

Dressage NSW – Equestrian Athlete Pathway Policy

Effective: 1 January 2026

Approved by: Dressage NSW Committee

Review Cycle: Annual

1. Purpose

The Dressage NSW (DNSW) Equestrian Athlete Pathway provides a structured, transparent and merit-based framework to identify, recognise and develop dressage athletes across New South Wales. The Pathway supports emerging, performance and elite athletes while aligning with Equestrian Australia (EA) performance frameworks and best-practice athlete development principles.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all NSW riders holding a current EA Dressage License who seek selection or recognition within DNSW Pathway squads.

All athletes regardless of category (AOR, Professional, Youth, Junior etc.) are eligible to apply for inclusion within any squad that they obtain the relevant qualifications for.

3. Governance and Oversight

The Pathway is managed by the DNSW Committee and aligns with the Equestrian Australia Performance and the Pathways program. Selection panels will comprise suitably qualified representatives and subject matter experts. Conflicts of interest must be declared and managed in accordance with DNSW policy. All selection decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

4. Pathway Structure

The DNSW Equestrian Athlete Pathway consists of three progressive squads:

- Blue Squad – Emerging Talent and Talent Identification
- White Squad – State and National Performance Squad
- Silver Squad – Elite Development Squad

Progression through the Pathway is performance-based and reviewed bi- annually in September and March.

5. Blue Squad – Emerging Talent

The Blue Squad is the entry point to the DNSW Equestrian Athlete Pathway. It recognises riders who have demonstrated objective performance benchmarks and provides development, education and recognition opportunities.

5.1 Eligibility Criteria

Requirement	Criteria
Membership	Current EANSW membership and Dressage License
Residency	Rider must be based in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory
Horse Eligibility	No age restriction, must meet minimum EA requirements
Levels enabling selection	Minimum average score obtained from 3 results at official competitions
Elementary	66%
Medium	65%
Advanced	64%
Small Tour	64%
Medium Tour	63%
Big Tour	62%

5.2 Benefits

- Recognition as a DNSW Blue Squad athlete
- Publication of rider name on the DNSW website
- Access to online education resources
- Attendance at Judges seminars and coaching events
- Invitation to DNSW-endorsed ridden clinics (participant funded, subject to capacity)

The White Squad supports riders who demonstrate competitive success at State and National Championships and prepares athletes for higher performance expectations.

6. White Squad – Performance Squad

The White Squad supports riders who demonstrate competitive success at State and National Championships and prepares athletes for higher performance expectations

6.1 Eligibility Criteria

Requirement	Criteria
Membership	Current EANSW membership and Dressage License
Residency	Rider must be based in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory
Horse Eligibility	No age restriction, must meet minimum EA requirements
Competition Standard	Official EA competitions only, freestyle scores are not counted
Levels enabling selection	Minimum Score (3 official results required with at least one at a State or National Championships or a CDI)
Elementary	68%
Medium	66%
Advanced	65%
Small Tour	65%
Medium Tour	64%
Big Tour	64%

6.2 Benefits

- Publication of rider name on the DNSW website
- Access to online education resources
- Attendance at Judges seminars and coaching events
- Invitation to DNSW-endorsed ridden clinics (partially funded, subject to capacity)

7. Silver Squad – Elite Development Squad

The Silver Squad is designed for Advanced and elite-level riders and horses preparing for high performance pathways, including progression toward EA High Performance consideration.

7.1 Eligibility Criteria

Requirement	Criteria
Membership	Current EANSW membership and Dressage License
Residency	Rider must be based in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory
Horse Eligibility	No age restriction, must meet minimum EA requirements
Competition Standard	Official FEI (CDI and National) competitions * ¹ , freestyle scores are not counted. At least one score from a CDI or State or National Championship.
Levels enabling selection	Minimum Score (3 results required with at least one at a State or National Championships or a CDI)
Small Tour	67%
Medium Tour	65%
Big Tour	65%

7.2 Benefits

- Fully funded DNSW clinics
- Focus on competition readiness and performance sustainability
- Priority inclusion in State teams at State and National Championships
- Integrated rider and horse wellbeing support.
- Recognition as a Squad athlete.
- Publication on the DNSW website.
- Support for riders transitioning outside EA High Performance selection

7.38. Athlete Conduct and Welfare

All athletes must comply with EA and DNSW Codes of Conduct, uphold the highest standards of horse welfare, and demonstrate professionalism and sportsmanship. DNSW reserves the right to remove athletes who fail to meet these standards.

8 Education and Mandatory Learning Requirements

All athletes selected or recognised within the DNSW Equestrian Athlete Pathway are required to complete online education modules as directed by Dressage NSW.

Completion of nominated online education modules is mandatory prior to confirmation or inclusion in any DNSW squad and/or annually or as otherwise required by Dressage NSW.

Education requirements may include, but are not limited to, horse welfare, clean sport and integrity, safeguarding, judging education, performance preparation and athlete wellbeing.

Failure to complete mandatory education within specified timeframes may result in delayed inclusion, suspension or removal from the squad.

10. Alignment with AOR Strategy

The Dressage NSW Amateur Owner Rider (AOR) Strategy establishes a structured and sustainable approach to the development, recognition and progression of AOR riders across New South Wales.

Performance outcomes from official AOR competitions, regional AOR Championships and associated initiatives may be considered as supporting evidence for Squad selection and broader pathway identification processes.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by Dressage NSW to ensure ongoing alignment with strategic objectives, governance obligations and national performance frameworks.

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