**EC Coach Licenses**

Here is some information from EC regarding the licensing of Coaches

As many of you are aware EC is starting to mandate that only licenced coaches will be able to coach at EC competitions starting very soon and to be completely mandated by 2025.

1.  How many ‘certified’ coaches are currently recorded or registered in Canada?  There are 1600+ coaches who are certified and maintain the Coach Levy on their EC membership.  The NCCP Locker lists approximately 4000 who have completed the certification process since the inception of the Coach Certification program.  It is understood from research through our PTSO partners, that there are approximately 8000+ coaches active on the field of play (not necessarily certified).

2.  The coaches who are currently licensed .. do they have to partake in this new program?

There are no coaches currently “licensed” they are certified.  Certification and licensing are different.  Certification is the training and evaluation of skills to act in the role of coach (i.e. a doctor’s phd, accountants degree, real estate agent training and evaluation, etc).  A Licence is the annual updating safe sport minimum standards requirements that coaches must hold to practice with that certification (for example a lawyer can finish school and be educated as a lawyer (get their degree) but cannot practice without a licence to use that certification in the community.  Their licence can be withheld if minimum standards are not met, but their degree can not be taken away.)  Certified coaches currently have to complete First Aid training and Police Background checks, concussion training and ethics training to maintain certification.  Those pieces are being moved into the licence to ensure that all coaches on the field of play will be trained to a minimum standard.  Ultimately (by 2025 it is estimated), coaches will require certification as one requirement for licensing.  Until we have a more efficient and updated Coach training and certification program, certification will not be mandatory to hold a licence.  Initially, Certified coaches who move into holding a Coach licence should not notice many differences – they are already completing most of the requirements as part of their current routine.  The Licence will allow us to ensure the mass of coaches who have never pursued certification complete the minimum standards required in most amateur sport to promote a safe, inclusive learning environment.  It will also allow our coaches, parents, athletes, officials and competition organizers the knowledge that the coaches on the field of play are, at a minimujm, screened, trained in Abuse and Harassment, concussion and return to sport policies and trained in ethical and respectful relationships.

3.  This ‘new’ category of coach being considered .. will it be like an entry level for coaches or is it to make certain that safe sport is recognized by persons in the equine industry who are helping other horse people?

There will be pathways added to the coach licence for apprentice coaches – those being mentored by more senior experienced coaches.  As part of an agreement with our 11 Provincial Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs, like Ontario Equestrian), Equestrian Canada was asked to require mandatory certification for coaches immediately.  There are several challenges to this – the largest being that there are currently about 2000 certified active coaches in Equestrian sport in Canada, yet the number of actual coaches active in sport is closer to 8000+.  If we were to mandate certification immediately, our PTSO partners would not be able to facilitate appropriate training and certification opportunities for the number of candidates that we think exist.  Certified coaches (certified under the EC, NCCP program) are already required to complete most of the licensing requirements, and should not find a difference to their normal routine other than holding a Coach licence rather than a Sport Licence with a Coach Levy.  To accommodate moving the sport towards mandatory certification, as already exists in many other countries, it was determined that we need to find a way to create a minimum “do no harm” level of requirement that allows coaches to self-declare and complete the minimum safe sport criteria to show that they are fostering a positive, safe environment for athletes.

4.  Is there a fee attached to this new ‘coach’ designation?

There will be a fee attached – the entire Coach Licence program is being unveiled the first week of November at the Royal Winter Fair during our annual convention.  The required elements of the coach licence will be included at no extra cost for coaches, other than first aid training as that is offered outside of our umbrella.  Any required elearning will be available at no cost to members.

5.  If it is an online course and instruction, how are the candidates rated on their ability to coach?  Who does all of this?  Do they then graduate to certified coaches?

One of the areas of confusion for the equestrian community is the difference between a Licence and certification.  A Licence is the professional designation that minimum standards required are being adhered to, in order to work in the role of Coach – Concussion training, Abuse and Harassment training, Police Background Check, provincial membership.  Certification is the training and evaluation of your skills to coach and teach.  Eventually (2025), a coach will need to be certified to Coach, initially, a coach will need to complete the minimum standards to prove a safe environment.  This is not being done to “dumb down” the level of coaches active in our sport, but to provide a stepping stone towards certification that will progressively move the mass of coaches who are not trained, or certified, towards that end goal of being certified and licensed.

Licensing is about much more than the cost of insurance and benefits provided, it is about creating a safe environment for athletes, parents, coaches and families.  Coaches who are uncertified are currently beyond the scope of Equestrian Canada.  There are many fabulous coaches out there with no training or certification, and there are also some who need help.  We have no ability to address these gaps or issues, if we don’t know who they are and what they are doing.

6.  I assume there will be exemptions for parents, relatives, anyone who is not in the business of horses.?

A parent of a child who rides falls into a different relationship – guardian rather than coach – so the minimum standards of licence will be required to ensure a safe environment for other athletes on the field of play. We are looking at creating a simpler minimum standard licence for grooms/relatives that can be completed online simply.  In most sports, a parent or volunteer is not allowed behind the bench/in the pool/on the field, etc without completing some screening and safe sport training.

I think there are many people who set themselves up as ‘coaches’ who have evolved through their association with an Riding establishment.

Absolutely true, and we are going to be working with riding establishments to educate them on the benefits of hiring trained, certified and licenced coaches.

If this formalized ‘coaching’ license is put in place, it will undoubtedly affect the amateur status of some current exhibitors.

Currently the only certification which does not affect amateur status is that of an Instructor, who is technically not coaching in competition.  A Coach Licence holder will only need to hold a sport licence if they are competing as an athlete as well.

This new category is obviously not NCCP approved?

A Licence is not a coaching certification – however it does recognize NCCP certification – by 2025, certification will be required to hold a licence however NCCP certification will be ONE OF the certifications that can be recognized to hold the licence.  Pony Club Instructor status will also be recognized (or Pony Club A), Cantra, Vault Canada certification can also be recognized to hold a licence.  This will allow us to recognize certification completed in disciplines where no NCCP certification currently exists.

Since Kim from Pony Club is anxious to become involved with EC, it might be politic to have that group invited for input since any of the riders in the ‘olders’

Divisions always refers to their start with pony club.

Canadian Pony Club has been involved in a few discussion with the CED Project Manager, and will continue to progress.  Val Paton and Naomi Girling spent a few days in Toronto reviewing the EC Learn to and Rookie Riders programs and discussing the crossover for the programs and they is work being done to ensure we can recognize achievements in Canadian Pony Club towards training and certification through Equestrian Canada.

A few more thoughts and I am sure there will be more as word spreads.

Thanks for all of the questions – I hope I have provided more clarity!  Keep them coming and thank you for reaching out!

Kind Regards,

Helen