



## WORLD CLASS **USING PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS AS A TRAINING TOOL** equestrian

SPORTS SCIENCE AND SPORT MEDICINE ARE WELL-ESTABLISHED AREAS WITHIN HUMAN MEDICINE. PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES IN MANY DISCIPLINES APPLY A MULTITUDE OF SPORT ENHANCING TECHNIQUES TO ATTAIN A HIGHER LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE AND MOVE AHEAD OF THEIR COMPETITORS. IN ADDITION, AN EVER-INCREASING ARRAY OF TECHNOLOGIES AND TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO AID DIAGNOSIS, ACCELERATE REHABILITATION AND ULTIMATELY ENHANCE PERFORMANCE.

A similar trend is emerging within equine sport, the Equestrian World Class Development Programme is using technology as a visual teaching aid in the form of rider analysis to improve technique and enhance performance and Equinanalysis to aid diagnosis, promote health and enhance performance in the equine athlete.

Performance analysis is used in a vast majority of sports as a means to help to boost results, although it is a relatively new concept in equestrian sport. Riders that have used performance analysis as part of their training programmes have seen vast improvements in both their riding and results.

The Eventing Programme has been using video analysis as a training aid from the Development Programme's inception in 2002. Used at both Dressage and Show Jumping squad training sessions it shows the impact of the rider on the horse, therefore identifying areas that may affect the way the horse moves and jumps and the effect this has on performance.

Vikki Underwood, World Class Development Manager says, "I believe that by using similar technology to that used by other successful sports, we may be able to create a performance enhancing system that enables riders to review, identify and predict

performances to gain better results". Underwood comments further, "The philosophy behind the World Class Development Programme, is that training achieves success and correct training is the foundation to success, the results speak for themselves".

Since those early days and the success that video analysis has shown, the technology has been developed further.

Russell Guire launched Centaur Biomechanics in 2006, which initially focused on horse and rider performance analysis, but the company has since become an accredited business partner in Equinanalysis,

a video based equine gait analysis system that has been developed by Haydn Price, Team GBR farrier, that addresses the need for lameness diagnosis, treatment monitoring and performance enhancement.

Russell began working with the World Class Development Programme earlier this year and attends squad training sessions with small cameras, projector screen and a computer that provides the riders and trainers with a valuable teaching aid.

Off the horse – once a training session has finished, a rider is able to visually see themselves, with the use of a computer and video playback. With input from either, dressage trainer Nick Burton or show jumping trainer Peter Murphy, who are able to scrutinise the tiniest of aberrations, this allows the riders to work on these specific areas and offers a greater understanding of their strengths whilst identifying areas for improvement thus enhancing performance.

On the horse – within a training session a rider can see an instant recording, with the use of an on-site projector, thus delivering immediate playback. In dressage this can be used to show training movements or a ridden dressage test, in show jumping it can be used to help train for accuracy and pinpointing mistakes that result in a problem at a fence.



Laura Collett all hooked up with key areas labelled.

With the use of playback and slow motion any strengths/ weaknesses can be identified and discussed with the riders by either trainer, which helps to achieve a level of consistency, that in turn enhances performance.

Leading event rider Ruth Edge, who is on the World Class Eventing Programme finds the use of rider analysis very effective and says, "with the use of this technology it highlights your weaknesses, which then can be improved upon, and it also looks back at past recordings to see how the horses have improved".

Equinanalysis is a video based equine gait analysis system that has been developed over the last two years in partnership with leading human biomechanics specialists.

The vision of Equinanalysis is to bring evidence based medicine to the equine industry, and as a method of objectively analysing equine gait as a performance enhancing technique.

Through its unique system that has been specifically designed and developed to visually track, measure, quantify and display accurate biomechanical data, the system identifies how a horse moves and can pinpoint areas of weakness, which then can be treated to extend the competitive life and optimize the performance of horses involved in equine sports e.g. eventing, show jumping, dressage, racing etc.

The World Class Development Programme is embracing the Equinanalysis system as it has proven itself to be a very useful aid in both the monitoring and improvement of performance within the World Class Programme.

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# essentials

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