

Para - Equestrian 2016



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Key:

FEI: Federation Equestre Internationale

BD: British Dressage

BEF: British Equestrian Federation

RDA: Riding for the Disabled Association

NCP: National Classifying Panel

1. Introduction

The Riding for the Disabled Association and British Dressage Para- Equestrian Classification Guide has been developed in compliance with the FEI Classification Manual (4rd Edition 2015) and was implemented in full on January 1, 2015. This updated policy will come into effect on February 1st 2016.

Classification has two important roles:

- To determine eligibility to compete as a Para- Equestrian athlete;
- To profile athletes for competition in the appropriate corresponding Grade.

To be eligible for Classification, an athlete must have more than 15% loss of power, range or coordination in any limb or the trunk. (See Base line scores FEI Classification Manual 4rd Edition 2015).

An athlete must have a recognised medical condition that causes impairment which can be measured objectively in compliance with the FEI Classification Manual (4rd Edition 2015).

- Classification ensures that athletes compete equitably with other Para- Equestrian athletes. Classification provides a structure for competition.
- Classification is undertaken to ensure that an athlete's impairment is relevant to performance on the horse.
- Classification aims to put athletes into classes or Grades according to how much their impairment impacts on the core determinants of success in the sport.

The purpose of the Para-Equestrian Classification is also to minimise the impact of impairment on the outcome of the competition, so that an athlete's success in competition relies on training and personal equestrian skill. Classification is an on-going process whereby all athletes are under regular observation by classifiers to ensure consistency and fairness for all athletes.

2. Eligible criteria

2a. Eligible impairment types

The FEI eligibility criteria (FEI Classification Manual 4th Edition 2015) define how an athlete may be considered eligible to compete. These criteria are based on the specific functions which are required to compete equitably with other athletes with a disability.

It is possible that an athlete may have an impairment which is perceived to cause some interference to their performance on the horse but does not fall within the criteria recorded in the FEI Classification manual (4th edition 2015). It is recommended if the impairment does not fit clearly into one of the impairment groups mentioned in 2c, that the athlete contacts a National Classifier as recommended by RDA or BD to obtain guidance on the criteria before the athlete seeks classification.

2b. Classification groups

Currently under BD and FEI Rules Profiles 1 – 31 & 36 – 37a are eligible to compete within the Five Grades of Para- Equestrian Dressage: Grade 1a, Grade 1b, Grade 2, Grade 3 & Grade 4.

2c. Impairment groups

- Neurological- impairments with either central or peripheral damage, either congenital or acquired- which include:
 - spasticity,
 - athetosis,
 - ataxia,
 - mixed - spasticity/athetosis/ataxia/dystonia
 - peripheral nerve damage
 - impaired muscle power
- Locomotor - which include:
 - amputations
 - limb deficiency and limb length difference,
 - impaired muscle power
 - impaired passive joint range of motion

- multiple impairments that lead to a permanent and verifiable activity limitation.
- spinal cord lesions – complete or incomplete
- visual impairments: (These are classified by ophthalmologist and details are available from British Blind Sport).

2d. Other profiles

Profile 29 and 30: Both profiles are not individually eligible in Para- Equestrian Dressage and those two profiles are only eligible as combination with another profile.

Profile 39: This profile (Intellectual Impairments) is classified by an approved psychologist. Currently under FEI Rules, an athlete with intellectual disabilities who does not have a physical classification is covered under Profile 39 of the Classification Guide (applicable to Grade III). This profile remains inactive at present so athletes in Profile 39 are not eligible to compete in Para- Equestrian Dressage competition run under FEI rules but are eligible to compete in RDA National Classes.

Profile 48: This profile is for able- bodied and riders are not eligible to compete in Para- Equestrian competitions.

3. Athlete evaluation

3a. Registering for Classification

Athletes must register for classification with RDA National Office and complete the registration form and submit a certificate that states their full medical diagnosis relevant to the classification a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the classification date. Failure to supply this information will result in a delay in a classification date being arranged. Registration and Medical forms can be downloaded from the [RDA webpage](#).

Once the required documentation has been submitted to RDA National Office the following procedure for registration to be classified will be followed:

- Stage 1: The NCP will review the submitted registration and medical forms submitted by the athlete.
- Stage 2: If the NCP determines that the medical evidence submitted is sufficient and that the applicant is eligible as defined in the FEI Classification manual (4th edition 2015) will then proceed to Stage 3 of the classification registration process
- Stage 3: The athlete will be given the contact details of a classifier in their region and a date and venue for physical assessment will be arranged. Full payment must be made for the physical assessment before a date is allocated.

NB. No athlete will be put forward for Stage 3 (physical assessment) until Stages 1 & 2 of the process listed above has been completed. Due to varying nature of disability, the NCP may at its sole discretion determine that a second opinion is required and direct that Stage 3 of the classification as listed above shall be conducted by two National Classifiers. In this case, RDA National Office will allocate an athlete a place at a Regional Classification Day.

Riders applying for *International Classification* need to be a member of either RDA or BD. For further information about the International Classification process, please contact the British Dressage Para Officer.

3b. Presentation at classification

Athletes should attend the appointed classification on the date and time arranged. Failure to do so without contacting RDA National Office or the National Classifier concerned may result in a classification not being re-scheduled for a period of **more than 6 months**.

Athletes must bring:

- A list of any medication with dosage
- Their passport (if no Passport is available then the Registration of Birth document must be produced)

3c. Informed consent

Athletes must sign a Classification Informed Consent form to indicate their willingness to be classified and confirm their agreement to provide full effort and co-operation throughout the classification process. This form is can be downloaded from the [RDA webpage](#). Athletes must read and sign the document prior to being allocated a date for Classification to acknowledge they understand the document and give their consent.

3d. Classification procedure

The procedure and physical testing will be carried out in accordance with the FEI Classification Manual (4rd Edition 2015)

Classification shall be carried out in a courteous and professional manner, with appropriate testing only. During the classification, only the necessary personnel shall be present: the rider and one other, who shall be another person requested by the rider to act as their representative.

The rider's representative shall not speak during the classification process unless directly addressed, or unless an objection is made to preserve the dignity of the rider. The rider has a right to terminate the classification process at any time, for a valid reason.

All Athletes should be encouraged to be as able as possible, and to this end prostheses should be worn that are used for riding, and the rider may ride with all special equipment or prostheses they need to make it possible for them to ride unless the type or shape of the prosthesis would disadvantage the rider or cause discomfort to the horse.

All Athletes should be observed riding and during social occasions following their classification; this is to confirm the performance in the bench tests, not to assess the skill of

the rider. Video evidence may be used to confirm the results of the bench test.

4. Notification of classification grade

After the athlete has completed their classification in the discipline he/she will be notified in writing of the final decision of the NCP. The NCP will assign the athlete a Classification based on the FEI profiles. No feedback will be given on the day of the classification.

4a. Classification status

There are three National Classification statuses.

- **REVIEW (R):** This status indicates an Athlete who has undergone classification and has obtained a Grade for National Competition, but may require further evaluation according to the Classification Rules of the FEI.
- **CONFIRMED (C):** This status indicates an Athlete who has undergone classification and has obtained a Grade for National Competition, and does not require further evaluation according to the Classification Rules of the FEI.
- **NOT ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE (NE):** Athletes who are found to be not eligible to compete may request to be seen by a second panel. If the second panel finds the athlete NE the decision will be final and not open to protest or appeal. If the medical classifiers find the athlete does not meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Classification Rules the classification assessment will stop immediately and the NCP will be notified.

4b. Failure to cooperate or complete the classification process or intentional misrepresentation of skills and/or abilities

Athletes who fail to cooperate with Classifiers or fail to complete the classification process will not be allocated a profile and therefore will not be eligible to compete in RDA Qualifiers/Championships or BD Para- Equestrian competitions.

An athlete who, in the opinion of the Classification Panel, is intentionally misrepresenting skills and/or abilities shall be considered to be in violation of the Classification Process; and:

- If the Classification panel decides that the athlete is not cooperating or the athlete to be misrepresenting his/her skills or abilities, it will provide the athlete with one verbal warning to that effect, including the consequences of non-cooperation and/or misrepresentation.
- If the Classification panel considers that the athlete continues to be uncooperative or to be misrepresenting his/her skills or abilities, it will stop classification and the NCP will notify British Equestrian Federation. The athlete will not be permitted to undergo any further evaluation for Para- Equestrian for a minimum of six months starting from the date upon which the athlete failed to cooperate or intentionally misrepresented skills and/or abilities.

4c. Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances arise when NCP at its sole discretion decides that an athlete demonstrates significantly less or greater ability prior to or during competition, which does not reflect the athlete's current Grade.

Exceptional circumstances may result from:

- A change in the degree of impairment of an athlete;
- An athlete demonstrating significantly less or greater ability prior to or during competition which does not reflect the athlete's current Grade;
- An error made by a Classification Panel which has led to the athlete being allocated a Profile which is not in keeping with the athlete's ability;
- Profile criteria having changed since the athlete's most recent evaluation.

In such cases, the NCP has the right to suspend the classification of the athlete until the athlete has been re-evaluated by the NCP.

5. Appeals procedure

Appeals process and procedures:

Athletes have the right to appeal against a decision of the NCP either as to their eligibility to compete as a Para- Equestrian athlete or their Classification Grade, or Status on the grounds that either the NCP has failed to comply with this Policy or that the NCP has made a decision that no rational body of competent classifiers could have made. Appeals must be made in writing within [48] hours of the decision. Appeals must be sent to the Riding for the Disabled Association. If the Riding for Disabled Association is not able to satisfy the appellant's concerns the Appeal will then follow the BEF Appeals Process; the process and procedures for which are laid out in the BEF Rule Book which can be obtained either from the BEF office or at www.bef.co.uk.

The Riding for the Disabled Association and British Dressage reserve the right to amend this Policy from time to time. The amended Policy will be published on the [British Dressage](#) and [RDA](#) websites and will come into force 10 days after such publication.

6. Appendix : Process of Classification



