

### Template letter to Psychologist

Dear Psychologist,

Regarding: Use of a Commander by an Athlete for Para Equestrian Competition

Please find herewith \_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of Athlete] who competes in Para Dressage Events at an international level.

In order to compete in Dressage, the Athlete is required to ride a Horse and complete a Dressage test of between 4 and 7 minutes in length depending on the level at which they compete. There are different Grades (I, II, III, IV, V) for Athletes reflecting their level of Impairment and physical status. Grade I being Athletes with the greatest Impairment and Grade IV Athletes with the least Impairment.

A Dressage test comprises a sequence of between 8 to 19 "movements" (depending on the Grade at which the Athlete competes) which are to be ridden at designated points around a Dressage arena (20mtrs x 40mtrs or 20mtrs x 60mtrs). The movements are carried out at a walk and/or trot and/or canter and involve moving from one pace to another while completing the movements. Below is an example of a Grade 1 Novice Dressage test and a Grade III Novice Dressage test. These provide examples of what an Athlete may be required to learn prior to competing and then remember for the period they are competing in front of the judges.

Grade 1 Novice Test	
1. A X	Enter in medium walk Halt, immobility, salute. Proceed in medium walk
2. C HXF FA	Track left Free walk Medium walk
3. A X	Down centre line 10m circle right
4. X	10m circle left
5. XC C	Down centre line Track right

Grade III Novice Test	
1. A X	Enter in working trot Halt, immobility, salute. Proceed in collected trot
2. C B	Track right Half circle right 10m to X Return diagonally to the track at M
3. MCHE E	Working trot Half circle left 10m to X Return diagonally to the track at H
4. CX XA	Half 20m circle right Half 20m circle left
5. A FXH HC	Working trot Change rein in medium trot Working trot

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of Athlete] has been asked to provide you, for your information, with a sample copy of a full Dressage test they would be required to learn specific to their grade.

The Athlete has ample opportunity (possibly weeks or months) to learn and practice the movements required in the Dressage test prior to competing. During an Event, perhaps over two or more days, the Athlete may be required to ride up to 4 (3 set tests and 1 optional Freestyle Test) Dressage tests. The nominated Dressage tests are used consistently at each level with the Athlete only competing at one level. The only exception to this is if the Athlete competes in a Freestyle Competition in addition to the set tests. In this case they have designed their own sequence of movements and then ride them to their chosen music.

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of Athlete] is Classified as Grade \_\_\_\_\_ and has requested the use of a *Commander* - a person to call out the movements in sequence to the Athlete as they compete.

In this instance this is an exception to the Para Equestrian Rules. All Athletes (except those with an identified intellectual disability or acquired brain injury) are expected to complete their Dressage test from memory under the same conditions and without a commander.

To ensure fairness and equity to all who are competing, those Athletes requesting an exemption to the rule pertaining to commanders are required to produce evidence from a psychologist of a level of permanent memory Impairment that would impact on their ability to remember the sequence of movements required for the duration of the Dressage test. Whilst the Dressage test is completed in a competitive environment, all Athletes within the Competition complete the test under the same conditions.

It is requested that, where possible, a **Wechsler Memory Scale (WMS-IV)** test (or similar) is conducted and a brief report be provided to substantiate this Athletes request for a commander. This confidential report will be held by me as documentation supporting the Athlete's request.

Your time in assisting this Athlete is greatly appreciated

Yours thankfully

FEI Para Equestrian Classifier

Please forward a copy of your report to: