

## TEAM SELECTION RULES PROPOSAL

I am aware that there has been a healthy debate about these proposed rules on Facebook and thought it might be helpful to give some background to the Sport Group's thinking in making such a proposal.

The Sport Group is tasked with developing sport riding in the UK and tried to answer the basic question "How does the IHSGB and sport riding in Britain get the best advantage from participation at the World Championships?" Is this an opportunity for motivation and experience or is it just about getting the highest marks? Is it better that a resident rider, actively involved in local events and who trains and works hard to qualify, goes to the WC's and does their best – whatever the outcome. They come back to their livery yard and to their friends, talking of their experiences and setting themselves new goals. Or for someone from Scandinavia, Europe or USA/Canada to ride at every other British Championship's, go to the WC's and then return to their home country? Under the existing rules all seven members could be non-resident.

When we went to the World Championships at Berlin last year, it was noted that our team had two non-resident members and whilst I was there, was approached on two occasions asking how GB passport holders could get in the team. I was later made aware of a third person who was interested.

After considerable in depth discussion, the Sport Group felt very strongly that the rules should be changed to give priority to resident members and to enable the IHSGB to have control of the places offered to non-resident passport holders. This is not a ban on non-resident riders; we simply want the UK to be in control of the team it sends. The reality is that the Sport Group expects to have non-resident team members at future WCs. We also felt that the qualifying marks, particularly under the new judges' guidelines, would ensure that GB team riders should be able to be proud of their performance at the WC's.

The new rules send two messages. If you are in the UK, it really is worth working to improve you and your horse to qualify. If you are outside the UK, you are very welcome to come and compete at the BC's and if there is space, you will probably be invited to join the team.

On a personal note, I feel that the national team should honestly represent the level of sport riding in the UK. I believe that the FEIF World Championships is a celebration of sport in its member nations and I would be proud of any of our resident riders with the courage to raise their game and ride in front of a large audience and I would do everything in my power to facilitate that – whatever the outcome.

Mike Adams, Dec 2014