



PARA-EQUESTRIAN DRESSAGE PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND PATHWAYS

(Effective January 1, 2019)

Revised 03/15/2019

Introduction

The U.S. Para-Equestrian Dressage athletes and Team are currently in the medal zone at Games level, but much work is required to maintain and exceed the current levels of performance if a Team Medal is to be a reality in 2020. Only a few athlete / horse combinations are close to being considered internationally competitive. There is a need to set parameters and clearly define what is required.

Staffing

- Discipline Director – Laureen Johnson
- Para-Equestrian Dressage Technical Advisor and Head of Coach Development– Michel Assouline
- COE Coordinator – Laura Roberts
- Team Veterinarian – Duncan Peters

Structure

- Elite Athlete Program
- Developing Athlete Program
- Emerging Athlete Program

Para-Equestrian Dressage Elite Athlete Program

Principles

- Internationally competitive athlete / horse combinations **with potential to help** put the U.S. Team remain in the Medal Zone and moving towards winning a Team Medal. Tokyo qualification and Tokyo Paralympic Games focused.
- Elite Athlete Program based on competition & training opportunities and Games preparation and success.
- Technical Advisor, and USEF Discipline Director led – communication, training sessions, competition planning, selection methodology, logistical planning.
- Competing at a given level does not imply “elite athlete status”, being internationally competitive does.

Competition

- 2020 Paralympic Games
- 2020 Qualification Criteria
- 2022 WEG
- CPEDI3* in Europe
- CPEDI3* in North America

Identification

- Selection methodology – Technical Advisor / Discipline Director / Selectors / Representatives of Sport Committee drive criteria development.
- Objective/Scores at CPEDIs plus subjective criteria.



Support

- Communication with Technical Advisor and Discipline Director.
- Observations by Technical Advisor at Athlete's home base with personal trainer.
- Competition Planning toward key Championship events and strategies for the short term and long term.
- Establish KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) for short term and long term.
- Review of KPI's.
- Prioritized access to Training Sessions.
- Competition Opportunities.
- Equine and Human Sports Science Medicine Support (Equine and Human SSM).
- Financial support.
- Logistical planning and support.

The Aim of the Elite Athlete Program is to identify athlete / horse combinations that are truly internationally competitive.

Elite Athlete Program - Criteria for Selection

Open to current athlete / horse combinations who have met the criteria from one of the three track options outlined below within the previous 24 months.

- Track 1. Have medaled (Team, Individual, or Freestyle) at the previous WEG or Paralympic Games.
- Track 2. Have earned two 72% or above scores in the Team and two 72% or above in the Individual Tests (total four) at Athletes classified Grade from CPEDI3* competitions. Please note Team and Individual scores do not need to be achieved at the same CPEDI3*.
- Track 3. Athlete/Horse combination earned one score of 72% or above in Team and Individual (total two) from CPEDI3* competitions, plus two (2) scores of 72% or above from both the Team and Individual Para dressage tests (total four) at the Athlete's classified Grade from National Para competitions judged by three different FEI Para Dressage Judge(s) or Dressage "S" judges.

Athletes who were previously named to the Elite Athlete Program within the previous 12 months (January 1, 2018 January 1, 2019) will remain on the Elite Athlete Program if KPIs are met.

In extenuating circumstances, the Technical Advisor may request the Selectors select an athlete / horse combination to the Elite Program for a set period of time (maximum 12 months).

Additional Requirements for Tracks 1-3 to be met within the previous 24 months.

1. Athlete / Horse combination compete in a minimum of three (3) separate USEF licensed competitions in FEI Para Team Test or Individual Test at their Grade.
2. Athlete / Horse combination obtain two Freestyle scores at a CPEDI3* of 72% or higher is required.

Other Criteria

- Athlete must be an active member of the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF).
- Horse must be actively recorded with the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF).



- The athlete and horse must be registered and active with the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI).
- Satisfactory veterinary inspection and/or report before Athlete/Horse acceptance or renewal into program, or as requested from Technical Advisor and/or team vet.
- Agreement to Requirements of Program.
- Willingness of athlete to agree to the aims of the Program including facilitating effective.
- Communication between the athletes' own support staff (trainer, vet, farrier etc.) and the Program / Team support staff.
- Quality of the athlete and horse and their perceived ability to advance internationally.
- FEI Classification with a status of Confirmed or Review (with set date).

Benefits to Membership

- Included on USEF Para-Equestrian Dressage Elite Program Member List published on www.usef.org as well as issued in Press Releases at least once a year.
- "Home" Visit by Team Vet and/or the Technical Advisor and/or Discipline Director in order to facilitate communication and planning as budget allows.
- Assessments by the Technical Advisor and access to Training Sessions.
- Funding may be available to the athlete selected for membership to the Elite Program. Funding is tied to meeting the agreed upon markers, evaluations, and with consideration of the athlete/horse combination to represent the U.S. in the following four years. It is intended to be used towards additional development opportunities such as training sessions and/or travel to European competitions. Distribution of funds will be done on a bi-annual basis as budget allows. Grant eligibility will be re-evaluated based on meeting the agreed upon markers. If the markers are not met, this may result in a loss of a grant or reduction in monetary assistance.
- Priority Access to educational opportunities offered through the Elite Program.
- Access to USEF Human and Equine SSM education resources as available.

Requirements to Maintain Membership

- Undergo a minimum of semi-annual reviews by the Technical Advisor.
- Establish KPIs and Targets markers (i.e., increase of scores, training sessions, competition plan) agreed upon by the Technical Advisor, the athlete, and his/her personal trainer. Following the initial meeting between the Technical Advisor, the athlete, and personal trainer, a personalized performance enhancing plan will be established to aid in meeting the agreed upon markers. This will allow the Technical Advisor to support the athlete/horse combination and their personal trainer throughout the competition year. Markers should include future goals of meeting Elite Program minimum criteria.
- Must set targets and achieve improved performance and results.
- Each horse / rider combination that achieves entry into the Elite program would need to remain current horse / rider combinations
- Must continue to achieve entry level criteria scores or above to remain in the Elite program.
- The Elite Program athletes will be reviewed semi-annually. Those unable to show improved results, meet their targets, no longer riding a horse capable of meeting the criteria, or unable to compete due to prolonged injury or illness (horse / athlete) may be removed from the program.
- Must continue to meet the Minimum Criteria for Selection as outlined above. Must achieve this within 12 months following qualification for the Elite Program unless given an exception by the Technical Advisor and Discipline Director, who will also consult with the Selectors.
- Demonstrate involvement with Human SSM Program as available and appropriate.



- Encourage communication between Athlete support staff and USEF Para-Equestrian Dressage support staff.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the Program and the Code of Conduct.
- Abide by USEF Code of Conduct.
- Sign Elite Program Agreement.
- Maintain current FEI Classification at the Grade selected to the Program.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS PROGRAM IS NOT REQUIRED AND WILL NOT BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF SELECTION

Applications may be found at www.usef.org or by contacting Laureen Johnson, Director of Para-Equestrian and Vaulting Activities, lkjohnson@usef.org; or (859) 225-7693.

Para-Equestrian Dressage Development Athlete Program

The Aim of the Development Athlete Program is to identify athlete / horse combinations with the perceived ability to reach Elite status. This will include developing athletes who have not yet reached Elite status and athletes who have, previously reached Elite status but who currently have a horse that has not yet reached Elite status but is on a trajectory to do so.

Principles

- Identification of developing athlete/horse combinations and developing Athletes is a key component of the Development Athlete Program in order to manage expectations, facilitate direct communication and foster the talent effectively.
- The Development Athlete Program is not a centrally based clinic driven program but a communication- based system that provides opportunities. Educational and training opportunities will be offered.
- Ensure Technical Advisor is briefed on combinations moving up the Pathway.
- Empower Development Athletes to remain with their own trainers within their own programs but challenge them to move up the Pathway and provide opportunities where possible or requested. Identify certain KPIs and requirements to stay in the Development Athlete Program.
- Work with Development Athletes' trainers to better involve them and help them (where necessary) to understand what is required to be internationally competitive within each Grade.

Competition

- CPEDIs
- National Competitions
- European CPEDIs (if funding available)

Development Athlete Program - Criteria for Selection for the Developing Program

It will be the responsibility of the athlete to apply for selection to the Development Programs based on results achieved in the previous 12 months to the Application;

- Track 1. 64% or above score from both the Team and Individual Tests at Athletes classified Grade at one CPEDI3*.



- Track 2 Two (2) scores or above from the Team and Individual Tests (total of four scores) at Athletes classified Grade obtained at a minimum of two (2) separate USEF recognized Shows by USEF “S” judges as follows:

Grade I	68%
Grade II	68%
Grade III	66%
Grade IV	65%
Grade V	65%

Additional Requirements for Tracks 1-2

At least two Freestyle scores of 66% or above at Athletes classified Grade at a CPEDI3* or 68% or above at USEF recognized shows at athlete’s grade achieved in the previous 12 months is also required.

Note: The above criteria are for athlete / horse combination. They do not apply in the following circumstances unless the Technical Advisor and Selectors agree otherwise.

- The athlete / horse combination has previously been part of the Elite Program.
- The athlete / horse combination has previously been part of the Development Athlete Program and have been de-selected from the Program for lack of achievement of KPIs or Targets.

In addition, satisfy the Additional Development Criteria below.

- A. Technical skills
- B. Trainability
- C. Strategy & Planning
- D. Commitment
- E. Mind set
- F. Management
- G. Fitness (athlete / equine)
- H. Competition record
- I. The length of time the athlete/horse combination has been on the Program and their progression up the Pathway in conjunction with what is considered the Program can still offer
- J. Demonstrate Potential for Elite Program
- K. Quality of the athlete’s horse and their perceived ability to progress up the competition levels. As an indication a minimum score may be required.

In extenuating circumstances, the Technical Advisor may request the Selectors select an athlete / horse combination to the Development Athlete Program for a set period of time (maximum 12 months).

Additional Development Criteria (Applicable to All)

- FEI Classification or interim Classification with a status of Confirmed or Review with a fixed review date (FRD) by a USEF approved Classifier (all FEI Approved Classifiers are automatically USEF Approved).
- Satisfactory veterinary inspection and/or report if requested by Selectors.
- Agreement to Requirements of Program.
- Willingness of athlete to agree to the aims of the Program including facilitating effective



communication between the athlete's support staff (trainer, vet, farrier etc.) and the Program / Team support staff.

Benefits to Membership:

Support:

- Communication with Technical Advisor.
- Competition Planning.
- Prioritized access to Development Athlete Program Educational opportunities.
- Establish KPI's (not necessarily competition-based).
- Review of KPIs.
- Competition Opportunities.
- Access to Equine and Human Sports Science Medicine support and advice as available.
- Funding may be available to the athletes selected for membership to the Development Athlete Program. Funding is tied to meeting the agreed upon markers, evaluations, and with consideration of the athlete/horse combination to reach Elite status. It is intended to be used towards additional development opportunities such as training sessions and / or competitions. Distribution of funds will be done on a bi-annual basis as budget allows. Grant eligibility will be re-evaluated based on meeting the agreed upon markers. If the markers are not met, this may result in a loss of a grant or reduction in monetary assistance.

Training and Evaluation Sessions

Training and evaluation sessions will be run as funding allows. These will be open to members of the Development Athlete Program and those that are seeking selection and meet the minimum criteria.

Requirements to Maintain Membership to the Program

- Adhere to semi-annual reviews by the Technical Advisor.
- Establish KPIs and Targets markers (i.e., increase of scores, training sessions, competition plan) agreed upon by the Technical Advisor, the athlete, and his/her personal trainer. Following the initial meeting between the Technical Advisor, the athlete, and personal trainer, a personalized performance enhancing plan will be established to aid in meeting the agreed upon markers. This will allow the Technical Advisor to support the athlete / horse combination and their personal trainer throughout the competition year. Markers should include future goals of meeting Elite Program minimum criteria.
- Horses are to undergo an Equine SSM assessment and abide by the agreed follow-upaction.
- Promote and encourage communication between their support staff and the USEF support staff.
- Abide by the USEF Code of Conduct.
- Athletes remain classified with a status of Confirmed or Review with a fixed review date (FRD) at the Grade they were selected.

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Para-Equestrian Dressage Emerging Athlete Approved Programs

The Emerging Athlete Program will reinforce the Development Athlete Program and will be comprised of “recognized” programs that could be run by the United States Para Equestrian Association (USPEA) and/or Centers of Excellence (COEs).

Each COE which wishes to run a recognized Emerging Athlete Program will develop a program which must include the following:

- Nominating a Coach to be approved by the USEF / USPEA.
- Introduction to Classification, ideally to FEI standard (USEF Classification meets criteria).
- Provide written updates on athletes’ progress.
- A Review system agreed by the USEF / USPEA.

USEF will provide.

- Coach development.
- A basis for Reviews.
- Learning materials regarding the international standards in each Grade.

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Centers of Excellence (COE)

The objective of a COE is to serve as a foundation for High Performance Para-Equestrian Dressage athlete development. The USEF / USPEA are committed to work with COEs to develop recognized hubs of excellence that not only attract new riders to the sport of Para-Equestrian Dressage but also work in partnership with the USEF High Performance Programs to develop athletes to a level where they can represent the U.S. at International and Paralympic Games level and ultimately win medals.

It is intended that these COEs will also be the focus for Para-Equestrian Dressage trainer / coach identification and development programs to expand the availability of quality Para-Equestrian sport programs and services offered such as FEI / USEF Classification, Human Sports Science & Medicine (Human SSM) and Equine SSM. The COEs will be the primary hubs for delivering the USEF Para-Equestrian Dressage High Performance Programs.

- COEs will be asked to run Emerging Athlete Programs (see below).
- Elite and Development Athlete Programs training sessions will be run at COEs and when appropriate will be funded by USEF or in conjunction with the COE.
- Coach Development Courses will be run at COEs.
- Communication between COEs will be facilitated.

Definitions

KPI Key Performance Indicator: A quantifiable measure used to evaluate the success of a



program, plan, etc. in meeting objectives for performance.

- COE Center of Excellence – Designated facilities that meet the USEF / USPEA requirements for Para-Dressage training.
- SSM Sport Science Medicine - includes: anatomy, physiology / **exercise**, biomechanics, training principles and techniques, nutrition, sports psychology and sociology, as well as sport injuries.
- CPEDI FEI recognized para-dressage competition.