

7.12 SPORT SPECIFICATIONS – PARA DRESSAGE

1. Objectives of Dressage for Riders with Intellectual Impairment

On the inclusion level, the objective of Dressage for Riders with Intellectual Impairment is to promote their inclusion into the Para Dressage Community and the Equestrian Community as a whole.

On the Dressage level, the objective for Dressage for riders with Intellectual Impairment is the same as for Para Dressage riders, mainly to improve balance, control, mobility, memory and self-esteem.

The tests for Senior competitions are taken from the FEI Grade 4 tests, including the Introductory Test A, Introductory Test B, Novice Test A and the Team Test. They include walk, trot, canter and lateral movements. While the newest tests written for a 20x60 arena are used, for the promotional and development phase, the Introductory Tests and the Novice A test can be ridden in a 20x40 arena. These tests are challenging the riding skills of the ID Para Dressage Riders.

The tests for Youth or lower-level competitions are taken from the FEI Grade 2 tests, including the Introductory Test A, Introductory Test B, Novice Test A and the Team Test. These tests can also be used for developing Senior riders, while for advanced Youth riders the Grade 4 Introductory Test A is recommended.

The objective for the dressage horse is to harmoniously develop its physique and ability, making the horse calm, supple, loose, and flexible, but also confident, attentive, and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with its rider.

These qualities are revealed by the freedom and regularity of the paces, the harmony, lightness and ease of the movements, the lightness of the forehand and the engagement of the hindquarters, originating in a lively impulsion and the acceptance of the bridle, with submissiveness throughout and without any tension or resistance.

The horse thus gives the impression of doing of his own accord that which is required of him. Confident and attentive he submits generously to the control of his rider, remaining absolutely straight in any movement on a straight line and bending accordingly when moving on curved lines. In all movements the purity of the paces, rhythm and acceptance of the bridle are paramount.

2. The VIRTUS Equestrian Committee

The VIRTUS Para Equestrian Committee is formed of VIRTUS members and professionals in the field representing different regions. Its goal is:

- a) to develop aligned guidelines, programs and pathways for participation and competition in Para Dressage for Riders with Intellectual Impairment globally,
- b) to provide the classification of Riders with Intellectual Impairment,
- c) to maintain and make available an up-to-date VIRTUS Para Dressage Rule Book.

The VIRTUS Equestrian Committee endorses the FEI Code of Conduct and acknowledges and accepts that the welfare of the horse must be paramount and must never be subordinated to competitive or commercial influences.

The rules stated in this VIRTUS Para Dressage Rule Book are to be adhered to by all Riders and

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anyone associated with them when joining into global competitions under VIRTUS. When not otherwise stated, the FEI Para Dressage Rules will be in place. If an issue cannot be resolved by the rules stated in this Rule Book and the FEI Para Dressage Rules, it will be the duty of the Judges and Official Stewards together with the head of the Organizing Committee to make a decision in a sporting spirit.

3. Eligibility & Classification

a) Eligibility

All riders who fulfill the VIRTUS eligibility criteria fall under the rules set in this Rule Book.

To be considered eligible to compete as an athlete with an intellectual impairment, athletes must fulfill the eligibility criteria as defined by VIRTUS which are based upon the World Health Organization and American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD).

The full eligibility criteria can be found on the Virtus website.

Please note: For national competitions as well as for the initial Video Competition VIRTUS would recommend the use of national eligibility with a lower amount of evidence required. Details of the national eligibility requirements are on the VIRTUS website.

b) Class

FEI Profile 39 is for Intellectual Impairment. Currently this profile is ineligible according to the FEI Para Dressage Classification Manual - January 2015, unless the individual has a movement and mobility/eligible vision impairment also.

VIRTUS will work to influence the FEI to reinstate this class with those with an intellectual impairment as classified by VIRTUS primary eligibility to be deemed eligible (with a sport classification system to be developed in future).

c) Grade

The Para Dressage Class for Riders with Intellectual Impairment will fall within the parameters of FEI Grade 4. The former Grade 3 (now Grade 4) was previously the Grade assigned by the FEI before the class became ineligible.

4. Dressage Tests

In the first phase of promoting Para Dressage for Riders with Intellectual Impairment the following tests will be used for VIRTUS Video competitions, ridden in a 20x40 arena.

Senior Division:

- FEI Grade 4 Introductory Test B (2018)
- FEI Grade 4 Novice A (2009)
- FEI Grade 2 Novice A (2009)

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For the VIRTUS SENIOR TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS riders have to provide videos of the Grade 4 Introductory Test B and Grade 4 Novice A Test.

In all tests the Halt in the first movement is omitted.

Youth Division (for riders up to the age of 21, birthday before end of the year):

- FEI Grade 2 Introductory A (2018)
- FEI Grade 2 Novice A (2009)
- FEI Grade 4 Introductory A (2018)

For the VIRTUS YOUTH TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS riders have to provide videos of the Grade 2 Introductory Test A and Grade 2 Novice A Test. In all tests the Halt in the first movement is omitted.

For On-site Competitions it is kindly advised, at the discretion of the organizing committees of such competitions, for senior riders to use FEI Grade 4 tests as stated below, with the difference that the Halt in the first movement is omitted:

- Introductory A (20x40 arena)
- Introductory B (20x40 arena)
- Novice Test A (20x60 arena or 20x40 arena)
- Team Test (20x60 arena)
- Freestyle Test (20x60 arena)

For Youth riders or lower-level competitions the FEI Grade 2 tests can be used as stated below as well as the Grade IV Introductory A – Test, with the difference that the Halt in the first movement will be omitted:

- Introductory A (20x40 arena)
- Introductory B (20x40 arena)
- Novice Test A (20x40 arena)
- Team Test (20x40 arena)
- Freestyle Test (20x60 arena)

The tests can be found on the FEI website: <http://inside.fei.org/fei/your-role/organisers/p-e-dressage/tests>

5. Arenas

In the promotional phase using the Novice A Test, the 20x40 arena will be used.

For non-video competitions using the higher tests, a 20x60 arena will be required.

6. Equipment (Rider & Horse)

a. Riding Wear

All riders should be encouraged to be as able as possible and to this end the rider should wear an outfit as stated in the FEI PE rules, however the riders may wear Jodhpur boots and black or brown half chaps.

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b. Compensating Aids

Standard Aids:

- Salute with head only
- Sitting or rising trot
- Sign language
- Use of Voice (athlete)
- Test Caller
- Safety vest (including inflatable)
- Gloves
- 1 whip (max length 120cm)
- A pair of matching spurs (without rowels or offset)
- Reins of any type – but must not be attached to the saddle (multi coloured reins permitted)
- Saddle – any type
- No stirrups
- Seat Savers
- Soft hand-hold (30cm max length) Firm hand hold max dimensions 10 x 30 cm
- Firm hand-hold max dimensions 10 x 30 cm
- Breast plate and/or neck strap
- Any stirrup irons permitted by FEI PE (including magnetic and enclosed)
- Elastic bands on stirrups
- Any FEI permitted snaffle bit or Weymouth
- Double bridle
- Split reins
- Elastic inserts in reins
- Knotted Reins
- Looped Reins
- Bar reins
- Marker Beepers

Dispensations:

A dispensation panel is formed that approves the use of any non-standard compensating aids. It currently consists of Mary Longden and Amanda Rodgers, with Jana Kulichova to be the technical adviser to this panel and sit as part of it when matters other than rider safety needs to be addressed.

Some examples of areas that may come under this category include

- Use of Velcro
 - Attaching stirrups to girth
 - Multiple whips
 - Adapted gloves
 - Foot reins
 - Any adjustment to a standard saddle design
- * Saddles must be no deeper than 12mm and is measured as below

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Not permitted:

- Electronic communication devices
- Reins not directly from the horse's mouth to the rider's hand
- Leaders and side walkers

Other areas for consideration:

A friendly horse is permitted for all riders. This horse must be held by a handler and be in a bridle. It should be positioned a minimum of 5m from the edge of the arena and must be at the A end of the arena.

All riders may be led around the outside of the arena prior to starting their test. They must be released at A. The handler must have an attached lead rope and not interfere at any time with the reins.

A helper may stand at each corner (4) of the arena for safety during the test. They may not speak and they must be a minimum of 5m from the edge of the arena.

Blind riders are allowed to be led or ride independently once around the inside of the arena in each direction. If required, they may commence their test from within the arena.

7 Competition Rules

Competitors must have gone through the eligibility process set by VIRTUS and appear on the VIRTUS Master list in order to be able to join the competitions under VIRTUS.

All competitors must adhere to the current rules as shown in the FEI Para Rule Book, any addendums to the rule book and the FEI PE Classification Manual.

8 Notes on the Interpretation of Dressage Tests

Please refer to the FEI Para Dressage Rules.

9 Rules for Video Competition

Tests should be ridden and will be judged according to the rules of this VIRTUS PE Rule Book.

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Some modifications have to be made to suit judging online.

- **For the video competition the GRADE 4 NOVICE A TEST is ridden on a 20x40 arena. Riders using the wrong sized arena will not be judged and disqualified.**
- Videos of tests must not be entered if they already have been judged in another competition. For this reason horses have to wear bandages or boots.
 - The videographer must stand well behind C.
 - The quality of the video must be so that it can be judged.
 - Sound must be recorded to make sure the rider is not receiving coaching during the test.
 - The video must be one take without cuts.
 - Horses and ponies can be ridden by two riders of a team.
 - Entry Fees will be paid online to VIRTUS in line with VIRTUS event entry terms and conditions.
 - A date will be set for the competition and a rider/horse combination can send in one or two entries out of three different tests offered.
 - Rosettes and Certificates will be awarded to the riders placed 1 to 6 in each of the tests.
 - Regarding the outfit of the rider and equipment of the horse, please refer to the rules in this book.
 - **All kinds of auxiliary reins may not be used. Using of auxiliary reins leads to disqualification.**
 - A commander may be used.
 - The Salute should be with the reins (and whip) in one hand and the free hand lowered to the rider's side. The rider should nod his head. Riders can also salute with the head only.
 - If there is a team competition, teams can be made up of three riders or more, but only the top three scores will count. A nation may enter only one team.