

KEY MESSAGES:

- The 2010 HSBC FEI World Cup™ Eventing season will consist of 12 events organized from March to August in 10 countries around the world. The events are held at CIC 3* level and the prize money for each event is \$25 000 US
- This year, given the late date of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ – from 25 September to 10 October in the USA– it will be difficult to guarantee the participation of the best riders and horses in a World Cup Final held at the very end of the sporting season.
- In order to ensure outstanding competition and to preserve the welfare of the horses, the FEI has opted for a series without a final with the standings points earned at the various events counting towards a final prize pot. This will have the advantageous effect of making the series exciting, of linking it properly and of making the points meaningful.
- The leading 15 riders in the standings will receive an additional prize totaling \$180 000 US which is one of the highest prize monies available at this level of the sport.
- This decision is fully endorsed by the riders as demonstrated by Clayton Fredericks who is the riders' representative on the FEI Eventing Committee.
- This is not unusual for an FEI Series. In fact, FEI's most prestigious team competition series in Jumping – the Meydan FEI Nations Cup™ – is organized in a similar fashion (series consisting of eight events with no final).
- The FEI sees this as a positive development in a complex sporting year and is looking forward to an exciting season.

Q. The format is different this year in that there is no Final, which has always been the case since the inception of the series. Why was this decision taken?

A. The 2010 sports calendar is particularly complicated with the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games taking place late in the season (from 25 September to 10 October). It should also be remembered that the Games will be in the USA, which involves additional days for travel and recovery of the horses. With this major championship happening at an unusual time, the FEI had to find the best possible solution, which takes into consideration first and foremost the welfare of the horses.

Q. Can you summarize the main rule changes made in connection with the new format:

A. The main change is that at the end of the season prizes will be distributed to the 15 most successful riders from the series overall standings.

The top rider will receive US\$ 50 000, followed by

2nd: 34 000

3rd: 23 000

4th: 18 000

5th: 13 000

6th: 10 000

7th: 8 000

8th: 6 500

9th: 5 000

10th: 4 000

11th: 3 000

12th: 2 000

13th: 2 000

14th: 1 500

15th: 1 000

Another change is that only the two best results per rider – as opposed to three in last year's rules – will count.

Other key principles, such as the fact that one rider can have two results at the same event and the method used to break ties, remain unchanged.

Q. It had been previously mentioned that a Final could be organized in Pau in conjunction with the final event of the HSBC FEI Classics™. Why was this considered and then dropped?

A. Yes, this had been originally considered but as explained previously, we had to find a solution, especially in regard to the welfare of the horses in a busy and somewhat unusual sports season. Our concern was that a Final this late in the season would not be well attended. It may push some riders to over exert their horses, which will of course be detrimental to the horse's welfare and to the sport in general.

Q. What was the sponsor's role in making this decision?

A. As is always the case with matters related to the international sporting calendar, the decision was made by the relevant technical committee – in this case the FEI Eventing Committee – and approved by the FEI Bureau. Sponsors are not involved in decisions related to the sport.

Q. You are even saying this new format is an improvement compared to previous years. Can you explain what you mean?

A. Our experience from previous years has proven that riders from distant parts of the world could very rarely, if at all, travel to the Final, so far always held in Europe and thus had virtually no chances to win. We consider that now that winners will be selected on the basis of the standings, all competitors have equal chances to do well. It is a very fair system.

This will have the advantageous effect of making the series exciting, of linking it properly and making the points meaningful.

Also, this is a system that has proven to work well with other key FEI series such as the highly successful Meydan FEI Nations Cup™.

Q. Will this be a permanent format or is the format likely to change next year?

A. The FEI needs to ensure all its series remain relevant and well adapted to the overall international calendar. We reexamine the rules on a regular basis to ensure this is the case.

Q. Do you know what the riders' opinion is?

A. The riders fully endorse this decision and are looking forward to an exciting season.