



## Coaching Certification Resources



**NGB/HPMO:** USEF - US Equestrian Federation

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<http://www.usef.org>

**USEF Coaching Certification for Para-equestrian  
(competitive):**  
*In Development*



## Paralympic Equestrian Fact Sheet

**Number of players:** Individual or team

**Eligible disabilities:** Open to male and female athletes with permanent, measurable physical disabilities such as amputation/limb loss, blindness/visual impairment, spinal cord injury/wheelchair-users and cerebral palsy/brain injury/stroke/neuromuscular disorders

### **Athlete classifications:**

- **Grade I** – Mainly wheelchair users with Impairment of all 4 limbs, may be able to walk with an unsteady gait, however trunk and balance are severely impaired. At this level the rider will ride a walk-only test.
- **Grade II** – Mainly wheelchair users with poor trunk balance and or Impairment of function in all four limbs, or no trunk balance and good upper limb function, or moderate trunk balance with severe Impairment of all 4 limbs. At this level the rider will ride walk and trot, excluding canter.
- **Grade III** – Mainly wheelchair users or those with severe movement and mobility Impairment involving the trunk and with good to mild upper limb function, those with severe arm Impairment and slight leg Impairment or severe unilateral Impairment. At this level the rider will ride walk and trot.
- **Grade IV** – Usually able to walk without support. Moderate unilateral Impairment or moderate Impairment in four limbs or severe arm Impairment. Athlete may need a wheelchair for longer distances or due to lack of stamina. Total loss of sight in both eyes. At this level the rider will ride walk, trot with lateral work and canter.
- **Grade V** - Impairment in one or two limbs or some visual Impairment. At this level the rider will ride walk, trot and canter with lateral work.

**Divisions:** Events are mixed (men and women compete together).

**Dressage Tests:**

1. Each Grade has its own series of Tests - Novice Test, Team Test, Championship Test and Freestyle Test. The Official PE Tests are published by the FEI and can, in no case, be modified.
2. Please refer to the FEI website for PE Tests.
3. Dressage and Freestyle to Music Tests are graded according to suitability for the Athletes in the five (5) Grades (I, II, III, IV and V). All Grades should be included if possible. Only the current Para-equestrian Dressage Tests may be used in official Competitions.

- Mixed individual Team Test
  - Grade I
  - Grade II
  - Grade III
  - Grade IV
  - Grade V
- Mixed individual championship
  - Grade I
  - Grade II
  - Grade III
  - Grade IV
  - Grade V
- Mixed individual freestyle
  - Grade I
  - Grade II
  - Grade III
  - Grade IV
  - Grade V

**Ring dimensions:** Riders in Grades I, II, and III, compete in a 20×40 meter arena. Grade IV and V riders perform in the standard 20×60 meter dressage arena.

**Equipment:** Competitors must wear the appropriate equipment as stipulated in the FEI Para Dressage Rules and are only permitted the use of special equipment when this has been formally documented and approved by FEI/International Classifiers. Riders with a visual impairment may use audible signals around the arena perimeters. (Riders who can see the letters would not qualify with a visual impairment).

- **Basic rules: FEI Para Equestrian Dressage Rules may be found here.**  
<http://inside.fei.org/fei/regulations/dressage>

## How to become an Equestrian Paralympian



- First, a national or international Classification must be performed by an FEI approved Classifier in order to participate in Para-Equestrian events. Classification is an attempt to ensure fair equestrian competition. All riders with a permanent, measurable disability who intend to enter national or international competitions must produce a certificate that states their full medical diagnosis to the classifier(s). Impairment is assessed and the resulting Grade and functional profile is combined with other profiles that should have similar ability when mounted. There are Five Grades of competition. Grade I is for the riders with a severe impairment, Grade V is for the riders with least impairment. The competition within each Grade can then be judged on the functional skill of the rider regardless of impairment. "Impairments are problems in body function or structure such as a significant deviation or loss." Impairments may be broadly classified as physical (including locomotor), intellectual, and sensory. For more information regarding classification, see links to the FEI below.  
<http://www.fei.org/fei/disc/dressage/about-para-equestrian>
- How do I get classified for my sport? If you are interested in being classified, please contact USEF Director of Para-Equestrian Programs, Laureen Johnson, [lkjohnson@usef.org](mailto:lkjohnson@usef.org), or (908) 326-1155 and Ms. Johnson will coordinate an approved Classifier from your area.
- Paralympic training-Both the United States Para-Equestrian Association (USPEA) [www.uspea.org](http://www.uspea.org) and the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org) hold developing and high performance training clinics throughout the year. Additionally, USEF/USPEA Para Equestrian Dressage Centers of Excellence are being designated throughout the country as a resource for Para Dressage instruction and education. Please visit the websites of each organization to find information on upcoming programs.
- Where can I go to compete in this sport?-At this time, most Para-Equestrian competitions are held abroad. On average, the U.S. holds at least two international level competitions (CPEDI3\*) annually. The USEF website, [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org) allows an individual to search competitions by discipline. In addition, you may visit the FEI website, <http://www.fei.org> to obtain information on international competitions. Please note that able-bodied Dressage shows may, upon request, offer Para-Equestrian classes as well.
- How do I qualify for the National/Elite Team?-As the criteria may change annually, please visit the USEF website at [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org), breeds/disciplines, disciplines, Para-Equestrian, High Performance to locate the most recent selection criteria. The Para-Equestrian Ranking List will be posted along with Selection Procedures for the upcoming National Championship.
- How do I qualify for the Paralympic Team?-Please visit the USEF website at [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org), breeds/disciplines, disciplines, Para Equestrian, High Performance to find the most recent World Equestrian Games/Paralympic Selection Procedures.
- Who can I contact in my area to help me get started?-USEF Director of Para-Equestrian Activities, Laureen Johnson, [lkjohnson@usef.org](mailto:lkjohnson@usef.org), or(908) 326-1155.

**Links:**

- [USEF Website](#)
- [USPEA website](#)
- <http://www.fei.org/>
- [United States Dressage Federation](#)