



EQUINE DISTANCE RIDING ASSOCIATION

June 22, 2020

Letter from Terry James, President of EDRA:

Start Ready, Finish Proud. This is EDRA's motto. We, the EDRA community and in particular the EDRA Board of Directors, are about to start a journey that for many of us, is more challenging than any race we've prepared for. And we truly want to Finish Proud.

Across the globe, we are seeing an expression of the urgent need to expose racism and eliminate discrimination wherever they may be found. Equestrian organizations (amongst many others) are being asked for their position on advocacy for People of Color (POC). There is an increasing awareness that systemic racism has profoundly affected representation of POC in equestrian sport. We are asking ourselves hard questions, and struggling to figure out the way forward.

The Board of EDRA met on June 18 via Zoom to discuss this issue. It was a heartfelt, difficult, emotional discussion. But the profound respect that was exhibited by our Board members made me proud to be a part of this organization, once again.

What follows is a preliminary statement; we felt strongly that we needed to state our essential position in a timely manner. Moving forward, we commit to providing updates to this position statement, and regularly reporting to our members on our progress and action plan. At all times, we welcome your feedback. We NEED to hear from our members and the equestrian community in general – and in particular, any member of an under-represented group – as to how we can best proceed. See last item for how you can reach out.

Preliminary Action Plan for Improving EDRA Climate for Underrepresented Groups

1. EDRA stands for all those who are underrepresented in our sport – including Blacks, Latinos/Latinas, Native Americans, LGBTQ.
2. We do not tolerate racism or homophobia in any form – be that displaying offensive symbols, using offensive language, or discriminating against a person because of race, creed, color, or gender preference. We are uniquely set up to address this with our Stewards – their task at any EDRA event is to ensure a fair and level playing field and adherence to our EDRA mission. They are guardians of fairness and equity in EDRA.
3. We are painfully aware we have much to learn. We are an overwhelmingly white sport, and we realize that the way forward is first to admit our faults. This is the first step.



EQUINE DISTANCE RIDING ASSOCIATION

4. We feel strongly committed to educating ourselves on the issue of systemic racism. We are seeking expert counsel on resources and will share these resources with our members. Diversity training will be offered to all current and prospective Board members and Stewards. As always, as a benefit of membership, where possible, this training will be offered to the membership at large.

5. We are developing a Scholarship for Youth of Color. Five applicants will receive the opportunity to participate each year, at EDRA's expense, in a summer equestrian camp in the Pacific Northwest. A committee will be appointed to develop an application form, deadlines, and determine most effective methods of getting the word out to Youth of Color across the country. Other funding sources will be explored.

6. We are revising our Discipline Matrix to specifically address use of racist/homophobic language/symbols/behavior. As we have with all other behaviors in the Discipline Matrix, we will strive to describe positive, affirmative, inclusive behavior rather than its negative opposite.

7. Finally – and most important – we want to hear from anyone who is committed to addressing this issue, particularly People of Color. What ideas do you have to help us move forward? Please forward your suggestions via email to Jo Weinstein, Vice President of EDRA at joweinstein@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Terry James