



14th July 2011

The start of a new Era.

Following all the AGM's of SANEF, the National Technical Committees as well as that of the SAEC, I am pleased to report on the following:

South African Equestrian Council

The SAEC, which was established during 2006, is the umbrella organisation for all equestrian sporting codes in the country. SANEF was a founding member of the SAEC, and other constituent members include the National Federations for Polocrosse, Pony Club, Tentpegging, Endurance, Saddle Seat, Horse Racing and Equestrian School Sport (SANESA).

The SAEC represents National Equestrian Federations in liaising with Government institutions (i.e. funding by Lotto, and Sport and Recreation South Africa) and SASCOC (awarding of Protea Colours and participation at the Olympic Games and WEG).

For several years, Messrs Lewis and Dewar were respectively the former Chairman and Secretary General of SANEF. Mr Dewar resigned both these positions in 2010. Mr Lewis, who resigned as chairman of SANEF in April 2010, remained the chairman of the SAEC. Historically, the SAEC had been managed largely for the benefit of SANEF, excluding the interests of other federations. These included constitutional imbalances and applications for funding, which favored SANEF to the prejudice of other federations.

The SAEC was also not spared the turmoil caused by the maladministration and financial irregularities which are still under investigation at SANEF. SANEF's commission of enquiry has investigated certain administrative and financial matters that relate also to the SAEC.

Tel: 00 27 11 468 3236
Fax: 00 27 11 468 3238
P O Box 50875, Kyalami, 1684, South Africa
Office B3, 1st Floor, Crowthorne Shopping Centre, Corner Arthur and Main Road, Kyalami, Gauteng, South Africa

info@horsesport.org.za
www.horsesport.org.za



Due to the overlapping of the administration of SANEF and the SAEC by Messrs Lewis and Dewar (and potentially other office bearers), SANEF's concerns in these regards were disclosed to the SAEC during recent meetings and certain remedial steps have been taken by the SAEC.

SANEF has also actively sought to correct the historical situation and to work together with the other SAEC members to further the common goals of the federations in the interests of equestrian sport. Development of Coaches and combined events are examples of this.

The Annual General Meeting of the SAEC was held on Tuesday 27th June. SANEF was represented by, Deon Augustyn (SANEF Manco) and Adv Panayiotis Stais SC (SANEF Council) and myself.

The SAEC Exco was elected in terms of a proposal (put forward by SANEF) whereby large and small federations were given a more equitable representation. The members of Exco were agreed upon unanimously by constituent members (without the need for a vote) and will serve as an interim committee until the first AGM under a new constitution. Mr Augustyn will serve as a member of Exco. Ms Lisa Tait, a former member of SANEF's Manco and for several years an independent member of SAEC Exco, was unanimously elected as Chair.

As a result of a vote on a resolution proposed by Polocrosse (following on a preliminary report presented to Council by Ms Tait pursuant to certain issues raised by SANEF), Mr Lewis was suspended as member of Exco pending further investigation into his management of funds. The preliminary report raised concerns inter alia regarding the manner of spending, reporting and controlling of funds, as well as the "constructing" of invoices and under reporting of SAEC's expenses. These matters are under investigation by SANEF's Commission of Enquiry and Ms Tait has been seconded by SAEC to assist as a member of the Commission.

A sub-committee (which includes Adv Stais SC) has been appointed to draft a new constitution for the SAEC.

The SAEC's auditors have issued SAEC with a disclaimer and an initial report containing a reportable irregularity. A sub-committee (including Adv Stais SC and Mr Augustyn) will investigate the reasons for this and will engage the auditors on their report. These matters are closely related to the status of SANEF's financial statements, which are also being investigated by the Commission.

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A sub-committee has been tasked with investigating and reporting on the manner of international affiliation by constituent members. As an immediate priority, the affiliation of SANEF, Tentpegging and Endurance through the SAEC to the FEI will be considered by representatives of these three Federations. Mike Marsden and I will represent SANEF.

Ms Tait and I will meet shortly with Mr Tubby Reddy (CEO of SASCO) to address any interim arrangements.

South African National Equestrian Federation

SANEF's annual general meeting was held on 28 May 2011. The Management Committee elected at the AGM is representative of persons with knowledge of our equestrian disciplines and with experience in business, and consists of myself (Chairman), Sharon Boyce (Development), Sandy Cox (Officials), Danielle Pienaar (Technical), Mike Marsden (International), Deon Augustyn (SAEC), Neil Smith (Office Administration and external funding), and Carol Wyrill (Financial Administration). Daryl Van Rensburg (Legal) resigned for personal reasons shortly after the AGM.

Shelly Beckbessinger will continue as acting General Manager until the office restructuring is completed. She is assisted by Tiffany Dewar (International Administration), Marika Kruger (National Administration and Marketing), Katrina Gill (Finances) and Sifiso Ndebele (General Administration).

As from 1 September 2011, at the suggestion and approval of all the provincial bodies, SANEF will operate from refurbished offices at the entrance to Kyalami Equestrian Park.

All of the portfolios for the SANEF committees have been filled by enthusiastic experts in their various fields, and we are excited about the way forward. It is our intention to hold a "bosberaad" as soon as possible to brainstorm and share ideas and policies in order to create a clear blueprint for SANEF for the future.

We intend to improve on communication, and have introduced a weekly newsflash and are busy updating the website. A National database will be instituted to facilitate the access to information.

Although we have inherited a number of issues such as VAT and PAYE liabilities, we have determined a clear plan for meeting our obligations by cutting down on expenses as much as possible.


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It was impossible for SANEF's auditors to prepare audited annual financial statements for the last four years, due to the absence of any financial recordkeeping. The financial reports for the last four years were however prepared by the auditors and approved by the Management Committee.

Although the auditors issued a letter of a reportable irregularity in regard to SANEF's finances (relating to incidences of fraud and theft) they did last week give written confirmation that these concerns have been satisfactorily addressed and that SANEF has taken steps to ensure that such irregularities should not happen again.

The new Management committee in consultation with Council, has taken a clear stand regarding transparency and corporate governance, which is why we have made voluntary disclosures to SARS, as well as introduced a new Financial Committee, together with checks and balances within the financial and administrative systems.


A transparent system for making payments has been introduced, and SANEF funds will be kept separate to government funding. These accounts will be overseen by members of the financial committee.

Disciplinary proceedings will be instituted against those office bearers who are found to have been responsible and accountable for the maladministration and financial irregularities at SANEF and who have brought SANEF and the sport into disrepute. In addition, civil action and criminal charges against Mr. Jimmy Dewar are being dealt with by SANEF's attorneys.

This has been a rocky road, but I believe that for the first time in a long while we have clarity on the way forward. I know that together we can achieve this with the best interest of Equestrian Sport in mind.

Eric Bianchi

Eric Bianchi
SANEF Chairman


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