

Para-Equestrian Information Sheet

About the Sport

Used for many years for rehabilitation and recreation, Para-equestrian was first included in the Paralympic Games in Atlanta in 1996. It is a multi-impairment sport, open to athletes with a physical impairment or a visual impairment.

Individual riders compete in two Dressage events; a Championship Test of set movements and a Freestyle Test to music. The Team Test is an event for teams of three to four riders per team. Competitors are judged on their horsemanship skills as they ride using a series of commands for walk, trot and canter. Riders may use assistive devices such as dressage crops, a connecting rein bar, rubber bands or other aids that may assist them to compete.

Who can compete?

Para-Equestrian is open to athletes with a physical or vision impairment. Athletes are required to submit medical reports and meet the minimum impairment criteria in order to compete.

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Loss of limbs	Partial or complete absence of bones or joints due to amputation or deficiency from birth	Leg: Loss of one foot through the ankle or shortened leg of similar length. Arm: Loss of one hand through the wrist OR shortened arm of similar length
Muscle weakness/ Impaired muscle power	Muscle weakness or paralysis from conditions such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, nerve damage, spinal cord injury or other spinal condition	Loss of strength in at least one arm, one leg or the trunk that impacts on riding.
Co-ordination impairments - Hypertonia, Ataxia, Athetosis	Impairments from neurological conditions such as acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis that affect co-ordination and smoothness of movement and balance.	Co-ordination or movement difficulties in at least one arm or leg
Restricted joint movement/ Impaired passive range	Restricted movement or tightness in a joint/s from conditions such as joint fusions and other restricting conditions.	Joint movement restriction in the leg, trunk or arms that impacts on riding
Short Stature	Reduced standing height and limb length from conditions such as achondroplasia or other conditions that affect growth.	Height less than 129cm

Leg Length Difference	Significant difference in leg length due to a deficiency at birth or trauma.	Loss of length must be significant, usually around 7cm or more.
Vision Impairment	Impairment of the eye structure, optic nerves or pathways, or vision area of the brain, resulting in a loss of vision in both eyes. Caused by conditions such as albinism, macular degeneration, macular or cone rod dystrophy and retinitis pigmentosa.	Visual acuity loss in both eyes (how far they can see) with best corrected vision. Vision is less than or equal to 2/60 (log MAR 1.5-2.6 inclusive); or Visual field restriction in both eyes (how wide they can see) of less than 10 degrees diameter with best corrected vision.

Para-Equestrian Sport Classes

Grade	Description (Guide Only)
I	Riders with the most significant impairments that affect their whole body. Grade 1 riders perform a walk only test, and will limit the sharpness of their turns due to their balance on the horse. Riders may use a number of approved aids to assist them to stay on and handle their horse.
II	Riders with impairments in their arms, legs and torso who have more balance than Grade 1 riders. Riders use a walk for more technical moves and a trot in straight lines.
III	Riders with impairments in their torso and legs; or down one side of their body. Grade III riders can walk, trot and perform a short canter.
IV	Riders with a physical impairment down one side of their body, or significant impairment in one or both arms. Grade IV riders can circle, change pace and walk, trot and canter. Riders who are blind also compete in this class.
V	Riders have a physical impairment in only one or two limbs, or have low vision. Riders are able to perform complex movements and routines at all paces.
Not Eligible (NE)	Rider does not meet the minimum criteria for the Para-sport classes, but may still be able to compete. Contact Equestrian Australia for more information

Find out more

To get involved or for more information contact:

Equestrian Australia

W: www.equestrian.org.au

E: info@equestrian.org.au

Note: The classification information provided is intended as a guide only. Only authorised classifiers are able to provide a formal classification in accordance with the rules of the sport. Not all classes may have events at the Paralympic Games.