

Matthew Palamarczuk

Webmaster



Preferred to be called Matt.

I was a regular horse rider at the RDA stables I attended and enjoyed it thoroughly. I then went for a BSc in Estate Management and was successful. Then I found an avenue into a physical sport, as I had been riding from a young age and I found it therapeutic and enjoyable.

Unfortunately, the horses, of my size, had to be retired and the suggestion was I tried carriage driving.

I had a taster at the centre, and although it is very different to horse riding, I enjoyed it and found it rewarding but challenging skill.

After a couple of coached sessions, one of the volunteers John Challoner, showed me the basic ropes and horse handling skill from the carriage. The team then introduced me to Ann Connolly another experienced and competitive coach at the centre. Ann explained that carriage driving is about strategy, anticipation, planning, and understanding how individual horses react to my driving techniques due to my disability.

Having ridden the dressage test as a horseman, I was thinking how would this transpose to carriage driving? The horse and carriage is a long vehicle for me to manoeuvre through and around the obstacles within the arena. So with practice and coaching, readjusting my sitting position and the rein control through my arms, shoulders and waist rotation I am able to create a more sensitive yet positive contact with the horse and my objectives within the arena.

I have now been training and competing for three years in different environments and locations, enabling me to become more professional and confident whilst qualifying and competing at a national level.

I was aware that my body needed to improve its physical abilities, specifically around my core and trunk movement. The Clwyd Riding for Disabled introduced me to the Celt Centre, and the mechanical horse, creating weekly sessions. For anyone who is not familiar with this training tool, it is to improve several things such as to build core strength, balance and posture whilst simulating through walking, trotting and cantering in the stirrups and without. All in a controlled, safe and friendly environment. These skills I have learnt and it has transferred and transformed into my carriage driving, because it has improved my balance and I am able to rotate my torsos more independently.

I have trained and visited other centres. This has increased my knowledge and connections to even more experienced and qualified competitors within the carriage driving world.

All of these avenues have assisted in my physical and mental wellbeing as well as introducing a wonderful set of individuals who are committed to supporting less fortunate people and improve their lifestyles.