
David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by CatG - 2007/02/13 13:18

The British Reining Council has recently published a statement concerning my appeal to the British Equestrian Federation against the team selection made by the Council for the World Equestrian Games 2006. The BEF has asked the BR Council to withdraw its statement from the BR website but, to date, it remains on the site. Here are the facts:

? I was not selected for the BR team for WEG 2006, although I was offered the Reserve position, which I declined because I did not believe the selection process was fair.

? After the final team selection was announced, I asked the Council to clarify the reasons for my non-selection for the team .

? When no meaningful clarification was given by the Council, I appealed to the BEF. The ground for my appeal was that the Council?s selection process for WEG 2006 was not fair, open and transparent.

? My appeal was allowed. In a decision dated 25 January 2007, an Appeal Panel of the BEF found that the BR selection process was not open, transparent and fair. As part of its decision, the BEF urged British Reining to consider its selection policy at the earliest opportunity and to adopt a format in line with that used by the Olympic disciplines.

We at Team Gray look forward to British Reining establishing in the near future a selection process for international events which is open, fair and transparent.

David Gray 13 February 2007

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by beeb - 2007/02/13 15:21

What should be added to the foregoing statement and noted by all readers and BR members is that David Gray DID NOT ASK the BEF Appeals Panel to make a ruling on whether he should have been chosen for the team, and THAT is the reason why the BEF did not state that he should have been chosen. The BR implies in the statement on their website--which was also posted to all BR members--that the BEF did not think that David Gray should have been on the team or they would have said so, and this is completely untrue.

Further, it is offensive that the BR Council should address this statement to all BR members, considering its polemic tone and controversial content, as if David Gray himself and all those (of whom there are many) who support his appeal against the manner in which the WEG team was selected, were not also BR members. It is also highly questionable that BR funds raised from the membership dues of ALL BR members should have been used to pay the postage required to send out such a defensive statement of unproven veracity that offends a great number of BR members.

Finally, the very idea that the BR Council has refused to heed the directive of the BEF itself and remove the statement from the website raises significant questions about the integrity of that Council.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by Summer - 2007/02/13 17:00

Oh my goodness. As an ex-pat living the USA who has been involved in Reining for more than 15 years, I am horrified that Reining in the UK is already adopting the usual British bickering.

This is a wonderful sport, full of wonderful people. Why do the Brits have to take themselves so seriously that this type of debacle occurs?

Instead of trying to do battle in the press or on web sites, why not try to find a way to work together for the betterment of the sport instead of trying to establish who is right and who is wrong?

This type of infighting will destroy Reining in the UK before it even has the opportunity to flourish. I am embarrassed that my home country is still more concerned with appearance than with the sport itself. :-[

Come on grass roots reiners - this is YOUR sport!! Don't let British beurocracy ruin it for you. Stand up, get involved and

put an end to this stupid infighting.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by scotty - 2007/02/13 17:35

Well said Summer.

I'm really new to western and have just spent time doing my homework at shows to get a feel for 'what's what'. Hence I have no opinion on the specifics of this situation and personally, I have no interest in reining.

But - I do feel it's a shame that as western is such a real minority equine sport in the UK, it is already riven with dissent, political in-fighting and the usual factions lining up against each other. In other words, like every other area of equestrianism in the UK and what drove some of us away from 'English'. I can only assume it's some kind of wierd curse that seems to afflict horse people in this country. Even at 'local shows' you rarely see people enjoying themselves. Just red faced, screaming kids annoyed because they didn't win the class and taking it out on the ponies, galloping up and down the showground. Whatever happened to people having fun and enjoying their horses? I thought western was going to offer something else. Now I'm beginning to wonder.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by qhrider - 2007/02/13 17:50

Scotty - maybe I go to the wrong shows! The shows I have been to have been fun, everyone supporting each other and saying "well done" even if I messed up a simple trail class. I have found some really good friends through western riding, much more than I ever did at the local riding club. Of course the last few years I only attended WES shows, but now have doubts about trying AQHA shows if this is what is going on. I still enjoy myself, both at shows and clinics, but maybe that is because I am an American ex-pat living in the UK. I do enjoy it everytime I show even if I don't bring home a ribbon after each class.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by scotty - 2007/02/13 18:04

I was referring to local 'English' shows, not Western.

My comment on this reining issue was a general one referring to the in-fighting that I suggested is just so typical of the general equine scene in the UK and I simply ventured the view that it is a shame it now appears to be infecting western. That's all.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by qhrider - 2007/02/13 18:25

Oh, sorry. It is sad to hear off the infighting going on. I am just now considering taking up reining, but will hopefully be well out of any politics and have some fun learning this exciting sport.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by scotty - 2007/02/13 18:29

Very best of luck QH! Nice to know somebody is planning to just go out and have fun. :D

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by Dark Star - 2007/02/13 20:34

I've just come into reining over the last year or so, and last show season was the first time I started to get my act together and have a go. I absolutely love it, and have had so much fun attending shows. I've totally supported David Gray in his appeal: it's not about being 'political' (whatever that means) but it is about having an open and transparent selection process that's fair to all.

This isn't about being 'political' but it is about ensuring that British Reining is 'fit for purpose' - which will be essential if Reining ever gets Olympic status. All of us expect to be subjected to rigorous standards of judging when we're showing, so why should it be any different for national team selection. Surely by definition, selection criteria should be equally objective and applied fairly to all? Only in this way can Reining in the UK 'come of age' and join the other equestrian sports by being run a professional manner.

I have strong feelings for the public statement put out by BR especially as I'm a member of BR and actually object to stuff being said in 'my name' - but that's for another time. In the meantime, PLEASE, PLEASE, please anyone out there interested in Reining, DON'T BE PUT OFF by what you hear. David has won his appeal hands down, BR has to get its act together and its house in order. It cannot be run as an exclusive private club (it could do with looking at how WES runs itself and take lessons in proper Governance).

Anyhow, I'm very much a novice at Reining. I bought my American Quarter Horse almost by accident, and came into western riding because I promised his previous owner that I would make the most of him. I don't have loads of dosh and probably not a lot of talent ... but I love my western shows (especially WES ones) and have met lots of great and supportive people. So come on, join the growing band of British Reiners.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by Roland - 2007/02/13 21:22

Im hoping to have a go at reining at some point, what do I need to be a member of to show, im a AQHA member do i need to join BR??or would NRHA be ok.. Thanks

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by beeb - 2007/02/14 09:56

Just a couple of responses to some of the comments that have been posted. First of all, please don't be naive enough to believe that it is only in Britain where political infighting amongst equestrian groups occurs. It has always been rampant in Italy, is occurring now in Germany, and has apparently been quite nasty in France (especially as regards Reining).

One thing that does seem unique to Britain, or at least more prevalent here than in many countries (which I observe in my capacity as a student of Sociology), is the peculiar form of social interaction that occurs in a situation where Party A wants what he/she wants and does just what he wants to get it, not caring in the least whether what he/she does is unfair, is immoral, is against the rules, offends someone else, or damages someone else. Then, when Party B--who has been injured, offended, or damaged by Party A's actions?DARES to speak up and protest and/or stand up for what's right, it is PARTY B who gets criticised for bickering, causing dissent, and rocking the boat; he/she gets told that he or she is a trouble maker, offensive, and not polite!

So what does this say? That those who have more power or more money, or who just don't have any scruples and don't care if they're unfair or if they damage other people, should be allowed to do whatever they want, and the rest of us should just remain silent and submit and suffer the consequences without speaking out or standing up for what's fair, what's right, and what's best for everyone rather than just the privileged few?

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by hunterrookie - 2007/02/14 12:03

The statement now appears to have been removed from the BR website - it was modified last night.

While I am saddened by BR's reaction to a legitimate process followed by the BEF, it was hardly a surprise.

From frequent dealings with the BEF in my previous job, the one thing I know that they hate is infighting among the disciplines - it shows equestrian sport in a bad light to the outside world and makes communication difficult from their perspective.

OK, the BEF is far from perfect, but they are our link with the sort of funding that has helped other sports make huge strides (no pun intended!) in the UK, and I would suggest that if we want a slice of that, then we have to respect their decisions.

If only BR could have accepted the BEF's verdict, said, 'OK, we got it wrong, now let's move on and adopt a more transparent selection policy' then at least something positive could have been salvaged out of this sorry mess.

As I have said before, we went to WEG and it was the most amazing competition - truly inspiring to see how the other European nations are progressing. Reining is a fabulous sport with so much potential, it would be a tragedy if Britain was unable to develop its standard of competition because of the views and actions of individuals

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by QQH - 2007/02/14 13:30

Congratulations to David and Cat for having the courage of their convictions and asking the question.....
Grass roots reiners take heart, by the time this sport becomes more of a household name in this country with any luck there will be a selection process we can hold our heads up and be proud of and can even aspire to knowing it is not a case of being "in the know" or "having the right horse" but that hard work, talent and dedication will give you every opportunity to shine.

Jude..who isn't involved in reining at all.....yet!! ;)

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by Dark Star - 2007/02/14 14:13

Roland, you can join NRHA by going on their website, or you can join British Reining and join the NRHA through them (which it seems everyone will have to do in future because BR have become a country affiliate of the NRHA). Or, if you just want to have a go and do some non-threatening Reining, then join WES. It's much cheaper and so are the class entries, and they are a friendly bunch of people with well-run shows all over the country. Good luck.

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Re: David Gray Appeal to the BEF

Posted by rosie - 2007/02/14 19:33

hi roland, :) did you realise that you can do reining at aqha shows as there is a reining class held so if you are already a member you don't have to join another organisation, but the only drawback could possibly be the surfaces which may not be really suitable for good slides but it could give you a start and i have found most people to be friendly at the shows so far. go and have some fun and meet new people too. Rosie

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