



OFFICIAL RIDER BIOGRAPHY
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Michelle Crunkhorn

- Date of birth:** 29 March 1983.
- Lives:** Tollerton, Nottingham.
- Major achievements:** Riding in grade IV, Michelle has won individual bronze overall at the 2003 World Championships for riders with disabilities on Painted Affair. She finished equal third in the 2004 Medium Restricted Winter Championships, an able-bodied competition with the same horse. In 2005, she became the first para dressage rider to compete at prix st georges and intermediaire I level in able-bodied competitions, also with Painted Affair.
- In 2005 and 2006, Michelle won the Grade IV Disabled Dressage Rider Championship at the National Dressage Championships. She made her team debut with No Limit IV at the 2007 World Para-Equestrian Dressage Championships and won team gold.
- Current competition horses:**
- AVS Jastr, a 16hh bay gelding of unknown breeding, born 1992 and owned by Michelle since a youngster.
 - Go Diamond, a 17hh Chestnut gelding by Giorgione, born 1998 and owned by the Crunkhorn family since September 2007.
- First competitive experience:** "A lead-rein class with my first pony Fly at my local riding centre when I was about five."
- Trainer:** "I have trained with Angela Weiss since I started dressage in 2001. I had four lessons from her before I got on the para dressage squad in May 2001."
- Superstitions:** None.
- Most admired riders:** "The American rider Debbie McDonald and Brentina. They always do well, but just keep missing out on the medals."
- Qualities looked for in a dressage horse:** "Personality. I like a horse that is nice to handle in the stable and is nice to be around, so I can spoil him lots."
- Favourite dressage venues:** Sheepgate Equestrian Centre, Lincs, because it is nearby, has indoor and outdoor facilities and runs good two- and three-day shows.
- What other career would you have chosen:** "I have an HND in fashion design and would like to design clothing for riders."
- Favourite meal:** "Christmas lunch with all the trimmings."
- Favourite drink:** "Pink Champagne ."

Michelle was born without the lower part of her left arm; her arm finishes just below her elbow. She uses a standard rein with her right hand and has an elastic insert on the left rein near the bit as well as a loop at the other end, which she hooks over her elbow and moves up and down.

Michelle began riding aged five, joining the South Notts Pony Club at seven. She subsequently represented her pony club on the Prince Phillip Cup mounted games, show jumping and eventing teams. Michelle also competed in affiliated pony show jumping JC/JA classes.

After the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Michelle spotted an advert in *Horse & Hound* for new para dressage riders.

“Mum sent off my CV – we thought it was worth a shot. We thought I ought to have a few dressage lessons and rang a local tack shop to ask whom to go to in our area and that led us to Angela Weiss,” she says.

Michelle had never competed in any disabled classes until she joined the British para dressage team.

“I had been asked whether I would like to have a go at disabled dressage when I was little, but I thought it boring at the time. I’m loving it now and find it far more challenging than anything else I have done – I have to concentrate and work hard.”

