



To: Members of the boards of directors for the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation (AMHF) and the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA)

From: Jeffrey V. Heininger, AMHF Chairman

Re: Statement and review of the 2012 Hall of Fame induction process

Immediately following the disclosure by the AMHF on June 30 that it would not be inducting Derek “Nobby” Clark into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame due to an error in the Hall of Fame balloting process, I asked the AMA Board Chairman and the AMA President to assist the AMHF with a thorough review of our nomination process and its implementation.

That review began immediately. We undertook an investigation into the 2012 Motorcycle Hall of Fame election process, and the sequence of events that led to errors in the 2012 balloting.

I want to reiterate that I spoke to Mr. Clark before our announcement was made on June 30, and that I apologized to him on behalf of the Hall of Fame. The error was tragic and unfortunate but had to be corrected immediately. The process by which we select nominees for the Hall of Fame ballot must stand up to scrutiny, and cannot be the result of incompetence or backroom dealings.

It is also important to note that the decision not to induct Mr. Clark was not in any way a reflection on his accomplishments. Mr. Clark, like dozens of other candidates to the Hall of Fame, remains in the pool of applicants that is considered each year for inclusion on the Hall of Fame ballot.

Understanding how the induction process works is important. Names are submitted to the Hall of Fame for consideration, and applicants are reviewed by one of eight committees focused on specific categories of motorcycle history. Each year, those committees review the sizable pool of potential candidates and offer their recommendations to a balloting committee that is charged with setting that year’s ballot. The path for people who apply to the Hall of Fame is detailed at www.motorcyclemuseum.org/induction.

The balloting committee has complete authority in setting the ballot, including the number of available slots and the selection of nominees that will go on the ballot to fill those slots. The balloting committee considers the recommendations of the eight category committees when setting the ballot.

The ballot is then voted on by existing Hall of Fame members along with members of the AMHF and AMA boards of directors, and votes are tabulated. This year, for the first time, the names of the nominees listed on the ballot were released to the public on April 6.

Many people have made statements suggesting that we ignore the serious breakdown of our process and induct Mr. Clark as we had originally announced. When I became chairman, I did so with the understanding that the AMHF needed to become more transparent in its dealings and move away from the “good old boy” reputation we had been tagged with. Our error was one of procedure, and it had very serious implications. Had we ignored this error, not only would the democratic process that our committees follow have been undermined, the nominees whose names are rightfully on the ballot would not have received fair consideration in the voting process.

Below are the results of our investigation, details of actions taken thus far, and recommendations for further action. It is also my intention to establish a task force of individuals highly respected for their integrity so that we can develop the necessary checks and balances needed to ensure that the Hall of Fame induction process is adhered to going forward.



Findings, Actions Taken and Recommendations From An Internal Investigation Of The 2012 Motorcycle Hall of Fame Balloting

A thorough review of the circumstances that led to Derek “Nobby” Clark being included on the 2012 AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame ballot has been conducted. The following represent the findings of that review and recommendations. The Hall of Fame is overseen by the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation (AMHF), which is wholly owned by the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA).

Findings

- The Hall of Fame Road Race Committee met Jan. 17 and recommended two names for the ballot as a result of their deliberations and voting on the pool of qualified candidates that came before them. Derek “Nobby” Clark was not one of the names submitted by the committee for the ballot. Clark’s name appeared in a summary email, sent Jan. 18, reporting the voting for all the candidates’ names considered by the committee, which showed that Clark received two votes out of a possible 14 from the seven-member committee (each member having cast two votes).
- Staff consolidated the recommendations of all committees and forwarded them to the Hall of Fame Balloting Committee in advance of its Feb. 23 meeting. Due to a clerical error by staff, the materials presented to the balloting committee for consideration for the 2012 ballot included all six names voted upon by the road race committee—four more than the two officially submitted by the road race committee. The ballot error was not caught or corrected during a staff review process.
- Subsequent to the committee deliberations and voting, two members of the road race committee sent emails on Jan. 18 to committee members suggesting that it would be “brilliant if we could squeeze Nobby Clark in somewhere.”
- At the balloting committee meeting Feb. 23, both the road race committee chairman and the balloting committee chairman were aware that the road race committee had voted to recommend two names, not six. At no time in that meeting was it pointed out that the road race committee had voted to recommend only two names. The full slate of six names was discussed only briefly during the balloting committee meeting and subsequently approved for the 2012 ballot. No action was taken to correct the error, or inform the balloting committee of the road race committee’s vote or recommendations. Therefore, the balloting committee acted without a full understanding of the road race committee’s intentions.
- Once the ballot was announced, a member of the road race committee inquired as to how it was possible that Mr. Clark was on the ballot when the road race committee had not recommend that his name be on the ballot.
- After Mr. Clark’s name appeared on the ballot in error, Mr. Clark received the third most votes of those appearing on the competition ballot, and it was therefore announced that he would be inducted with the 2012 class.

Actions Already Taken

- Once it was determined that a serious balloting error had occurred in the committee process, the chairman of the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation (AMHF) Board of Directors, the chairman of the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) Board of Directors and the AMA President & CEO met to determine the appropriate course of action. Given the egregiousness of the error, it was determined that, to maintain the integrity of the Hall of Fame induction process and the Hall of Fame itself, Mr. Clark would not be inducted with the 2012 class.
- Mr. Heiningering contacted Mr. Clark and explained the circumstances, and apologized for the mistake. A release was issued noting the balloting error, and announcing the start of this investigation.



Recommendations

- The inclusion of the additional names on the draft ballot presented to the balloting committee was the result of carelessness on the part of staff. Given that the balloting materials presented to the balloting committee would be used to set the ballot, there should have been greater scrutiny and review by the supervisors involved. Given the enormity of the error and the negative impact on both the Hall of Fame and the AMA, not to mention the anguish to which Mr. Clark has been subjected, the staff involved must be subject to disciplinary action.
- Both the road race committee chairman and the balloting committee chairman were aware of the results of the deliberations and voting of the road race committee and the subsequent submission by the road race committee of the two names for inclusion on the ballot. Neither took any action during the balloting committee deliberations to correct the error. Both therefore demonstrated a dereliction of their duties as committee chairmen to ensure that the balloting committee knew of the true recommendation of the road race committee. Given that this situation involves the balloting committee chairman, to whom the committee chairs look to for leadership and guidance, it is clear that the entire induction process must be thoroughly reviewed and scrutinized before resuming.
- All actions and activities of all of the Hall of Fame committees should be suspended immediately, and a task force should be convened to review the committees' structure and membership, and recommend procedures to ensure the adherence to, and checks and balances within, the induction process.
- The task force should work quickly to complete its review in order to restore faith in the process and the institution. It should make recommendations to the AMHF and AMA Boards of Directors for their consideration and approval.

Clarifications

- There was no evidence to suggest any irregularity or breach of process for any of the other individuals slated for induction as part of the 2012 class.
- Although Derek "Nobby" Clark did not garner enough support from the road race committee this year, he remains on the list of names eligible for consideration for future nomination to the Hall of Fame.