agreed process should continue or whether all 45 nominated riders for open teams/individual places should go to trial. The list of 45 riders includes 1 U12 rider, 3 U14 riders and 5 U17 riders.

Discussion raised various points including:

- At a trial every rider is trying to impress and it is difficult for a selector to watch every rider even if there are only four lanes. This could be overcome by selectors using a simple scoring system (eg 1 OK performance, 0 mistake made, 2 spectacular performance) for each rider and/or selectors working individually scoring one lane each.
- Some members of the committee do not respond to emails and do not share their experience with those trying to set up a process.
- It has been seen that at times more than one rider has ridden a numbered pony. The use of leg bands in the past has caused confusion between similar looking riders on similar coloured ponies within a team
- Riders and ponies must have competed in the Open age group at at least two of the selection shows to be trialed
- We are aiming to pick the strongest possible team for the European Championships and the strongest possible team for the Royal Welsh Show. It is anticipated that there may be overlap between the two teams.

Jess Hindle proposed and Michelle Aylott seconded that 28 open-nominated riders be selected to attend the trial. This was unanimously agreed.

TRIAL PROCESS

David Ridler had produced a draft document detailing a possible way of organising the trial. The final version forms appendix 2 to these minutes

It was noted that only one ring would be available at the venue, which was being provided by Mr and Mrs Clark. It was agreed that this would enable four sessions of c40 minutes each twice a day. This would make it possible for trainers to watch more than one age group and also help cover the shortfall of selectors in the U12 age group.

Since there is now only one of the elected U12 selectors available for the trial it was agreed that Martin Lyons (who had put himself forward as an U17 and an U12 selector) and Andrew

Wass, who had volunteered as an U12 selector but had not been elected would be asked if they would be willing to select U12 riders.

It was questioned whether we should be asking ponies to compete in races over and over again, especially since with a heavy competition schedule between now and the European Championships there is a danger of injury. However, the ponies must be competition fit.

- There was discussion about whether trainers have a say in the selection process and it was agreed that their opinions would be asked but that they would only have a deciding vote if the selectors could not make a decision between two or more riders.
- Nikki Carter would email the agreed selection process to all nominated riders, selectors and trainers

David Ridler's proposed process was then discussed in detail. Points raised included:

- There is no need for riders to wear special hat silks or kit.
- Riders would arrive on Friday with a briefing and the draw of numbers taking place on Friday evening.
- Session 1: All riders (even those only putting themselves forward for individuals) would be expected to participate in teams of 7 running through games repetitively.
- Following this, selectors would discuss possible combinations of riders, not their positions within teams, as this is the trainer's role. Arbiters take no part in any discussions.
- Session 2: All riders work in allocated teams of 4 running through games that are regularly played in Europe (Founders, Balloon, Four flag etc). Selectors may change riders between teams to see how combinations work. The trainer would be asked to be in the ring with the riders
- Following this, selectors will review performances of riders and further refine their team selection.
- At the end of the trials on Saturday there will be a barbecue and entertainments aimed at team bonding.
- Session 3: is of similar format to session 2.
- Selectors will then announce the European Teams and reserves. Reserve riders will be asked if they are willing to travel to the competition. If not another reserve will be chosen.
- Open selectors will then announce the Royal Welsh team and reserve. The reserve rider will be asked if they are prepared to make themselves available for the competition (only the team has stabling etc at the Royal Welsh – the reserve would be called in if necessary)
- Session 4 will comprise an Open individual competition of c6 games with the three highest placed riders getting the three confirmed England spaces in the European Individuals.
- If further European Individual spaces are obtained the fourth place will go to the Open team reserve rider if they have a second pony considered by the selectors to be suitable to use at the competition. Further spaces obtained will be allocated on the basis of results in the individual trials
- U12 and U14 selectors will select riders to represent England in the friendly individual competitions at the European Championship.

There was considerable discussion on whether selectors could/should consider performance at selection shows as well as trial performance.

- Some believed that the selection shows should be used to choose the shortlist for trial and that performance in the trial was then the only factor in the selection of the team(s). If previous performance was to be a criterion then there was no point in holding the trial.
- Others felt that a better team could be selected if previous performance was considered rather than just performance in one or two days trial when the best rider may be off colour or a weak raider may have a lucky day.

Dawn Stamp proposed and Matt Fullbrook seconded that selection should be based solely on riders' and ponies' performance at the trial. This was agreed 8 votes to 4 (proxy votes included)

Since venue hire has been discounted, Matt Fullbrook reported that the cost of the trial per rider, including a barbecue for riders and parents and a disco would be £50

EGM

Nathan Turner informed the committee that they had voted for the date and venue of the EGM on incorrect information. He stated that he felt that since the Warwickshire Friendly had restricted entries and company law recommends that meetings should be available to as many members as possible, the meeting would be better held at the John Scott Championships^{*1}. The committee felt that as the date chosen met the requirements of the Articles and members had been notified, it should go ahead.

Nathan Turner stated that he would not resign as Chairman *until after the trial* regardless of any vote at the EGM^{*2}.

Committee members stated that:

- Problems were caused by lack of communication and that all committee members should respond to emails promptly.
- The England MGA Facebook page should not be a public group and that everyone should think before making postings on social media in case their personal views are considered to be those of the committee as a whole.
- Committee members had been made to feel like muppets when they know nothing about a questionnaire produced at the AGM.
- The committee needs to be more supportive.
- More should be done by the whole committee between meetings

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

NOTES

*1 At the time the speaker was unaware of the changes in competition dates and meant the UK Masters due to be held on 23-25 May 2015

*2 There is dispute about whether the words "until after the trial" were spoken. 2 of those present say they were said, 3 say they were not said, 1 thinks they were not said and 2 have not expressed an opinion.

Appendix 1

Letter from John Scott to the England Committee

To the England MGA committee.

I am sorry that I cannot attend the meeting on Saturday 25th April as it my only free weekend from MGA for the next 7 weeks with an external show at Pickering 16th/17th May too. Up to now I have attended 2 shows as a selector, travelling 560miles, spent £100 in accommodation fees, 3 days observing every session and 1 day in complete confusion after the AGM. Nathan says we do not observe at shows trial only, no method agreed!! Minutes of the meeting 9th November 2014 state the selectors to watch riders at Spring Championships, Shropshire Friendly and Warwickshire Friendly and draw up a shortlist for trial – voting for 5 and against 2, and 2 abstentions. The England show was added to the list on 8th February and suggested 28 to be trialled but could be adjusted, what on earth is going on?? Do we look competent ?? Do we look stupid ?? – (show of hands please !!)

I would hope all riders have the ambition to represent their country but unfortunately few will be able to do so. Trying to watch ALL who want to trial is impossible !! remember 9th November draw up a shortlist !!! If the trial is at a show there is no extra cost to anyone or extra travelling.

What was wrong with the selection process last year? The Open trial was so good the selectors used 15 of the 16 riders who took part. What was wrong with team performances last year?

No mention has been made of a trial for the Individuals this year. First past the post would be straight forward to do after the teams have been chosen and riders listed in order of results.

John Scott.