DRESSAGE GAUTENG
INSPIRATION & EXCELLENCE

Telephone: Admin – 0795894313 | Gauteng - 0662312150
Email: admin@dressagesa.com | gt@gautengdressage.co.za

Gauteng President and Portfolio Report

President: John Smith

2023 was a busy year for Gauteng and the Province focused on development, by hosting and supporting a variety of development projects.

Some of our development highlights were: OTS clinics presented in each of our five regions, an international seminar hosted by Malgorzata Pawlowska open to all members demonstrating the new 2024 dressage tests. Furthermore, we supported the Rising Stars initiative, focusing on youth development, as well as various other judges and coaches training opportunities.

Gauteng had a full and busy show calendar and we had the privilege of many international judges visiting. Many thanks to all parties who made this possible.

Gauteng successfully fielded provincial teams for the Youth National Championships, hosted by KPC. The show had some of the highest number of entries recorded, was well run and successful. Youth Champs had been moved to June to combat the rainy season it is usually plagued with in December and this proved to be a success.

Gauteng did not field Adult teams in 2023, the Adult Championships were hosted in the Western Cape. Due to AHS traveling restrictions complicating matters, members either couldn't travel, or deemed the risk to high.

Below, each portfolio head will detail their highlights for the year.

I would like to thank my Council for vigilantly attending meetings and for their valuable input on the smooth running of Gauteng Province.

Treasurer: Jennifer Gertzen

It was nice to see a normal return to the Equestrian Sport in 2023.

Gauteng remained within budget and was able to meet the financial obligations related to the development of the sport, and in particular the youth, judges, coaches and athletes.

Funds were also spent on Teams as well as hosting our annual awards day.

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Athletes Representative: Jane Schalkwijk

We had 1 specific incident at KPC where 1 member was given a yellow card for apparently being rude. I wasn't there, so will not comment on that.

I do however feel his complaints were justified and the situation was very badly handled. It could have been avoided all together if the judges knew their rules and didn't delay the class as they did for over 20 minutes, it was totally unnecessary, should have been dealt with later.

The comments in the lawyer's letter were, that we mustn't upset the judges because we have few and we need them. I also think the lawyer was somewhat rude.

Yes we do need them but I think if we have to never complain about anything because we will upset the judges and may loose them is not acceptable either.

This is not the only incident where I heard complaints in this regard.

I also heard remarks from judges that X person is a good rider and should get good marks, well yes that should follow but they shouldn't get good marks just because they are considered a good rider, it should be because they deserved it at the time.

There were several complaints about the new tests too, 1st of all, Why USA? When Europe is the dressage hub of the world and only 3 tests in each grade.

In fact I haven't heard of anyone all for it, not so much changing, that is good but as stated above , the route taken.

Technical: Sheba Zager

Technical has dealt with numerous upgrades, downgrades, new ownerships etc, over the past year.

It is encouraging to see many "new" riders on school masters now going through the grades.

Every year after rule changes, there are numerous requests from riders querying which bits are allowed. Last year (2023) particularly, with the re-instatement of the 'French Link'

Most queries are forwarded to DSA Technical for confirmation.

There have also been some queries from judges on elimination of riders for various reasons.

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These judges' queries are dealt with immediately and mostly telephonically.

Notably, there have been very few queries regarding the new DSA tests which came into force in January 2024.

Judges and Officials: Claire Nadin

2023 was a busy calendar year for Gauteng Dressage with a lot of activity for the judges. The calendar was full and between graded shows, eventing shows and SANESA events, the judges were called on every weekend to sit at C. The usual focus on training, sit-ins and exams saw the continued education and promotion of a number of judges over the course of the year.

One of the more exciting themes for 2023 was the number of visiting international judges to South Africa, whether for the CDI show, World Dressage Challenge, Dressage Connection, or the Hollyberry Internationals.

All of these events offered a learning opportunity for our judges and the opportunity to engage on the technical details of the tests as well as the future of dressage judging, with the visiting judges.

Judges seminars were presented by Tina Karkkolainen and Hanne-Mari Kiuttu at the Hollyberry Hall Internationals as well as the opportunity to sit in and scribe for both of these knowledgeable judges.

The CDI show gave the Gauteng Judges the great privilege to listen to the 3 visiting international judges Eddy De Wolff (Level 4), Peter Holler (Level 4) and Maja Stukelj (Level 3) via headphones as they were making their comments and scores throughout each test.

Dressage Connection kindly created the opportunity for Gotthilf Reixinger to host a judges and riders seminar on the difference between judging at C and from the side of the arena. Our judges were also gratefully sponsored with the opportunity to participate in a "virtual sit in" where they could listen to and observe Gotthilf judging the horses throughout the weekend.

Lastly, Malgorzata Pawlowska, visiting South Africa for the second time to judge the World Dressage Challenge, ran a seminar at Manor D'Or where some of our talented riders demonstrated the new 2024 tests. Margo provided expert commentary and feedback from the judge's perspective. The seminar was well received by riders, coaches, and judges alike.

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Venues and Schedules: Cheryl Teare

For the 2023-year Show Holding Bodies have been sending in their Show Schedules timeously to both Surea van Schalkwyk and myself to check. This process is working well as we can double check for errors. Shows are running well in the central region, but a few venues in the Ekurhuleni and Tshwane regions, have had to cancel their shows due to not enough entries being received. The bigger and national shows are being run by Angie at the various venues, the venues are not running these shows themselves.

As new SHB's register for shows we need to find a more formalised system, as the first time I sometimes even know about a news SHB is when I get to check their first entry form. My suggestion is that all new SHB registrations should be emailed to me as well, just so that I am in the loop and can start communicating with them. We also need to formalise the system of arena inspections as many SHB's are due for arena inspection again this year. John Smith also spoke to me recently and it was agreed that if there are any blanks on the arena inspection forms, the arenas do not pass inspection and the inspection will need to be done again. This will need to be communicated to the venues so that they know they must check that whomever is inspecting their arenas completes the forms in full, else the venue will need to pay to have the arenas inspected again.

It is also a suggestion that we have one fee that all judge's who do arena inspections get paid. We can't have one judge being happy with R 300.00 and another insisting on R 1 000.00, and sometimes their fees are per arena. I would also like to suggest that arena inspections get organised by whomever holds this SHB portfolio on the Gauteng Dressage Council, so that we know who is inspecting which arenas and when. It would also be a good idea for the SHB portfolio person to be there at the inspection as well to start building a relationship with the Show Holding Body. I feel that if a judge is going to part of the SHB, they may under no circumstances inspect that venues' arenas as it's a clear conflict of interest.

We need to remind SHB's that they can have ungraded classes at graded shows but NOT 'training' classes and that all competitors must be DSA members: if they have training classes and non-DSA members competing at their shows they are not covered by DSA and/or SAEF event insurance in any way what so ever and neither is any person competing in that class at that particular show.

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Teams and Awards: Martjie Kuipers

In the year 2023 we had a very successful Awards Brunch at Eaton Farm. We had good feedback from the members. We reintroduced the horse retirement ceremony and this was headed up by Lisa Agbenafa, who was also our expert emcee for the day. Thanks must go to Angie Meredith and all the Eaton Farm staff as our hosts for the morning.

Junior Champs went well, we fielded full teams and they were ably guided by Chef Andrea Harrison. Andrea hosted a team bootcamp before the event, where team members could meet each other and their colours were officially awarded.

Gauteng Dressage did not send any teams to Adult SA Champs. There was a restriction on travelling of horses and SA Champs was held in the Western Cape Province. They postponed the date but there were too many uncertainties for the members to commit to travel with their horses to the Cape.