

WESTERN DRESSAGE ASSOCIATION®

OF AMERICA

WESTERN DRESSAGE RULES FOR ALL BREEDS



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Table of Contents

CHAPTER WD-1	WESTERN DRESSAGE HORSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	- 4 -
WD 101	Goals and Objectives	- 4 -
WD 102	Participation in Western Dressage Competitions.....	- 4 -
CHAPTER WD-2	THE GAITS.....	- 6 -
WD 201	The Walk.....	- 6 -
WD 202	The Jog	- 6 -
WD 203	The Lope.....	- 7 -
WD 204	The Back	- 9 -
WD 205	Faults.....	- 9 -
CHAPTER WD-3	ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS AND METHODS.....	- 9 -
WD 301	The Halt	- 9 -
WD 302	Transitions.....	- 10 -
WD 303	Changes of Direction	- 10 -
WD 304	Figures and Exercises.....	- 11 -
WD 305	Work on Two Tracks and the Lateral Movements.....	- 12 -
WD 306	Turn on the Haunches; Turn on the Forehand	- 16 -
CHAPTER WD-4	COLLECTION, SUBMISSION, IMPULSION, AIDS	- 17 -
WD 401	Collection	- 17 -
WD 402	Impulsion.....	- 17 -
WD 403	Submission	- 17 -
WD 404	Position and Aids of the Rider	- 18 -
CHAPTER WD-5	APPOINTMENTS.....	- 19 -
WD 501	General.....	- 19 -
WD 502	Tack	- 19 -
WD 503	Illegal Equipment in the Competition Ring.....	- 22 -
WD 504	Attire	- 22 -
WD 505	Warm Up Ring and Training Area	- 22 -
WD 506	Officials for Western Dressage Competitions.....	- 23 -
WD 507	Execution and Judging of Tests.....	- 24 -
WD 508	Scoring, Classification and Prize-Giving	- 28 -
WD 509	Elimination	- 29 -

WD 510	Requirements for Western Dressage Competition Management	- 29 -
CHAPTER WD-6	TESTS	- 34 -
WD 601	Tests for Western Dressage Competitions	- 34 -
CHAPTER WD-7	MUSICAL FREESTYLE	- 35 -
WD 701	Performance Directives and Judging	- 35 -
CHAPTER WD-8	SUITABILITY	- 36 -
WD 801	Eligibility	- 36 -
WD 802	Performance Directives and Judging	- 36 -
WD 803	Appointments.....	- 36 -
WD 804	Qualifying Gaits and Class Specifications.....	- 36 -
CHAPTER WD-9	HACK.....	- 37 -
WD 901	Eligibility	- 37 -
WD 902	Performance Directives and Judging	- 37 -
WD 903	Appointments.....	- 37 -
WD 904	Qualifying Gaits and Class Specifications.....	- 37 -
CHAPTER WD-10	SEAT EQUITATION	- 38 -
WD 1001	Eligibility	- 38 -
WD 1002	Judging	- 38 -
WD 1003	Performance Directives	- 38 -
WD 1004	Patterns.....	- 39 -
CHAPTER WD-11	MEDAL EQUITATION.....	- 39 -
WD 1101	Class Specifications.....	- 39 -
WD 1102	Requirements for Specific Classes	- 39 -
WD 1103	Movement Scores.....	- 40 -
WD 1104	Penalties	- 40 -

When a subject is not addressed by these rules it must be addressed by the appropriate committee whose decision will stand as rule until the rule can be formally adopted.

CHAPTER WD-1 WESTERN DRESSAGE HORSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

WD 101 Goals and Objectives

1. The goal of Western Dressage is to develop a partnership between a happy equine athlete working in harmony with his rider. A system of progressive training produces a horse that is physically strong, balanced, supple and flexible; this equine athlete also demonstrates a calm, confident, attentive attitude and is happy to do his job.
2. A Western Dressage horse achieves this goal by using the principles of classical dressage training while emphasizing the lightness and harmony with the rider which is a hallmark of a Western Dressage horse.
3. The Western Dressage horse demonstrates free flowing, comfortable strides. The gaits are free, regular in cadence and rhythm, consistent in speed and tempo.
4. The Western Dressage horse presents a balanced appearance.
5. The Western Dressage horse's head and neck are carried in a relaxed, natural manner; head and neck carriage are dictated by conformation and serve as a balance arm to facilitate proper movement.
6. The Western Dressage horse engages his hindquarters; uses his back freely; and lifts his forehead. These characteristics of framing and movement are more pronounced as the Western Dressage horse advances in his training and development.
7. The Western Dressage horse carries his body in a straight line when required by the maneuvers of the test; The Western Dressage horse carries himself in a consistent curve whose degree of bend is consistent throughout a movement that calls for a curve. The straightness or bend is consistent throughout the horse's body and is dictated by the requirements of the maneuver being performed.
8. Lightness and harmony are the hallmarks of the Western Dressage horse; he willingly accepts a light contact on the bit without tension or resistance. He gives the appearance of performing the requested gaits and maneuvers of his own accord.
9. The horse and rider are one.

WD 102 Participation in Western Dressage Competitions

1. Western Dressage classes are open to riders on horses, mules and/or ponies of any origin.
2. There is no limit on the number of rides on the same day. Horses may be ridden by multiple riders. Shows may limit number of rides per horse and level if stated in their prize list.
3. For purposes of competition in Western Dressage classes:

- a. Individuals are eligible as Junior Exhibitors until the end of the competition year in which they reach the age of 18.
 - b. Competitors shall compete as Adults from the beginning of the competition year in which they reach the age of 22.
 - c. From the beginning of the competition calendar year in which they reach age 18, individuals must possess a current Amateur Certification to be eligible to compete as Amateurs at a USEF licensed competition. For non-USEF affiliates, check the organization's rules for age and eligibility to possess an Amateur Certification.
4. To be eligible to participate as a rider, owner, lessee, coach, or trainer at WDAA recognized competitions persons must be members of WDAA; or pay a non-member fee of \$25 for each competition. A non-member, who wishes to participate as a rider, handler, owner, lessee, agent, coach or trainer at Regular USEF Competitions, Dressage Competitions, Reining Competitions that hold Western Dressage classes, must pay a non-member registration fee for each competition in which competing. Lessees are considered owners in connection with this membership requirement. In the event of an entry under multiple ownership, only one owner need be a Member or pay a non-member registration fee. The competition is responsible for listing either the active member or the owner that paid the non-member fee in the results. The competitions will be responsible for forwarding a list of the names of individuals who pay non-member fees at the competition to WDAA with the post competition report. Payment of non-member fees for the purpose of competing does not entitle the individual to any privileges of the WDAA membership.
- a. Exception: Local Competitions, competitions restricted to a particular breed, and exceptions listed: Participants in the following classes are exempted from the Requirements of this rule: 1) leadline; 2) exhibitions; 3) games and races; 4) classes for 4-H members; 5) walk trot and academy classes (academy classes are classes limited to horses used regularly in a lesson program); 6) Opportunity classes

Requirements for Specific Classes: this was the RCP made for WD Equitation:

Junior Exhibitor (13 and under) Tests – Introductory Tests through Level 1

Junior Exhibitor (14 - 17) Tests – Introductory Tests through Level 3

Young Riders (18 - 21) Tests – Introductory Tests through Level 3

Amateur Division (22 +) Tests – Introductory Tests through Level 3

Open Division Tests – Introductory Tests through Level 3

5. Time-Out: An exhibitor is not allowed to have a time-out in Western Dressage.
6. Suspension of Judging: If it becomes necessary to interrupt a Western Dressage competition for any reason, the unfinished portion may be recommenced and rescheduled for the same or following day at the option of the Show Committee with the official's consent. All scores recorded before the interruption will stand. When classes are recommenced after a delay on the same day, competitors must be given at least 30 minutes' notice of the starting time. Exhibitors whose ride times are changed to or on a

subsequent day as a result of an interrupted competition or inclement weather conditions, must be individually notified at least two hours prior to a rescheduled ride time.

CHAPTER WD-2 THE GAITS

The horse's three gaits, walk, jog and lope will be enhanced and amplified through correct training. Development of his strength and balance as a result of correct training will now let him carry his rider with ease and confidence while maintaining correct rhythm and a steady tempo at all times.

WD 201 The Walk

1. The walk is a **well-marked four time beat** marching gait in a regular cadence and with equal intervals between each beat. This regularity combined with full relaxation must be maintained throughout all walk movements.
2. When the foreleg and the hind leg on the same side swing forward almost at the same time, the walk has a lateral rhythm. This irregularity is a serious fault of the gait.
3. The following walks are recognized: Collected walk, Working walk and Free walk. There should always be a clear difference in the attitude and tracking in these variations.
 - a. Collected Walk. The horse, remaining "on the bit", moves resolutely forward with his neck raised and showing a clear self-carriage. The head approaches the vertical position and a light contact is maintained with the mouth. The hind legs are engaged with good flexion of the joints. The gait should remain marching and vigorous, the feet being placed in regular sequence. The steps cover less ground and are higher than at the Working walk, because all the joints bend more markedly. The step at the Collected walk is shorter than the Working walk, and shows greater activity.
 - b. Working Walk. Four-beat, active, energetic walk with resolutely forward-reaching steps and confident stretch to the bit. Head and neck should swing naturally as a result of a relaxed back and free shoulders. The nose must be in front of the vertical. The hind feet should touch the ground into or beyond the prints of the forefeet.
 - c. Free Walk. A relaxed walk with unconstrained, forward reaching steps where hind feet touch the ground clearly in front of the footprints of the forefeet. The horse must be relaxed and be allowed complete freedom to lower his head and neck to stretch forward and down and out. The length of stride, rhythm, the relaxation and swing through his back are of great importance.

WD 202 The Jog

1. The jog is a **two-beat gait** of alternate diagonal legs (left fore and right hind leg and vice versa) separated by a moment of suspension.
2. The jog should show free, active and regular steps.
3. Excessive speed or slowness will be penalized.

4. The quality of the jog is judged by general impression, i.e. the regularity and elasticity of the steps, the cadence and impulsion in extension at all three paces. This quality originates from a supple back and well-engaged hindquarters, and by the ability to maintain the same rhythm and natural balance in all variations of the jog.
5. The following jogs are recognized: Collected jog, Working jog, Lengthening of Strides and Free Jog.
 - a. Collected Jog. The horse, remaining “on the bit”, moves forward in a two-beat gait with the neck raised and arched and showing clear self-carriage. The head approaches the vertical position and a light contact is maintained with the mouth. The hocks are well-engaged and flexed and must maintain an energetic impulsion, enabling the shoulders to move more freely. Although the horse’s steps are shorter than in the other jogs, elasticity and cadence are not lessened. The Collected jog must be ridden seated.
 - b. Working Jog. An energetic, regular, two-beat jog; the horse must go forward with even and elastic steps. The back must be relaxed and the shoulders free, while there is an obvious push from the hindquarters. The hind legs step actively up under the horse. The horse must show proper balance and maintain light contact with the bit. The horse's nose must be on or in front of the vertical. In the Introductory and Basic tests, the Working jog may be ridden either posting or sitting. In more advanced tests from Level 1 up, the Working jog should be ridden seated.
 - c. Lengthening of Strides. This is a variation of the Working jog; the horse covers more ground through lengthening its frame while maintaining the same tempo as in the Working jog. Excessive will be penalized. Lengthening of stride may be ridden either posting or sitting.
 - d. Free Jog. This is a pace of moderate lengthening of stride and frame compared to the Working jog. Without hurrying, the horse goes forward in a two-beat gait with clearly lengthened steps, with impulsion from the hindquarters and uphill balance. The rider allows the horse to carry the head a little more in front of the vertical than at the Collected and the Working jog. The horse's neck is "out", down and forward, with the nose slightly in front of the vertical, with a loose rein and the poll at approximately the same height as the wither (the neck is level). The steps should be even, and the whole movement balanced and unconstrained. The Free jog may be ridden posting or sitting.
6. Gaited Horses will perform “intermediate or saddle gait” instead of the jog. Competitions may hold Gaited Horse classes; they are to be held as separate classes.

WD 203 The Lope

1. The lope is a gait with three equal, regular beats with time of suspension after the third beat. One stride equals 3 beats, or three footfalls. This gait may be demonstrated on right or left lead. Footfall sequence in right lead is: left hind, right hind and left fore together, right fore, then suspension. Footfall sequence in left lead: right hind, left hind and right fore together, left fore, then suspension.

2. The lope has a typically slower tempo than a canter and must keep the three beat rhythm or the regularity is lost. Excessive speed or slowness must be penalized.
3. The correct lope must be balanced, rhythmic, and with three beats with a clear time of suspension; it must be straight, adjustable and supple, showing willingness to move forward in self-carriage with engaged hindquarters.
4. The quality of the lope is judged by the general impression, i.e. the regularity and lightness of the steps. The uphill tendency of the forehand and the steady cadence, originating from engagement of the hindquarters transmit the energy from back to front and connect into a willing acceptance of the bridle. The horse's mouth is quiet and his poll is soft. The horse should always remain straight on straight lines and correctly bent on curved lines.
5. The following lopes are recognized: Collected lope, Working lope, Lengthening of Strides and Counter lope.
 - a. Collected Lope. The horse, remaining "on the bit", moves forward in a three-beat cadence with the neck raised and arched. The hocks are well-engaged and maintain an energetic impulsion, enabling the shoulders to move more freely, demonstrating self-carriage and an uphill tendency. The horse's strides are shorter than in the other lopes, without losing elasticity and cadence.
 - b. Working Lope. While maintaining the three beat cadence, the horse must go forward with even and elastic steps. The back must be relaxed and the shoulders free; there is an obvious push from the hindquarters and the hind legs step actively up under the horse. The horse must maintain light contact with the bit and his nose must be in front of the vertical.
 - c. Lengthening of Strides. This is a variation of the Working lope; the horse covers more ground through lengthening its frame while maintaining the same tempo as in the Working lope. Excessive speed will be penalized.
 - d. Counter-lope. The counter lope is a balancing and straightening movement. The horse appears to be cantering on the incorrect lead to the direction of travel. The horse lopes in a correct sequence to the left on the right lead; the horse lopes to the right in a correct sequence on the left lead.
6. Change of lead through the Jog. This is a change of lead where the horse is brought back into the jog and after 3-5 strides, strikes off into a lope with the other leg leading.
7. Change of lead through the Walk. This is a movement in which, after a direct transition out of the lope into a walk, with 3-5 clearly defined steps at the walk, an immediate transition is made into the other lead. This is considered a Simple Lead Change when done through the walk.
8. Flying change of lead. The flying change of lead will ideally begin with the sequence of the new outside hind leg, the diagonal pair and followed by the new leading front leg. The change of lead of the hind and front leg take place immediately after the moment of suspension without a break of gait. The aids should be precise and unobtrusive. Flying changes of lead can also be executed in series. For example, flying changes can be performed at every 4th, 3rd, 2nd or at every stride. The horse, even in these series, remains **light, calm and straight** with lively impulsion, maintaining the same

rhythm and balance. In order to not restrict or restrain the lightness, fluency and groundcover of the flying changes in a series, enough impulsion and forwardness must be maintained. The flying lead changes show the reaction, sensitivity and obedience of the horse to the aids.

WD 204 The Back

1. The Back is a rearward diagonal movement with a two-beat rhythm but without a moment of suspension. Each diagonal pair of legs is raised and returned to the ground alternately, with the forelegs aligned on the same track as the hind legs.
2. During the entire exercise, the horse should remain “on the bit”, maintaining his desire to move forward at the slightest indication of the rider.
3. Serious faults are: Anticipation of the movement, resistance to or evasion of the contact of the bit either by raising the neck or going behind the bit, deviation of the hindquarters from the straight line, spreading or inactive hind legs and dragging forefeet.
4. Steps are counted as each foreleg moves back. After completing the required number of steps backward, the horse should show a square stop or move forward in the required gait immediately. In tests where a back of one horse’s length is required, it should be executed with three or four steps.
5. A back series is a combination of two backs with walk steps in between. It should be executed with fluent transitions and the required number of steps.

WD 205 Faults

Faults of gaits include crookedness, loss of rhythm; tight and tense back with short stiff neck; horse on forehand and/or leaning on the bit; nose consistently behind the vertical; raising of the head to avoid collection, changing tempo; and evasion of contact which can come from improper training, too harsh a bit, or bad hands. In all cases faults will be penalized.

CHAPTER WD-3 ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS AND METHODS

WD 301 The Halt

1. At the halt the horse should stand attentive, engaged motionless, straight and square with the weight evenly distributed over all four legs. The neck should be raised with the poll as the highest point and the head slightly in front of the vertical. While remaining “on the bit” and maintaining a light and soft contact with the rider’s hand, the horse may quietly mouth the bit and should be ready to move off at the slightest indication of the rider.
2. The halt is obtained by the displacement of the horse’s weight to the hindquarters by a properly increased action of the seat and legs of the rider, driving the horse towards a soft hand, causing an almost instantaneous but not abrupt stop at a previously fixed place.
3. The quality of the gaits before and after the stop is an important part of the assessment.

WD 302 Transitions

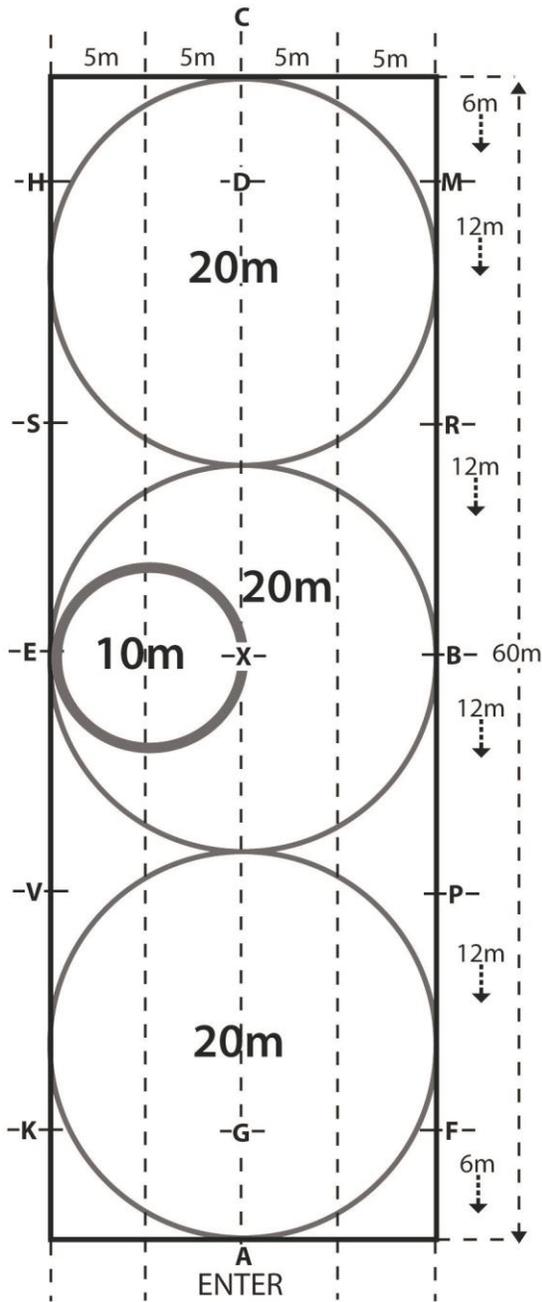
1. The changes of gait and pace should be clearly shown when the rider's leg is at the prescribed marker; they should be quickly made yet must be smooth and not abrupt. The cadence of a gait or pace should be maintained up to the moment when the gait or pace is changed or the horse halts. The horse should remain light in hand, calm and maintain a correct position.
2. On a diagonal, the transition is made when the rider's leg is at the letter at the end of the diagonal.
3. When riding the long diagonal, the rider should wait to change rein and post at the end of line, instead of making the change of diagonal at X.

WD 303 Changes of Direction

1. At changes of direction, the horse should adjust the bend of his body to the curvature of the line he follows, remaining supple and following the aids of the rider, without any resistance or change of gait, rhythm or speed. Corners should be ridden as one-quarter of a circle appropriate to the level of the test.
2. Changes of directions can be executed in the following ways:
 - a. Right-angled turn including riding through the corner (one quarter of a small circle of approximately 6 meters).
 - b. Short and long diagonal.
 - c. Half small circles and half small circles with change of rein.
 - d. Turn on the forehand and turn on the haunches.
 - e. Serpentine loops.
 - f. Counter-changes of hand (in zig-zag). * The horse should be straight for a moment before changing direction.

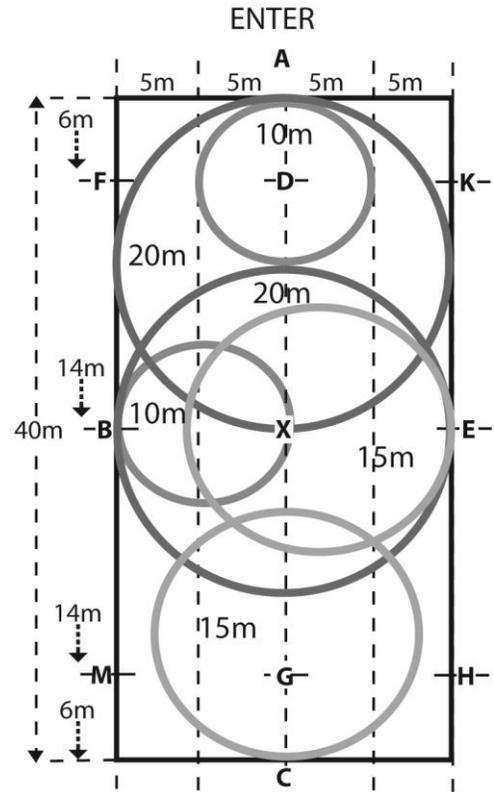
WD 304 Figures and Exercises

1. The figures asked for in Western Dressage tests are: the circles, the serpentines and the figure eights.
 - a. Circle. The circle is a round figure, which varies in size according to the requirements of each test. The diameter of a circle is specified in each test.



Basic Circle in the 20m x 60m (large) court.

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Basic Circles in the 20m x 40m (small) court.

- b. Serpentine: there are three variations.
 - 1) The serpentine with several loops touching the long side of the arena consists of equal connected half circles. Depending on the size of the half circles, the straight connection varies in length.
 - 2) The serpentine with one loop on the long side of the arena is executed with 5-meter or 10-meter distance from the track.
 - 3) The Serpentine around the centerline is executed between the quarter lines. The loops must show bend in both directions and change their bend as they cross the quarter line (or mid-way, depending on its prescribed size).
- c. Figure eight. This figure consists of two circles of equal size as specified in the test, joined at the center of the eight. The rider should make his horse straight an instant before changing direction at the center of the figure.

2. The Exercises.

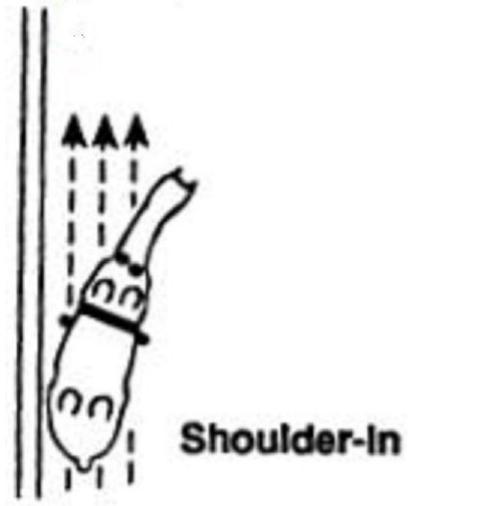
- a. Stretching Through the Frame. The horse gradually takes the reins, stretching forward and downward with light contact, while maintaining balance, rhythm and tempo and quality of the gait. Important: **The horse must point his nose clearly forward.**
- b. Release of Rein. This is a clear release of contact while the horse maintains self- carriage, rhythm, tempo, straightness, and quality of gait. The rider lets his hand(s) move forward from the elbow.

WD 305 Work on Two Tracks and the Lateral Movements

- 1. The aim of movements on **Two Tracks** is:
 - a. To improve the obedience of the horse to the aids of the rider;
 - b. To supple all parts of the horse thereby increasing the freedom of his shoulders and the suppleness of his quarters as well as the elasticity of the bond connecting the mouth, the poll, the neck, the back and the haunches;
 - c. To improve the balance, cadence and straightness and bring the gaits into harmony.
- 2. In all lateral movements - shoulder in, counter shoulder in, haunches in, haunches out, half-pass - the horse is slightly bent and moves with the forehand and the hindquarters on different tracks.
 - a. Lateral movements are the beginning of collection
 - b. The bend or flexion must never be exaggerated so that it impairs the balance and fluency of the movement concerned.
 - c. At the lateral movements the gait should remain free and regular, maintained by a constant impulsion and forwardness, yet it must be supple, cadenced and balanced. The impulsion should not be lost because of the rider's preoccupation

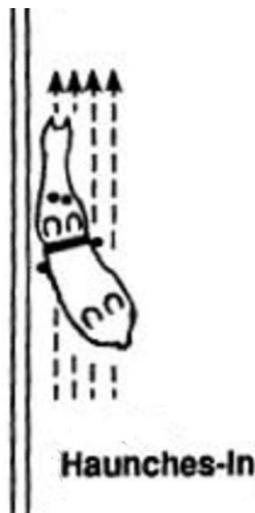
mainly in bending the horse and pushing him sideways. The horse should maintain rhythm and not lose impulsion.

- d. At all lateral movements the horse is bent in the direction in which he is moving.
1. Shoulder-In. The horse is ridden with a slight but uniform bend around the inside leg of the rider maintaining cadence at a constant angle of approximately 30 degrees. The horse's inside foreleg passes in front of the outside foreleg; the inside hind leg steps forward under the horse's body weight following the same track of the outside foreleg, while lowering the inside hip. The horse's footfall creates three tracks. The horse is bent away from the direction in which he is moving.



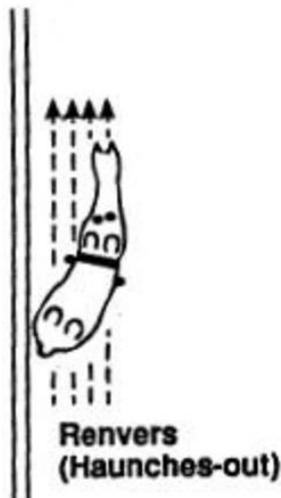
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2. Haunches-In (Travers). The horse is slightly bent round the inside leg of the rider. The forehand remains on the track and the quarters are moved inwards. The horse is bent in the direction in which he is moving. To start the haunches-in, the hindquarters should leave the track or, after a corner or circle, are not brought back onto the track. At the end of the haunches-in, the hindquarters are brought back on the track as one would finish a circle, without any counter-flexion of the poll/neck. The horse's footfall creates four tracks.



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3. Renvers (Haunches-Out). This is the inverse movement in relation to haunches-in. The hindquarters remain on the track while the forehand is moved inward. To finish the haunches-out, the forehand is aligned with the hindquarters on the track. Otherwise, the same principles and conditions that apply to the haunches-in are applicable to the haunches-out. The horse is slightly bent around the rider's inside leg. The horse is bent in the direction in which he is moving. The forehand is displaced to the inside. Balance and cadence are maintained.

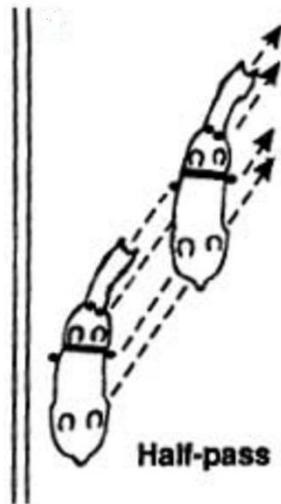


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4. Half-pass. This movement is a variation of haunches-in, executed on a diagonal line instead of along the wall. The horse should be slightly bent around the inside leg of the rider and into the direction in which he is moving. The horse should maintain the same cadence and balance throughout the whole movement. In order to give more freedom and mobility

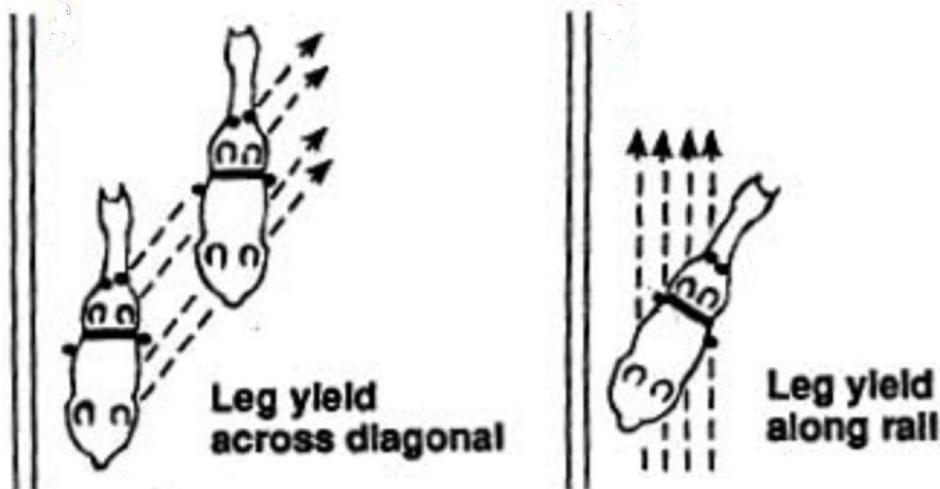
to the shoulders, it is of great importance that the impulsion be maintained, especially the engagement of the inside hind leg. The horse's body is nearly parallel to the long side of the arena with the forehand slightly in advance of the hindquarters. The bend in the half-pass should increase with the steepness of the diagonal.

- a. In the jog and the lope, the movement is performed in a series of forward/sideways strides. Aims of the half-pass in the jog and the lope: Show a fluent collected jog movement on a diagonal line with a greater degree of bend than in shoulder-in. Fore and hind legs cross, balance and cadence are maintained.
- b. The aims of the half-pass: to both demonstrate and develop the collection and suppleness by moving fluently forward and sideways without any loss of rhythm, balance or softness and submission to the bend.



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5. Leg yield. Leg yielding is not a lateral movement. The horse is almost straight, except for a slight flexion at the poll away from the direction in which he moves, so that the rider is just able to see the corner of the eye and nostril on the inside. The inside legs pass and cross in front of the outside legs. Leg-yielding can be performed on the diagonal in which case the horse should be as close as possible parallel to the long sides of the arena although the forehand should be slightly in advance of the hindquarters. The leg yield can also be ridden along the wall with approximately a 35 degree angle.



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WD 306 Turn on the Haunches; Turn on the Forehand

1. Turn on the Haunches. Two methods of performing a turn on the haunches are allowed
 - a. The horse may walk a small circle with the rear feet, as to maintain the rhythm of the walk. (This method is found in Dressage.)
 - b. In keeping with traditional Western Stock horse movements, the horse is allowed to pivot the inside hind leg and step around it with the outside hind leg. The horse pushes off with the outside hind leg. The pivot leg is allowed to pickup and reset when it reaches the point of stress.

Both methods must be judged equally. It is not allowed to switch off from one method to the other, if done 3 points will be deducted from the movement. If the horse takes a backward step with one or both of the hind legs, it will be a .5 deduction for each backward step.

2. Turn on the Forehand. This is the inverse of the turn on the haunches. It is executed out of a halt or a working walk prepared by half-halts to shorten the steps. The horse's hindquarters make a circle around the horse's stationary front end. The horse must bend slightly in his ribcage around the rider's inside leg. As with the turn on the haunches, it can be executed on a diameter of approximately one meter. The horse must maintain the same rhythm, contact and activity and show willingness to be on the outside rein. Stepping back is a fault.

CHAPTER WD-4 COLLECTION, SUBMISSION, IMPULSION, AIDS

WD 401 Collection

1. Collection is achieved by increased weight bearing of the horse's haunches, thereby lowering the croup and lightening the forehand to allow the shoulders more freedom.
2. The aim of the collection of the horse is to add to the ease and carriage of the horse, to increase the strength and athleticism, and to make him more pleasurable to ride.
3. Horses ridden with the face behind the vertical plane must be penalized.
4. The position of the head and neck of a horse at the collected gaits is naturally dependent on the stage of training and on his conformation. It should, however, be distinguished by the neck being raised and unrestrained, forming a harmonious curve from the withers to the poll which is the highest point. The head is slightly in front of the vertical. However, when the rider applies his aids in order to obtain a momentary and passing collecting effect, the head may momentarily become more or less vertical.
5. The lightness of contact, which is the hallmark of Western Dressage, shall be demonstrated in collection.
6. A marked lowering of the horse's pelvis and an increased flexion of the hocks should be demonstrated. This is also called "coiling of the loins".

WD 402 Impulsion

1. Impulsion is the term used to describe the transmission of an eager and energetic, yet controlled, positive forward energy generated from the hindquarters into the athletic movement of the horse. Its ultimate expression can be shown only through the horse's soft, relaxed, swinging back guided by a light, elastic contact with the rider's hand.
2. **Speed, of itself, has nothing to do with impulsion**; the result is more often a flattening of the gaits. A visible characteristic of impulsion is a more pronounced articulation of the hind leg, in a continuous rather than staccato action. The hock, as the hind foot leaves the ground, should first move forward rather than being pulled upwards and certainly not backwards. A prime ingredient of impulsion is the time the horse spends in the air rather than on the ground. Impulsion is, therefore, seen only in those gaits that have a period of suspension.
3. Impulsion is required for a good collection in the jog and lope. If there is no impulsion, then there is nothing to collect.

WD 403 Submission

1. Submission of the horse does not mean subordination, but an obedience revealing its presence by a constant attention, willingness and confidence in the whole behavior of the horse as well as by the harmony, lightness and ease he is displaying in the execution of the different movements.

Submission is also demonstrated by the way the horse accepts the bit, with light contact and a supple poll. Resistance to or evasion of the contact, by being either "above the bit" or "behind the bit" demonstrate lack of submission.

- a. Putting out the tongue, keeping it above the bit or drawing it up altogether, as well as grinding the teeth or agitation of the tail, are mostly signs of nervousness, tension or resistance on the part of the horse and must be taken into account by the judges in their marks for every movement concerned, as well as in the collective mark for submission.
- b. Willingness is the most important consideration of submission. The horse understands what is being asked of him and is confident in the rider by reacting to the aids without fear or tension.
- c. The horse's straightness, uphill tendency and balance enable him to stay in front of the rider's legs and go forward into an accepting, light and self-carrying contact with the bit. This is what really produces the picture of harmony and lightness.
- d. Harmony between the horse and rider is demonstrated by the horse and rider moving as "one". The rider uses tactful cues; the horse performs without resistance, agitation or wariness. The horse shows attention and confidence in his ease of movements and acceptance of the bit while staying up in the poll and keeping his nose in front of the vertical. The degree of lightness increases as the horse advances in his training.

WD 404 Position and Aids of the Rider

1. All the Western Dressage movements should be obtained with imperceptible aids and without apparent effort of the rider. The rider should be well-balanced, elastic, sitting deep in the center of the saddle, smoothly absorbing the movement of the horse with his core muscles, supple thighs with the legs steady and stretched well down. The heels should be the lowest point with the ankles relatively relaxed. The upper part of the body should be tall and supple demonstrating a vertical alignment of shoulder to hip to heel. The light contact of the rider's hands should be independent from the rider's seat. The hands should be carried steadily in a style appropriate to the style of rein and bit being used with **a straight line from the supple elbow through the hand to the horse's** mouth. The elbows should be close to the body. All of these criteria enable the rider to follow the movements of the horse smoothly and freely.
2. The rider may use one or two hands with a curb bit but may not go from one handed to two handed during an individual test.
3. The rider must use two hands with a snaffle bit, hackamore (Bosal), bitless bridle or two rein bridle (reference 502.2 and 502.2.f.)
4. Not only are the aids of the rider's hands and the legs, but also of the seat of great importance in Western Dressage. The rider who understands how to properly engage the core muscles at the right moment is able to influence the horse correctly.
5. The effectiveness of the rider's aids determines the accurate fulfillment of the required movements of the tests. There should always be the impression of a harmonious cooperation between horse and rider.
6. Quiet use of the voice and clicking of the tongue is permitted.

CHAPTER WD-5 APPOINTMENTS

WD 501 General

1. A breastplate and/or crupper may be used.
2. A western cavesson (pencil bosal, braided or plain) with space for two fingers placed between the cavesson and the jowl of the horse is allowed. No metal, studs of any kind or other substances can be used in conjunction with or part of a western leather cavesson.
3. The C2 Steward or person designated by the C2 Steward or a designated person (at a USEF licensed competition) or a designated person at a WDAA recognized competition will be responsible for the overseeing the checking of tack, bits, etc. A horse must be eliminated from the test just completed if the bit is in violation of the rules and/or the tongue has been tied. **All horses in each class/test must be inspected upon completion of their ride.**

WD 502 Tack

1. **Bridles:** Any western type headstall must be used.
 - a. A western cavesson (pencil bosal, braided or plain is allowed).
 - b. Hackamores (Bosal) are permitted on a horse of any age at any level.
 - i. A hackamore includes a bosal rounded in shape and constructed of braided rawhide or leather and must have a flexible non-metallic core, attached to a suitable headstall. No other material of any kind is to be used in conjunction with the bosal, i.e. steel, metal or chains.
 - ii. Bosals may be wrapped with smooth electrical tape to prevent rubbing.
 - c. Native and national bridles are permitted.
 - d. Bitless bridles of Western style made of leather or leather like materials.
 - e. The Western Two Rein bridle is permitted. This is a bridle and bit, snaffle or curb ridden over a full or pencil bosal with a romal; hence a bit rein and a mecate rein is held in each hand.
 - f. Romal reins are appropriate only with a curb bit and can only be ridden with one hand.
 - g. A rider can ride with two hands with only split reins, connected reins, or mecate type reins (without the popper such as in Romel reins). So romal can only be used for one handed with a curb.
2. **Snaffle Bit:** Any snaffle bit may be used on a horse of any age being ridden at any level. **WDAA strongly recommends the use of snaffles or bosals for junior horses 5 and under.** Competitions may choose to hold junior horse (5 and under) classes that are restricted to snaffles or bosals.

- a. A snaffle offers no leverage or curb action. A Western Dee bit and/or bits that are slotted for the headstall and reins are addressed in WD 502.3, Curb Bit. The rider must use two hands with a snaffle bit.
 - i. A standard snaffle is a conventional O-Ring, Egg Butt or D-Ring, all with rings having an outside diameter no smaller than 2 inches (50.8 mm), nor larger than 4 inches (101.6 mm). The inside of the circumference of the ring must be free of rein, curb or headstall attachments that would provide leverage.
 - ii. Bars: Bars of the mouthpiece must be round, oval or egg shaped, smooth and unwrapped, except with latex; and no less than 5/16 inch (7.9 mm) to ¾ inch (19.05 mm) in diameter measured one inch (25 mm) from the cheek with a gradual decrease to the center of the snaffle. May be inlaid if smooth. The mouthpiece may be two or three piece.
 - iii. Three-Piece Mouthpiece: If a mouthpiece is three pieces, a connecting ring must be no larger than 1 1/4 inches (31.75 mm) in diameter, or a connecting flat bar must be no longer than 2 inches (50.8 mm) and 3/8 inch (9.5 mm) to ¾ inch (19.05 mm), measured top-to-bottom, and must lie flat in the horse's mouth.
 - iv. A Mullen Mouth (solid mouthpiece), barrel mouthpiece, full cheeks or Naptha Bits (plastic or rubber) may be used.
 - v. If a bit hobble is used on a ring snaffle it must be attached below the reins.
 - vi. No flat, sharp, slow twist, twisted or pointed edges on mouthpieces are allowed.
 - vii. Horsehair or rope reins and mecate are allowed for bosals and snaffles. The mecate can be tied to the saddle horn or held by the rider.
3. **Curb Bit:** There is no discrimination against any standard Western bit. . A standard Western curb bit may be used on a horse of any age being ridden at any level; rider may use one or two hands with a curb bit. A Standard Western Bit is defined as a bit with leverage. It may or may not have shanks; the maximum length of the shanks is 8 1/2 inches (21.59 cm). Shanks may be fixed or loose. A bit which has slots for attaching the headstall and/or rein is a leverage bit and is permitted.
 - a. Bars of the mouthpiece must be round, smooth and unwrapped (except with latex) metal of 5/16 inch (7.9 mm) to ¾ inch (19.05 mm) in diameter measured one inch (25 mm) from the cheek. It may be inlaid, but smooth, or latex wrapped. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three piece, connecting ring of 1 1/4 inch (31.7 mm) or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8 inch to ¾ inch (9.5 mm – 19.05 mm) measured top to bottom with a maximum length of 2 inches (50 mm), which lies flat in the horse's mouth, is acceptable.
 - b. The port must be no higher than 3 1/2 inches (8.89 cm). Rollers attached to the center of the bit and covers are acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, half-breeds and spades are acceptable.

- c. Wire on the braces (above the bars and attaching to the spade) of a traditional spade bit is acceptable.
 - d. Reins must be attached to each shank. Split reins, romal reins, rein chains (spade bit) or loop reins are allowed.
 - e. Curb chains, if used, and flat leather chin straps must be at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) in width and lie flat against the jaw of the horse. No wire, rawhide, metal or other substance can be used in conjunction with or as part of the flat leather chin strap or curb chain. Round, rolled, braided or rawhide curb straps are prohibited.
 - f. A slobber guard on a curb bit is permitted.
4. **Illegal Bits:** All curb bits must be must be free of mechanical devices. Nothing such as extensions, rivets or prongs, may protrude below the mouthpiece (bars). The following are prohibited:
- a. Slip or gag bits, donut or flat polo mouthpieces and kimberwicks.
 - b. Roping bits with reins attached to a single ring at the center of a cross bar.
 - c. Any rein design or other devices which increases the effective length and thereby the leverage of the shank of a standard western bit.
 - d. Anything that alters the intended use of equipment as provided for in the description of appointments for a given class/test.
5. **Reins:** If a snaffle bit is used the Rider must hold one rein in each hand, (right rein, right hand, left rein, left hand) If the Rider is riding with a curb bit he or she has the option of using Romal reins or Split reins.
- a. If Romal reins are used the Rider must hold the rein in one hand with no fingers between the reins. The free hand must hold the tail and popper, rolled or straight, and must be at least 16 inches from the rein hand.
 - b. If the rider uses split reins they must hold the rein with one hand, held palm down rider is allowed to have one finger only, between the reins. The tails of the reins must fall on the same side as the hand holding the rein.
 - c. At the end of the Free Walk or Free Jog, riders using Split reins or Romal reins may use the free or off hand to pull the reins back to the desired length. This is the only time the Rider may use two hands on the reins.
6. **Saddle:** A standard stock saddle, national, working saddle, Aussie, native or western side saddle is to be used but silver equipment will not count over a good working outfit. A horn is not required but western style fenders are required. Tapaderos are permitted, except in Western Dressage Equitation.
- a. Padding or pads on the seat of the saddle is permissible.
7. **Whips:** One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm) including lash, is permitted in all Classes/Tests.

WD 503 **Illegal Equipment in the Competition Ring**

1. The use of martingales, bit guards, any kind of gadgets (such as bearing, side, running, balancing reins, nasal strips, tongue tied down, etc.), any kind of boots (including “easy-boots”) or tail bandages and any form of blinkers, earmuffs or plugs, and nose covers, are cause for elimination. Protective manufactured leg wraps are permitted, with color matching natural color of the horse as much as possible.
2. Fly hoods (ear covers) will only be permitted in order to protect horses from insects. The fly hoods should be discreet and should not cover the horse’s eyes, and will only be permitted in extreme cases at the discretion of the judge. Permission must be granted prior to the class and applies to all competitors in the class.
3. Rein additions or attachments except for rein chains used in conjunction with a spade bit.
4. Any decoration of the horse with extravagant items, such as ribbons or flowers, etc. in the mane, tail, etc.
5. Flash, figure eight or dropped nosebands.
6. Mechanical Hackamores.

WD 504 **Attire**

1. Required apparel:
 - a. Suitable western hat.
 - b. Long-sleeved shirt with any type of collar: short sleeves may be worn at the discretion of the judge.
 - c. Trousers, pants, a one-piece long sleeved equitation suit provided it includes a collar.
 - d. Boots.
 - e. Native and National attire can be worn when riding in Native or National tack.
2. Optional apparel:
 - a. Necktie, kerchief, bolo tie or pin;
 - b. A vest, jacket, coat and/or sweater.
 - c. Spurs of Western style, with or without blunt tines, or English dressage style.
 - d. Chaps, shotgun chaps, or chinks.
 - e. **Protective headgear is acceptable; not required to be of Western style.**

WD 505 **Warm Up Ring and Training Area**

1. The restrictions regarding Illegal Equipment (**see WD 603**) apply to warm-up and other training areas; however, training martingales (only with snaffle rein or plain snaffle bridle), boots, bandages (without magnets) and earmuffs are permitted. A training martingale consists of a divided strap attached to the girth that does not provide downward pull; the extension of each strap must be connected from the point of

division only to the rein on the same side and must be free to slide. The rings through which the reins slide must be connected to a neck strap.

2. Fly hoods (ear covers) that do not cover the horse's eyes are permitted in the warm-up and other training areas.
3. Single direct side reins or double sliding side reins (triangle reins) are permitted only when longeing (mounted or unmounted). A single direct side rein is defined as an auxiliary rein affixed to the bit and to the girth, saddle or surcingle on the side of the horse (not between the legs).
4. Only one longe line is permitted while longeing. A longe line must attach only to the halter, cavesson or snaffle bit of a bridle and go directly to the hand of the longeur.
5. The following whips are permitted for schooling only:
 - a. One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash, may be carried by the rider when mounted.
 - b. One longeing whip is permitted only when longeing. There is no restriction on the length of whip permitted for working a horse in hand.

WD 506 Officials for Western Dressage Competitions

1. Judges

- a. Western Dressage classes offered at WDAA recognized shows must be judged by either a graduate of an USDF "L" Dressage program or by a licensed USEF Dressage judge in good standing.
- b. At a USEF licensed Western Dressage competition a USEF Dressage Judge must officiate.
- c. Any judge officiating in Western Dressage at a USEF or WDAA recognized competition must be a current member in good standing with the Western Dressage Association® of America.
- d. Exception: Western Dressage Suitability, Western Dressage Hack and Western Dressage Seat Equitation must be judged by:
 - i. A licensed Federation judge with experience in judging Breed Restricted Classes
 - ii. A licensed competition judge at Breed Restricted competitions
 - iii. The Western Dressage judge

2. Stewards

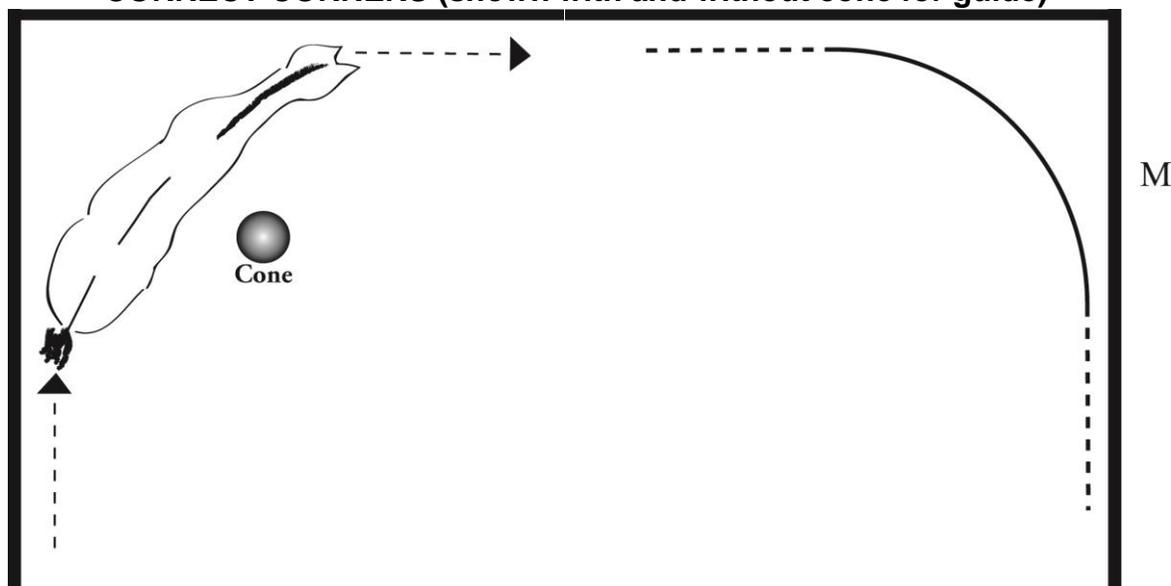
- a. Inspection of tack and bits must be done by or at the direction of the Competition Steward if at a USEF licensed competition or by a designated person if at a WDAA recognized competition. **See WD 501.**
 - i. WDAA recognized competitions (which are not USEF licensed) must designate an individual to check each entry for compliance with the regulations governing bits and use of spurs and whips. This inspection must be conducted outside the Western Dressage ring immediately following the completion of the test.

- ii. A USEF licensed competition which offers Western Dressage tests/classes may use either a USEF licensed C2 Steward.
- b. Tack and bits on both sides of each horse must be inspected and checked for each class/test and must be done immediately as the horse leaves the arena. Competitors will be asked to drop the bridle of the horse, removing the bit to below the mouth of the horse. A magnet may be used to detect the presence of metal in nosebands. Random pulling of leg wraps and protective boots will also occur at this time. **See WD 501**
- c. Any evidence of blood on the horse's mouth or sides or the addition of substances or devices behind wraps or boots will result in elimination of the entry for that class/test.
- d. The checking of the bridle must be done with the greatest caution, as some horses are very touchy and sensitive about their mouths.
- e. Bit inspectors must use a new disposable protective glove for each horse.
- f. The responsibility for the correct attire and equipment rests with the competitor.

WD 507 Execution and Judging of Tests

1. **Calling Tests.** All Western Dressage Tests may be called during the competition. If test is announced, it is the responsibility of the competitor to arrange for a person to announce the test. Unless an exception is made by the judge, the announcing of the test must start with the first movement. Lateness and errors in announcing the ride will not relieve the rider from "error penalties". Announcing the tests is limited to reading the movement as it is written once only. However, the repetition of reading of a movement is acceptable if there is reason to doubt that the rider heard the original call. All Freestyle Rides must be ridden from memory.
2. **Salute.** At the salute riders must take the reins in one hand. A lady rider shall let one arm drop loosely along her body and then incline her head in a slight bow; a gentleman rider shall remove his hat and let his arm drop loosely along his body or may render the salute as does a lady rider.
3. **Voice.** The quiet use of the voice or clicking the tongue once or repeatedly is permitted.
4. **Touch.** Petting the horse is allowed during the test as a gentle reward.
5. **Corners of the Dressage Arena:** A rider should ride their horse as deeply as possible into the corners of the Dressage Arena while maintaining impulsion, balance, bend and rhythm.

CORRECT CORNERS (shown with and without cone for guide)



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6. Errors.

- a. When a competitor makes an "error of the course" (takes the wrong turn, omits a movement, etc.) the Judge warns him by sounding the bell. The Judge shows him if necessary the point at which he must take up the test again and the next movement to be executed then leaves him to continue by himself.
- b. Every "error of the course" whether the bell is sounded or not, must be penalized, as noted above:
 - 1) The first time by 2 points;
 - 2) The second time by 4 points;
 - 3) The third time the competitor is eliminated. However, at the discretion of the judge, the rider may continue to finish the test. If the competitor's continued presence in the ring is about to interfere with the start of the next scheduled ride, then the judge must excuse him/her from the ring.
 - 4) For Freestyle tests, two points will be deducted for each error, however they are not cumulative and will not result in elimination.
 - 5) When the competitor makes an "error of the test" (at the salute does not take the reins in one hand, etc.) he must be penalized as for an "error of the course".
 - 6) If the judge has not noted an error the competitor has the benefit of the doubt.

7) The penalty points are deducted on each judge's sheet from the total earned by the competitor.

2. Other Errors.

- a. Not entering the arena within 45 seconds.
- b. Entering the arena before the sound of the bell.
- c. Switching from one hand to two hands or vice versa during a test (with exception of Freestyle tests where changing is acceptable.)

3. Lameness. In the case of marked lameness the judge informs the competitor that he is eliminated. There is no appeal against his decision.

4. Judging a Test.

- a. The mark for each movement should first establish the fact of whether the movement is marginal (5 or below) or higher. The judge should state the reason for his judgment, at least when giving marks of 6 and below.
- b. If a problem appears once it may be treated lightly by the judge; if it appears successively he will score it more harshly each time, i.e., nodding, stumbling, shying, etc.
- c. Grinding of the teeth and excessive wringing of the tail are signs of tenseness or resistance on the part of the horse and should be considered in the marks for each movement where they appear, as well as in the Collective Marks. Horses demonstrating relaxed and free carriage of the tail shall be rewarded. Horses that get their tongues over the bit or perform with an open mouth shall be marked down. **See WD 403 - Section 1a**
- d. The levels of Western Dressage are offered as a means of evaluating a horse that is changing and developing. The purpose of each test is printed on the cover. The horse shall be considered in light of the degree of training he should have achieved to be shown at that level.
- e. In the case of a fall of horse and/or rider the competitor will be eliminated.
- f. If the horse leaves the arena with or without the rider (all four feet outside the fence or line marking the arena perimeter) between the beginning and end of the test, the competitor is eliminated.
- g. A test begins with the entry at "A" and ends after the final salute, as soon as the horse moves forward; except in Freestyle, where the test begins in the first stride after the salute and ends at the final salute. The competitor should leave the arena at "A" at a walk, on long or loose rein.
- h. Horses, that enter the arena with their tongues tied down, shall be eliminated.
- i. The judge may stop a test and/or allow a competitor to restart a test from the beginning or from any appropriate point in the test if, in his discretion, some unusual circumstance has occurred to interrupt a test. Time-outs are not permitted in the Western Dressage division.

- j. After the sound of the bell, the competitor should enter the arena at “A” as soon as possible. Exceeding 45 seconds before entering the arena after the bell has sounded will entail elimination. No competitor can be required to ride prior to his scheduled time without his written consent.
- k. Any continuing resistance, which prevents the continuation of the test for longer than 20 seconds, is cause for elimination. However, resistance that may endanger the rider, horse, judge or the public will result in elimination for safety reasons earlier than within twenty (20) seconds.
- l. All movements and certain transitions from one to another, which have to be marked by the judge, are numbered on the judge’s sheets. They are marked 0 to 10, 0 being the lowest mark and 10 being the highest. Half marks from 0.5-9.5 may also be used both for movements and collective marks, at the discretion of the judge, and all scores given must be recorded with a decimal (i.e., as 6.0 instead of 6).

5. The scale of marks is as follows:

10 Excellent	4 Insufficient
9 Very Good	3 Fairly Bad
8 Good	2 Bad
7 Fairly Good	1 Very Bad
6 Satisfactory	0 Not executed
5 Marginal	
	“ <i>Not executed</i> ” means that practically nothing of the required movement has been performed.

- 6. Collective marks are awarded (from 0 to 10, including half marks) after the competitor has finished his performance for:
 - a. Gaits.
 - b. Impulsion.
 - c. Submission.
 - d. The rider’s position, seat and hand(s).
 - e. Correctness and effect use of the aids.
 - f. Accuracy.
 - g. Harmony.
- 7. Unauthorized Assistance is forbidden under penalty of elimination. Any intervention by a third party with the object of facilitating the task of the competitor, including voice, signals, etc., is illegal assistance. Except in the case of an error, any outside assistance provided by or NOT authorized by the Judge will result in elimination. A Judge may not discuss a ride with a competitor before the bell.
- 8. The execution of the tests is not timed, except for the Freestyle Test. The time shown on the Judge's sheet is for scheduling purposes only.

WD 508 Scoring, Classification and Prize-Giving

1. After each performance and after the judge has given his Collective Marks which must be done with due consideration, the judge's sheets pass into the hands of the scorers. Having two scorers is recommended. Scores and comments must be written in ink. It is recommended that adding machine tape is initialed and attached to the test. Any corrected score must be initialed by the judge having made the correction. The marks are multiplied by the corresponding co-efficient where applicable and then totaled. Penalty points incurred for errors in the execution of the test are then deducted on each judge's sheet.
2. The total score for the classification is obtained by adding the total points. Total final results must be published in marks as well as in percentages with numbers to three places after the decimal point. Scores must be posted on a public scoreboard as soon as possible after each ride or within one hour. The public scoreboard may be in either paper or electronic format. The name of the judge must be posted, as well as the time of the posting.
3. Individual Classification. In all competitions the winner is the competitor having the highest total points, the second placed competitor is the one with the next highest total points and so on. In case of equality of points the competitor with the highest marks received under General Impressions shall be declared the winner. When the scores for General Impressions are equal the horses must remain tied. Errors on a test may not be used to break ties.
4. Final results for each class must be posted as soon as possible after the class is completed and all results must include total points and percentages with numbers to three places after the decimal point, eliminated horses, and the placing of each horse that receives an award. If a competitor withdraws (scratches) prior to a class or is excused, eliminated or a "no show" prior to or during the performance of a test, the words "scratched", "excused", "eliminated", or "no show" or abbreviations of each, must appear after the competitor's name in the result sheet. The published final results may be in paper or electronic format and must remain posted throughout the entire competition.
5. Video tape may not be used to dispute a judge's decision.
6. When the total of the scores for General Impressions is equal, ties in classes, which involve prize money, shall remain tied for the purpose of dividing prize money.
7. A judge is free to leave when all scores from his class/tests are totaled and the protest/inquiry time has expired.
8. If a mathematical error on the score sheet is discovered, it must be brought to the attention of competition management within 1 hour of the official posting of the scores from the last class of that competition day. Competition Management must announce said posting, and must make test sheets available to competitors immediately.
9. After the awards for a class have been presented, the judge's score sheet should be given to the competitor. The score sheet must be handed directly to the competitor or his representative. Privacy must be maintained.

10. It is recommended that scorers and scribes may not be a competitor, or an owner, coach, trainer or family member of a competitor/horse in the class(es) in which they are scoring or scribing.

WD 509 Elimination

1. Horse and rider combinations shall be eliminated from the competition for “**a, f and i**” below; horse and rider combination shall be eliminated from the current or next class depending on which is closest to the time the incident occurred for all others, under the following circumstances:
 - a. Misrepresentation of entry or inappropriate entry.
 - b. Bucking while riding a test.
 - c. Use of illegal equipment.
 - d. Unauthorized assistance.
 - e. Three errors of the course or test.
 - f. Horse’s tongue tied down.
 - g. Late entry into the arena.
 - h. All four feet of the horse leave the arena with or without rider.
 - i. Cruelty including excessive spurring.
 - j. Resistance of longer than 20 seconds.
 - k. Concern for the safety of rider, other exhibitors or their entries
 - l. Evidence of blood on a horse in the competition arena shall be cause for elimination from the class by the judge at “C”. Evidence of blood on a horse outside the competition arena shall be cause for elimination by competition management, after consultation with the steward (USEF licensed competition) or designated person (WDAA recognized competition), from either the last class in which the horse competed or next class in which he is scheduled to compete, depending on which is closest to the time the incident occurred. Environmental causes such as insect bites shall normally not be cause for elimination.
 - m. Failure of the competitor to wear their number.
 - n. Any situation where a direct rule violation can be cited. Where a violation cannot be cited, a competitor is not eliminated.

WD 510 Requirements for Western Dressage Competition Management

1. All classes must be listed in the prize list.
2. When permitted by the rules or special criteria, classes may be divided into separate divisions or sections based on qualifications, age or other eligibility of horses or riders.
3. Divisions or sections of a class are considered to be a separate “class” only if listed as such in the prize list. Divisions or sections of a class may be held in different rings and

judged by different judges. When divisions or sections are held under different conditions (i.e., different ring or judges), separate awards must be given.

4. When entries warrant, competitions are encouraged to split classes into separate divisions, and to provide separate awards for Open riders, Amateurs and Junior/Young Riders. Horses may be ridden only once in any class, including separate divisions or sections of the same class and not by multiple riders.

5. Competition Schedule.

- b. A tentative class schedule must be included in the prize list.
- c. Organizers must prepare a time schedule including all rides. If possible, competitors should be notified of their riding times prior to arrival at the competition.
- d. The time schedule must be posted in a conspicuous place by noon the day before the competition at a USEF licensed competition. Ride times may not be changed after noon the day before the start of the entire competition without the written consent of the competitor affected. Competitions may reserve the right to fill a competitor's subsequent ride times if that competitor fails to notify the competition secretary of his/her intention to scratch (i.e. is a "no show").
- e. Western Dressage classes must be run in their entirety and rides may only be scheduled out of sequence to allow a reasonable interval between two or more horses entered by the same rider in the same class. Also, when preparing a time schedule consideration must be given to riders entered in more than one class or riding more than one horse.
- f. At least 50 minutes must be scheduled between start times for a rider's tests on different horses unless they have agreed, in writing, to a shorter interval between tests. Time intervals should be allowed between rides for judge's breaks and awards presentations.
- g. If a competitor cannot show due to the management's change of scheduling on the day a competitor must ride, their entry fees must be refunded.

6. Schooling and Longeing.

- a. One or more schooling areas must be provided far enough away from the arena(s) so as not to disturb the competitors during their tests. Schooling areas must be of sufficient size for several competitors to prepare their horses at the same time.
- b. Competitors will not be allowed in or around the arena while a class is in progress or inside the arena at other times except under the following conditions:
 - i. Management must post and announce, in advance, designated times that competitors may school inside the arena(s);
 - ii. Competitors should be permitted by management or the Judge to enter the arena prior to their ride if arena conditions do not permit riding

around the perimeter of the arena prior to entry. Such permission must be announced prior to the start of the class.

- c. Competitions are permitted to charge warm-up or schooling fees prior to a competition for horses entered in the competition.

7. Judges.

- a. Judges must be given at least a 45-minute lunch break and at least a 10 minute break every 2 hours.
- b. Judges are not to be housed in private homes unless the judge has agreed to it prior to the competition.
- c. Judge's comments, while judging, may not be audio-recorded without prior written permission of the judge, the specific competitor(s) and management.

8. Scribes.

- a. Scribes should have knowledge of the tests being ridden.
- b. Scribes must not be an owner, coach, trainer or family member of a competitor/horse in the class(es) in which they are scribing.
- c. Scribe changes should not be made more than once per day for each judge.
See WD 509 Section 10.

9. Specifications.

- a. The arena should be on as flat and as level ground as possible.
- b. The Standard Arena is 60 meters long and 20 meters wide. The Small Arena is 40 meters long and 20 meters wide. Arena measurements are for the interior of the enclosure. The Small Arena is recommended for Western Dressage classes of the Introductory and Basic Levels.
- c. The Large Arena is required for Level 1 and above.
- d. The enclosure itself must consist of a low fence about 0.3 meters high and must be completely enclosed, except for the entrance at "A". The width of the entrance must be at least two meters.
- e. The fence should be such to prevent the horse's hooves from becoming entangled and arena stakes, if used, must be covered with a ball or similar object so as to prevent injury. Rope, concrete or unbreakable chain fencing is not allowed.

10. Location of Judges. The Judge should be placed at the letter "C". The use of an elevated platform or place ensures safe and good viewing. Additional judges are similarly placed at "E" and/or "B".

11. Footing Maintenance. Competition management must make every effort to provide the best possible footing in competition and schooling areas. The footing in all areas must be as uniform as possible.

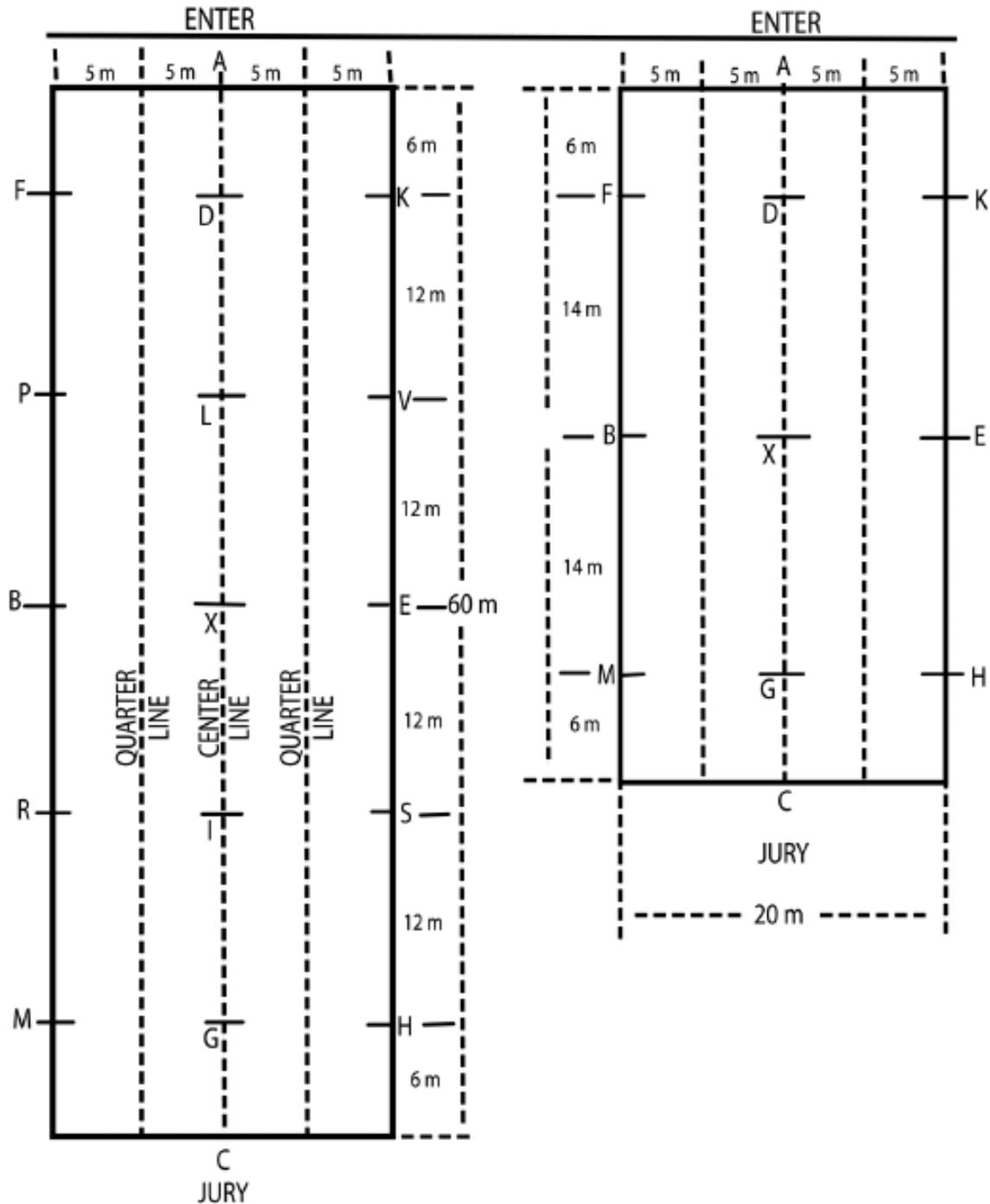
12. Schooling/Warm-up Area Supervisor.

- a. Show management must appoint a designated person (e.g. Steward, TD, paddock master) to check saddlery, inspect bits and protective leg wraps in each class. At a USEF Licensed competition the steward will perform this duty. At a non USEF Licensed competition, which is a WDAA recognized competition; a designated person will be appointed by show management (e.g. Equipment Judges).
- b. Schooling and warm-up areas must be monitored by stewards starting at least 30 minutes before the first scheduled ride at a USEF licensed competition.
- c. Bit inspectors must use a new disposable protective glove for each horse. Competition management must provide gloves. **See WD 501 to 506**

13. Miscellaneous.

- a. A separate number must be issued for each horse/rider combination. This number must be worn when the horse is in the designated schooling area and during the competition. **(See Arena Diagram)**

Western Dressage Arena



CHAPTER WD-6 TESTS

WD 601 Tests for Western Dressage Competitions

1. The WDAA approves and issues tests for use at USEF licensed and WDAA recognized competitions in the United States. Tests cannot be modified without the approval of the WDAA.
 - a. Introductory Level. Tests provide an introduction to the discipline of Western Dressage; the horse performs only at the gaits of walk and jog. The rider should demonstrate correct basic position, use of basic aids, and understanding of figures. The horse should show relaxation; harmony of horse and rider are important. The jog should be a natural gait within the horse's scope and should demonstrate a swinging back.
 - b. Basic Level. Tests confirm that the horse is supple and moves freely forward in a clear and steady rhythm, accepting light contact with the bit. The horse demonstrates a greater understanding of the aids and calm acceptance of the bridle; greater emphasis is placed on relaxation, submission, harmony, rideability, and pure gaits. The horse is beginning to develop more power and balance.
 - c. Level 1. Tests confirm that the horse is building on the elements from lower levels and has developed the impulsion to achieve improved balance while beginning to develop the self-carriage and engagement required by the "lengthened" jog and lope. The horse demonstrates a more consistent **light** contact with the bit. Tests introduce collection and engagement as well as lateral longitudinal balance while emphasizing rideability.
 - d. Level 2. To confirm that the horse, having achieved the impulsion required in Level 1, now accepts more weight on the hindquarters (collection); moves with an uphill tendency, especially in the lengthened paces; and is reliably and **lightly** on the bit. A greater degree of straightness, bending, suppleness, balance and self-carriage is required than at Level 1.
 - e. Level 3. To confirm that the horse has achieved the impulsion required in Level 2, now accepts more weight on the hindquarters (collection); moves with a greater degree of an uphill tendency as required in the collected gaits especially in the collected lope. The horse must maintain a **light** contact on the bit showing balance, self-carriage and energy that result from improved engagement and weight-carrying by the hindquarters as performed in the halts. The movements should be performed with greater bending, suppleness, balance and self-carriage than at Level 2.

CHAPTER WD-7 MUSICAL FREESTYLE

WD 701 Performance Directives and Judging

1. A Western Dressage Musical Freestyle is a performance utilizing the gaits and movements of the discipline ridden to music. Each test includes the required movements, gaits and paces of the standard Western Dressage Tests for that level. The competitor is absolutely free in the form and manner of the presentation she or he chooses within a fixed time provided. The performance should clearly show the unity between rider and horse as well as harmony in all the movements and transitions. The horse and rider should appear as one; lightness of contact is the hallmark of Western Dressage Musical Freestyle.
 - a. The competitor must declare to the management (and consequently the judge) at what level she or he will be riding.
 - b. The competitor must provide two (2) recordings of the music to which the Freestyle will be performed. Management must provide time for a sound check.
 - c. The Freestyle ride must not exceed the time limit listed on the test. Time begins when the horse moves forward out of the initial halt and ends with the final halt and salute. Both halts are mandatory.
 - d. The judge will provide two (2) sets of scores; one for the technical correctness of the movements performed and one for the artistic merit.

The artistic score is comprised of several elements:

- Harmony between horse and rider
- Choreography: use of arena, design and creativity. Not "test-like".
- Degree of difficulty: points are only awarded when the attempts are performed well.
- Music: suitability to the horse. Cuts in music are smooth/flowing.
- Interpretation: music must express gaits and paces.

Technical correctness:

- Judged on the execution of required technical movements in the test i.e. figures, gaits/paces and transitions.
- Certain movements (leg yield, half-pass etc.) should be performed in both directions.

2. Errors:

- a. Entering the arena after more than 20 seconds of music but within 90 seconds.
- b. If the Freestyle test is longer than the stipulated time on the test sheet, 10% will be deducted from the artistic score.

CHAPTER WD-8 SUITABILITY

WD 801 Eligibility

1. To be eligible for a Western Dressage Suitability class, a horse must not have shown in a Western Dressage competition/ Tests at First level or above and/or shown in a Western Dressage Hack Class.

WD 802 Performance Directives and Judging

1. Refer to the WDAA Rules ([Link](#)) for directives in performance and judging, including WD 101 Goals and General Objectives, Chapter 2–Gaits, WD 302-Transitions, WD 401-Collection, WD 402-The Impulsion, WD 403-The Submission, and WD 404-The Position and Aids of the Rider.
2. Suitability classes may be judged by:
 - a. A licensed Federation judge with experience in judging Breed Restricted Classes
 - b. A licensed competition judge at Breed Restricted competitions
 - c. The Western Dressage judge

WD 803 Appointments

1. Reference WD Chapter 5 on Appointments
2. Exceptions competitor will not be asked to drop the bridles of the horse.

WD 804 Qualifying Gaits and Class Specifications

1. Reference WD Chapter 2-Gaits
 - a. Horses to enter at working jog, in a counter clockwise direction. Horses must perform all gaits both ways of the ring. Gaits shall be working walk, working jog, and working lope. Free walk on long rein with horse stretching forward and down to be performed in at least one direction. Transitions into and out of the lope will be called for through the working jog. Horses will be asked to reverse direction at the working jog or working walk at the judge's discretion. Jog work to be ridden sitting or posting.
 - b. In the lineup, horses must stand quietly and may be asked to back individually or as a group.
2. Western Dressage Suitability Objectives: To confirm that the horse's muscles are supple and loose, and that it moves freely forward in a clear and steady rhythm, (*look for forward impulsion in the horse*) with purity of the gaits, and accepting light contact with the bit. The horse should show lightness of the forehand and engagement of the

hindquarters. Resistance and tension of the horse is to be penalized. The horse's potential as a Western Dressage mount is to be considered.

3. Western Dressage Suitability Specifications: To be judged 70% on Performance of gaits and transitions, with attention to impulsion and submission, and using the objectives above as reference; and 30% on the rider's position, seat, and effective use of aids. Classes may be divided for Open, Amateur, Junior Exhibitor, Stallions, Geldings and Mares. If classes are divided, a Championship class is recommended. A separate Junior Exhibitor Championship class may be offered.

CHAPTER WD-9 HACK

WD 901 Eligibility

1. The Western Dressage Hack class is open to any horse, however, once a horse has been entered and shown in a Western Dressage Hack class that horse may not subsequently be shown in a Western Dressage Suitability class.

WD 902 Performance Directives and Judging

1. Refer to the WDAA Rules (Link) for directives in performance and judging, including WD 101 Goals and General Objectives, Chapter 2–Gaits, WD 302-Transitions, WD 401-Collection, WD 402-The Impulsion, WD 403-The Submission, and WD 404-The Position and Aids of the Rider.
2. Hack classes may be judged by:
 - a. A licensed Federation judge with experience in judging Breed Restricted Classes
 - b. A licensed competition judge at Breed Restricted competitions
 - c. The Western Dressage judge

WD 903 Appointments

1. Reference WD Chapter 5 on Appointments
2. Exceptions competitor will not be asked to drop the bridles of the horse.

WD 904 Qualifying Gaits and Class Specifications

1. Qualifying Gaits and Class Specifications. (Reference WD Chapter 2 Gaits)
2. Gaits: Horses to enter at working jog, sitting or rising, in a counter clockwise direction. Horses will perform working walk, collected sitting jog, working jog, lengthen the strides at the jog, collected lope, working lope, and lengthen the strides at the lope both ways of the arena. Free walk and free jog on the long rein with the horse stretching forward and down to be performed in at least one direction. Horse must stand quietly on the rail or in the lineup. A back of 4 steps may be asked for as a group on the rail, or individually in the line up. Transitions into and out of the lope will be asked for through the working jog. Horses will be asked to reverse direction at the working jog. Jog work to be ridden sitting or rising.

3. Objectives: In addition to the objectives for the Western Dressage Suitability class, horses should begin to show more
(pushing power) and show progression towards a degree of balance and thoroughness. The horse should be lightly on the bit. A greater degree of straightness, bending, suppleness, and thoroughness is required. There should be a clear distinction between the gaits (working and lengthening). The horse's ability as a Western Dressage mount is to be highly considered.
4. In the lineup, horses must stand quietly and may be asked to back individually or as a group.
5. Specifications: To be judged 70% on performance of gaits and transitions, with attention to impulsion and submission, and using the objectives above as reference; and 30% on the rider's position, seat, and effective use of aids.
6. Classes may be divided for Open, Amateur, Junior Exhibitor, Stallions, Geldings and Mares. If classes are divided, a Championship class is recommended.
A separate Junior Exhibitor Championship class may be offered.

CHAPTER WD-10 SEAT EQUITATION

WD 1001 Eligibility

1. Western Dressage Seat Equitation may be offered for Junior (13 and under) and (14-17), Young Riders (18-21), Amateur and Open.

WD 1002 Judging

1. Seat Equitation classes may be judged by:
 - a. A licensed Federation judge with experience in judging Breed Restricted Classes
 - b. A licensed competition judge at Breed Restricted competitions
 - c. The Western Dressage judge

WD 1003 Performance Directives

1. The riders are to be judged on the rail both ways of the ring at the Working Walk, Working Jog (sitting), and Working Lope. To be judged on:
 - a. Rider's Position: The rider's position shall be balanced with the horse; the rider's shoulders, hips and heels should be aligned at all gaits. When observed from behind, the rider is straight in the back and symmetrically balanced with the shoulders, hips and feet parallel in the stirrups.
 - b. Rider's Correct and Effective use of aids: The rider demonstrates preparedness for performing the movements. The rider is subtle and effective with aids to perform transitions; is effective with bending in the turns and on the circles and moves straight on straight lines. The rider is capable of keeping the horse moving forward and keeping the tempo in each gait performed. The transitions are performed effortlessly, willingly and smoothly. There is a clear picture of

"action causes reaction."

- c. Harmony between the Rider and Horse: The horse and rider appear as one. They are confident, focused and calm. They perform competently at the level. They are a pleasure to watch.
2. Judges may choose to have the exhibitors perform a short pattern. If a pattern is part of the class judging is based 50% on railwork, 50% on individual workout. The pattern to be judged on:
 - a. Accuracy of the figures: The rider demonstrates the ability to maintain the geometry of the movements. The movements are correct in their size, shape and placement in the arena. The circles and half circles diameter are correct and round. There is a clear picture of where the circles originate and terminate.

WD 1004 Patterns

1. Approved Western Dressage Seat Equitation Patterns can be found in Appendix A.

CHAPTER WD-11 MEDAL EQUITATION

WD 1101 Class Specifications

1. The Western Dressage Seat Equitation Class is an equitation class requiring riders to perform Western Dressage Tests. Riders will be judged on hands, seat and aids, performance of the horse, suitability of the horse and rider and their partnership. The rider will be evaluated on effectiveness (equitation) and the quality of the figures asked for in the Level and test chosen by the judge.
2. Only one test from a level may be chosen for each medal class within the age group. All exhibitors will perform the same test in each class.
3. A rider who is off pattern will be eliminated and will not be eligible for an award.
4. Dropping of the bits, inspection of protective leg equipment and the horse is mandatory. The C2 Steward-or designated person will perform the inspection immediately following the test. The rider is to be dismounted and if necessary, they may have assistance. Failure to comply with this rule will result in elimination.

WD 1102 Requirements for Specific Classes

Junior Exhibitor (13 and under) Tests – Introductory Tests – Level 1
Junior Exhibitor (14 - 17) Tests – Introductory Tests through Level 3
Young Riders (18– 21) Tests – Introductory Tests through Level 3
Amateur Division – Tests – Introductory Tests – Level 3
Open Division – Tests – Introductory Tests – Level 3

WD 1103 Movement Scores

Each test has a set of movements. It is the judge's responsibility to evaluate these movements and evaluate each movement as Dressage movement scores and equitation score with each movement. Half points can be used.

10 - Excellent

9 - Very Good

8 - Good

7 - Fair Good

6 - Satisfactory

5 - Marginal

4 - Insufficient

3 - Fairly Bad

2 - Bad

1 - Very Bad

0 - Not executed

"Not executed" means practically none of the movement has been performed.

The judge should consider the performance of the horse and rider on the following:

- a. On Pattern: The judge must make certain that the movement being performed by the horse and rider is the correct movement as dictated by the test.
- b. Correctness and rider position: Having determined that the horse and rider are performing the movement required by the test, the judge must then determine whether the movement is being executed correctly. The judge must evaluate the performance of the movement against the requirements of the movement description listed in the WDAA rules and the seat, position, hands and aids of the rider.

WD 1104 Penalties

1. Zero Score: (Not eligible for an award)
 - a. Use of more than one finger between the reins when one hand is used.
 - b. The changing of hands on the reins (1 or 2 handed method)
 - c. A horse or rider fails to complete the tests as written.
 - d. Performs a movement not in the specified order. (Off pattern)
 - e. Includes a movement not specific
 - f. A horse that balks or freezes during a test
 - g. The fall of a horse or rider
 - h. Leaving the arena with all four feet
2. 5 Point Penalties:
 - a. Spurring in front of the cinch
 - b. Use of a hand to instill fear
 - c. Holding the Saddle with either hand (except for the Introductory Tests)

- i. Note: The holding of the saddle does not include incidental, brief contact. The rider is allowed to straighten the latigo any place the horse is completely stopped during the test. A rider may untangle the horse's mane from the reins at an appropriate place without incurring a holding the saddle penalty.
 - d. Blatant disobedience includes kicking, bucking, rearing, striking, or biting.
- 3. 2 Point Penalties:
 - a. A horse breaks gaits during the execution of the test.
 - b. Missing the letters
- 4. 1 Point Penalty:
 - a. Out of lead during the test:
 - i. Circles: 1 penalty point for each $\frac{1}{4}$ circle
 - ii. Serpentine: 1 penalty point for each $\frac{1}{2}$ loop
 - iii. Lines:
 - 1) From the turn to the halfway position to the next marker = 1 point penalty
 - 2) Beyond the halfway point to the next marker = 1 penalty point.
 - b. Note: In tests which require a simple lead change in its movement; the ideal change is to be performed. Any deviation from the ideal change as described by the WDAA rules would not incur a penalty but deserves less credit.
- 5. Jog Penalties:
 - a. When the movement requires a lope and a horse breaks gait into a jog up to 2 strides = $\frac{1}{2}$ point penalty.
 - b. Jogging beyond 2 strides = 2 point penalty
 - c. Note: A judge counts the steps of the rear legs. Four steps and under would represent two or less strides and require a $\frac{1}{2}$ point penalty. Five steps or more, requires a 2 point penalty.

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