

REMI STUD YOUNG RIDER SCHOLARSHIP 2017

Olivia Ruzsicska

Olivia started riding at 18 months old when her Auntie Karen popped her on a pony called Pebbles. She went to Pony Club, attended local agricultural shows in leadline classes on Pebbles in Darwin, progressed to her first dressage test off lead at 5 years old, and she has now won multiple rider and dressage classes on ponies as she grew up.

Olivia's kind heart was apparent even at a young age, when, after winning Champion Junior Rider at the Royal Darwin Show, she was then competing for Champion Rider against a beautiful pony and its much younger rider still on a leadline. The other little girls pony was spooked when the 'Bute Ute' competition started up next door, and just as the judge was about to sash Olivia as the Champion Rider, Olivia asked the judge to give it to the little girl as it wasn't her fault that the pony was spooked. Upon deliberation with Mums and judges, the little leadline girl received the Champion sash.

This wonderful attitude is no doubt what contributed to Olivia being nominated for the NT Junior Sportsperson of the Year in 2014 and 2015. Due to geographical challenges, Olivia's dedication to her sport presented many difficulties, not the least needing to travel thousands of kilometres to support her dream if she was to compete.

Living in Humpty Doo in the Northern Territory meant isolation from mainstream events on the eastern seaboard, and many hours on the road required to compete seriously, but over the years Olivia's dream has turned out to be a real family affair with Mum as strapper, Dad as chauffeur, stable builder, and sometimes strapper, and Olivia's brother, Bradley, as the freestyle designer and home support when they travel away.

This is the 4th year that Olivia has applied for the Remi Stud Young Rider Scholarship, but her dedication to be the best dressage rider she can be also showed to the Scholarship committee in 2015. EA very kindly offered for all the Scholarship applicants to attend the Elite Riders Clinic just prior to the Nationals that year, where they are able to not only watch the elite riders and coaches training their horses, but also attend lectures on anatomy, veterinary, business management, and all things required to ride at the top level. Olivia was the only applicant to take advantage of this very generous offer – and she came down from Darwin!! Certainly a testament to her dedication.

Olivia has now been awarded a scholarship to attend the New England Girls Grammar School in Armidale, allowing her to access the school's coaches and mainstream events. She rides a bigger horse called Wizard now who she is training at Elem/Medium level. Unfortunately Wizard is no spring chicken, and was actually a showjumper before Olivia decided he could learn dressage, but in 21/2 years she has taken him to Elementary/Medium level - no mean feat for a showjumper. With his age and his limited talent (according to her coach), she is in desperate need of a young horse to go on with in the years ahead.

This is where the Remi Stud Young Rider Scholarship comes in. In Olivia's riding journey from the age of 18 months, she has faced every challenge with dedication, enthusiasm and total belief in the world of the horse. Equestrian sport in the NT has benefited from her achievements, her talent, her inspirations of excellence, and sheer determination to be the best person and rider that she can be. With young riders like Olivia, Equestrian sport will continue to prosper in Australia well into the future. Remi Stud, together with their Supporters (HorseForce, Edwards Saddleworld, Team VDB, Dr Show, Westvets, Belrock Equestrian, Prydes Easifeed, HHSA, Manuel Equine Transport, EQ, EA, and the Brisbane CDI,) are delighted that Olivia Ruzsicska is the lucky recipient of the Remi Stud Young Rider Scholarship in 2017, and look forward to watching Olivia and Remi Lazzarini S competing in the years ahead.