

The impact of the American Eventing Championships on starters at regional, and national events

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Overview

The American Eventing Championships (AEC) garners an enormous amount of interest from U.S. competitors in the sport of Eventing. It is the second most prominent Eventing competition in the country. Opinions about the AEC run the gamut of being favorable to unfavorable regarding the impact of the AEC on the Area in which the event is run. To date, an analysis had not been done to determine what the actual impact the event had upon other regional and national competitions. The following report evaluates the starters within an Area that hosts the AEC before and after the arrival of the event including the impact on starters at local Area events six weeks before and six weeks after the AEC. In order to clarify the actual correlation of the AEC with regional events, the United States Eventing Association (USEA) is publishing the following review of data related to the AEC.

Methods

The USEA is divided into ten areas. Since 2004, eleven AEC have been held in a total of four different areas. As of the 2014 competition year, the USEA Areas which have played host to the AEC include:

- Area II = New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina
- Area IV = Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wisconsin
- Area III = Tennessee, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Eastern Louisiana, and Florida
- Area V = Arkansas, Western Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas

Each event is registered/recognized through the USEA database and the USEA has maintained records for recognized events since its inception in 1959.

The USEA compiled the following data from its database of organized events:

- The total number of AEC starters since the first year of the event (2004) until the current year (2014);
- The total number of starters in each area in which the AEC was held from three years before the first AEC was held in that area until the current year;
- The total number of starters in each area in which the AEC was held for six weeks prior to the AEC; and
- The total number of starters in each area in which the AEC was held for six weeks after the conclusion of the AEC.

Results

Table 1: The total number of starters at the AEC by area, and Year held. Corresponding number of total U.S. starters included.

AEC Year	Area	Date	Total # of starters at AEC	Total # of starters at every U.S. event
2004	2	9/15-19	413	41,317
2005	2	9/14-18	391	40,975
2006	2	9/20-24	496	44,325
2007	4	9/12-16	544	45,667
2008	4	9/10-14	401	42,610
2009	4	9/10-13	386	41,132
2010	3	9/09-12	647	40,418
2011	3	9/07-11	467	41,557
2012	3	9/06-09	566	42,936
2013	5	9/26-29	408	42,695
2014	5	9/25-28	396	42,798

Table 2: Total number of starters in an AEC host area one year before the AEC, during the AEC, and total number of starters in 2014 (the last year for which starters were determined).

Year	Total # of starters for all events in an Area one year before the arrival of the AEC	Total # of starters for all events held in an area where the AEC is held	Total # of starters in an Area the year after the AEC moves to another area	Total # of starters in the Area for 2014
2004	8200	10100	12259	10882
2005	8200	10019	12259	10882
2006	8200	11187	12259	10882
2007	2170	3393	1900	1997
2008	2170	2546	1900	1997
2009	2170	2662	1900	1997
2010	7561	8069	9374	9324
2011	7561	8842	9374	9324
2012	7561	9970	9374	9324





2013	2477	2854	NA	2724
2014	2477	2724	NA	2724
KEY:	Area II 	Area IV 	Area III 	Area V 

Table 3: Number of starters at all area events held in the six weeks prior to the AEC and in the six weeks after the AEC.

* Number of starters from events that started six weeks prior and subsequent to the last day of the AEC, current year highlighted													
2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1501/2234	1605/2112	1683/1907	1915/1441	1990/841	1803/1763	2010/2080	1554/1912	1999/1846	1676/1650	1594/1950	1569/2101	1808/1968	1939/1997
	1605/2112	1356/2234	1713/1643	1990/841	1803/1763	2010/2080	1514/2099	1786/2060	1676/1650	1594/1637	1569/2102	1542/2234	1540/2396
		1683/2276	1915/1721	1961/889	2122/1335	2370/1956	1762/2067	1814/2236	1524/2089	1621/1734	1931/1739	1923/2263	1922/2479
			522/466	579/442	819/274	963/351	801/332	497/354	306/253	492/303	577/246	681/335	707/370
				579/442	819/274	963/351	801/332	750/354	306/253	492/303	510/313	681/241	707/222
					428/665	963/351	801/332	750/354	481/253	492/303	510/313	584/338	707/222
						696/677	274/812	259/698	385/576	330/576	422/735	688/472	704/445
							274/812	259/698	385/576	330/576	422/670	443/717	704/445
								259/698	385/576	330/576	422/670	443/717	507/642
									288/463	386/366	252/517	151/435	186/419
										637/115	105/664	151/435	186/419

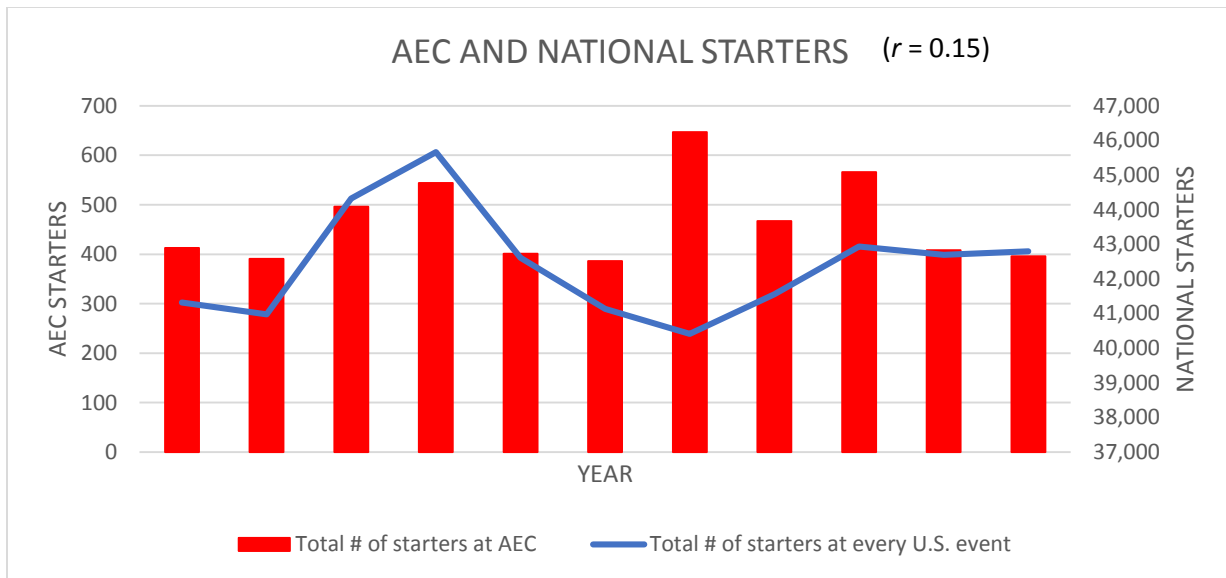
(*Does not include AEC Starters)

Discussion

Weak Correlation Between Annual AEC and National Starters

There is very little correlation between the number of AEC starters and the number of total starters in the United States ($r = 0.15$). This suggests that the success of the AEC and the overall number of starters nationally are independent of each other. As the AEC is only one of two hundred and fifty events held in the country this would follow basic logic. However, it is surprising that the AEC can have a successful year even when the overall number of starters is low. Other variables, such as the physical proximity of the AEC to the majority of the U.S. competitors, most likely have a greater correlation to the number of AEC starters.

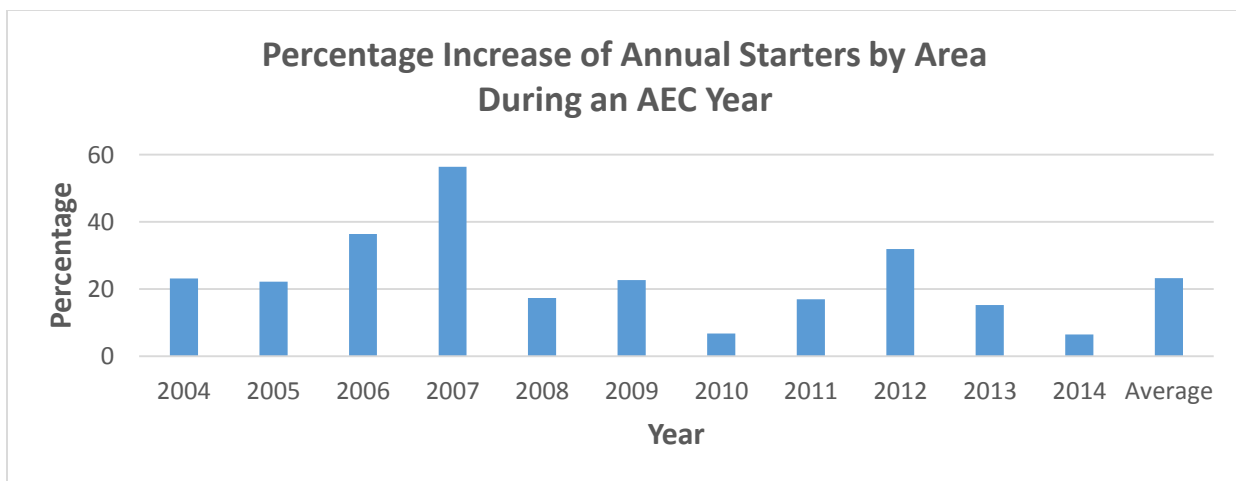
Graph 1.



Overall Area Impact of the AEC

Without exception, the number of starters in the Area in which an AEC is held increased in each and every year since the inception of the event. On average the net benefit to an area that hosts the AEC is a 23% increase in starters (Graph 2). When the AEC starters are not included in the calculation of overall Area impact, the average number of entries in the Area yields an 11% increase.

Graph 2.

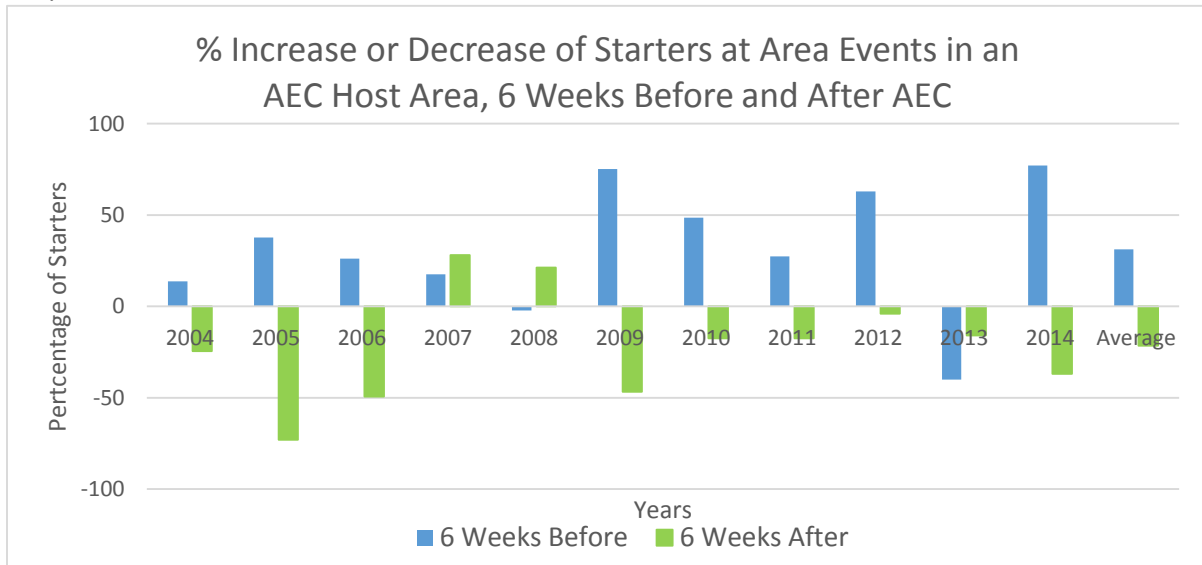


Starters at Area Events Six Weeks Before the AEC

On average, events held in the six weeks prior to the AEC saw an increase of 31% of their starters over the year previous to the arrival of the AEC (Graph 3). However, of the 11 times that the AEC was held,

two years actually experienced a decrease in starters in the six weeks before the AEC. In the year 2013, the first year the event was held in Area V, there was a decrease in starters with a 40% decrease in starters in the six weeks before the event. However, the results were significantly different in 2014 when there was a 77% increase in the number of starters six weeks prior to the AEC in the area. The years 2009, 2010, and 2012 also saw notable increases in the percentage of area starters with increases of 75%, 49% and 63% respectively.

Graph 3.



Starters at Area Events Six Weeks After the AEC

Events held in the six weeks after the AEC were recorded to have had an average decrease of 21% of their starters. Of the eleven years in which the AEC was held, two years experienced an increase in the number of starters at events held within six weeks after the AEC (2007, and 2008). The AEC in both of those years took place in Wayne, Illinois at the Lamplight Equestrian Center, a venue within Area IV. In the case of 2007, there was a 28% increase in starters six weeks after the AEC, and in 2008, there was a 21% increase in starters. An average decrease in the number of starters at local area events seems logical as many non-professional competitors may schedule the AEC to be the end of their competition year. With an increased understanding of the impacts of the AEC on regional events, it may allow regional events to adjust their expectations and investment, or reschedule their events to better capture regional competitors.

Conclusions

The number of starters at the AEC will not impact the number of starters nationally. With only a marginal positive impact, meaning that if the AEC has a strong number of starters in a given year, there is a small chance that the national starters will also increase. The presence of the AEC in an Area will result in an overall increase in the number of starters in that Area. When starter numbers at the AEC are included, the average increase in Area starters is 23%. When the AEC is excluded from the number of starters in the host area, the average increase in Area starters is 11%. On average, events held six weeks

before the AEC will see an average increase of starter numbers of 31%. However, events held within the six weeks after the AEC will see an average decrease in starter numbers of 21%.