

## **Women riders' interview guide**

### **I. Introduction**

Hello Madam,

Thank you for your given time to this interview.

We are Emilia and Lara. We are two Master students at Louvain School of Management. As part of our thesis, we try to analyze the gendered subtext in the high level of showjumping. In order to deepen our research and to have a diversified view in this field, we would like to interview equine professionals as riders or veterinarians, osteopaths, farriers, breeders and owners.

The gender context is marked by inequalities between men and women which, in some cases, may be hidden by equities. Equestrian sports are among the only Olympic sports where women and men compete at the same level and in the same classes. We have noticed that in high level jumping, men are more present than women. We would like to understand this participation gap and how they achieve the same performances as men.

Concerning the interviews, we are going to interview about thirty people working in the equestrian field. We wish to list interviews with women and men, with people of all ages but also of different professions in the equestrian world. For reasons of authenticity, we must record this exchange. However, the data will remain anonymous. Only our thesis promoter and we will have access to these interviews. In order to guarantee anonymity, we will first of all ask you to choose an assumed first name to be used in the writing of the master thesis. We will of course delete all the data allowing you to be found, such as the names of the horses, places, the won competitions, etc... It seems important to us to proceed in this way in order to comply with the code of ethics of the UCLouvain. As far as your interview is concerned, it will never be published or used in its entirety. Rather, we will use it on a specific theme or topic to which you have responded clearly and accurately. This will be an abstract of approximately 200 words.

Is the use of this data clear to you? Do you have any questions?

So we are going to start recording this interview and asking our questions. If you do not feel comfortable answering one of the questions, you are free not to answer it. Normally there will be no questions that are too disturbing.

Our interview is divided into 5 different themes : (1) the nature of the job, (2) the passion for horses, (3) the work life balance, (4) the human and horses relationship and (5) the gender differences in the field of jumping at the high level.

## II. Questions

Surname, first name and alias	
Interview date	
Interview place	
Gender	
Age	
Riding discipline	
Level	

### 1) Nature of the job

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself?
2. What is the place of equestrian sports in your life?
  - a. What exactly is your job?
  - b. How long have you been in the business?
  - c. Can you describe a typical day at work?
  - d. Do you work in the equestrian world full time or do you have another job on the side?
  - e. Are you self-employed or working for someone?
  - f. If you are self-employed, do you have employees to help you? If so, for which functions?
  - g. How many proofs do you do per month on average? Has this changed due to the health situation with Covid-19? If so, how has this changed?
  - h. How do you train a horse? How often?
  - i. Do the horses you ride owe to you? If not, why?
  - j. Do you breed in addition to your riding profession? Why do you do it?
  - k. Do you offer some of your horses for sale? Why do you offer them for sale?
  - l. Do you have sponsors? If so, for what types of products?
  - m. What part of your job do you like best?
  - n. Conversely, what do you like least about your work?
  - o. What is your greatest success? What is your best memory?
  - p. What is your worst memory?
  - q. In a few years' time, how would you situate yourself within the equestrian world?

### 2) About your passion for horses

3. Can you explain how your passion for horses started?
  - a. At what age did you start riding?

- b. How did you practice this sport as a child?
  - c. Did you practice this sport with your family? If so, how?
  - d. How did the decision to take up horseback riding as a profession come about?
  - e. How were you supported by your family and friends in this decision?
4. Could you imagine your life without horses?
  5. How do you currently live your passion within your family?

### 3) About your balance work/private life

Now that we have discussed the place of horse riding in your family, we will look at how you manage your private life in relation to your professional life.

6. Do you find it easy to combine a professional life in the horse world with a private life?
  - a. How do you separate work from private life?
  - b. Is this job important in your life? Do you see yourself living without it?
7. Does your partner, if you have one, also practice this sport? Does he or she practice it as a professional activity or as a hobby?
  - a. Do you work together? If yes, does he do the same work as you do? How do you organize yourselves?
8. Do you have children? If yes, how is the division between work and family life in relation to them?
  - a. Have you passed on your passion for horses to your children? If yes, how did you pass on your passion for horses to your children?

### 4) About human/horses relationship

Now we can move to the 'the human/horses relationship' section.

9. Do you think that the horse is a 'tool' or more a 'partner' and a 'family member'? And could you explain your thinking?
10. Do you have a strong bond with your horse(s)? Could you explain? Are you spending without counting on the health and well-being of your horse?
11. Have you faced a horse loss (death or sale)? If yes, what were your feelings according to this situation?
12. How do you spend your time with your horse(s) when you don't ride him/them? How do you take care of him/them?
13. Can you think of a particular horse that was special to your life? What made him/her so special?
  - a. What do you feel when thinking of him/her?
  - b. With what could you compare the relationship between the two?
14. Do you think the horses are attached to their master or do they stay with them because they feed them?
15. Do you think that horses have feelings as humans do?
  - a. How can you identify the horse feelings?
  - b. How can you communicate with him/her?

16. Do you consider the horse equal to a human? Could you explain?
17. How can you identify that a horse is 'enjoying' their work activity?
18. How would you identify that your horse is not feeling well or is sick by his behaviour?
19. Does animal abuse ever take place in your discipline? What forms can such abuse take?
  - a. Are there any ways owners can be sanctioned by the equestrian federation in case abuse is suspected?

**5) Gender differences in the field of jumping at the high level.**

We arrived at the last part of the interview ; the gender differences in the field of jumping at the high level.

According to the literature review, the equestrian world is feminized : more women than men ride a horse during their free time. The dressage at the amateurs and high level is also known as more feminine. Nevertheless, that is not the case of the jumping and other professional equestrian events : men largely outweigh the number of women.

20. What do you think about this statement? Do you agree?
21. It is something that you have witnessed in your own discipline as well?
22. Have you heard about expressions such as 'horse girl' or 'horse man'? Are they used in the area where you ride a horse? If yes how often?

As we said in the beginning of the interview, according to the theoretical framework women and men compete together at the same level in the show jumping at the high level.

23. Do you think that the performances change between the genders? If yes, which one is more performant? And why?
24. Do you think that a gender has a stronger relationship with the horse than the other one ?
25. What are the psychological and physical qualities that allow a person to become an excellent rider?
26. How the equestrian equipment is adapted to each gender?
  - a. Do you see a real difference compared to the use of equipment adapted to women? Could you explain?
27. According to you, which gender is a 'better' rider? And why?
28. What do you believe about the fact that women and men compete together at the same level?
29. Do you think that the men's physiology makes riding easier and is more adapted to manage a horse?
30. Do you think there are any important differences between male and female sport horses? Do you have a preference for mares, gelding or stallions? Are there any that are better for competition in your discipline?

In the literature review, we have seen that women are underestimated in different sports disciplines because sport is perceived as masculine. For this reason, sponsors and media are more attracted by masculine athletes and pay less attention to female athletes. Therefore, women have to work harder than men to stand out, to attract sponsors and develop their career.

31. According to you, is this statement also true for the equestrian disciplines? Why?
32. Do you think that women have to work harder than men to prove their potential in the horse world? Can you explain and give an example?
33. Do you think that women and men have equal chances to develop their career in the equestrian sports at the high level?
  - a. How about their media exposure?
  - b. How about the sponsorship?
  - c. How about the possibility of riding the best horses?
34. Did you have encountered some forms of women discrimination or were you a witness of that? If yes, how often and in which situations?
35. Do you think that you are well integrated in the equestrian world? How are you considered by others since you are a woman?
36. Is being a woman ever an advantage in your field of work? How so?
37. Is being a woman ever a disadvantage in your field of work? How so?
38. Are there any traits of femininity and/or masculinity that you have ever wanted to emphasize or hide to feel more comfortable in your work?
39. Do you know if there are any differences in wages between women and men in the equestrian world at the high level?
  - a. Is there wage transparency of your field of work? Do riders ever discuss openly about the wages with others? Do you know how much money other riders earn at the same level as yours?
  - b. Are there any regulations (e.g. from government or horse federation) that give directions for salary policies?
  - c. Do you think wage differences are sometimes justifiable?
  - d. Are you personally satisfied with the remuneration you receive? Why so/not?

We have arrived at the end of our interview, we do not have more questions. Would you like to add something that has not been discussed yet?

### **III. Conclusion (Summary of the main ideas)**

Thank you for your participation and help for our research. Would you be interested to receive the results of our research?

If yes, could you please, give us your email address?