

## Olympic Games under review

### **The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games equestrian competition receives a report card.**

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After conducting an equestrian Olympic Test Event in Hong Kong this past August, a report has been issued that was recently presented to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the international governing body of equestrian sport.

The goal of the Test Event was to review the venue, layout and procedures for the three Olympic equestrian disciplines: dressage, eventing and jumping. The report cited unresolved issues that need addressing before the start of the equestrian competition during the 2008 Games, including lighting in the main arena, veterinary procedures, weather protocols, media operations and communications between officials.

According to the report, the Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games (BOCOG) is committed to establishing an equestrian training and competition center that is suitable for international competition within a disease-free zone. The BOCOG is also committed to making a final decision on where the equestrian competition will actually be held: The 2008 Olympic Games are being held in Beijing, but the equestrian venue is slated for Hong Kong's less congested countryside. However, officials from the Chinese city Nanjing have shown interest in hosting the equestrian competition and the BOCOG is reviewing the proposal. According to the Test Event report, the BOCOG will finalize its decision on the equestrian venue by year's end.

The riders who participated in the Test Event were all eventers, and their major concern was the effect heat and humidity had on their horses. Most found that the animal athletes took the testing weather conditions better than the humans. In addition to the team veterinarians, an international group of 30 experts had their eyes on the horses, gathering flight recovery and acclimatization data. Information on weight, water intake and blood parameters was also collected.

The Test Event marked the first time Hong Kong had ever hosted a high-level eventing competition. Other than racing, equestrian sports have no tradition in Hong Kong.