

WESTERN DRESSAGE ASSOCIATION®

OF AMERICA

WESTERN DRESSAGE RULES

FOR ALL BREEDS



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Table of Contents

CHAPTER WD-1	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	- 4 -
WD 101	Goals and Objectives	- 4 -
CHAPTER 2	THE GAITS	- 4 -
WD 201	The Walk.....	- 4 -
WD 202	The Jog	- 5 -
WD 203	The Lope	- 6 -
WD 205	The Back	- 7 -
WD 206	Faults	- 8 -
CHAPTER 3	ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS AND METHODS	- 8 -
WD 301	The Halt	- 8 -
WD 302	Transitions.....	- 8 -
WD 303	Changes of Direction	- 8 -
WD 304	Figures and Exercises.....	- 9 -
WD 305	Work on Two Tracks and the Lateral Movements	- 9 -
WD 306	Turn on the Haunches; Turn on the Forehand	- 11 -
CHAPTER 4	COLLECTION, SUBMISSION, IMPULSION, AIDS	- 11 -
WD 401	Collection	- 11 -
WD 402	Impulsion.....	- 12 -
WD 403	Submission	- 12 -
WD 404	Position and Aids of the Rider	- 13 -
CHAPTER 5	APPOINTMENTS.....	- 13 -
WD 501	General.....	- 13 -
WD 502	Tack	- 14 -
WD 503	Illegal Equipment.....	- 15 -
WD 504	Attire	- 16 -
WD 505	Warm Up Ring and Training Area	- 16 -
WD 506	Stewards/TD	- 17 -
WD 507	Participation in Western Dressage Competitions	- 17 -
WD 508	Execution and Judging of Tests.....	- 18 -
WD 509	Scoring, Classification and Prize-Giving	- 21 -
WD 510	Elimination	- 22 -

WD 511	Officials for WDAA recognized shows	- 23 -
WD 512	Requirements for Western Dressage Competition Management	- 23 -
CHAPTER 6	TESTS	- 27 -
WD 601	Tests for Western Dressage Competitions	- 27 -
CHAPTER 7	FREESTYLE.....	- 27 -
WD 701	Western Musical Freestyle	- 27 -

CHAPTER WD-1 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 forehand. 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.

CHAPTER 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 and Lengthening of Strides.
 - 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 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, the Working jog must be ridden seated.
- c. Lengthening of Strides. This is a variation of the Working jog; the horse covers more ground while maintain the same tempo as in the Working jog. Speeding up is a fault. 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.

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, and Lengthening of Strides.
 - 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 while maintaining the same tempo as in the Working lope. Speeding up is a fault.
 - 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.
 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 at every 4th, 3rd, 2nd or at every stride. The horse, even in the 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 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 205 The Back

1. 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 alternatively, 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. 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 are serious faults.
4. The 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 206 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; 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 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 shoulder 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 **horse’s nose** is at the letter at the end of the diagonal.

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.
 - b. Serpentine.
 - 1) The serpentine with several loops touching the long side of the arena consists of half circles connected by a straight line. When crossing the centerline, the horse should be parallel to the short side. 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 are 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 quarters on different tracks.
- Lateral movements are beginning of collection
 - The bend or flexion must never be exaggerated so that it impairs the balance and fluency of the movement concerned.
 - 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.
 - At all lateral movements the horse is bent in the direction in which he is moving.
 - a. 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 and crosses 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.
 - b. Haunches-In. 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 quarters 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 quarters 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.
 - c. 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 quarters 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.
 - d. 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.

In the jog, the outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. In the lope, the movement is performed in a series of forward/sideways strides. Aims of the half-pass in jog: To 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.

Aims of the half-pass in lope: to both demonstrate and develop the collection and suppleness of the lope by moving fluently forwards and sideways without any loss of rhythm, balance or softness and submission to the bend.

3. 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 quarters. The leg yield can also be ridden along the wall with approximately a 35 degree angle.

WD 306 Turn on the Haunches; Turn on the Forehand

1. Turn on the Haunches. For younger horses that are still not able to perform a collected walk, the 'turn on the haunches' is an exercise to prepare the horse for collection. The 'turn on the haunches' is executed out of working walk prepared by half-halts to shorten the steps a little and to improve the ability to bend the joints of the hindquarters. The horse must bend a little in his ribcage around the rider's inside leg. The 'turn on the haunches' can be executed on a larger diameter (approximately one meter) than the pivot in walk, but the demands of the training scale concerning rhythm, contact, activity and bend are the same. The horse will not be penalized for pivot, step, pivot, step on the inside rear hind leg.
2. Turn on the Forehand. The inverse of the turn on the haunches. It is executed out of a working walk prepared by half-halts to shorten the steps. 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. Stepping back is a serious fault.

CHAPTER 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 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 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. Not only the aids of the rider's hands and the legs, but also of the seat are 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.
4. 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.
5. Quiet use of the voice and clicking of the tongue is permitted.

CHAPTER 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 Steward/TD (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.**

WD 502 Tack

1. **Bridles:** Any western type headstall must be used. A western cavesson (pencil bosal, braided or plain) is allowed. Native and national bridles are permitted.
2. **Snaffle Bit:** Any snaffle bit may be used on a horse of any age being ridden at any level. A snaffle offers no leverage. A Western Dee bit and/or bits that are slotted for the headstall and reins are addressed in WD 121.3, Curb Bit. The rider must use two hands with a snaffle bit.
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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 3/4 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.
 - c. 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 3/4 inch (19.05 mm), measured top-to-bottom, and must lie flat in the horse's mouth.
 - d. A Mullen Mouth (solid mouthpiece), barrel mouthpiece, full cheeks or Naptha Bits (plastic or rubber) may be used.
 - e. If a bit hobble is used on a ring snaffle it must be attached below the reins.
 - f. Hackamores (Bosal) are permitted on a horse of any age at any level. 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.
 - g. No flat, sharp, slow twist, twisted or pointed edges on mouthpieces are allowed.
3. **Curb Bit:** There is no discrimination against any standard Western bit. A curb bit is a leverage 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 3/4 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 1/4 inch (31.7 mm) or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8 inch to 3/4 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, and donut or flat polo mouthpieces.
 - 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. **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 prohibited.
6. **Whips:** Whips no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm) including lash, are permitted in all Classes/Tests.

WD 503 **Illegal Equipment**

1. 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, cause

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 nose bands.
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 digression 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, running martingales (only with snaffle rein or plain snaffle bridle), boots, bandages (without magnets) and earmuffs are permitted. A running martingale consists of a divided strap attached to the girth or breastplate (at the front of the horse's chest); 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 may not be connected to a neck strap.
2. Fly hoods (ear covers) that do not cover the horse's eyes are permitted in 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 Stewards/TD

1. Inspection of tack and bits must be done by or at the direction of the Competition Steward/TD if at a USEF licensed competition or by a designated person if at a WDAA recognized competition. **See WD 501.**
2. 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. Random pulling of leg wraps and protective boots will also occur at this time. **See WD 501**
3. 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.
4. The checking of the bridle must be done with the greatest caution, as some horses are very touchy and sensitive about their mouths.
5. Bit inspectors must use a new disposable protective glove for each horse.
6. The responsibility for the correct attire and equipment rests with the competitor.

WD 507 Participation in Western Dressage Competitions

1. Western Dressage classes are open to riders on horses, mules and/or ponies of any origin.
2. Horses may compete in more than one Licensed Competition in a day; there is no limit on the number of rides on the same day. Horses may be ridden by multiple riders.
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. Individuals are eligible as Young Riders from the beginning of the competition year in which they reach the age of 16 until the end of the competition year in which they reach the age of 21.

- c. Competitors shall compete as Adults from the beginning of the competition year in which they reach the age of 22.
- d. 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.

WD 508 Execution and Judging of Tests

1. **Calling Tests.** All Western Dressage Tests may be called during the competition. If a 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. **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.

6. Other Errors.

- a. Not entering the arena within 45 seconds.
- b. Entering the arena before the sound of the bell.
- c. In Freestyle classes, entering the arena after more than 20 seconds of music but within 90 seconds.
- d. If the Freestyle test is longer or shorter than the stipulated time on the test sheet, .5% will be deducted from the total artistic score.
- e. Switching from one hand to two hands or vice versa during a test (with exception of Freestyle tests where changing is acceptable.)

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

8. 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 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).

9. 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	
	“Not executed” means that practically nothing of the required movement has been performed.

10. 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.

11. 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.
12. 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 509 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 510 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 technical delegate, 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 511 Officials for WDAA recognized shows

1. 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.
 - a. At a USEF licensed show:
 - 1) a recorded or "r" judge may officiate at Introductory through Basic levels
 - 2) a registered or "R" judge may officiate at Introductory through 4th levels
 - 3) a senior or "S" judge may officiate at all levels
 - b. At a local schooling show or non USEF show recognized by WDAA, an "L" graduate may officiate.
2. Any judge officiating in Western Dressage at a WDAA recognized show must be a current member in good standing with the Western Dressage Association® of America.
3. WDAA recognized shows 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 dressage ring immediately following the completion of the test.
4. A USEF licensed show which offers Western Dressage tests/classes may use either a USEF licensed Steward or a Technical Delegate.

WD 512 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.
 - a. A tentative class schedule must be included in the prize list.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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").

- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. 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:
 - 1) Management must post and announce, in advance, designated times that competitors may school inside the arena(s);
 - 2) 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 and Technical Delegates.

- a. Judges must be given at least a 45-minute lunch break and at least a 10 minute break every 2 hours.
- b. Judges and technical delegates are not to be housed in private homes unless the judge or technical delegate 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 may be used for Western Dressage classes of the Introductory and Basic Levels but the Large Arena is required for Level 1 and above.**
- c. 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.
- d. 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 that 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.

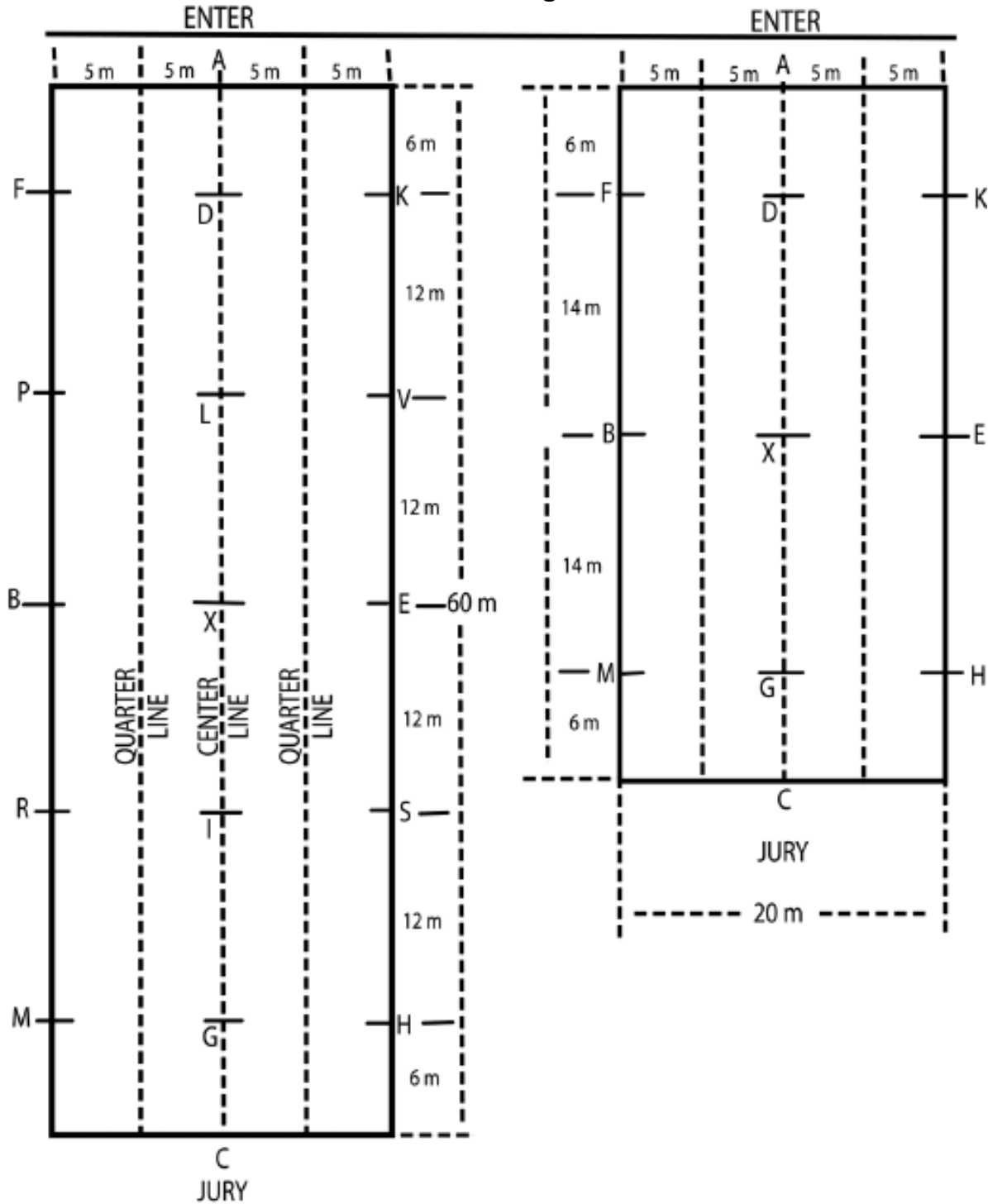
12. Schooling/Warm-up Area Supervisor.

- 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/technical delegate 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 on next page)**

Western Dressage Arena



CHAPTER 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.

CHAPTER 7 FREESTYLE

WD 701 Western Musical Freestyle

1. A Western Dressage 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 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 last three (3) minutes but not more than five (5) minutes. 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.

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