



World Championships for Icelandic Horses 2015

Report from Herning on Team GB – by Team Manager, Kirsty Carson

This is a review of the performance by the team in Herning and is an initial review of preparations and outcomes. We hope that in due course, the team members themselves will be able to reflect and come together either in person or via a conference call for a general review from their point of view along with our 2015 Team Leader and the IHSGB Sport Group.

Preparations in administration were smooth and FEIF should be congratulated on their online system that worked well and although at times, they had one or two issues with people registering at the same time, this was handled well and made the system much easier to complete online and on time. Being able to upload via a team dropbox was easy and the level of information provided good.

All our team members complied with deadlines and although many decisions for them had to be made in advance, when there was some uncertainty to their grooms etc, this was all done on time and properly by the team, making the administration seamless and without any financial fines for late filing from FEIF.

Given our small numbers of participants and team members, the decision to have myself as the 'Team Manager' seemed to work well and gave the riders, team leader and team coach the ability to focus on their roles and not worry in the months before about forms, deadlines and administration and simply focus on their training and performances towards Herning. It was a central point of administration and meant that if an issue did arise even once in Herning, we had someone on hand to deal with it.

We have to be grateful to the many companies that contributed towards looking after our horses and turning out our team so well:

Casco Helmets, Selwood Equestrian, Horseplay Equestrian Clothing, Fantasy Prints, Bakkeholm, Mark Todd Equestrian, KeyFlow and NAF. Their contributions to our sponsorship made a real difference and feeling like a team is part of being a team – so many thanks to them for their contributions.

There had been lessons learnt from Berlin 2013 and the sport group took these forward to Herning 2015. We provided a much more relaxed and 'team' environment within camp. There was focus on a central meeting area within camp, where the members would meet daily, share a coffee and discuss the day ahead and raise any issues before the day began. This involved all members of the team.

We appointed a 'team coach', Maaïke Burgraffer, whom had led the 'team training' earlier in the year, where she met with all prospective team members. Maaïke also attended the British Championships (our team selection event) where she was able to see the riders perform under pressure and offer them support. Maaïke supported the team in Herning by attending all the training that the riders did prior to their tests as well as being there with them in the warm up area prior to their competition.

This was a new development for Team GB, to have a specific team coach, and one that we hope to continue for the future. Even although most of the team train with their own personal trainers throughout the year, Maaïke brought knowledge and professionalism to the role which helped to support the riders and allow the Team Leader to fulfil their duties without having to also coach the

riders, but simply to support the team coach during training and provide extra support at the most crucial times for the riders.

Our Team Leader for 2015 was Marina Van de Bunt. Marina was unable to announce her position too much in advance of Herning due to her commitments in The Netherlands, and we fully supported her in this professional approach. Marina was a true professional throughout the tournament and brought structure and knowledge to the TL role. With a lot of knowledge and understanding of the FEIF office and WC's, Marina covered all aspects and at all times kept the team members fully informed of developments and changes happening during the tournament. Marina worked very hard on our behalf and kept a very neutral and level head throughout, making sure that all questions from the riders were dealt with and raised within her TL meetings.

Herning 2015 – was well organised and as expected of a tournament of this size, there were some issues raised about the organisation early on, but credit must be given to the organisers who listened and worked with all the Teams to resolve these. The facilities for horses and riders were very good and worked well. We thank them for this.

Herning 2015 would be the first World Championships to be judged under the new judges' guidelines. This would be a test for all, horses, riders and judges! It was very clear from the beginning that the judges would judge very strictly to the guidelines and so they did. We, as a team, fully appreciated this fact and were pleased to see unity amongst the judges and implementation of the guidelines that have until Herning been sometimes used, but not always.

There was good spirit, support and encouragement throughout the team. With wide ranging ages, experiences and expectations, the team were always united and professional in their approach.

We received our first ever 'ribbons' in sport in Herning.

Charlotte Cook was placed 10th in P1. Charlotte was under increasing pressures arriving in Herning, where she carried great expectations for herself and her horse owner. Her performances were great, and we were delighted that she became the first to obtain a top ten finish for GB on the track and dealt with the circumstances well, proving to be a true professional and great ambassador for pace riding. Sadly for Charlotte, she did not manage to place in either of her other pace events. Andrew Nickalls finished in 17th position in PP1 of the seniors, setting his personal best time in his first run, only to better this on his second. Andrew also reached 20th position in P2.

V1 was our first event on the track for the team. James Faulkner, Jemimah Adams and Ann Savage were participants for us in this class as seniors. James finished 25th, Jemimah 29th and Ann 32nd.

Our young rider, Sandy Carson was placed 16th in the young riders.

Each of the V1 riders gave good, clean performances of their tests on the track. Although they were perhaps individually disappointed with their marks, they should also reflect on the marks that were given to the top ten, and on reflection, should be pleased with their rankings.

In T1, both James and Jemimah finished with the same score and in joint 20th position of the seniors, with Sandy finishing in 19th of the Young Riders – all 3 within the top 20.

Mike Adams and Andrew Nickalls both rode in F1 and both narrowly missing out of top 20 placings, finishing 21st and 22nd respectively. Mike and Andrew both rode good tests, with moments of excellence, but unfortunately missing their 2nd side of pace proved costly.

The team performed well, and we were proud to be there to support them. Their individual performances and professionalism was super and they should be congratulated on their individual and team efforts.



Team GB 2015 (missing from picture is James Faulkner)

Given the new era of technology, the team ran an online commentary on facebook – allowing members of IHSGB and friends at home the opportunity to share in the fun!

This was a new approach and within the ‘Riders’ Declaration’ that they signed prior to accepting their position on the team, the riders’ were asked not to discuss team issues on social media. Of course, they could comment on their own accounts, but team matters would be dealt with as one. We felt this worked well and kept a good team moral as all the team members were able and willing to contribute to postings – and it would also protect the riders from any unwanted commentary during their time in Herning. Many people used the page to see photos and reports from the team and we were delighted to hear how many people ‘back home’ were using the live online tv feed from Herning - a great source from the organising committee. We did not post individual marks on this facebook account, it’s priority was to give insight to our many supporters of life in the team camp and the many aspects of behind the scenes in Herning. Of course, we could have done more or some things differently, but as a first attempt at using this media and in this way from the team, we were happy with the outcome. This will remain as a live page and will be used for any team activity over the next 23 months.

This team of riders in Herning, along with their support teams, worked well together, and we are proud of their performances, attitude and conduct. Team camp is a difficult place to be, and there is no denying that living together for over a week, in tight space, dealing with the pressures of competition, expectations, performances and results as well as each and everyone’s individual personalities can be hard. It was not perfect, but it worked well and Team GB at World Championships 2015 did their flag and IHSGB proud.

Thank you to each and every one of the people that contributed towards it.

We, as a team, would also like to thank the supporters from home that made the journey to Herning to support the team as well as enjoy watching the best horses and riders that the World has to offer. It is always nice to see them waving the flag and also spending time to chat with them, giving their support to the team, is invaluable.

The team were delighted to see Gundula Sharman in her role as FEIF director of Youth working hard, handing out prizes and also giving support to our team.

And finally, we would like to offer our congratulations to Fi Pugh for her judging in Herning, the team were proud to see GB represented amongst the judges and Fi doing such a good job.