

12. RIDER CATEGORIES

Agenda Item 14: 2.45pm

Amateur and Rider Classification Review

Background

For the last 2 years (2020 & 2021) it has been raised at the North Island Riders meeting that the Amateur classification system has not been working as intended. This was raised again at the 2021 Planning meeting and agreed that a subcommittee be established to review the current system and explore the possibility of a new system that will better meet the needs of our riders especially those new to our sport and those moving up a level for the first time.

The subcommittee was made up of the following members;

Wendy Hamerton	DNZ Sport Manager
Jody Hartstone	North Island Riders Rep and GP Rider
Debra Cowan	Event organiser and Rider
Peter Jenkins	Event organiser and Rider
Sarah Hazelwood	DNZ Board member and Dressage Canterbury (Sth Is Rep)
Sally Linton	Amateur Competitor and ex Chair of Eventing NZ
Cherie Pearson	Amateur Competitor and Sth Is Rep
Lucarne Dolley	Young Rider Riders Rep
Jos Gresham	DNZ Points Coordinator

Current System

The current system is made up the ESNZ Dressage Rider categories and includes the rule when running amateur competitions.

The following table sets out the ESNZ Dressage Rider Categories:

Category N	(CN) Newcomers. For riders who have never earned grading points at any Level
Category 1	(C1) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Preliminary (Level 1)
Category 2	(C2) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Novice (Level 2)
Category 3	(C3) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Elementary (Level 3)
Category 4	(C4) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Medium (Level 4)
Category 5	(C5) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Advanced Medium (Level 5)
Category 6	(C6) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Advanced (Level 6)
Category 7	(C7) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Small Tour (Level 7)
Category 8	(C8) For riders who have never earned 15 or more grading points at any level above Intermediate Tour (Level 8)
Category 9	(C9) For riders who have earned 15 or more grading points at Big Tour (Level 9) (Int II- GP-GPS- GPFS)
Category M (Masters)	(CM) Masters. For Riders 50yrs & over (age from the beginning of the calendar year that the rider turns 50)
Category Am (Amateur)	(CAm) Any rider C5 or below is a CAm rider. A CAm rider may compete in Amateur competitions at any level not more than two levels below that rider's rider category. Examples: A C5 rider may compete in any CAm competition or series at levels 3,4 and 5. A C4 rider may compete in any CAm competition or series at levels 2,3 and 4.

Discussion

The committee first determined what is the aim of this review and what outcomes were being sought and came up with the following:

Aim: *To provide a classification system that encourages new riders to participate in the sport of dressage as well as providing a pathway encouraging existing riders to try a new level.*

Outcomes:

To provide a competition format that:

1. Allows riders to compete within their peer group, especially when entering a new level
2. Is able to be easily managed by an event committee and easily adaptable and reportable from a DNZ Series point of view
3. Is easy to understand by riders, spectators and the wider dressage community
4. Equestrian Entries system can identify the correct level for each combination at entry*.

*It was agreed that the EE requirement was a nice to have but not an absolute requirement.

In reviewing the current system, we looked at recent results from PL shows that ran both Open and Amateur classes. It was found currently, the range of scores including the high score was pretty much the same whether the classes were designated amateur or open, and also some lower category riders were often placing in combined classes such as the Super 5.

It was felt the primary issue was there was no consideration of the combination (horse and rider) in determining the classification. For example, an experienced C3 rider can compete at Level 1 Amateur currently and regularly achieve scores over 70%. It is felt this is a significant disincentive to new riders (CN-C1) to the sport or those with limited experience at the level they are competing.

As a result, we agreed that a rider who is regularly achieving over 70% and a new rider achieving 60% at that level and are both currently considered Amateur due to their current DNZ rider classification, should actually not be in the same peer group. We consider this situation is not achieving the agreed Aim or Outcome 1 above.

Gold Silver Bronze

In Britain they use a classification system of Gold Silver and Bronze sections which has been raised as a better way to achieve our aim and outcomes. We reviewed the British system and felt in principle would provide a more equitable classification which is more aligned to our agreed aim and outcomes.

The subcommittee felt that the British system needed amendment and simplification to better align with dressage competition in New Zealand. After online discussions and a Zoom meeting the Review committee agreed that a section classification should be determined by two criteria. They are;

- The level that the rider has competed on any horse within a time period; and
- The number of performances that as a combination (horse and rider) have achieved above a determined percentage at the level they wish to compete.

From this we developed the Section Classification Tables and Notes – these are attached.

To determine the rider level and the percentage/number for the combination the subcommittee carefully reviewed several PL show results and determined the criteria of the Section Classification provide a reasonably equitable split across sections for the shows reviewed.

The subcommittee was also cognisant of the concern that any system did not discourage the upper level pony rider (medium and above) moving on to horses. The system as proposed aims to find the balance between the needs of pony riders as they transition to horses and maintaining bronze section for riders new to a level without over complicating the system.

The Amateur Review Sub Committee therefore proposes that;

1. The Section Classification Table and Notes are adopted by Conference for use by any DNZ event if they so wish for the 2021/22 season. They will then be reviewed and any amendments made as a result of the review before being formally adopted into DNZ rules in 2022.
2. The Category Amateur be deleted from the Dressage Rider Category Table on page 51 of the DNZ Rules. It is considered that this category should be deleted even if the Section Classification Table (point 1. above) is not adopted as it is considered that it is not fit for purpose.
3. The balance of the Dressage Rider Categories remain in the DNZ rules in order to process downgrading applications and any other administrative function identified.
4. If the Section Classification Table is adopted into DNZ Rules in 2022 the Dressage Rider Categories should be then deleted from DNZ Rules.

Section Classification Tables For Graded Classes

Preamble

Each level of graded competition e.g., Preliminary, Novice etc. up to Advanced Medium is divided into three sections: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The section which a member may enter is determined by the rider experience AND the combination experience at each level of competition, whether on a horse or pony.

Each level can run as one class with all riders being judged by the same judge. In this case at the end of the class the results of the class are divided into the different sections.

Alternatively, if the numbers allow sections may be run as separate classes at that level.

- Bronze sections are for less experienced combinations who have just started competing at a given level so that they can compete against those with a similar ability.
- Silver sections are designed for those combinations that show more ability at a level and have demonstrated that they are no longer beginner at that level.
- Gold sections are open to all but are designed for riders who have gained experience at higher levels and a riding a horse with less experience, or for combinations who have demonstrated that they are competent at a level.

1. Preliminary

Preliminary Gold – Open

All riders that don't meet the criteria of either Preliminary Bronze or Silver below

To compete Preliminary Bronze you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements			To compete Preliminary Silver you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements		
	Yes	No		Yes	No
As a rider on any horse competed at Medium level or above in the last four years			As a rider on any horse competed at Advanced Medium level or above in the last four years		
As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 65% or above at any level			As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 68% or above at any level		

2. Novice

Novice Gold – Open

All riders that don't meet the criteria of either Novice Bronze or Silver below

To compete Novice Bronze you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements			To compete Novice Silver you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements		
	Yes	No		Yes	No
As a rider on any horse competed at Advanced Medium level or above in the last four years			As a rider on any horse competed at Advanced level or above in the last four years		
As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 65% or above at any level Novice and above			As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 68% or above at any level Novice and above		

3. Elementary

Elementary Gold – Open

All riders that don't meet the criteria of either Elementary Bronze or Silver below

To compete Elementary Bronze you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements			To compete Elementary Silver you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements		
	Yes	No		Yes	No
As a rider on any horse competed at Advanced level or above in the last four years			As a rider on any horse competed at Small Tour or above in the last four years		
As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 63% or above at any level Elementary and above			As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 65% or above at any level Elementary and above		

4. Medium

Medium Gold – Open

All riders that don't meet the criteria of either Medium Bronze or Silver below

To compete Medium Bronze you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements			To compete Medium Silver you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements		
	Yes	No		Yes	No
As a rider on any horse competed at Small Tour or above in the last four years			As a rider on any horse competed at Medium Tour or above in the last four years		
As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 63% or above at any level Medium and above			As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 65% or above at any level Medium and above		

5. Advanced Medium

Advanced Medium Gold – Open

All riders that don't meet the criteria of either Advanced Medium Bronze or Silver below

To compete Advanced Medium Bronze you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements			To compete Advanced Medium Silver you MUST answer NO to BOTH statements		
	Yes	No		Yes	No
As a rider on any horse competed at Medium Tour or above in the last four years			As a rider on any horse competed at Big Tour in the last four years		
As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 63% or above at any level Advanced medium and above			As a combination have achieved more than 8 scores of 65% or above at any level Advanced medium and above		

Notes – These are Important!

- Applies to graded competitions only
- Does not include musical scores in determining section eligibility
- Section eligibility is as at close of entries
- No restrictions on riding downgraded horses
- There is no expectation or requirement that an event uses this classification system, nor do they have to use all 3 sections if it is chosen to be used. For example, an event may choose to run a bronze section and all other riders are run as open.
- Sections do not have to be run as separate classes but can be run as one class with extra awards for silver and bronze riders.
- There is no expectation that Premier League shows provide separate championships for silver and bronze riders especially if the level is being run as one class.
- Riders, to check your results, go to equestrian entries, go to results, find the last competition you competed at, click on your horse's name, click on all results (top right). Only use results from graded competitions for you as a combination (not including musicals) to confirm your section eligibility