



Kate Nipperess riding at Sydney International Equestrian Centre. Image by 'Beautiful A Photography'

THE SECOND ACT FOR KATE NIPPERESS

BEYOND THE FINISH LINE – KATE NIPPERESS HAS PUT A TRAGIC ACCIDENT NINE YEARS AGO BEHIND HER TO FOCUS ON CAMPAIGNING FOR THE WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES WORDS: PHILLIP O'BRIEN

For Kate Nipperess, the saddle has always been home.

From her earliest equestrian days to her successful career in racing – from riding trackwork to breaking in and becoming an apprentice jockey – her life has been defined by a deep, intuitive connection with horses.

Kate was born to the saddle, beginning her equestrian journey at age four.

By 20, she had found her calling in the racing industry.

Her career was defined by moments of triumph, most notably a 2013 victory on Chief Seattle at Armidale, a memory she still holds dear.

A tragic accident at Warwick Farm in 2016 left her with a broken neck, back, shoulder and ribs, alongside a severe concussion and collapsed lungs.

And Kate sustained a spinal cord injury which changed her life forever.

While the circumstances forced the end of one chapter, it simultaneously served as the catalyst for an extraordinary evolution – one that has seen her rise to become a premier athlete on the global para-equestrian stage.

The diagnosis was stark – Kate was now a paraplegic.

For a woman whose identity was intertwined with the horse, the most “emotionally debilitating” part of the injury was the belief that she would never ride again.

The path back to the saddle wasn’t found in a hospital wing, but through the resilience of the racing community and organisations like Equine Pathways Australia.

Assisted by high-performance coach Julia Battams, Kate discovered that her ‘athlete’s mentality’ remained untouched by her wheelchair.

Her resurgence has been powered by a remarkable partnership with SW Cruiser, a Warmblood by Clydie gelding purchased with the help of Racing NSW and the wider racing ‘family’.

Together, they have climbed the global ranks.

Kate now has a new equine partner, a Friesan by Warmblood mare named Dame Remi Wolverine, affectionately known as “Winnie”.

They have big goals of being selected for the Los Angeles 2028 and Brisbane 2032 Paralympic Teams.

“I feel so lucky to have this horse which would not have been possible without the sponsorship of Racing NSW, the support of Peter V’landys and other racing industry donors,” Kate said.

“I am extremely grateful for everyone’s support, and I cannot thank all donors enough.”

By early 2024, Kate was ranked 23rd in the world in her grade.

She also secured the title of Champion of her grade at the FEI



Kate Nipperess – has been selected for this year’s Australia Para Dressage High Performance Squad. Image by Georgia Young

Boneo Park event, a critical step in her international campaign.

While her journey was focused on the Paris 2024 Paralympic cycle, Kate’s gaze is now fixed on the future.

As of January 2026, Kate has been named to the Equestrian Australia ‘Generation Next’ High Performance Squad, identifying her as a developing talent for future international podiums.

“We have been selected for the Australia Para Dressage High Performance Squad again this year,” Kate said.

“I spent three days at the Australia Institute of Sport in Canberra recently for our Squad camp, where I was lucky enough to be in sessions with renowned Olympians including Andrew Hoy, Stuart Tinnie and Shane Rose.

“We have our first World Equestrian Games Qualifier at Willinga Park from late February, and preparation for that included competing at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre where we scored a personal best of 69.2%.”

Kate has set her sights on campaigning for the World Equestrian Games, with the final Sydney qualifier set for June 13 to 15. Her impact now extends far beyond the dressage arena.

She works in racing welfare for the charity Team Tye Foundation, run by former champion jockey Tye England.

She is also an official ambassador for the Kids Foundation Tour d’Hore, which raises funds for children and families affected by trauma.

In these roles, Kate can call on her own experiences of trauma to help people facing life-altering injuries or illness.

She continues to advise the ATC Foundation on the retraining of retired racehorses, like Francesco Guardi, for para-equestrian careers.

From the dark days in a hospital bed to the bright lights of international competition, Kate Nipperess has proven that while an accident can change how you ride, it can never change the spirit of the rider. **RNSW**