



## DRESSAGE RIDER CATEGORIES EXPLAINED

From August 1 2010 there will be a national standard of DRESSAGE rider category. This categorising of riders has nothing to do with the level or grading points of a horse, but just the points gained in a particular level by the rider ON ANY HORSE AT ANY TIME .

Why did Dressage NZ do this? Well it gives the sport a chance to offer classes defined by rider experience. For example: Organisers can offer a Level 1 Test 1.1 ( old name preliminary) class restricted to CN and C1 riders, and then another class, Level 1 Test 1.1 for riders C2 and above , so that an experienced rider doesn't compete on a lower graded horse against an inexperienced rider on a lower graded horse.

This **does not** mean that experienced riders can never bring out their young horses at Level 1. It does mean that more experienced riders will not be able to enter classes offered to a lower category of rider.

### Frequently Asked Q & A:

**Q:** I gained grading points at Level 5 when it was called Open Medium ten years ago. This is the highest level I have ever gained points at. What Category of rider am I ?

**A:** *You are category 5 rider. **Category 5 (C5)** For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 5 (and riders who have ridden at ESNZ Advanced Horse Trials)*

**Q:** Is there any time limit as to when a rider may have earned grading points ?

**A:** *There is no time limit*

**Q:** I have earned points ridden at Grand Prix (Level 9) – does this mean I cannot bring out a young horse and earn grading points on them at a lower level ?

**A:** *That makes you a Category 9 rider so unless the class is specifically restricted to Categories CN – C8 riders, then you may compete your young horse*

**Q:** A schedule has listed a Level 3 Test 3:3 open to CN – C4 riders. What riders are eligible for this class ?

**A:** *This means all riders up **Category 4 (C4)** are eligible - For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 4*

**Q:** A schedule has listed a Level 2 Class Test 2.1 but it does not say which riders are eligible. I am a C1 rider – can I enter this class?

**A:** *Unless it states in the schedule that this class is restricted in any way to a particular category or categories or riders, then it is an Open Class and you may enter providing you are an ESNZ member and your horse is registered with ESNZ and have purchased either an annual start or Dressage Start Stickers.*

**Q:** Will the lower levels at the NZ Championships be restricted to any particular category or categories of riders ?

**A:** *No – these championships are to determine the best horse at that Level regardless of who the rider is.*

**Q:** I have never earned any grading points on any horse. What category will I be and can I go in Open classes.

**A:** You will be a "Newcomer" (CN) and yes you may go in open graded classes providing you are an ESNZ member and your horse is registered with ESNZ and have purchased either an annual start or Dressage Start Stickers

**Q:** I am classified as a Master (CM) – does that mean I can only go in classes restricted to Masters?

**A:** Absolutely not ! You may enter in any open class and any restricted class for which you are eligible, but if a class is restricted to Masters then only Masters may enter ! Masters Classes can also be combined with graded Levels of horses and particular categories of riders. For example a show may offer Level 2, Test 2.2 for CM masters who are CN, C1 and C2 category..

**Q:** Is my rider category on a database ?

**A:** The ESNZ database of horses stores information about individual horse performance. At the moment it does not store this info directly related to riders. Dressage NZ is relying on the integrity and sportsmanship of riders to only enter the classes for which they are eligible. In the future, once this system has been in place for a time, then Dressage NZ may look at a means of recording rider categories

These rider category rules may seem a bit confusing initially, but please take the time to determine which category of rider you are, remembering that it is a **rider category**. It unrelated to the graded level of your horse. It is determined solely on your experience and performance history **as a rider**.

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 grading points at any level above Level 1
Category 2	(C2) For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 2 and riders who have ridden at ESNZ Novice Horse Trials
Category 3	(C3) For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 3 and riders who have ridden at ESNZ Intermediate Horse Trials
Category 4	(C4) For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 4
Category 5	(C5) For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 5 and riders who have ridden at ESNZ Advanced Horse Trials
Category 6	(C6) For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 6
Category 7	(C7) For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 7
Category 8	(C8) For riders who have never earned grading points at any level above Level 8
Category 9	(C9) For riders <b>who have</b> earned grading points at Level 9
Category M	(CM) Masters. For Riders 55yrs & over (age from the beginning of the calendar year that the rider turns 55)