

STATUS: FINAL

SUBJECT: PHOTOGRAPHERS, MEDIA AND EVENTS

Mission

To make equestrian photography sustainable moving forwards, to promote the sport through professional-level marketing imagery, and enable media, sponsors, commercial equestrian businesses and riders access to quality images through clarifying for event organisers, competitors and photographers the etiquette around photographing at an event.

Background

It's a hugely changing space in the world of media – whether that be photographers, writers or videographers. There are more and more people keen to shoot equestrian but as we all know, not all photographers are created equal.

Without changes in the industry, professional photographers will simply hang up their cameras or just move away from equestrian if it continues to be difficult or unprofitable to cover events, which will lead to New Zealand having a bunch of snappers giving low quality images to all and sundry.

Everyone generally wants the same thing – a good outcome for the sport – but there needs to be more awareness around what role each party plays. Riders, officials, events, photographers and journalists to name but a few. Riders simply cannot keep stealing images off photographers and pleading ignorance – or at worse being outright rude when spoken to about it. Everyone needs to work together for the best end result.

Photographers are there to do a job and are a very important part of what makes an event successful. Without good imagery, stories can just be dropped.

One of the biggest challenges is understanding just what photographers do, the different types of photographers, and just how to manage them and the use of images at events.

Should photographers be charged to shoot at an event or should events pay photographers to be there?

Some events ask photographers to give imagery to events while some may ask for a trade rate if photographers are selling to competitors. Some events are happy to have photographers there without any fees or imagery. Some events may want to pay a photographer to be there to take specific photos for the event ensuring they get exactly the images they want or need.

Ideally it should be fluid whatever way an event decides to run – what suits one photographer won't suit another.

What exactly does a photographer do?

- Besides actually taking stunning and unique imagery that fills a brief, is accurately captioned, delivered regardless of weather and other issues, any reputable professional photographer will
- Have their own website rather than selling only through social media
- Clearly identify who is in each image to ensure images are searchable
- Generally spend two hours editing/processing for each hour shooting

- File images in a timely manner to agencies and/or publications – sometimes as soon as an image is shot

What happens after the event?

At the end of a long day's photographing, the bulk of the work begins. A photographer will look at every single image, edit appropriately, process as necessary and file it – generally named with the rider, horse, class, result and event.

What rights do riders or sponsors have to imagery seen on Facebook, Instagram or online?

As a general rule, it is fine to share the image on an event page – that means NOT downloading or screen shotting it, but rather sharing the link or post. If a rider's sponsors would like to use the image, they too can share it but not download it. If they wish to use the image in a commercial sense – which is pretty much anything other than a straight share – they would need to contact the photographer and negotiate the use of that image. Cropping out watermarks or branding on images is a breach of copyright and should never be done. You cannot alter an image in any way – no filters, no weird things, added words etc – nothing without the express permission of the photographer.

What if you are the official photographer at an event – what does that mean for both the event and the photographer? The finer details of any arrangement should be worked out in advance of the event between the photographer and organiser.

Photographers :

- Will be required to supply photos in a timely manner to the organisers – generally both clean in hi res and branded for web/social media use
- May want to make some money selling to riders to make attending the event worth their while.
- Will obey the rules of the committee, judges and ground jury, especially in areas like where they stand and where they can park / drive their vehicles
- May have access to areas that other photographers are not allowed to enable them to get exclusive images – that could include the presentation area or inside arenas

Event organisers:

- Will advertise their official/accredited photographers wherever they can
- Will provide, where possible, some space to work to ensure they can file photos quickly
- Will have a sign in process and provide them with a programme/entry lists
- May limit the number of official photographers at the event

How many photographers do you need at a single event to make it work for everyone?

Event organisers usually like to ensure there are enough photographers to cover all arenas/rings, supply enough photos in a timely manner to the organisers and make some money selling to riders. Clearly that depends on each event. Having too many photographers will mean none of them make enough money to make it worth their while, doing no one any favours in the long run.

Can event organisers shut out photographers?

If it is somewhere like an A&P Show which is a public event then no, but organisers can list the official photographer/s in the programme and encourage competitors and media to use those photographers.

If it is at a private venue like Takapoto or an event at one of the National Equestrian Centres for example, then organisers can limit the number of photographers. This is done to ensure quality images, by events who generally have long term relationships and arrangements with photographers which work well and want to make sure that it is worth the photographers' while to be at the event.

It is disrespectful for a photographer to just turn up at an event and expect to shoot – equally, an event should have some sort of easy process/registration so that they know who is coming and who is on the grounds at any given time. This is important for both sides when you consider health and safety rules and regulations. Organising committees at private venues can ask unauthorised photographers to stop taking photos and/or leave.

What if the photographer wants to put advertising on their images?

That is fine if it is just on their own channels however, the problem arises when their sponsors clash with an event's sponsors so the event won't be sharing their page/channels if they are branded with anything other than the photographer's own logo.

What if the photographer has given the event a photo to use and suddenly it pops up on a news website or ESNZ website – is that ok?

Both the event organising committee and photographer need to agree on clear terms of use of imagery provided. Generally it is a given that the event can use that image for stories around the event however, some photographers may have an outlet they refuse to supply imagery to . . . in which case, they need to let the event know this beforehand.

Both sides should have a clear outline in writing of what those rules are – so, how many images, what will they be used for, time frame, and any other relevant conditions.

Can event organisers tell photographers where to shoot and select the imagery they want?

Not unless the event is paying the photographer to do this. There need to be far more tactful conversations/guidelines around how you would like the photographers to work at the event but if you aren't paying them to be there, you can't dictate what they shoot. If they are supplying you images for being at the event, you can suggest a wish list that is there for all to see so that you get a spread of images. The same goes for multiple rings and often it seems no one wants to shoot in ring three but the riders are all requesting images. Event organisers should talk to the photographers and ask if they would be prepared to shoot there. If a photographer is on contract to a publication, they will generally need to be in the main arena. Often too you will find photographers backing each other up to cover the various rings/classes. It is all about relationships.

Let's talk quality – what images represent the event well?

Most events don't have anyone in their organisation who is managing imagery who actually understands imagery and copyright. What best represents your event's brand? If you use low quality imagery – what does that say about your event? Does it represent your event well? What is the value of good imagery to an event? The difference between a happy snapper and a professional photographer is that the latter will produce quality, appropriate,

respectful and acceptable work – irrespective of conditions and limitations. It is important the sport is portrayed in the very best possible way at all times. It is a huge responsibility.

Does anything need to be supplied to photographers who are photographing an event?

Ideally yes – get them to sign in daily, provide a free programme or running orders and access to results as soon as they are available. If they are editorial photographers, somewhere for them to access wi fi and file. Let them know the lay of the land before they get there. There should be access to tea/coffee and water too for journalists and editorial photographers.

So how much is exposure worth to a photographer?

Photographers aren't a charity – they are running a business and need to cover expenses, invest in good gear, pay wages, taxes and make a profit. Their investment in getting to an event can be significant in actual costs before you consider their investment in gear, time and expertise. Exposure is actually worth very little. A saddle company is not going to let you wander off with a brand new saddle on the promise of exposure for their brand – unless you are a sponsored rider and that is a whole other conversation.

What about snappers sharing all sorts on line – for free?

It is hard to understand people who snapshot, share, download or use bad imagery – wouldn't you rather pay a small fee for an image that is suitable for Facebook that could just as easily run on the cover of a magazine because of the quality of the shot? A poor quality image is a reflection of your brand.

Can you pre-book a photographer?

If you are wanting images of your child or yourself at an event, please do think about pre-booking with photographers. Some are more than happy to keep a look out. The flip side of that is that some photographers are there to capture entire fields which does not always allow the perfect pic of every rider over every jump.

Should there be a list of approved ESNZ photographers?

Probably. They have proven they can work safely around horses and work in an arena, have an OSH plan, and are proven to be top quality at what they do.

What about prizegiving photos?

If you would like a photographer to shoot a prizegiving, you need to pre-arrange this with said photographer and it can't just be demanded of the photographer who happens to be standing there.

Can events give images to their sponsors?

The old school way of printing an image to present to the sponsor to say thanks is perfect. Giving a digital image to a sponsor is absolutely unacceptable because the sponsor could then use it for their business which could lead to a dispute and an invoice from the photographer because it is third party use – and commercial to boot. Perhaps it is the best idea to actually commission a photographer to do those prizegiving shots then you have freedom of use for your sponsors.

How many photographers should be in a main arena?

Photographers in rings and presentation areas needs to be far better controlled and limited to professional photographers only. It could be dangerous to have inexperienced equestrian photographers in the arena. Professional photographers will know the course before entering the ring and where they will shoot from. They will be dressed appropriately and know they need to obey instructions from the ground jury and/or judges.

How do new photographers break into the equestrian scene?

The top echelon of New Zealand's professional photographers are all keen to ensure there is a next generation coming through and you'll find each of them mentor someone in their own way. If you have aspirations to do more equestrian sport photography, contact one of the reputable photographers at the event you want to attend and see if you can work with them. Don't just turn up and try to muscle in, you will find yourself blacklisted by the event organisers and the photographers won't want to work with you.

What's the deal with photographers sponsoring riders?

Some photographers do have sponsorship arrangements with riders. This becomes an issue when there is an embargo on when images can be released. One suggestion is that a list of photographer's sponsored riders is given to the event beforehand and an agreement reached as to timing of release, which should align with the embargo for other photographers. Every photographer should be registered though – even if they are just there for one sponsored rider – because before you know it, one becomes two and more and then it can take away income earning opportunities from those who are accredited or there in an official capacity.

Copyright definition: who owns the image?

The copyright owner is the photographer who took the image. Whether it is loaded on social media or put on a website with or without a watermark makes no difference to the ownership of the image – the photographer owns it.

The only exception is when the photographer is commissioned or takes the photograph as an employee, and then the copyright is held by the person/business commissioning the photos.

How can people use images once they have purchased them?

A copy of an image may have been purchased for use on social media, or perhaps a higher resolution one to be printed. As part of that purchase, there is a licence to use that image. Normally the social media image or the higher resolution photo comes with a private use only licence. That usually means you can print it, hang it on your wall or use it on your social media but do check – the photographer will probably have the conditions on their website. If you want to use the photo commercially (for example to advertise your horse for sale or to promote your own equestrian business) that is a completely different scenario. You will need to discuss that with the photographer and generally there will be an extra charge. You can't give the image to your sponsor to use either – they have to enter into their own arrangement with the photographer.