

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR

Dressage SA

APRIL
2019



Presented by the President
of Dressage SA at the 2019
Annual General Meeting

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of the Dressage SA 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

2018 has indeed been a tumultuous year for Dressage SA. We seem to have been able to build on the foundations laid in 2017 in ensuring a high level of organisational and financial reform and put this to very good use in ensuring a much more structured and goal orientated approach to 2018.

Each portfolio has been thoroughly tested and criticised to ensure absolute performance by both ourselves, our athletes and officials and to the most part I believe stood up to the test admirably. It must be said that at times such criticism and objection has often been personally motivated and relentless, and this has proven to be frustrating and has resulted in very many hours of wasted time that could have been used to ensure far better overall performance of the organisation.

We have seen huge strides in organisational restructuring in provinces such as the Western Cape and likewise, we have felt the pain of problematic administration in Mpumalanga (which has now been corrected) as well as a diminishing participation in Limpopo provinces. These examples serve as a reminder that high-level vision and assistance when required must be provided by the entire council of which we all collectively have a duty to for fill.

The overall position is however hugely positive and well co-ordinated efforts on all fronts have ensured a professionally run and properly administrated sports discipline with a lot to be very proud about.

It would be unforgivable for me not to thank each and every individual who has served so selflessly on our council for their enormous contributions. I also need to make special mention of the “dream team” – our office staff that have been incredible this year as well as FEI and SAEF who have contributed hugely in making us the very best we can be.

Lastly, my sincere thanks to the members of the DSA EXCO who have delivered way more than expected both in time and in achievements... thanks you guys, I could not have got through a single week without you.

I look forward to seeing dressage grow from strength to strength in 2019 and very many years to follow.

Sincerely,



Pierre Hefer
President - Dressage SA



OUR WORK, OUR COUNCIL

The Equestrian Federation

I am pleased to report that for a second year running, there has been a monumental improvement in the co-operation and efficient collaboration between the discipline of Dressage and the SAEF council and staff. We have all felt the direct impact that such a co-operation brings about and we are thankful to those who have navigated the Federation back onto a path of financial prudence and organisational credibility which is clearly also being recognised by SASCO. It is noteworthy to state that SAEF is a National Federation who proudly carry the status of a B- Class Federation (only 4 in the RSA and only sixteen Preferred or A-Class Federations of the 73 in total.) SAEF are a full member on the SASCO Council and carry 3 votes. SAEF is also a member (largest) in the Group IX African Countries participating in the Equestrian industry presently consisting of 14 countries including Madagascar and Mauritius.

International

Dressage has proved to be one of the top performing South African equestrian disciplines at international level during the past year. Our athletes have successfully been performing at many of the top European events as well as wonderful performances as the World Equestrian Games in Tryon, USA. The management and administration of the World Equestrian Games is no small feat and I urge you all to review the international report presented by Ingeborg Sanne for 2018. We are all now focusing on the Olympics in Tokyo in 2020 and our athletes are progressing very well in qualifying and getting themselves and their horses ready to take the world by storm and we wish them all well. On a personal note, please allow me this one indulgence - The South African athletes that train and compete overseas do so at an astronomical personal cost. We are all very quick to own and share the international athletes' personal successes and I believe that we should likewise strive to ensure that we as a discipline put aside a portion of every members annual subscription fee to go towards a contribution (however small) as a show of our appreciation for them competing under our national flag. I welcome your support on this going forward. We thank Ingeborg for her dedicated participation and experienced leadership and also wish to thank Robyn Sterley at SAEF for her support and dedication in managing this complex portfolio.

The Athletes Representative

I believe that we need to refresh the enthusiasm from athletes in supporting and communicating effectively with their provincial athletes' representatives. The clubs all should have an athletes representative and such a representative must be able to understand the complexity of our sport and affective be able to make the collective athletes voice heard at provincial as well as national level. Sadly, at present, our athletes' voices are not effectively and properly expressed, and we are all the poorer for this. I urge the athletes to make it a priority to have a representative voice at all levels of decision making as there is a constitutional provision to allow this and Dressage SA strongly support the participation.



OUR WORK, OUR COUNCIL

Judges

We wish to thank Sue Horne and her dedicated team as well as the provincial judges' sub-committees in once again ensuring huge progress and positive change. We recognise the high level of professionalism that underscores every effort that this incredible team undertakes.

I urge you to read her report and get an understanding of the mammoth task that this portfolio is responsible for. The achievements of the 2018 year are numerous but I feel compelled to mention the highlights which are: Substantial and remarkable achievements in the areas of judges training and development, including international accreditation, fielding and ensuring a huge number of DSA as well as SANESA shows were judged at a superior level during the year including our national championships, revising and implementing a new code of conduct for judges, completely overhauling our dressage tests for 2019 producing a huge amount of improvements which were very well received by our athletes, Running national as well as provincial seminars and refreshers as well as huge participation at the various Dressage Forums and Clinics.

Coaches

2018 DSA placed a colossal priority on the development of dressage coaches, which was initiated by Dianne Smith, and this effort was hugely supported by SEAF, FEI as well as all the provincial councils. Regula Niehus came on-board as a co-opted member of the EXCO team and took on the Portfolio with wonderful professionalism and a very focused drive. She effectively co-ordinated the efforts of our discipline with the Federation as well as FEI and championed the following programmes with the assistance of Nicky and Debbie at the office in a very short period of time: First Aid Level One Certification, FEI Coach Developers courses and the Coaches Podcast series. We look forward to lots of good things regarding coaching for 2019 which will deliver on our goal of developing better quality athletes which will include: Promotion of the Coach Developers work, Facilitating Level 1 Coaching clinics, Improving Coaching Communication channels, Framework for the Accreditation and Designation of coaches as well as developing a reliable and valuable Coaching Database. It's a very ambitious goal but I believe that it could not be in better hands. A huge note of gratitude must however be expressed to the present Coach Developers who have driven us all towards our goals with their wonderful energy, dedication and enthusiasm. Our Dressage coaches are now finally and officially and irrevocably on the Dressage future roadmap.



OUR WORK, OUR COUNCIL

Financial

Our organisations finances have, for the second year in a row, improved tremendously by way of contributions made by members both in annual subscriptions as well as specific participation levies and contributions to training and awards events. It is encouraging that our membership base is steadily growing and this is taking the pressure off increasing the subscription rates in order to sustain the organisation's requirements. There is also a much better understanding from all stakeholders on the need to ensure very strict and transparent financial processes. We have made approximately 40% of all the annual revenues available to the provincial councils and they have been tasked with the management of these funds. I believe that the funds were not used to their optimal advantage during the past year due to substantial underspend as well as some spending that was not aimed at capacity building nor efficient advancement of constitutional and athletes' requirements. I believe that a lot was learned from the 2018 experience and that 2019 budget and financial management should yield a vast improvement on 2018. We can be enourmously thankful to Carol who has on so many occasions placed her personal and business priorities aside to ensure that Dressage is managed in a proper and dillegent way. Our auditors Nolands Johannesburg Inc have also been of incredible help and have gone past their call of duty in assisting us in being the best we can be. They truly live up to their slogan "not your ordinary auditors".

IT Infrastructure and Database Management

The 2018 year proved that a more robust IT infrastructure and a better developed disaster management strategy has paid rich dividend with less than 8 hours of unplanned and 14 hours of planned downtime this year. This represents 99.74% uptime, against a 95% uptime goal. The bandwidth capability has also been improved by 300% and even at peak times, we seldom utilise more than 60% of our capacity which translates directly to the speed of the database access. We have again upgraded our infrastructure at the beginning of this year by partnering with Equisystems and providing a full replicated environment which is updated on an hourly basis as well as fully automated backup and archiving services at a cost increase of 18% over the 2018 values but vastly improved redundancy and data recovery capabilities.

Rule Changes 2018

The national technical portfolio lead by Eino Vuorinen this year had its hands full when bombarded with a list of rule changes which exceeded any previous year by at least 5 times. These suggested changes were so voluminous that it eventually exceeded the capability of the portfolio team and consumed the efforts of most provincial councils , the whole EXCO team as well as the judges and other various experts for months on end. The voting process was laborious, and I believe that it was not effective at ensuring an ideal result. There is a very urgent need to review the rule change policy to ensure that a team of experts have the ability to ensure a more practical and informed decision-making process. Such a policy will be promoted and introduced in the fothcoming year.



OUR WORK, OUR COUNCIL

Schedules and Venues for 2018

We all thank Janeese Silen for the huge task that she so efficiently and willingly took on during 2018 and for the incredible results that she produced in what we all know to be one of the most complex and demanding portfolios on our council. Every athlete owes this wonderful lady a huge debt of gratitude. During the year, the DSA Challenge has grown and we believe that during 2019 it will receive a new boost through a different funding model which should truly make the Challenge the popular SA Championship for every rider. The flagship SA Dressage Championships was likewise a great success and the FEI World Challenge 2018 which was hosted at Shongweni Club was unfortunately disappointing due to a low number of entries.

The Dressage portion of the SA Youth Champs this year had to separate from all the other disciplines due to the fact that the principal venue in Port Elizabeth was too small to host all disciplines together. A forum, hosted by SAEF, was established this year to ensure that we do not have a repeat of this problem by properly planning at least two years in advance.

LEAD

A special programme, known as “Learner Education for the Advancement of Dressage” (LEAD) was launched towards the end of the year after receiving confirmation from FEI Solidarity that they had agreed to support the initiative financially.

The training of the first group of 120 young riders has already commenced with their attendance of boot camps, together with their own coaches. The programme will be run countrywide over a two-year period, with the potential to possibly extend further.

This initiative marks the beginning of a new future where DSA and SANESA join forces to ensure that the basis of South African dressage riders will broaden with much-improved standards to allow a smooth transition of the riders from SANESA to DSA competitions. We have learned a lot from the first few boot camps and now understand that there is a huge demand for this type of programme, especially in the far-away towns and cities where the exposure of many athletes to this level of coaching is at times limited. We also need to ensure an improved participation from the athlete's coaches which is required for continuity and thus enhancing the athlete's accelerated development.

SANESA

We are confident that some problematic relations between the two organisations are now well behind us and after the incorporation of SANESA as an associate member, had been further enforced through regular meetings and effective communication. There is still a large amount of work to be done by both organisations in ensuring smooth and effective co-ordination of our efforts, but I am pleased to report back that a healthy co-operative attitude from all officials will ensure an accelerated result on all fronts.

Our immediate efforts are aimed at: ensuring better provincial co-ordination and integration between office bearers of both organisations, a more structured approach to the use of Dressage SA trained and accredited officials and coaches, more focused approach to implementation of rules and dispensations, better database integration and all other areas in which sharing resources and expertise can enhance the young athlete's experience in our discipline.



OUR WORK, OUR COUNCIL

The Office Staff

We have been blessed by a wonderful group of knowledgeable, enthusiastic, dedicated and happy administrators this year. Debbie Hunt has led her team of Nicky Anderson and Joanne Purdy and Carol has had great assistance from Peter Schalkwijk. These individuals have made a huge difference in ensuring a very well run office and have raised the bar in terms of professionalism and compliance. We all thank them most sincerely for their hard work and look forward to working with them in the new year which has some really lofty and ambitious goals.

The Dressage SA EXCO

The EXCO team at DSA has again this year given hundreds of hours of their personal time in a dedicated effort to improve and manage the discipline to their absolute best possible ability. I have seldom been privileged to have such a wonderful and effective management team to assist in achieving the organisational goals. My most sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Vice President - Dianne Smith, Treasurer – Carol Pickering, Janeese Silen, Suzanne Horne, Regula Niehus who have all worked so hard, been available at all hours of the day and night, made sure we keep each other in check and most importantly, displayed a magnificent camaraderie that has kept us all going when times seemed a little hopeless.

In Closing

I thank you all, as well as our athletes, coaches, clubs, show holding bodies and officials for allowing me the privilege to have again served as your president during the 2018 year.

Sincerely,

Pierre Hefer
President - Dressage SA





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