

**Meeting Date:** Saturday, February 3, 2024

**Meeting Time:** 9:00 a.m. Pacific, 10:00 a.m. Mountain, 11:00 a.m. Central, 12:00 p.m. Eastern

**Meeting Frequency/Modality:** Annually, 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in February held virtually via Zoom (per USAWE Bylaws)

#### MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE MEETING

**Q-1.** *What is the job description of the Clerical Assistant and Treasurer Assistant? Is this a new or previously existing board position?*

**A-1.** The duties are outlined within Article VI Officers and Staff > Section 7 of the Bylaws of USA Working Equitation. Policies & Procedures 3.8 further define role and responsibilities. Position was appointed December 13, 2023 to assist the Secretary and Treasurer.

**Q-2.** *What is being done to simplify and reduce the difficulty of putting on a rated show?*

**Q-3.** *What is being done to reduce the expense of putting on a rated show?*

**Q-4.** *What is being done to encourage and/or recruit more venues or people to host shows? It is an overwhelming process for those who have done it for many years, let alone someone doing it for the first time and, it is expensive to fly in judges, TDs, hiring people to design courses, etc.*

**Q-5.** *Why are there so many prohibitive requirements for so many different positions at shows? It is already hard to get volunteers to scribe, work the gate, be the show secretary, be the show manager. These requirements often mean that volunteers cannot ride in the show or have limited ability to volunteer when needed. I can understand some of these rules for championship shows, but a rated show should not be so stringent that it takes away from the camaraderie and fun.*

**Q-6.** *There has been a positive and successful effort from to get an international team with training opportunities up and running, which is wonderful. Across the board there has been success with marketing, offering training opportunities, stipends, etc. Why is there not an equal amount of effort to increase the number of show venues & increase show opportunities? Or an effort to help show organizers with building or purchasing obstacles? I'm glad the organization is doing a great job with getting an international team going, now, let's focus on helping the local shows grow and continue to run.*

**Q-7.** *Last year several regional shows were cancelled due to lack of riders, and/or lack of desire of the show management to host because of they can't host a show and also ride in the show because it was too difficult to do both. What is being done to address this problem?*

**A-2-7.** Working Equitation is a complex, challenging sport. The beauty of the sport is its complexity – it provides an excellent test of a horse and rider's skills, athleticism, and ability to problem-solve as a team. Having three (or four) different trials, each with separate requirements, is equivalent to holding three (or four) separate competitions. The logistics alone are challenging – providing a dressage court and a set of obstacles built to exact specifications, often set up, used, and dismantled all in the same day, takes a lot of resources – both personal and financial. The Cattle trial adds another dimension entirely.

We fully understand that organizing and running a WE show is very challenging. Many of us have been doing this for years and can attest to the level of effort that it takes, as well as the financial risks that go with it. Some areas of the country have more horses, and therefore more opportunities to generate interest in WE; others aren't as fortunate. The reality is that some areas do not have the resources to support a licensed competition. Schooling shows, playdays, and clinics are a much less arduous way to get a broader group people involved and interested. Getting L judges or L judge candidates involved is a bonus.

One idea to consider is contacting some experienced show managers to learn the key techniques they use to lessen the challenge. There's a lot of wisdom out there to be had just for the asking. USAWE is working on a Show Manager's Guide to help with this as well; our goal is to have it ready for rollout in early spring.

One of USAWE's primary goals is to ensure that WE competitions are held fairly and consistently. We do this by providing a clearly documented set of rules derived from the WAVE rulebook, and guidelines for

how competitions have to be run (Competition Manual) to ensure a level playing field for all. There is solid rationale for every rule or requirement, including the duties and responsibilities of the show staff.

If you have any specific questions regarding the rulebook or Competition Manual, please send them directly to [Rules@usawe.org](mailto:Rules@usawe.org) or [Competitions@usawe.org](mailto:Competitions@usawe.org) at any time. Questions are always welcome and are answered promptly.

**Q-8.** *Why was it decided that riders had to get qualifying scores in the region that they want to compete at the championship in. It makes it so much harder for folks who live the border of regions and frequently go to different region shows? Most already have to travel long distances and go through large expenses. Let us ride in any championship with qualifying scores. Many times these shows need as many riders as possible to make it worth putting on. By requiring scores in each qualifying region you are potentially limiting the people who can participate and discouraging folks from attending shows in multiple regions.*

**A-8.**

**Zone Championships** - Since 2022, USAWE has been operating under a zone championship structure, not regional. This structure will continue to be in effect for 2024. The rulebook states, "Horse-rider combinations may compete in any or all zone championships, regardless of where the qualifying scores are achieved." For the 2024 competition year, the qualifying period is January 1, 2023 through the show entry deadline in 2024. At least one of the scores must be earned during the current competition year.

**Regional Championships** - We will be going back to a regional championship structure starting in 2025. Regional championships may be combined into multi-regional championships of up to three contiguous regions in areas where single regional championships are not able to be held. Horse-rider combinations may compete in any regional championships, regardless of where their "home" region is, as long as the qualifying criteria have been met. "Home" is defined as the region where a competitor resides.

Only USAWE current members are eligible to compete in a championship show. A horse-rider combination must earn a combined average of 58% or higher in Dressage and EOH (L1-L7) and successfully complete the Speed trial (L2-L7) at two USAWE-licensed shows, at least one of which has to be in the region in which the rider plans to compete. Riders may compete in more than one region. The qualifying period is Jan 1 of the year preceding the regional championships through the entry deadline for the championship show. Only one score can be earned from the year preceding the championship show; the other score(s) must be from the same year as the championship show.

**Q-9.** *Why was it decided that a judge could not host a clinic before a show? Many other disciplines allow this and it brings in money for the clinician, show venue, and encourages show attendance.*

**A-9.** The decision was made to better ensure a level playing field for all participants: People who ride in a clinic with the presiding judge immediately prior to a competition have an unfair advantage over people who do not. Schooling shows are allowed prior to a show and clinics are allowed after a show; both options provide opportunities for increased show attendance and income.

**Q-10.** *Why are riders not allowed to school on obstacles the day before the show, so long as they are not placed for the course? This is especially important for youth riders. Many people travel very long distances and spend a lot of money to attend shows and many youth riders are not used to traveling. It can even be dangerous. Giving an answer of "if you can't do it, then maybe you shouldn't be showing or maybe you should continue to go to schooling shows" is not an acceptable answer. There are very limited show/schooling show options.*

**A-10.** There is nothing in the rules that prohibits schooling on individual obstacles the day before a show. There are rules that prohibit schooling EOH and Speed courses set up for competition. There is no requirement for show management to allow schooling prior to the competition – only that there be three obstacles in the warm-up arena prior to the trial. Individual show managers may have some restrictions unique to their situation that precludes them from allowing schooling on obstacles.

**Q-11.** *Has there been any discussion about adding additional levels? It seems like the jump between levels can be incredibly difficult for those who are working on next level skills but don't have them perfected.*

**A-11.** The subject of adding additional levels has been discussed a number of times over the years. We have settled on 6 levels below the Masters level as being a workable number, considering both horse-rider development and show management expense. The requirements for each level have been carefully designed to provide a steady progression to the Masters level needed for international competition. The sport is challenging – moving to the next level is a significant accomplishment. Rulebook section 1.7, Performance Level Selection and Advancement, discusses the allowances for moving up or down in level; there is opportunity to try out the next level to see if you and your horse are really ready without committing to it.

**Q-12.** *As a resident of Montana and member of USAWE, I also compete in Arizona. Do I need to join the Arizona WE to compete?*

**A-12.** A current USAWE membership and USAWE recorded horse is required to compete in a licensed show. Affiliate Organization membership is optional. Please contact the Arizona Working Equitation Club should you have any questions regarding their show series.

**Q-13.** *Can USAWE do more to support amateur riders who live far from established USAWE show locations? I would like to see more grass roots educational programs for beginners and older adults who want to participate and learn but can't make it to the bigger events and for whom competition and prizes are not the number one goal.*

**A-13.** Our first-line grassroots educational program providers are our Affiliate Organizations. USAWE currently has 60 Affiliate Organizations nationwide that offer opportunities such as clinics, playdays, online educational opportunities, and more, in addition to shows. Many of them have a FaceBook page or group and don't restrict participation to only those who live locally. We encourage all of our members to take a look at every Affiliate Organization listing on the USAWE website, visit their social media presence, and join, like, share, and follow them as a way to help the sport grow across the country. You will learn a lot by interacting with them in this way, and be able to participate in their various virtual activities and training.

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Thank you for your questions. On behalf of the Board of Directors and Committee Chairs we appreciate your participation and your membership.