

Three-Day Eventing Under the Media Microscope

HBO Real Sports premieres a segment on the equestrian discipline.

July 23, 2008

On July 22nd, HBO Real Sports aired a story on three-day eventing, where it examined the risks inherent involved in the equestrian discipline. While many in the sport may appreciate the national media attention, the Real Sports segment, entitled "Deadly Ride," has worried the United States Eventing Association (USEA) and the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF). Both organizations expressed concern about negative publicity and have stated they are committed to safety. Indeed, tougher three-day eventing rules have been instituted after a series of deadly accidents plagued the sport earlier this year.

Prior to airing of the Real Sports segment, the USEF released a public statement: "While we certainly hope the story will be balanced and accurately portray our sport, we are concerned by the preview HBO sports put out late last week. The story is entitled "Deadly Ride" and features among others, an interview with a mother who has tried to force her daughter to stop eventing.

"USEF President David O'Connor did a lengthy interview for the story with Real Sports correspondent Frank DeFord. In the interview, David provided DeFord with important context around the recent spate of accidents and talked at length about what the sport was doing to improve safety. We feel like the interview went well. But of course, we do not control how much of the interview will be used in the final story.

"We were encouraged that the story's producer, Tim Walker, attended the USEF/USEA Safety Summit in June. He sat through each session and said later that he felt he had learned quite a bit about the sport. So while we are a bit troubled by the sensationalistic title and description of the HBO story, we will withhold final judgment until after we've seen it. But we are prepared to respond vocally to HBO, if warranted."

If you didn't catch "Deadly Ride" on July 22, you can still view the episode--it airs through August 11. To check program scheduling, [click here >>](#)