

Summary

FEI Para Dressage Test Concerns

Laurence and Marianna discussed concerns about new FEI para dressage tests scheduled for 2027, which they believe create an unreasonably large gap in skill levels between elite athletes and the rest of the competitors. Marianna offered to share a letter and notes about the tests with Laurence, who agreed to review them and potentially provide feedback to the FEI. The conversation took place before a presentation, with Vera noting she would be available to assist while cooking lunch.

Sports Task Force Collaboration Update

Laurence and Marianna discussed the creation of the Sports Task Force, which aims to support professionals working with challenged riders in sport-oriented equine activities. The task force's main goals include building an international network, sharing knowledge through webinars and workshops, and coordinating with equestrian organizations like the FEI. Marianna provided an update on the task force's communication with the FEI, noting that they had sent a letter expressing interest in collaboration and awaiting a response.

Para-Equestrian Sports Development Strategy

The meeting focused on increasing athlete participation in para-equestrian sports, with a particular emphasis on para-vaulting and para-dressage. Marianna and Laurence discussed plans to meet with the FEI to address coach education and judge training in para-equestrian sports. Laurence presented on the importance of equestrian sports for individuals with disabilities, highlighting skills development, emotional regulation, and social inclusion benefits. The group agreed to share the presentation and continue discussions on supporting professionals and addressing challenges in para-equestrian sports.

Para-Equestrian Sports Development Challenges

The meeting focused on para-equestrian sports, particularly para-dressage and para-vaulting, discussing challenges and opportunities in different countries. Elena shared her experience in Portugal, highlighting financial and mental health challenges for para-athletes. Laurence and Marianna discussed the need for internal competitions and judge education, while Selçuk mentioned the development of para-vaulting in Turkey. The group agreed on the importance of horse welfare and education in adaptive sports, with Helena emphasizing the need to support trainers and prevent them from feeling trapped by welfare concerns. The conversation ended with plans for future webinars and a HETI conference in September.