



ORION CUP NATIONAL CHAMPION

The Orion Cup is named after a very special horse in Canadian dressage history. Orion was Pia Fortmuller's KWPN Grand Prix partner. He was an Olympic Team horse for Canada, trained to the Advanced level by Pia's former coach, Leslie Reid, who represented Canada with Orion at the 2008 Olympic Games in Hong Kong.

In the fall of 2009 Orion was sent to Europe to be sold, during the same time that Pia, a 2006 NAJYRC Gold Medalist, also moved to Europe to continue her training. It was during this time the two began a partnership, and Pia subsequently purchased Orion. At the age of 25, Pia rode in her first Grand Prix with Orion, and they went on to compete very successfully at the International Grand Prix level in Europe. Orion took Pia all the way to the Canadian Senior Team, and their career together culminated when they were named the reserve combination for the 2012 Olympic Dressage Team in London.

Sadly, Orion died in January 2014. His passing was not only a loss to Canadian dressage, but a devastating personal loss to Pia and her family. The Orion Cup has been established to pay tribute to this very special gelding. It is poignant and inspiring that just as Orion was instrumental in the start of Pia's Grand Prix career, the Orion Cup will provide other talented Canadian athletes with a start to their own. Pia says it best in her own words. "I never truly lost Orion for he will always live on in my heart, and it brings me an incredible amount of joy to know that Orion will also live on in the legacy of the 'Orion Cup.'"

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Orion Cup is to encourage and support young Canadian athletes as they take the significant step of transitioning from the Young Rider level to the Grand Prix level. The Orion Cup serves as an important developmental initiative by promoting the inclusion of U25 Grand Prix classes at competitions, thereby providing emerging athletes with meaningful opportunities to gain experience and confidence as they advance in their equestrian careers.

Summary of Benefits and Advantages of the Orion Cup

- **Bridges Athlete Development Stages:** Serves as a key competitive goal between the *Training to Win* and *Living to Win* stages outlined in the [Long-Term Equestrian Development \(LTED\)](#) framework, supporting both athletes and coaches in their progression.
- **Builds Competitive Experience for Young Athletes:** Provides valuable experience for riders aged 16–25, encouraging them to refine their training, strategic planning, and competitive focus while working toward a meaningful objective.
- **Offers a Supportive Transition to Elite Competition:** Designed to allow emerging athletes to gain exposure to high-level competition environments with confidence, without the pressure of competing directly against seasoned professionals.
- **Enhances Future Opportunities:** Earning a national title through the Orion Cup can strengthen athletes' profiles, improve their prospects for sponsorship, and open doors to advanced training and development pathways.



- **Promotes Growth Within the Sport:** Encourages show organizers to include the Grand Prix (16–25) test in their competitions, thereby expanding opportunities for young riders to compete at a national standard.

AWARD

The recipient of the Orion Cup will be honored with a commemorative jacket and cooler, along with a \$5,000 cash prize. In addition, the recipient will be formally recognized as the Orion Cup National Champion, acknowledging their achievement and excellence at the U25 Grand Prix level.

ORION CUP REQUIREMENTS

1. EQUESTRIAN CANADA REQUIREMENTS

Equestrian Canada has prepared and adopted the following requirements for the Orion Cup.

2. QUALIFICATION PERIOD

The Qualification Period (QP) for the Orion Cup shall annually begin **January 1 and end September 1st.**

3. QUALIFICATIONS

a. QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS / CLASSES AND QUALIFYING SCORE

- Qualifying Tests - FEI Grand Prix 16-25 test.
- Qualifying Competitions - EC Gold, or FEI sanctioned (CDIU25) competitions.
- Qualifying Scores – Two scores are required. Score achieved at FEI sanctioned (CDIU25) competitions will receive a 1% bonus
- Qualifying Judging Panel – Panel must have a minimum of two judges.
The full panel score will be used for ranking and selection purposes.

4. RULES, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

The following Rules are in place for the Orion Cup:

- Current FEI Rules for Dressage events with rule changes included;
- Current FEI General Regulations with rule changes included;
- Current FEI Veterinary Regulations; with rules changes included;
- Current EC Dressage Rules with EC rule changes included;
- Current EC General Regulations with EC rule changes included.

In the event the FEI publishes changes to their rules listed above, the new (most current) rules shall take effect where relevant in criteria. FEI rulebooks can be downloaded from the FEI website at www.fei.org

In the event EC publishes changes to their rules, the new (most current) rules shall take effect where relevant in criteria. Please check the Equestrian Canada website www.equestrian.ca for the most current rules and rule updates.

It is the responsibility of declared athletes and owners of declared horses to ensure that they know and understand the Selection/Nomination Procedures, Rules, Policies, and Regulations.



5. ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS / RESTRICTIONS

- a. Athletes must be between the ages of 16 and 25 as per FEI rules for the Grand Prix 16-25.
- b. Athletes must hold an EC Gold or Platinum Sport Licence.
- c. The athlete must be a Canadian citizen.
- d. Athletes may not take part in this selection process while under the influence of any prohibited substance identified by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) <http://cces.ca/>, the World Anti-Doping Agency (“WADA”) <https://www.wada-ama.org/>. or the FEI <http://www.fei.org/>.

6. SELECTION OF THE ORION CUP AWARD RECIPIENT

- a. Following the completion of the QP (see point 2 Qualification Period above), the two highest EC Gold and/or FEI Sanctioned Grand Prix 16-25 scores achieved will be reviewed and ranked based on point 3 Qualifications above
- b. In the event of a tie between any two or more athletes, the single highest Grand Prix (16-25) test score will break the tie. Should there still be a tie then the second highest Grand Prix (16-25) score will break the tie.

7. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ORION CUP AWARD RECIPIENT

Equestrian Canada will announce the award recipient upon the completion of the selection process.

8. PRESENTATION OF THE ORION CUP AWARD

The presentation will be done publicly at a dressage competition or venue in the year that the award is earned.