

Nathan Harvey – Para Equestrian Grade V



Nathan Harvey's love of horses is contagious! Diagnosed with autism at two, Nathan did speak a word until he was given a little pony named Tommy for his fifth birthday. When it came time to blow out the candles on his cake, Nathan couldn't be found — he was in the stables, speaking clearly and reading Tommy a bed-time story. A progressive eye disease means Nathan is legally blind, which makes the depth of his relationship with his horses vital — Nathan has no other option but to trust a horse to be his eyes in the dressage arena. Enter Dom, a beautiful Trakehner stallion, who is the perfect partner for training and competing, and a best friend for going to the beach, playing soccer and performing tricks! Nathan's second horse is a 13-year-old Thoroughbred named Flip. Nathan will be riding both horses in competition 2017. Nathan has always found strength and inspiration in horses. "I don't feel disabled when I'm with my horses," he says. "When I ride, the world disappears.... It's like the best dream in the world. "While Nathan started out competing at numerous disciplines, dressage stole his heart with its dance-like beauty. "It's like a ballet," he explains. "When everything is going perfectly, it's like I'm a butterfly on my horse's back." Nathan is classified as a grade IV para-equestrian and aims to compete at the 2020 Summer Paralympics in Tokyo. His program for the next few years is to build on his successes at the Special Olympics Australia in 2014 and, more recently, at the Spring CDI 2016 and the Australian Dressage Championships. At the same time, Nathan is becoming more active in encouraging other people with disabilities to get out and compete. "More and more people with similar challenges are coming out and competing with their horses," he says. "In the past, they stayed at home, but we're now out there following our dreams."