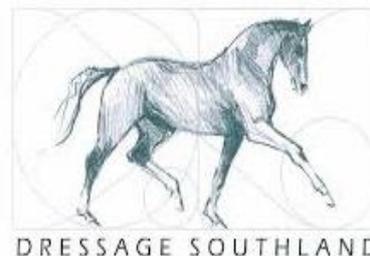


President's report: 2019-2020

2019-2020 has been an eventful season, one which will be remembered for quite some time for the rapid changes and challenges the group has faced.



Firstly, however, I wish to wholeheartedly thank the Organising Committee for the 2019-2020 season. We were a mix of seasoned committee members and a number of new committee members. Without this hard working group of diverse individuals, the group would have been unable to provide those who compete at Dressage Southland events the opportunities that occurred.

In particular, I give sincere thanks, and appreciation, to our outgoing Treasurer, Bev Cason. Bev has been a stalwart of the group for a significant number of years and has ensured the smooth running of our accounts as well as providing insight and expertise. In her role, she has also been a financial supporter of the group, donating the financial costs of the Xero accounting programme (usually over \$800 per annum) to the group. As a group, we wish Bev all the best and we know that she will continue to be a supporter of Dressage Southland.

We have a number of Organising Committee members who are also stepping aside from their positions this year: Theresa Kingipotiki as Vice President and Writer's Coordinator, Julie Manson as Health & Safety Officer, Norma Parks as Assistant Treasurer, and Tania Fairbairn as Sponsorship Officer. Thank you, ladies, for your hard work and enthusiasm. I know that all of you will continue your involvement in Dressage Southland at a range of levels.

This season has certainly been a mixture of challenges and successes.

The challenges:

The hosting of the South Island Championships in February this year was to be the highlight of the Dressage Southland calendar. Ably organised by Event Manager, Sharon Muirhead, members of the group had worked tirelessly to put together an exciting programme, filled with riding and social opportunities. Sponsors had been sought and gained, international and national judges had been recruited and were in the process of travelling, the programmes had been printed, the special social evening had been booked, caterers organised, the grounds prepared to perfection and then the rain came, and came, and came, and came some more. Initially, it was thought that we could run the tournament with an amended programme (due to flooding in the oval and under the grandstand) but it just wasn't to be as a State of Emergency was declared for the Southland region, the Gore A&P Showgrounds were evacuated, non-essential travel was stopped, motels were evacuated, and sewage treatment and potable water supplies were impacted. Our hearts went out to our Dressage Southland community members who were impacted by the flooding. Thankfully, no lives were lost but the cost to property, for some, has been immense and ongoing. This is where I was extremely grateful to my fellow members of the Organising Committee, along with the support and guidance of Wendy Hamerton, DNZ Sports

Manager, and Celine Filbee, DNZ Partnerships Facilitator. The wider dressage group can be reassured by the professional approach taken by your Organising Committee and the support that is available to us through DNZ. I also must make special mention of you, our riding community, for your incredible generosity when it came to donating back to the group, some or all, of your entry fees to help offset the non-refundable expenses the group had occurred in putting this event together. The Organising Committee were overwhelmed by the generosity and positive messages we received during this time.

And then came Covid-19 after recovering from the flood, the group were all set for our season finale, our AB Lime March tournament, where we would also finalise our Accumulator series results, run special classes and celebrate the season. Everything was in place, we were counting down the last few days, busy watching for updates around running events in light of this new pandemic, when ESNZ made the decision to halt all competitions due to the potential risks from Covid-19. Not long after that, the entire country was placed at Alert Level 4 and was in lockdown.

Let's hope that this next season will have fewer challenges!

The successes:

There have been many successes this season for the group (please forgive me if I miss anything out)

- Implementation of an email database to aid communication with our equestrian community
- A mid-winter dinner with guest speaker and presentations of Series awards
- A training evening on the new dressage tests
- Amendment of the Dressage Southland accumulator series to enable all those who compete at Dressage Southland events to enter, free of charge
- Increased sponsorship gained for the 2019-2020 season
- Financial savings due to changes in elements of how our competitions are run
- Podcasts
- Fiona Sharp gaining a DNZ Judge's Scholarship
- Rachel McCallum being appointed Chief Steward, and being selected as DNZ Official of the Year
- A highly successful three date Winter Series competition
- Three successful, and enjoyable, registered tournaments, including the running of a Premier League competition in December
- Survey of our equestrian community, seeking feedback, used as a basis for forward planning
- Increased positive feedback from sponsors and riders (seen as a direct reflection on the group's focus on openness, transparency and approachability as areas of need identified in the survey)
- Organisational changes to help with increased transparent communication
- Updating our Health and Safety documentation

- Increased social media reach
- Introduction of a Musical Freestyle TOC to the January tournament
- Changes to the parking and competition layouts to increase 'watchability', socialisation for riders and support crew, and better utilisation of surface space
- All levels, and all non-grading and registered classes, on the surface
- Dressage Southland riders gaining success at the National level in Super 5 Leagues, the Zilco series, the Flying Horse Arabians in Dressage series and the Top 10 Leagues
- Noelene Keen and Lyn Fox gaining their A level judge's qualification

Looking ahead to the 2020-2021 season, some goals are:

- Increased utilisation of the Rider's representative
- Continuing with succession planning
- Increased volunteer participation, including non-riding volunteers
- Continuing to seek sponsorship with sensitivity due to the current climate
- Refining our strategic and budgeting planning
- Developing a Dressage Southland constitution

Sonja Swale

2019-2020 President, Dressage Southland