



Member Communication/WCERA Newsflash

28 February 2020

Helo fellow WCERA members!! We are sending out a lot of information currently, but it would seem as if there is a desperate need of members to be properly informed.

Herewith some feedback and general information on a number of issues.

1. Enquiry – Mandates for Jan 2020 election

At the elections meeting in January, a few members asked for club mandates to be provided at the meeting. This request was rejected by the electoral officer, Mr Elton Davids, a representative of the provincial arm of SASCOC, namely the Western Cape Provincial Sports Confederation (WCPSC). He made it clear that it was not a requirement from SASCOC that proof of mandates had to be presented at an election. He also made it clear that if proof of mandates were required, this should have been done prior to the meeting, and not at the meeting.

A member from Weskaap club then said he was not asked for his vote in his club, and so the election can therefore not proceed. This in spite of the fact that the Weskaap club had a meeting minutes prior to the elections meeting. Mr Davids said that if a club member felt compromised, he should raise the matter with his club, and that it should be sorted internally in the club, or escalated, but that this could not stop the elections from proceeding, so long as the Weskaap club representative felt he did have a mandate to bring out a vote on behalf of the club.

Subsequent to the meeting, a member escalated the matter directly to the SAEF, unfortunately without using the correct WCERA escalation procedures. The SAEF refused to handle the matter, as it was a provincial matter, and asked WCEF, as the SAEF representative in the Western Cape, to investigate the matter and resolve.

Attached the findings of the WCEF. It is clear from this, that the elections were fair and correct. Even though proof of mandates were not brought with to the meeting

(as they were not specifically requested by anyone prior to the meeting starting), mandates were in fact given and the club chairpersons voted accordingly.

At the moment, elections are via secret ballot. This means no one knows who votes for whom. As such, the issue of mandates becomes tricky, as the only way to really ascertain whether people voted according to their mandate, is to check the final result against mandates. If it does not tally, there is however no knowing who did not vote according to their mandate. An election that is done by open ballot would be more transparent, and WCERA should probably take up the matter of secret ballot with the SAEF, as this is enforced on sports bodies from the top down.

2. Member voting procedures

In 2014 SASCO changed the structure of sports bodies. This meant that members could not exercise votes directly anymore, as was the case in a lot of sports bodies, and most certainly in endurance.

The changed process is as follows :

Members vote at club level. This gives the club chair a mandate to vote with on regional level, or in the absence of regional structures (as is the case in equestrian), on provincial level. The provincial president then gets a mandate to vote on national level.

It sounds easy in principle, however is not easy to effect. Many riders just want to ride, so they prefer to give their club chair an **open mandate**, in other words, vote as you see fit as you know what is going on in the sport.

Other riders want to participate in all decisions

Some riders feel their club chair can vote as he/she sees fit, but would like to be involved in **major decisions, and elections** of office bearers.

It is not practical to involve members in all decisions all of the time, as we will then need to run polls/votes daily, and it will take **hours to explain every consequence of every decision**, in order to allow people to make an informed decision.

The most practical way to implement the structure is to involve members in major decisions (eg do we run SAIC as FEI or not), ride calendar changes, and elections of office bearers.

To this end, a club polling system has been introduced. For major decisions, or any other decisions where a club chair feels he does not want to take the decision alone, members will be able to vote at club level. The vote is emailed to the club chair, and in this way, the club will also have an auditable paper trail substantiating their mandate on any given subject.

3. WCERA council composition and changes

It has come to my attention that many riders do not know or understand how the WCERA provincial council is structured, and how the votes work.

The council has constituent members in the form of the clubs (a constituent member is one who makes up the council of the overall body, as opposed to an elected member or an affiliated member). The clubs therefore make up the bulk of the management team of WCERA. Clubs have a representative (mostly the club chair, but the club can also nominate another representative for meetings, should the club chair not be available). Each club has one vote on council.

The council then furthermore has office bearers. These are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. They are elected for a term, or, in absence of a formal election, can also be co-opted by the council, to act in the position until such time as a formal election can be held. Apart from the secretary, each of these positions have one vote.

There is also an athlete representative on the council, with one vote. The athlete representative is also elected for a term.

In addition, we have technical representatives on the council, with no vote, but able to make a contribution with regards to council matters, and especially as it relates to their field of expertise. These are Head Vet, Head Ridemaster, and Head Timekeeper. These people are appointed each year.

At present, the positions of President, Vice and Secretary are co-opted positions. Elections require a 60 day notice period, and so once a Special General Meeting (SGM) is called with at least 60 days notice, these positions can be formally elected.

The council members at present are :

President (acting)	Michelle Behrens
Vice President (acting)	Naomi Muller
Treasurer	Myrtle Oosthuizen
Secretary (acting)	Mariska Burger
Athlete representative	Helen Jackson
Head vet	Henk Basson
Head ridemaster	Niel Jordaan
Head timekeeper	Elardus Behrens

Although they are not on the council, the team managers also make a tremendous contribution to the sport. For 2020 these are :

Riaan Kuhn
William van Zyl

4. Participant/Member details

Participants (these being riders, officials, office bearers, supporters, grooms etc) belong to various bodies in order to be able to participate in the sport. Firstly they have to belong to a club. That is the beginning of everything and no participation is possible if you do not belong to a club, and are in good standing with your club. To be in good standing, you have to be fully paid up, and cannot be in violation of anything in the constitution of your club, WCERA, WCEF, ERASA, FEI or SAEF.

In the case of equestrian, the next level of participation is the province. That includes the provincial association (WCERA) and the provincial federation (WCEF). Then the national association (ERASA), and the national federation (SAEF). Each organisation offers its own benefits to the member/participant.

It is logical that when one joins an organisation, **it requires to know who you are, where you live, and how you can be contacted (at the least).**

Members are required, by the constitution, to **provide all their details to their clubs**, including their ID's. They also need to sign an indemnity with the club, which technically should cover and indemnify the club, its officials and office bearers, all the organisations that the club is affiliated to.

Clubs are obliged by the WCERA constitution to share member details with all the bodies that the club is associated to. This includes ERASA, WCERA, SAEF, and WCEF. It is logical that the bodies issuing colours (SAEF and WCEF) would need to verify the person for whom colours are applied for.

In the past, clubs only gave member totals to WCERA. This is not adequate, and also not according to the constitution.

For clubs using XRC to affiliate, updating of information is online or through your secretary. For clubs using another system for their affiliations, members have to complete a form, and the club needs to then send WCERA a spreadsheet with all the details for each member. It is essential that we have our database complete and accurate at provincial level. Kindly co-operate with your club secretary and ensure that all your details are captured correctly, as it will affect WCERA membership if not complete and accurate.

According to the structures prescribed by SASCOC, no one can technically belong to a national body if they are not in good standing with their provincial body.

WCERA does not share the details of any member with any organisation other than the equestrian bodies of ERASA, WCEF and SAEF. We also feel confident that none of those organisations share your details outside of the organisation.

5. Criteria and procedures for provincial teams

These have been circulated and have also been placed on the website. Make sure you are familiar with them, and please do what you can to qualify for the various events so that we can send the strongest possible teams to represent our beautiful province.

The procedure for teams is as follows :

- The team manager sends out a call for availability for the various national competitions
- A short list is derived based on who is available, and also rankings in the province
- Once all eligible people are known, the team managers and selection committee sit together and decide a team given the criteria and rankings.
- An application is then sent to WCEF to approve the proposed team, and to order provincial clothing
- Once the WCEF approves the team, it is announced in the province
- Clothing is issued and each competitor that starts officially qualifies for team colours
- Post the event, the final team member names are sent to the WCEF, who in turn updates the SASCOC provincial arm, the WCPSC, so that the names can be taken up in the registry of provincial competitors.

6. Criteria and procedures for regional teams

We are the **first province to ever run a regional competition!!** This is a very exciting development, as it allows competitors to earn SASCOC approved colours at an additional level. There are six regions in the Western Cape (these are determined by government, as with provincial borders). The criteria for regional teams will be up to each region, as with their selection process, and application process to the SASCOC regional arm, which is known as a regional sports council.

The format of the competition and also how the points will be calculated will be circulated shortly.

If you are eligible and available for a regional team, ensure that your club chair does what is required to apply for colours and select a regional team/s in good time!

7. Escalation procedures

We have had a number of issues over the past year or so, where members escalated grievances directly and unconstitutionally to either the WCEF, the SAEF or ERASA. Apart from clearly casting WCERA and its clubs and members in a very poor light, it also **prevents us from solving matters properly**, and in many instances things are blown completely out of proportion, taking up enormous amounts of time of council members at all levels, and causing unnecessary division in our beloved sport. Unconstitutional behaviour is obviously subject to disciplinary action, something no one really wants to get involved in, as there are much better

things to do with our time, not least of which TO BUILD THE SPORT, and create opportunities for our participants.

I urge you to please please stick to the procedures for escalation and grievance resolution so that the WCERA council is given an opportunity to resolve matters quickly and effectively, and so that molehills don't escalate into mountains!

The procedure is as follows :

- You raise your problem with your club chair in writing, who is then obliged to take it to the club management team for handling, and a ruling.
- Should you not be happy with the ruling given by the club council, or should the club council feel it is not a matter to be resolved at club level, you now use the relevant grievance/dispute forms to escalate the matter to WCERA. These forms are on the WCERA website
- The WCERA council and/or judicial commission handles the matter and issues a ruling.
- Should you not be happy with the said ruling, you now escalate the matter to either WCEF (if the matter is **political** in nature) or ERASA (if the matter is **technical** in nature eg. Team selection, incorrect ruling at a ride etc etc)
- The WCEF or ERASA council and/or judicial commission handles the matter and issues a ruling
- Should you not be happy with the ruling you now escalate to the SAEF. It handles and issues a ruling
- Should you not be happy with that ruling, you escalate to SASCOC
- Should you not be happy with the SASCOC ruling you escalate to the Minister of Sport

As can be seen, this process allows for various levels of independent people to adjudicate the matter. It **also allows for BOTH SIDES of the story to be heard** and adjudicated properly, and keeps things civil and orderly.

8. Points system – Regional and inter club competitions

Above will be circulated shortly and also placed on the website. It may seem complicated at first glance, and with closer inspection you will see it is kinda complicated!! Should you be mathematically inclined, you will be able to calculate the points yourself. It is useful to see how the points are derived, and member input is always welcome! The calculation has been added to the XRC timekeeping system, like with that of Best Conditioned horse, and so results should be available automatically.

9. Points system – Horse and rider of the year

Above will be circulated shortly and also made available on the website. As with regional competition points, it is a fairly complex calculation, but XRC has offered to

also automate this for WCERA, free of charge, and in light of the fact that most clubs use XRC for entries as well as affiliations. As with the regional and inter club points system, the points allocation method is most certainly open for discussion, and members are invited to make a contribution in this regard, which can then be discussed by council, voted on, and implemented in the next riding year.

Points are calculated for all rides (not just provincial rides), and results are taken from the national results database after they are approved by ERASA.

10. Results of poll – additional rides for GERC/Co-opted council positions

The first ever opinion poll we ran for our participants, was very well supported!!! We thank everyone who engaged and brought out their vote and opinion!! I know we all want to just ride, but we do need to also be involved from time to time in how the sport is managed.

The poll about the additional dates requested by GERC, was overwhelmingly in favour of the dates being approved, a clear sign of the willingness of members to assist each other in creating more opportunities.

The poll about the co-opting of council members was equally well supported, and we thank people for taking the time to contribute to their sport in this way!

We also thank people for their positive comments about the website!! The website is there to serve the sport, so please feel free to make suggestions on how to approve it and make it work better.

To quote our beloved website master, Antoinette De Swardt – “teamwork makes the dream work!”

Lekker ry and remember, any questions, concerns, comments suggestions – please give through to your club chair or any of the WCERA council members!

Kind regards

Michelle Behrens on behalf of WCERA council