



July 29, 2020

STATEMENT FROM THE IJRC ON THE RANKING LIST AND INVITATION SYSTEM

TRYING TO CUT A LONG STORY SHORT

Some riders have expressed doubts about ranking points as they do not know exactly how the system works.

Twenty years ago the ranking list did not exist and the organisers' skill lay in selecting a roster of competition-level riders able to provide exciting events for the paying public to watch.

Later, a ranking list was compiled and managed by private initiative, but it did not always reflect ability on the field, privileging competitions which required Pay Cards.

In 2000, three members of the IJRC Board invented a ranking formula, which certainly had its flaws, but which has always aimed to reflect reality and whose top positions have always been filled by true champions. Minor adjustments have been made over the years to avoid possible manipulations but in general, the ranking list has functioned well.

Initially, the Ranking List assisted the National Federations and organisers in the selection of the best riders.

Because a rider with more competition horses can gain advantage by summing up the number of points awarded in an unlimited number of events, over a decade ago it was decided that for each rider, only the best 30 results would count.

Classifications for pairs (i.e. horse and rider) were excluded because simulations showed that the same riders appeared more frequently in the rankings on different horses (i.e. Rodrigo Pessoa and Ludger Beerbaum each appeared 5 times in total in the Top 10 on different horses, as did Isabelle Werth, on 3 different horses, in dressage). What's more, the concept of pairs was hard for the public and media to follow and it seemed best to avoid inducing a rider to push the same horse and force it to take part in too many events.

The *raison d'être* of the Longines Ranking List is a double-stranded tie with the Invitation System.

Thanks to the Invitation System in conjunction with the formula, 80% of places in 5* events can be guaranteed to be awarded through meritocracy (the Ranking quota plus the Home Federation quota). The remaining 20% of the OC should also be awarded though merit but unfortunately this does not always occur.

CSI5* 60% 20% 20%

CSI4* 50% 25% 25%

CSI3* 40% 30% 30%

CSI2* 30% 30% 40%

CSI2* with no Longines Ranking competitions

(available only for CSI2* that are combined with CSI3*, 4* or 5*, upon specific request of the OC) 0% 20% 80%

Not having established quotas in the 2* category -- (currently due to harmonisation issues between enrolment terms of just 4 weeks in the FEI Calendar and the algorithmic system of IT FEI, which necessitates 8 weeks of programming) -- has generated enrolment difficulties for all riders across the liberalised 2* system: riders are asked to pay an extra participation fee since there is no right of entry based on merit alone.

If we cancel or open up the Invitation System, the opportunity to compete through meritocracy, respecting sporting values, could become extremely weak. Maintaining a balance between business interests and sport is fundamental, but priority must always be given to sport.

COVID-19 resolution

The Longines Ranking Working Group -- made up of three FEI representatives (President, Jumping Director, Chair of the Jumping Committee) and three IJRC representatives (President, Director and one board member) -- found itself facing the ranking points question during lockdown. The continual cancellation of large events only added to the difficulties.

After various consultations, the Group decided on the following:

As everybody knows at the end of each month, to update the Longines Ranking List, the points awarded from the same month in the preceding year are detracted, and only 30 results are always considered.

Points were frozen for European riders at the end of February and for American riders at the end of March (as they had events in Wellington in March, and it was thought unfair to remove some results).

As in the USA coronavirus arrived later than it did in the EU, it was predicted that North American events would restart at a later date than in Europe (i.e. September or October) but this forecast proved incorrect. In fact, in the USA, events started again in June, while in Europe, June events were only held in the south of France.

At this stage, competing riders can be awarded points, but it is important to remember that only 30 results count towards the ranking, so as the high ranking riders, currently competing in 4* and a couple of 5* events, will have more than 30 results, this will not have a significant effect on their ranking positions. In order to earn points they must have better result than in the same month of the preceding year (which will be difficult as there are no big events) Those who cannot compete will not lose points. So there will be no relevant changes in the ranking.

The idea to freeze points is to protect riders currently unable to compete.

We are monitoring the situation and will check the ranking list with the FEI - IT in a couples of weeks.

Tennis decided to follow our lead and have also started to freeze points. The IJRC is also working with a professor of statistics who is also following tennis ranking points.

These are tricky times and the rules and regulations are more difficult to accept but we need to follow common sense, fight the moment, trust the institutions, criticise them when needed with constructive critiques, work together, and always act in the best interest of our sport. As the saying goes: Use your head!

Second part
Too many competitors, too few events.

Appreciation and thanks go to all organisers who have put themselves on the frontline over this period by arranging events but we must reprimand those who are profiteering from the Covid-19 situation by making money at the expense of others. We need to convince them to put things in order.

Over 250 competitors in a competition of 1.45m with 4000 euros as prize money is totally unacceptable.

Equally unacceptable are the difficulties faced by young talents without large financial reserves who cannot enrol in events and therefore have no chance of being noticed by owners and technical experts and are unable to construct the futures they deserve. Or who have the support of technical experts and generous owners, but they can't compete with their horses.

Certainly the IJRC Board will collaborate with the FEI Jumping Committee and with the Alliance of Jumping Organisers (AJO) to try and regulate these situations and render them acceptable.

Unfortunately these are not the only problems we are currently facing and the time required to change a regulation is never brief. Together we can and must work to find solutions. And we will.

We need to safeguard the credibility of our sport. Tennis does not allow anyone who feels like it to play with Federer just because they have paid; skiing does not permit 'athletes' to participate in the World Cup without having gone through all the qualifying rounds; athletics does not allow random individuals to run against Bolt. The public pays for tickets to watch champions.

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