

INTRODUCTION

by Max E. Ammann

The present set-up of FEI senior championships in the three Olympic disciplines: World in the non-Olympic even years – Continental in the odd years, goes back to 1965. Before that the FEI had tried, not always successfully, to introduce championships. But its then pre-occupation with creating rules and regulations, especially for the Olympic Games, and the consequent neglect of ruling the sport by enforcing structures, resulted in a certain lack of credibility of the seriousness by the FEI to have championships. Consequently the desire to hold championships was often lacking and, until the early sixties, in several years no organiser could be found, even for senior dressage and eventing.

In jumping the problem in the first 20 years after World War Two was the lack of foresight. The World championships were introduced in 1953 and then held annually until 1956 when it was decided to hold them in Olympic years only. In the three years in between, continental championships, i.e. European, should be held. Unfortunately the interest in these European jumping championships was often limited (there were only seven starters in 1962 in London) and the World championships in 1960 in Venice, held after the glorious Olympic Games of Rome, were a disappointing anti-climax.

The FEI then decided to hold the next World jumping championship in 1966, and to continue with its European championships in all years except the Olympics,



and to open them to the world. This led to the bizarre situation in 1966 where only six Europeans and no North American competed in the World championships in Buenos Aires and, at the European championships in Lucerne (SUI), all three medals were won by non-Europeans.

Outside of Europe the picture was, and partly still is, even sketchier. This is true especially of the Americas where, for decades, the issue was discussed whether North and South America were one continent or, in fact, two. This led to years of separate South American championships, followed by years of united American championships. In practical terms it did not matter: the huge distances, bad roads, lack of air cargo services, etc. made even a full participation within South America problematic, and it was and is rare that North Americans go down to compete in South America or vice-versa, even if the title to be gained is that of American champion.

In the first chapter of this book the international situation before the founding of the FEI in 1921 is presented. The second chapter shows the early attempts by the FEI in the thirties to create some forms of championships. Nothing was tried in jumping, the attempts in eventing were often futile, but dressage had, as from 1930, a successful series of championships. In the next chapter we present the set-up of the five World Equestrian Games, their organisation and administration. The sporting part of the five World Equestrian Games is treated under the heading of the respective disciplines.

We start with the World championships, followed by the European championships, the Pan American Games and the various continental and regional championship and games in the Americas. Then follows Asia with the Asian Games, and Africa. The next part groups the regional championships in Europe, such as the Nordic and the Balkan, followed by a few special championships, the Top Ten final and the Festivals of 1980.

The next group are the chapters on the young riders, the juniors, the pony riders and the children. Then follow reports on the various World Cups, and on the Nations Cups, ending with the Super League. There is a survey on the Top Driver awards and the FEI challenges in jumping and dressage. The final chapter covers the World records and the puissance.

In the index of names we have collected all riders, drivers and officials who have been mentioned in the text or in the captions. We have tried to make the lists of champions and medal winners as complete as possible and with correct spellings. There have been, and still are, numerous championships, on all age levels, in

all geographical areas, in all disciplines. Some of the championships are held on a regular basis, annually or bi-annually or every four years. Others appear only infrequently in the FEI calendar, some disappear and pop-up some years later.

In principle, we took the top three at senior World and European championships, the World Cup finals, the Pan American and Asian Games in our lists of winners and medallists. From all other continental championships we only mentioned the champions. This is also true of regional championships. At the youth levels we only considered the winners in World and Continental championships, but ignored the regional championships. We had to leave out several regional or special championships which lasted only a few years. We also left out the breeding championships held successfully since breeding joined the FEI some 15 years ago.

The production of this book was only made possible by the generous contributions from over 50 equestrian personalities. We have listed them earlier in the book. I like to thank Kathy Moore, who has looked for and found supporters in the USA.

A major task has been to find photographs, especially of the non-Olympic disciplines. We could count on the FEI archives which the author has assembled over 40 years and which are now housed in some rooms a few hundred meters away from the FEI headquarters in Lausanne. Many of our photographer friends dug into their files of negatives, also the editors of the *Pferdewoche* helped. Numerous "holes" could be filled thanks to private individuals, especially former riders, drivers and vaulters.

Olivia Robinson of the FEI's communication department was an invaluable help, as was my long-time assistant, Diana Chavannes and my old vaulting friend Fritz Gerber, with whom this book is the third joint publishing undertaking. Judith Draper, Alan Smith and my wife Korine read the manuscripts to give my American-Swiss-English an acceptable form. Finally I should like to thank Bill Steinkraus who, since we met well over 40 years ago, always pushed me to write down the history of the international equestrian sport, especially the Olympic Games. The history of the Olympic Games will be the second book, scheduled to be published some months after the 2008 Olympic Games.