

Ontario Hunter Jumper Association
Annual General Meeting
Monday December 2, 2024
7:30 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order - OHJA President, Victoria McDonald
Victoria called the meeting to order and welcomed all to the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Hunter Jumper Association.

Victoria reviewed some housekeeping items before providing notice of quorum. To respond to a motion, to make a motion or to ask a question please submit via the question and answer panel or chat. When it comes time to vote, please only submit a response if you are not in favour of a motion in the Chat section. Please also note that only Senior OHJA Members are allowed to vote.

1.1 Approval of 2024 Agenda

Motion to Approve 2024 AGM Agenda

Brought forward by: Diane Ratigan

Seconded by: Sharon Batista

Motion carried.

1.2 Approval of the minutes from the 2023 AGM

Motion to Approve 2023 AGM Minutes

Brought forward by: Elizabeth Rous

Seconded by: Kathryn Kitchen

Motion carried.

1.3 President's Report

It was another busy year for the OHJA and we are looking forward to reviewing our progress with you and sharing our plans for 2025.

We continued to evolve our brand and built on the momentum created through our strategic plan.

As in the past, our biggest investment went to programming and the banquet. More details of the 2024 offerings will be shared later.

Our Junior Ambassador Program thrived and we welcomed 13 Juniors again this year led by Lauren Kirton. This program has had very positive response and the kids look forward to joining and being part of making the OHJA better.

We definitely had some challenges this year with our points management approach and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to apologize for a less-than-ideal experience. We realigned with a new provider, Show Management Systems, and they too had difficulty servicing our requirements and as a result they stepped away from supporting us mid-season. We picked up the process ourselves manually which allowed us to offer standings but I know it was not ideal. It is clear to us that we need to find an approach that allows us more control of the data and better display and sort capability for our

members. That is exactly what we will provide in 2025 as we are building out our own platform that will have these capabilities to offer. More to come on this further in the presentation.

A big milestone for us this year and still to come is the launch of our new and improved website. This will be coming your way mid-December as we are in the final stages of development. This new website will provide easier more user-friendly access to content and information that is important to you. It will allow us to host more educational material on topics that are relevant and timely. Most importantly it will host our Points Management Program and Program Details that are top of mind for you.

2024 sponsors and partners thanked, as we could not do what we do without them:

- Running Fox
- Yield Branding
- Apple Saddlery
- Ride Every Stride
- Letter Perfect Embroidery
- BlueBerry Hill Boutique
- Ringside Ribbons
- Kalli Kakes

Membership Update

In 2024, we had 1,879 members down 124 members from the previous year. In September, we opened up 2024 membership renewal again offering an early bird membership rate of \$65 until December 31 when the renewal rate will go to \$75.

Committee Reports

The OHJA currently have 5 underlying committees. Here is a summary of the work done by each this year:

Hunter/Equitation Committee

The Hunter/Equitation Committee budgeted \$49,500 in 2024 down \$15,500 from 2023. The Young Hunter Development Program was a big focus for us in the Ottawa Region this year. We supported 4 shows during the regular season for Ottawa Tournaments plus the Final and also ran this program at Ten Sixty in August. Ottawa invested heavily in young horse development through their programming for both hunters and jumpers and they were very pleased with our level of support and participation.

We continued to support the ever-popular Pony Power Program and this year we were able to secure sponsorship from Apple Saddlery for prizes for this program which was a huge help in managing costs.

Our participation in the Canadian Hunter Derby Series continued with our support of the High Point 3'6" and 3'. Rider Program. In addition, we introduced the 2'6" JR/AM Development Derby to support the development of junior/amateurs who are looking to explore the world of derbies and get their feet wet at a manageable height. We ran this program at least once at all show venues and saw good participation.

We were very excited to launch a new Derby offering in 2024, The Great Derby Challenge. This program was going to offer a team-based opportunity for hunter derby riders in the professional, junior and amateur levels bringing them together as a team to compete against other teams. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts at the Hunter Spectacular, we were unable to run this program but have commitment from Angelstone Events that this will be a feature class at the Hunter Spectacular in 2025 and will showcase in the grand prix ring.

The OHJA 2'6" Junior/Amateur Hunter Division continues to gain support with strong participation and all venues adopting as part of their regular season programming.

On the equitation front, we continued with support of our signature OHJA Medal and CET Mini Medal Series and support of the Grand Prix Medal Finals at the BFL Cup. We did see participation in the medals drop in 2024 and as a result we will be exploring new thinking for 2025 programming. In addition, Grand Prix was recently sold so we will be exploring sponsorship options for this Hunter Medal Series for 2025.

We continued to build equitation capability through our Emerging Rider Medal Program for riders in the non-core hunter divisions. This program offers entry level equitation opportunities to assist riders in building capability to move up to the core equitation programs. This year we ran this program across all show venues with the Final contested at the BFL Cup in Caledon.

Jumper Committee

The Jumper Committee budgeted \$20,000 in 2024, down \$9,500 from 2023.

Our 1.20M JR/AM Nations Cup Class offered at the Ottawa Summer Tournament Show was a huge success again this year. Participation was very strong and we had 7 teams compete. Both competitors and coaches alike are very supportive of this program and the team-based skills it enables.

In an effort to support our 1.30M and 1.40M Junior/Amateur Jumpers we offered a bursary program for the top rider at each level over the course of the Ottawa Summer Tournament Series.

We continued our support of the Eastern Canadian Championship Finals for 0.6M through to 1.10M riders; however, with the cancellation of the Finals we did not end up spending this budget and will roll it into 2025 budget plans.

Other Programs

Junior Ambassador Program – Our Junior Ambassadors continued to evolve and this year they contributed to a number of important initiatives including support with OHJA presentations, running an onsite educational event to support our learning agenda and created horsemanship bracelets to recognize great sportsmanship towards both horses and each other. The kids love this program and it is building in popularity each year.

Sportsmanship Award – We received 8 nominations this year. It is truly wonderful to see the true meaning of sportsmanship playing out across our membership. This year's recipient was Arya Armogan from Stoney Fields.

Travel Grant - We continued to offer our Travel Bursary Program and we are pleased to have received 17 applications this year. It is great to see our members out competing on the North American stage and making their mark. We are proud to be able to support their aspirations.

Events/Awards/Banquet Committee

Our biggest event of the year was the Banquet and we were thrilled to build on the momentum that we created in 2023. This year's event was offered at the Liberty Grand in Toronto. We sold 231 tickets down 49 tickets from 2023. I suspect the drop was due to the date conflict with the Taylor Swift Concert which was also on that evening in Toronto. We presented 367 awards across 40 divisions. The venue was amazing, the dancing spectacular and the camaraderie outstanding. We are looking forward to building on the momentum we have created around the banquet and bring you an even better 2025 version. Feedback on the banquet to date has been very strong.

We continued to offer our ever-popular director chairs as championship prizes for year-end award winners. Each year we change up our reserve champion offering and this year we provided backpacks from BlueBerry Hill Boutique.

In an effort to take advantage of existing inventory for regular season awards, we were able to repurpose ribbons that were not used in previous years which kept our award costs down year over year.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee published 1 digital issue of InGate magazine this spring and continued with the very popular Instagram Takeovers and OHJA play by plays. With the launch of our new website we will be revisiting our strategy around InGate as we would like to provide relevant content to our members more frequently. We will be looking to launch this new approach in January 2025. Content will be focused on profiling our members and education on important and timely topics. We love hearing from our members on what they would like to hear about so please send ideas our way. We will also canvass members for ideas in the coming weeks.

Our social media presence remains strong with 6,800+Instagram Followers and 4,400 Facebook Followers. We ramped up our presence on both of these social media mediums in 2024 in an effort to communicate more frequently and effectively with our membership and keep our programs top of mind.

As our brand continues to gather momentum and our strategy unfolds, we have found the need to expand our marketing presence with members, partners and others in the industry. To do that we have engaged the services of marketing expert, Melanie Widmeyer. Melanie comes to us with deep expertise in marketing and branding and she is very familiar with the equestrian industry given she has ridden for a number of years and her young daughter is now competing on the Gold Circuit. You can expect to see our content ramp up and meaningful focus on bringing you valuable events and education.

2025 - The Year Ahead

- Launch Points Management Program
- Website Upgrade
- Refreshed Programs
- Improved education and learning content

- Banquet 2025

2025 Points Management

- Working with Yield Branding, we will develop our own in-house database managed and operated by us with no reliance on an outside technology vendor
- Display features will be user friendly and allow for viewing optionality
- Data accuracy will be improved
- Standings will be posted in a timely manner

Website Refresh

Here is what you can look forward to with our updated website:

- Updated “look & feel” and better functionality
- Improved user experience and ability to navigate content more easily
- Profiles our equestrian community and reflects our membership
- One stop shop for learning & educational content

Refreshed Programs

The Hunter, Equitation and Jumper Committees will be meeting in December to work through 2025 Programming. If you are interested in having a say, please let us know and we can assign you to a committee.

Improved education & learning content

We will begin releasing content as soon as the website has launched.

Banquet 2025

Planning will begin in January and we look forward to an even better event than this year.

2. Financial Report

The 2022 financial report was presented by Sharon Batista, Treasurer. A copy of the report is available upon request.

2.1 Motion to accept the Financial Report

Motion to accept the 2023 Financial Report as presented.

Brought forward by: Sharon Batista

Seconded by: Elizabeth Rous

Motion carried.

2.2 **Motion to appoint RLB Chartered Professional Accountants of Orangeville, as review accountant**

Brought forward by: Sharon Batista

Seconded by: Diane Ratigan

Motion carried.

3. 2023-2024 Board of Director Elections

3.1 Review of Candidates

Victoria thanked Kristine Kubota & Kelly Nicholl for their contributions to the OHJA and the Board of Directors.

There are 3 positions up for election

- **Victoria McDonald** (President) and **Pam Dorion** (Board Member) are up for re-elections for a 3 -year term
- We have one 3-year vacancy for the position being vacated by Kelly Nicholl
- And one 2- year vacancy for position being vacated by Kristine Kubota
- We have 2 nominations submitted for consideration:
 - Ellen Gowland
 - Carrie Whitwell

Ellen Gowland

Ellen is a lawyer in Ontario and practices in the area of civil litigation. She currently is the Director of Corporate & Claims Litigation at Allstate Insurance Company of Canada. She is the mother of two avid equestrians who have been competing in Ontario since 2012. They first started competing at the local level and graduated to Trillium and Silver shows and are now competing at the Gold level. Ellen has lots of experience in the equestrian world from leasing to owning and everything in between. She has a passion for our sport and is interested in making a difference and contributing in a meaningful way to improving the future of our sport.

Carrie Whitwell

Carrie has been engaged with the OHJA through her daughter, Kyleigh, for the past 6 years. Her daughter is an active member competing in a variety of divisions in both the hunters and the jumpers. Carrie has been involved in the horse world for her entire life. She graduated from Fanshawe College with a degree in science and accounting. She currently works for General Motors in warranty aftercare managing a team. She has had the opportunity to observe the sport as a horse show mom and rider and wants to contribute to the continued growth and maintenance of equestrian sport in Ontario.

3.2 Motion to accept the Board of Directors for 2025

Victoria McDonald, Elizabeth Rous, Sharon Batista, Diane Ratigan, Pam Dorion, Alana Aird, Katie Kitchen, Taylor Brooks, Karla Scott, Kelly Traver, Carrie Whitwell, Ellen Gowland

Brought forward by: Victoria McDonald

Seconded by: Sharon Batista

Motion carried.

4. New Business and Q&A

- Elizabeth Campbell asked if OHJA memberships can be auto-renewed in a similar way to PSO licenses. Members can sign up for auto-renewals through Ontario Equestrian for both OE and OHJA memberships.
- Di Lagmuir asked why Angelstone charged a higher fee for divisions only getting prize money for certain classes sponsored by the OHJA, specifically the low Children's, Beginner Child/Adult Stakes. Victoria clarified that all entry fee decisions are the discretion of the show managers. These were also not OHJA sponsored classes in 2024.

- Ellen Gowland brought up the need for additional diversity in horse show venues, and how this may impact member retention initiatives. These conversations will be continued at 2025 Board meetings.
5. Meeting adjournment
 6. Next OHJA Board meeting on January 27. All members are welcome to attend.
Motion to adjourn the 2024 Annual General Meeting at 8:40p.m.
Brought forward by: Victoria McDonald
Seconded by: Carol Jardine
Motion carried.