



EQUESTRIAN AUSTRALIA HIGH PERFORMANCE

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Review



The Tokyo Olympic cycle presented many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent postponement of the Games from 2020 to 2021.

Introduction

The following document outlines an internal review process undertaken by Equestrian Australia High Performance post the Tokyo Olympic Games 2020. The Tokyo Olympic cycle presented many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent postponement of the Games from 2020 to 2021.

The Equestrian Australia High Performance Program is funded by Sport Australia (SA) through the Australian Institute of Sport and directly and/or indirectly by the Australian Olympic Committee and Paralympic Australia. The AIS is currently the sole funder and investment body into Equestrian Australia High Performance. It is important to note that no EA membership funds contribute to the EA High Performance Program.

AIS funding is based on the national framework of Sport Categorisation that identifies sport programs most likely to contribute to Australia's high performance targets. Sports are ranked primarily on past performance and future potential criterion at international benchmark events. On this basis, HP spend is focused on the disciplines of Eventing and Para- Equestrian.

Medal target expectations for the Australian Equestrian Team at Tokyo was set at 1-2 medals for the Olympic Games and 1-2 medals for the Paralympic Games.

The logistical and operational costs of an Olympic and Paralympic Games are shared between EA HP and the AOC and PA respectively. A financial review of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be reviewed and presented separately on the completion of all the relevant financial reporting.

The current structure of Equestrian Australia High Performance is governed by a Terms of Reference as a delegated authority to the High Performance Panel from the EA Board as referred to in the Sport Investment Agreement. The High Performance Program is provided oversight and leadership by the High Performance Panel under the guidance of HP Panel Chair Mr Leigh Clifford AO.

The review was undertaken by the High Performance Staff in accordance with the agreed review process. Several formal sessions were held based on the process that included the relevant HP staff, the Chefs d'Equipe and the veterinarians. The riders and grooms that participated in the Tokyo games were consulted on an informal basis. The purpose of the review is to take the learnings from the Games and subsequently implement the key recommendations from the review. The High Performance Director, in consultation with the High Performance Panel and the AIS, will be responsible for implementing these recommendations.

The Olympic Games were highlighted by the delivery of an Eventing Team Silver and an Eventing Individual Bronze, which were the result of a 4-year planning strategy referred to as Prepare to Prepare to Win.

Executive Summary

The Tokyo Olympic Games 2020 will be memorable for many reasons. Although generally regarded as a great success, they will be reported historically for the challenges they presented under extraordinary circumstances.

The 12-month postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Games, due the COVID-19 pandemic, created numerous challenges for all involved and most importantly for the athletes. The added COVID compliance requirements added a new dimension to planning and organizing for a Games and credit must be provided for all involved.

The Olympic Games for the Australian Equestrian Team and EA High Performance were highlighted by the delivery of an Eventing Team Silver medal and an Eventing Individual Bronze medal, which were the result of a 4-year planning strategy referred to as Prepare to Prepare to Win. (P2P2W).

This review process undertakes an operational and logistics review together with a highlighted performance review of Jumping and Dressage disciplines; the review dives deeper into the Eventing preparation, performance and results.

The aim is to provide recommendations from the learnings and findings of the process in order to adapt and apply these to the Paris 2024 campaign.

The Tokyo campaign also presented several significant issues that will require further review in order to learn and grow from these incidents in order to prevent recurrences. The first matter was the anti-doping violation of Jamie Kermond which we were notified the day of the athlete's departure that resulted in his disqualification from the games and ultimately the disqualification of the Jumping team.

The second matter was related to the non-nomination of Rowan Willis in the Jumping Team (he was nominated as the P athlete–Travelling Reserve). Rowan Willis lodged a notice of dispute regarding his non-nomination to the Team, however did not formally appeal. Subsequently Rowan Willis withdrew from the Team and did not take the position of the P athlete–Travelling Reserve.

EA received multiple enquiries regarding the non-nomination which subsequently questioned the process of selection, communication of the process and a perceived conflict of interest within the Jumping Selection Panel.

This matter was unfortunately brought to air publicly through equestrian and mainstream media platforms. Both incidents created significant distractions to the preparation of the campaign and the team itself.



Consistent and sustainable success for Australian athletes:

Left: Andrew Hoy and Vassily de Lasso, Shane Rose and Virgil, Kevin McNab and Scuderia 1918 Don Quidam—members of the Silver medal team at Tokyo 2020.

Bottom: Andrew Hoy and Vassily de Lasso, Individual Bronze medal at Tokyo 2020.

As a result of Jamie Kermond's disqualification, Rowan Willis withdrawal and the lack of available reserves at the time, Equestrian Australia was not in a position where it could field a Jumping Team in the teams competition at Tokyo.

We wish to acknowledge the significant effort of the staff and volunteers, as well as the critical role of the veterinarians. The veterinarians played a vital role in ensuring that not only were all horses fit to perform and well prepared for the logistical and equine bio security requirements, but that all horses, riders and grooms were ready for the extreme conditions that Tokyo presented. The team wishes to note that the quality and leadership of the veterinary program and veterinarians was world-class which set a benchmark for the competition.

We further wish to acknowledge the effort, time and contribution made by the Volunteer National Selection Panels. The Eventing result has shown that the decisions made by the Eventing Selection panel were good ones culminating in the targeted success of two (2) medals.





Although Tokyo 2020 went ahead despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the competition was anything but normal.

Top: Face masks were obligatory at all times, even at the prize giving ceremony.

Recommendations

1. Appoint a dedicated resource to manage the following AOC requirements.
 - > Accreditation
 - > Long List Administration
 - > Uniforms
 - > Travel
 - > AOC Liaison
 - > Freight/Equipment
2. Establish and maintain a centrally managed and accessible data management system for information storage and management.
3. Review the Nomination Process, Policies and National Selection Panel appointment processes in order to ensure our policies and procedures are fit for purpose, rigorous and robust and in accordance with best practice integrity frameworks.
4. Appointment of a local Paris 2024 Liaison Officer.
5. Undertake a performance cultural review for Jumping and Dressage to present the following questions.
 - > How are we currently perceived?
 - > How do we want to be perceived?
 - > What are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours?
 - > What are our mutual expectations of each other?
6. Undertake a further investigative review of the positive anti-doping matter of Jamie Kermond to further understand mitigation measures that can be implemented, if any.
7. Undertake a further investigative review of the non-nomination of Rowan Willis in the Jumping Team and subsequent relevant matters relating to rider communication, nomination processes, conflict of interest and national selection panel appointments.
8. HP Discipline Managers to implement proactive and scheduled communication on rider plans and nomination/selection expectations including veterinary management and reporting.
9. Review COVID compliance requirements with the Performance Support & Athlete Wellbeing Manager and to present COVID mitigation and management plans and strategies fit for purpose for WEG 2022 and Paris 2024.
10. Ensure adequate horse and athlete combination depth is available in each discipline as a contingency plan to ensure the fielding of full teams and reserves for the Olympic format.



On behalf of EA High Performance, we wish to congratulate the riders, the grooms, the owners, supporters/connections and all significant others on the Tokyo campaign.

We would also wish to thank the National Selection Panels and the High Performance Panel for their devoted time, effort and professionalism.

11. Review and implement the Prepare to Prepare to Win Strategy 2.0 for Eventing for WEG 2022 and Paris 2024 together with rider buy in and engagement to ensure an athlete centric program.

12. Attendance at the Paris test event with an athlete and horse combination and the relevant staff and athletes to undertake a full recce trip to ensure appropriate preparation planning.

13. Maintain the relevant detail and rigor with complimenting support in the identified Eventing combinations and the Individual Performance Planning Process.

14. Undertake a performance review process for all HP staff, coaches and contractors and review the structure of High Performance aligned with performance outcomes in Eventing and Para Equestrian.

15. Establish with EA a more effective and efficient financial management, reporting, approval and accounts payable process.

16. Present the Tokyo review findings and recommendations at the EA HP Forum in December 2021.

Despite numerous and significant challenges and distractions over the past 18 months – including but not limited to, EA entering and exiting Voluntary Administration, appointment of a new EA Chair and CEO, the postponement of the Tokyo Games, COVID-19 implications, the Equine Herpes Virus outbreak, a positive anti-doping violation in Jumping and a publicly aired notice of dispute over a Jumping non-nomination – there is much to celebrate as Equestrian Australia's High Performance has met the funding requirements of the AIS and secured funding for HP for the upcoming two cycles including Paris 2024 and Los Angeles 2028.