

Oregon High School Equestrian Teams, Inc.

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March 19, 2015

TO: OHSET Coaches, Trainers, Advisers & Families

FROM: Candi Bothum, State Chair

RE: The appropriate process for your unhappiness

Hello Everyone,

Thank you for being a part of OHSET! Over the past few weeks I have visited several OHSET District meets – and a few more to come hopefully. I have witnessed so much great stuff happening: Volunteers pitching in whenever needed, athletes helping other athletes, sharing horses and equipment across team lines, and so much really great sportsmanship. I can't tell you how much it pains me to write the next few paragraphs. Thank you to all who behave appropriately and are role models for our participating athletes.

With that said, I must address many comments I've received that lead to be sure judges at a certain meet were being yelled at from the seats, told they "didn't know what they were doing" including VERY inappropriate language. This "trash talking" and yelling of obscenities is unacceptable. In the future, should this happen, I expect District Chairs to throw out anyone who behaves this way and if they are unable to get them to leave respectfully, then I expect them to contact local law enforcement and have people who behave this way removed. One warning will be all you get and frankly, I wouldn't even give that – what would we do to one of our athletes who behaved this way? Parents, coaches, and others, we have processes you can go through to request rule changes, evaluate judges, and share your displeasure with a meet's organization and none of these processes include screaming obscenities or "talking trash" about judges or volunteers as loud as you can in an audience of people.

If you believe a judge isn't following our rule book or is not competent in some area, please use a judges' evaluation form to share that information. Before you do that, I encourage you to be sure you know the rules, so your criticism is accurate and constructive. If it's really the rule you are unhappy with, don't take that out on the judge, submit a rule change proposal – it's online, it's easy to do. If something is wrong with the meet schedule or how something is being run, visit politely with your district chair or vice chair, or write down your concerns and ask to share them at the next District meeting. Screaming, cursing, and belittling someone destroys your own credibility and eliminates any chance you had of making change. So even if you did have a valid point, you have ruined your opportunity to be heard.

More importantly than what it makes you look like, it makes OHSET look bad and we are too good of organization to have our judges think this is the sort of behavior we allow. Our judges are respected contractors, who endure annual training and hours of unpaid travel time simply to help our athletes get better at what they do. They do their best and we should respect them for what they have to offer. If we are so unhappy with a specific judge at a district meet, it's very easy not to have them return. However, I also suggest you make real sure your unhappiness is directed appropriately, my experience is more often than not, people who vent about a judge, simply didn't know the rule(s), or another judge didn't enforce the rule(s), and now the judge who points it out gets all the negativity.

If you are a coach or parent, remember you signed a code of conduct form too; expect to be held at a high standard. OHSET is an organization that facilitates a youth competitive event in a family atmosphere and we intend to keep it that way. Only a few times have I ever been embarrassed to be part of the leadership of this really great organization, unfortunately, I was recently embarrassed. I don't like it and I'm sad for the many great athletes and their families who want OHSET to continue with a high level of competition and a high standard of sportsmanship. Please help be a part of the solution and let people know when they are behaving inappropriately; show them how to better direct their thoughts into constructive processes. Bring your encouragement, your constructive criticism, and your manners. If you can't be kind, behave appropriately, and exhibit quality sportsmanship, stay home.

Respectfully,

OREGON STATE HIGH SCHOOL EQUESTRIAN TEAMS, INC.



Candi Bothum
State Chair