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Journey to WEG 2018

Sport Director's Note from Will Connell, U.S. WEG Chef de Mission



Some months back, we sent out a Newsletter promising regular updates; those updates did not happen, as we did not have much "new news". Well, the FEI World Equestrian Games (WEG) Tryon 2018 is heating up (as it is in Gladstone, NJ with temperatures in the high 80s as I type). All the Test Events have taken place, less for

Reining, which takes place 11th-13th May 2018 and the mist is beginning to clear around our logistics plan. The Spring / Summer competition program is at full throttle and was set alight with some fantastic results in Paris at the Dressage & Jumping FEI World Cup Finals. Land Rover Kentucky CCI4* was another fabulous competition at an iconic eventing venue.

The WEG will have its challenges and for those that have been to competitions at Tryon, I urge you to approach the WEG, mentally, as if you are going to a new venue. This links a little in to the Home Advantage and Home Disadvantage. Please remember that this is a

World Equestrian Games that is taking place at a venue that had barely two years to prepare. There will be frustrations, delays, queues (lines), travel challenges, accreditation restrictions and restricted access to athletes.

As a Team, we will head to Tryon focused on securing Tokyo 2020 qualification (Olympic disciplines) and placing the U.S. as high up the Medal Table as possible. The U.S. will not win every Gold Medal... sorry, but managing expectation is important! We will of course do all we can to ensure Owners and athletes' families enjoy the WEG experience but the Field of Play results are what history will remember and where the Team Staff's primary focus will be.

Updates from the USEF Sport Department

Detailed Timetable can be found at www.tryon2018.com

Week 1—Dressage, Endurance, Eventing, Reining **Week 2**—Driving, Jumping, Para-Dressage, Vaulting

• Accommodation

The U.S. Team will be accommodated in 8 different locations across, maybe, 10 different properties: The accommodation mind map is complex!! Athletes and staff will be accommodated "by discipline" and grooms will be accommodated, onsite, at the WEG Venue. We are very aware that a number of potential WEG Horse Owners have either rented houses or booked through the USET Foundation at the Biltmore. For those that are waiting until selection is announced, we are holding a number of rooms for Owners and friends & family at hotels: These include rooms at the Biltmore (Asheville) but also within 30 minutes of the Venue at Lake Lure and the village of Tryon. For some disciplines, there may be additional rooms available at the athlete hotels.

• Parking & Traffic Flow

The final traffic and parking plan has not been published. There will be limited parking at the Venue for media, VIP Pass holders and also for National Federation accredited vehicles: The indication is that there will be a maximum of 2-3 Car Passes per disciplines for NF vehicles and these will be allocated to Team Staff and the vehicles being used to transport athletes (these will be self-drive by the Teams). We will continue to work with the OC to identify parking options for Owners. Parking for the public is likely to be at satellite locations with buses shuttling spectators to the Venue.



• Security

Everyone entering the WEG Venue will pass through airport style “mag & bag” security. All attending WEG should check the information for spectators nearer the time. Those that are NOT accredited / credentialed will only be allowed to use clear bags as per the policy used in many other sports in the U.S., such as the NFL. We are seeking to identify some clear bags for athletes’ friends and family—more news to follow. Those that are accredited / credentialed will be able to bring in non-clear bags as well as “tools of the trade”.

• Stables

Stabling at WEG will be “by discipline”. The stable barns are excellent with rubber mats throughout, fans in each stall and plenty of water and electrical outlets. Storage will be very tight but we will try to secure some solutions to alleviate the storage challenge where possible.

• Food & Restaurants

Those that know Tryon will be aware of the variety of culinary fares on offer through the four-onsite restaurants. We understand that these will be open during WEG but there will be other food outlets. Behind the scenes, there will be a large dining area for athletes, grooms, staff and it is hoped there will be a number of “grab and go” outlets near each Barn. We will have a back up for the Team members should this be needed during busy times—yes, the Rio Toastie Machine will be heading to Tryon!

There are plenty of very pleasant restaurants within easy striking distance of the Venue and details of these will be included in the Team Handbook. However, they tend to be small and close early, so reservations will be essential. There are also grocery stores within 15 minutes drive.

• Hospitality

Hospitality options in the VIP Summit Club (top floor of the structure below) are now available through Tryon. We will secure limited Hospitality in order to ensure Owners have opportunities. We await details on additional hospitality packages, especially for the non-Olympic disciplines.



• Feed, Bedding & Forage

The WEG OC are working with our long term friends and feed experts, KER. USDA has placed some restrictions around hay having to be certified “tick free”. We will work with KER to make sure all athletes are aware what hay will be available during WEG and where it can be sourced ahead of WEG (this will include Timothy, Alfafa, GoldenGrass haylage and chopped hay / chaff).



• Tickets

We have purchased all discipline session tickets based on a “per athlete” allocation. We have tried to gauge what the need might be in terms of meeting the needs of athletes families and the fact that being a Home Games the interest in attending might be greater. Each Team Leader will communicate with the short listed / nominated entry athletes as to what the number is “by discipline”. Individual discipline tickets, by session, are now available through the Tryon 2018 website; www.tryon2018.com

• Clothing

Thanks to the generosity of our US Equestrian sponsors, all accredited athletes, staff, grooms and owners will receive Ariat US Team clothing and horses will each receive a range of Horseware Ireland US Team rugs for use during WEG including a WEG 2018 specific rug to keep.

• Support to Owners

Owners are an essential part of the Team and we want to ensure Owners enjoy their WEG experience and the achievements of their horse. We are very aware that Owners will be staying in many different locations and we will work hard to secure beneficial parking.

During the WEG, there will be Discipline WhatsApp Groups, a central Hotline and daily emailed Newsletters in order to keep Owners informed of Start Times and News. We will be organizing some “gatherings” - these are likely to be by discipline due to the timetable but our aim is to facilitate owners getting together.