

## Para-Equestrian

Para-Equestrian is the sport of equestrian for people with any physical or visual impairment. It includes two equestrian disciplines – dressage and driving.

Para-Equestrian Dressage is the only equestrian discipline that is included in the Paralympic Games.

Riders compete in a range of sport classes known as grades.

### Classification

In Para-Sport classification provides the structure for fair and equitable competition to ensure that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus – the same factors that account for success in sport for able-bodied athletes.

The Para-Sport classification assessment process identifies the eligibility of each Para-Athlete's impairment, and groups them into a sport class according to the degree of activity limitation resulting from their impairment.

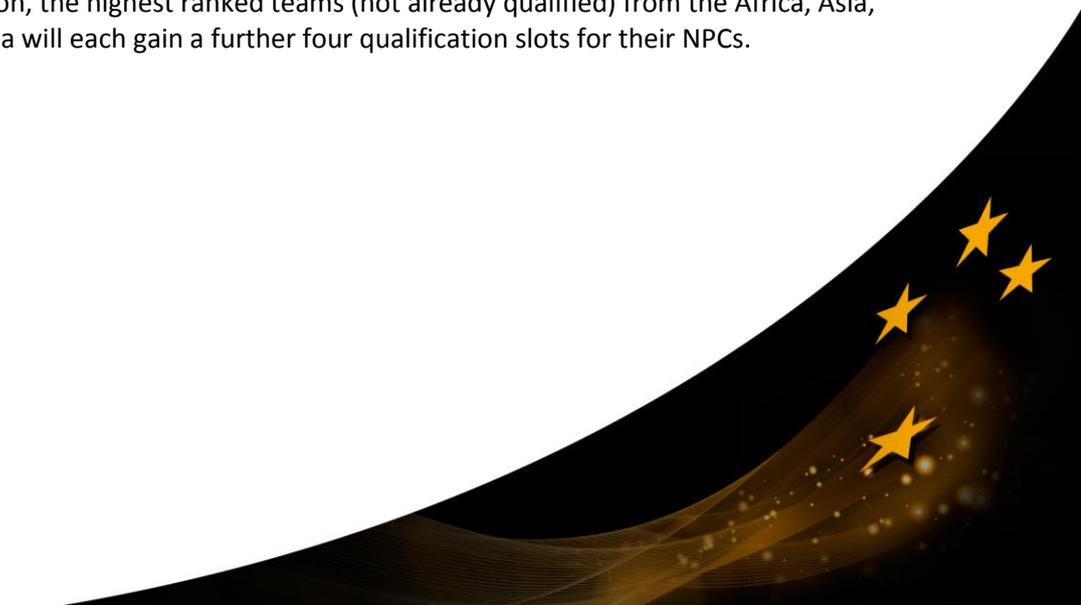
Classification is sport-specific as an eligible impairment affects a Para-Athlete's ability to perform in different sports to a different extent. Each Para-Sport has a different classification system.

More information on classification and sport classes is available under 'Classification detail' below.

### Qualification – the road to Rio

Qualification slots for Rio 2016 are secured via team and individual rankings.

**Team event:** For the team event each team can enter three to four eligible Para-Athletes. The top three ranked teams at the 2014 FEI World Equestrian Games obtain up to four qualification slots for their NPC (National Paralympic Committee). Meanwhile, the seven highest ranked teams (not already qualified) by 31 January 2016 will also claim four qualification places via the FEI Paralympic Team Rankings. In addition, the highest ranked teams (not already qualified) from the Africa, Asia, the Americas and Oceania will each gain a further four qualification slots for their NPCs.



**Individual rankings:** The other method of securing a spot for Rio is via the Para-Equestrian Individual Rankings where two qualification slots will be allocated to the NPCs for the two highest ranked riders in Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania. A further three Para-Athletes will be eligible through Bipartite Commission Invitation, four places via host country allocation, plus the five remaining highest ranked Para-Athletes on the FEI Paralympic Individual Rankings, regardless of region.

*“For New Zealand Para-Dressage athletes to qualify for the Rio 2016 Paralympics they are required to firstly achieve the FEI Minimum Eligibility Requirement of at least 60% at a FEI Para-Dressage competition (CPEDI3\*) riding the horse they may like to compete in Rio 2016. We have up to four athletes heading to Australia in January 2016 to look to achieve this qualification.”*

*“New Zealand will then look to qualify up to two individual positions from the FEI Paralympic Rider Rankings, by having the top placed riders on these rankings.”*

*“Should New Zealand qualify one or two individual positions, those Para-Athletes that have gained their FEI qualification will then have to present their results to the New Zealand Para-Dressage selectors.”*

*“The International standard of Para-Dressage is continuing to improve hence the need for our Para-Athletes to achieve high percentage scores to be considered for selection. We are hopeful that we will have at least one if not two Para-Athletes that can achieve the criteria set.”*

*Warrick Allan, Equestrian Sports New Zealand, High Performance Operations Manager*



## Rio 2016 Para-Equestrian

The Para-Equestrian events at Rio are all dressage events and are divided into championship tests and freestyle tests. They are mixed and grouped according to the riders' functional profiles.

### Championship test (medal event)

- Riders have to display a series of compulsory movements such as walk, trots and canters.
- Scores are graded out of 100 as a percentage, with the rider accumulating the best average of the five judges scores being declared the winner.

### Freestyle test

- Riders perform a routine choreographed to music.
- The five judges score competitors' performance based on percentage scores for technical difficulty and artistic merit. The 10 scores from the jury are then averaged to determine a rider's total percentage score.

### Team competition

- Involves a minimum of three and a maximum of four riders.
- Each rider performs two team tests and then the championship test (for which individual medals are also awarded). Team scores are the sum of the best three individual aggregates.

**Medal events:** 11 mixed events.

**Where:** Olympic Equestrian Centre, Deodoro.

**When:** Sunday 11 September to Friday 16 September 2016.

More info: [www.rio2016.com/en/paralympics/equestrian](http://www.rio2016.com/en/paralympics/equestrian)

## Para-Equestrian Medals Won

1 gold, 1 silver

### GOLD

- Mixed Dressage – Championship Grade IV (Sydney 2000) – Jayne Craike

### SILVER

- Mixed Dressage – Freestyle Grade IV (Sydney 2000) – Jayne Craike

## The Stars of Para-Equestrian

Great Britain has historically been the most successful nation in the sport, although the Netherlands, Germany and Italy also boast a strong tradition.

The most famous names in the sport are 10-time Paralympic champion from Great Britain, Lee Pearson, while his countrywoman Sophie Christiansen, a five-time Paralympic gold medallist, is another leading name in the sport. Other prominent names include Sara Morganti of Italy and Pepo Puch of Austria.

## Did you know?

- Internationally, there is Para-Equestrian competition for both dressage and driving. However, unlike dressage, driving is not in the Paralympic Games programme.
- Great Britain is the dominant nation in the sport of Para-Dressage and they have won every team gold at the Paralympic Games.
- The London 2012 Paralympic freestyle Grade 1b champion, Pepo Puch, was a former Olympic eventer who competed at Athens 2004 before a serious riding accident saw the Austrian later switch to Para-Equestrian.
- Great Britain's Lee Pearson, the 10-time Paralympic gold medallist, was once carried up the stairs of 10 Downing Street by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.
- Grades 1a, 1b, II compete in a 40x20m arena. Grade III compete in a 40x20m or 60x20m arena and Grade IV in a 60x20m arena.
- For the best interests of the competition and the well-being of the horses, the Para-Equestrian competition at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games was held almost 2000km away in Hong Kong.

## Terminology

<b>Paralympian</b>	A Para-Athlete who has taken part in Paralympic Games.
<b>Pirouette</b>	A lateral movement where the horse turns around on its inside hind leg with the two forefeet and the other hind leg moving around it in the shape of a circle.
<b>Connecting rein bar</b>	An assistive Para-Equestrian device in which a bar is used to tie the two reins together.
<b>Piaffe</b>	A dressage movement in which the horse is in a highly collected and cadenced trot without any forwards, backwards or sideways movement.
<b>Passage</b>	A move in a dressage competition in which the horse makes a highly elevated and powerful trot.
<b>Dressage crop</b>	A type of short whip used as an assistive device in a Para-Equestrian competition.

## Timeline

- 1996** Para-Equestrian was included on the Paralympic schedule for the first time at the Atlanta 1996 Paralympic Games.
- 2000** Kiwi Jayne Craike struck gold at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games in the mixed dressage championship Grade IV. To date, it is New Zealand's sole Paralympic gold medal won in the sport of Para-Equestrian.
- 2006** Para-Equestrian joined the other seven disciplines to be formally regulated by the FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale).
- 2008** The five grades for both the mixed championship and freestyle tests, which are part of the Paralympic programme that we know today, was adopted for the first time at the Beijing 2008 Paralympics.
- 2010** Para-Equestrian made its debut appearance at the FEI World Equestrian Games in Lexington, USA.
- 2012** A total of 78 athletes competed across 11 events at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. New Zealand was represented by two athletes, Rachel Stock and Anthea Dixon.

## Classification detail

In equestrian dressage riding there are five sport classes called grades for Para-Athletes with physical and visual impairments. Lower grades indicate more severe activity limitations and higher grades include Para-Athletes with less severe activity limitations.

### Physical impairments

**Grade Ia** – Para-Athletes in this grade have severe impairments affecting all limbs and the trunk. The Para-Athlete usually requires the use of a wheelchair in daily life.

**Grade Ib** – Para-Athletes in this grade have either a severe impairment of the trunk and minimal impairment of the upper limbs or moderate impairment of the trunk, upper and lower limbs. Most Para-Athletes in this class use a wheelchair in daily life.

**Grade II** – Para-Athletes in this grade have severe impairments in both lower limbs with minimal or no impairment of the trunk or moderate impairment of the upper and lower limbs and trunk. Some Para-Athletes in this class may use a wheelchair in daily life.

### Physical or visual impairments

**Grade III** – Para-Athletes in this grade have a severe impairment or deficiency of both upper limbs or a moderate impairment of all four limbs or short stature. Para-Athletes in Grade III are able to walk and generally do not require a wheelchair in daily life. Grade III also includes Para-Athletes with visual impairment.

**Grade IV** – Para-Athletes in this grade have a mild impairment of range of movement or muscle strength or a deficiency of one limb or mild deficiency of two limbs. Grade IV also includes Para-Athletes with visual impairment.

For further details please go to [www.paralympics.org.nz](http://www.paralympics.org.nz) or to [www.hpsnz.org.nz](http://www.hpsnz.org.nz)