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FEI PARA EQUESTRIAN FORUM 2022
Session 1, 18 January 2022

Day one of the FEI Para Equestrian Forum included discussions on the FEI Para Dressage Rules Revision, Paralympic Rules Revision, the Officials Education Systems, and the Para Dressage World Challenge.

With the FEI Para Equestrian Forum marking the start of the consultation period, National Federations were encouraged to be proactive in the feedback process.

Rules Revision and Rule Book Restructure

Forum participants were reminded of the key dates for the FEI Para Equestrian Rules Revision process for 2022 which are as follows:

- 1 March 2022: Deadline for NFs to send in rules revision proposals
- April 2022: FEI Sport Forum
- July 2022: FEI provide first draft of rules changes
- August 2022: National Federations have 7 weeks to review draft and provide feedback
- October 2022: Final Draft published for vote at FEI General Assembly
- November 2022: FEI General Assembly

Participants were reminded that a full restructure of the FEI Para Dressage Rule Book will be carried out in 2022, to be effective 2023.

Para Dressage Tests

Forum participants had the opportunity to discuss a proposal for new FEI Para Dressage Test names which were created to better reflect the differences in the skill level required in the Para Dressage sport structure.

While there was general agreement that the renaming will benefit the sport, Forum participants strongly advocated for creating a system that does not just raise the current technical difficulty but rewards riding and training skills.

A key point to come out of the discussions was that Classifiers should provide their input on the movements to include at each Grade level. This way the physical capabilities required to ride the movements, and parity among the range of physical impairments within the Grades can be more thoroughly assessed.

Para Dressage Education System

FEI Director of Education and Officials Frank Spadinger provided an overview of the FEI Education system and the timelines for the implementation of Para Dressage CES assessments and maintenance courses for 2023, and update of the Para Dressage

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Officials Education Systems. These steps are being taken to harmonise the FEI Education system across all FEI disciplines.

As Officials are a key component in Para Dressage sport, they must be provided with the tools to carry out their important roles. These courses are aimed at creating a more robust assessment of Officials to ensure that they can meet the rising standards required in Para Dressage.

Developing Para Dressage

The concept of the FEI Para Dressage Challenge was put forward by the FEI Solidarity Department as a key tool to developing Para Dressage sport structures and Officials, as well as broadening and increasing participation levels in the sport.

Using models already developed in Vaulting and Dressage, the concept of the FEI Para Dressage Challenge will be created with the following aims in mind:

- To provide a pathway for para athletes from National to International events, and to allow National Federations, Organising Committees and National Officials to gain more experience.
- To create more opportunities for developing Nations host Para Dressage Events.
- To provide different levels within the Challenge: Beginner (an introduction to the discipline which will be accessible to new athletes); Intermediate (to motivate athletes in their progression); Advanced (a step just before the first International level)

The FEI Solidarity team together with the Para Equestrian Technical Committee is already working to get this Challenge launched in 2023.

Participants were also provided with an overview of the tools already available within the FEI Solidarity to help increase global participation in countries looking to develop Para Dressage as a sport.

Eligibility

The day concluded with a Q&A session where the discussions led to widening the eligible impairments to allow Intellectual Impairments as an Eligible Impairment to compete in Para Equestrian. The delegates were largely in favour of making this move, although it was acknowledged that research would have to be carried out to have a reliable classification system. The viability of such a project would be assessed.