



OFFICIAL RIDER BIOGRAPHY
www.britishdressage.co.uk

Natasha Baker

Date of birth:	30 th December 1989
Lives:	Uxbridge, Middlesex
Major achievements:	<p>In June 2007 Natasha was sent to Norway for an International where Team GBR rode borrowed horses. Over the three days she progressed from 3rd to 2nd and won the freestyle to music. Following a successful selection period Natasha went to the F.E.I World Para Dressage Championships as a non-medallist but to gain experience and qualify for Beijing. Had she been eligible for a medal she would have won a Bronze in the Individual Grade II on Wald Minor.</p> <p>Long-listed for the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, Natasha was selected as a reserve for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games in Kentucky. The 2011 European Championships will be Natasha's British Squad debut after posting wins at Deauville CPED13*.</p>
Current competition horses:	Cabral, a 16.2hh bay gelding by Bujak, born 2001
First competitive experience:	"I started riding at my local RDA aged 9; I entered into the RDA National Championships when I was 10 and won!"
Trainer:	Sacha Hamilton
Superstitions:	"My mother's very superstitious but I'm a bit superstitious about the Number 22"
Most admired riders:	"Edward Gal"
Most inspirational sportsman/woman (non-equestrian):	"Tanni-Grey Thompson, she has such an amazing track record of 11 Gold Medals! She is a fantastic sports woman".
Qualities looked for in a dressage horse:	"A good temperament is vital in a para-equestrian dressage horse, especially Grade I and II. The horse would have naturally forward thinking and be willing to work, as I have no use of my legs when riding."
Favourite dressage venues:	"Parchetts"
Best advice you've ever been given:	"Everything happens for a reason and never give up"
Favourite meal:	"Indian food or a Roast Dinner"
Favourite drink:	"Apple Juice"

Natasha has been surrounded by horses all her life and began riding at her local RDA, South Bucks., where she competed in many competitions using their horses. At 12 she was selected for the World Class Start Programme for para-equestrian dressage and has since progressed onto the World Class Potential Squad.

Natasha is a Grade II rider; "When I was 14 months old I contracted Transverse Myelitis (inflammation of a section across the spine) the nerve damage is permanent and has left me with severe weakness and decreased tone in my legs. This has obviously affected my balance; I can walk short distances using a stick and for longer distances I use an electric scooter. When I ride I do not have the ability to use my legs to push the horse forward, so we have trained the horses to respond to my voice and seat.

In 2000, I watched the Paralympic and Olympic Games on TV (the first time they were televised), I announced to my parents that I was going to do that and this has been my dream ever since. In November last year I won my class in France, they played the National anthem and raised the Union Flag; I cannot describe how amazing it was. I felt so proud of myself and my horse. Now I am even more determined to win a gold medal in the Paralympic Games."

Natasha is part of Team Visa a sponsorship programme that helps the best young athletes in Europe as they strive to fulfil their Olympic and Paralympic dreams. The members of Team Visa are selected and mentored by former Olympic and Paralympic Champions and given the wisdom and motivation they need to train, qualify and win medals at an international level. Team Visa is made up of two generations of great athletes; our 'hopefuls' are great prospects for London 2012. Young potential Olympians and Paralympians are put forward to Team Visa by their sport's National Governing Body, the mentors then select the very best of these hopefuls to join the team; Natasha's mentor on the programme is triple Olympic Gold medallist, Sir Steven Redgrave.

Natasha has Business, Sociology and English A-Levels and is currently concentrating full-time on riding and securing selection for next year's Olympics.

