



ONE'S PERSPECTIVE

“What impressed me most, however, was the palpable spirit of sportsmanship, humor and camaraderie. As someone who looks different, it was a sudden comfort to mingle among many who confront and have mastered a wide variety of conditions. The sheer range of impairments, which covered the spectrum from accidents, past or present disease, genetic or nerve disorders offered up a visual and visceral slice of real life. It is a reminder that things change, we don't always have control and that no one is immune.”

-Holly Jacobson

Dressage Daily



OUR RIDERS

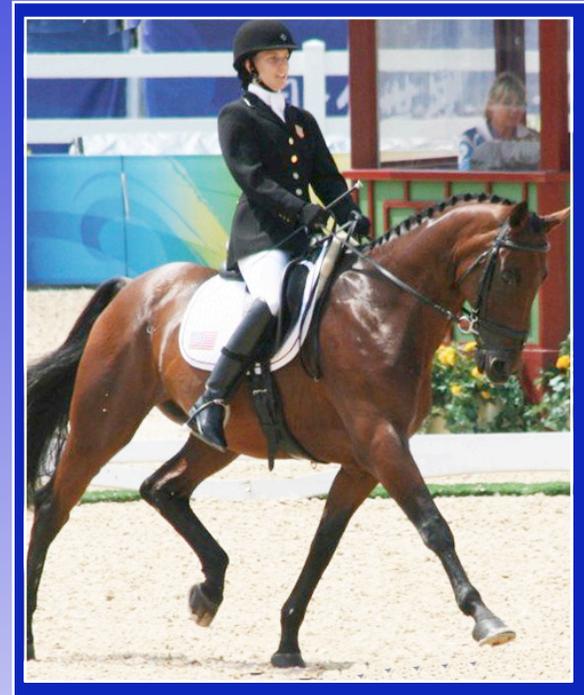
Many athletes who participate in USPEA are quite talented, and some are considered to be among the elite equestrians of the world, regardless of their physical condition.

In USPEA, each rider or driver is classified according to his or her functional ability. USPEAs are assessed by trained physiotherapists and doctors who evaluate either muscle strength, coordination, or a combination thereof throughout the athlete's body. The athlete is then given a functional profile that indicates the grade in which they can compete. The competition within each grade is judged on the functional skill of the rider or driver and not the level of disability.



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UNITED STATES PARAEQUESTRIAN ASSOCIATION



OUR VISION

The vision of the United States ParaEquestrian Association is to provide leadership for equestrian sport in the United States for athletes with a physical disability, promoting the pursuit of excellence from the grass roots to the Paralympic Games, based on a foundation of fair, safe competition and the welfare of its horses.



Adapt and Overcome



PARALLEL COMPETITION

USPEA sport includes all equestrian disciplines practiced by people with physical disabilities. "Para" means, parallel to able-bodied equestrian sports. Many disabled athletes are able to hold their ground in competitions designed for the able-bodied, but USPEA opens the world of competition to riders and drivers with severe disabilities as well, allowing them to compete in a serious, focused environment.



The primary focus of the USPEA programs are to provide clinic and competition opportunities for athletes with physical disabilities. Many of our USPEA athletes were first introduced to horses through their therapeutic riding programs. The therapy program objectives are to introduce riding to improve balance, joint mobility, coordination, muscle tone and posture to ease symptoms of a wide variety of disabilities. It is a well know fact that horse's gaits parallel that of the human.

What makes USPEA so special is that a person with a disability can compete in an exciting and well respected sport as an elite athlete and be judged on their abilities. Some of our best USPEAs compete at the highest level, the Paralympics. The Paralympics, not to be confused with Special Olympics, is an elite sporting event for athletes with physical disabilities. Currently, the only USPEA sport recognized at the Paralympic level is Para-Dressage.

USPEA is the eighth discipline within the United States Equestrian Federation. Para-Dressage is considered a High Performance Sport, therefor subject to the USEF selection criteria standards. All Para-Dressage riders must meet the strict show standards prior to being considered eligible to compete at a selection trial. After applying the selection criteria, considering the horse and rider combinations, their rankings and scores at the trials, a team is selected.

What does Olympic gold mean to athletes who have more to prove than just sporting ability? For starters, it takes a lot of money to support this sport. The most successful countries fund athletes' living expenses through lotteries, heavy

endowment funds, and corporate sponsorships so that they can concentrate on their job: riding for medals. In turn, medals won bring more funding, credibility, and respect.

Although the US Olympic Committee provides some funding to our Paralympic equestrians, it does not compare to that received by our competition. Our Paralympians' stories are much different from those of their able-bodied equestrian peers because it takes more of a support team to handle the day-to-day horse care and training. USPEAs generally cannot supplement their expenses by training or coaching, so most of our athletes have full-time careers apart from horses.

Help USPEA support our athletes by making a tax-deductible donation today! Visit our website at www.USPEA.org for more information. USPEA is a non-profit affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation.

