



Dressage/ Western Dressage

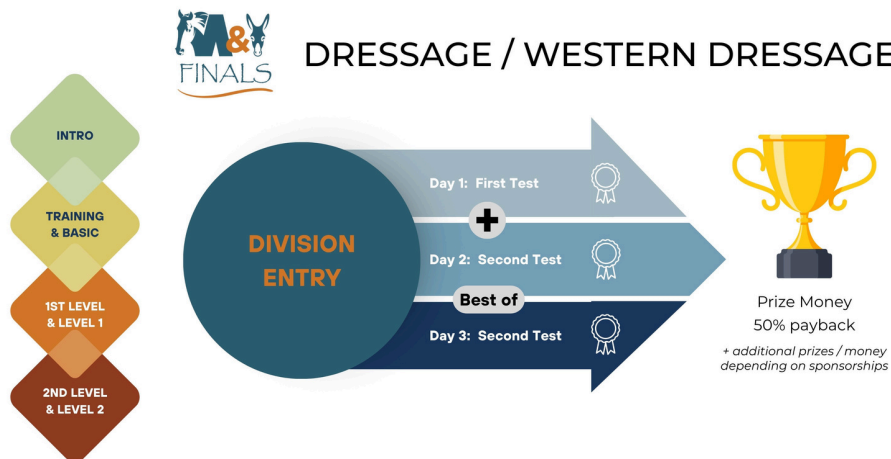


Discipline Rules

1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Dressage and Western Dressage divisions are to showcase the development of the horse as a willing, harmonious, and supple athlete. Dressage evaluates the quality of the horse's gaits, the harmony between horse and rider, and the horse's acceptance of contact and forward movement. The mustang's ability to demonstrate calm responsiveness and progressive training is central to evaluation at all levels.



1.2 Divisions Offered

Four divisions are offered:

- Introductory
- Training / Basic
- First Level / Level 1
- Second Level / Level 2

Both **Dressage and Western Dressage will be competing together** at each division level. Event Management reserves the right to split divisions by discipline if entry numbers and the schedule allows.

Competitors must declare Dressage or Western Dressage at entry, and that declaration is fixed for all rides within that division.

Each division consists of three scored classes:

- First Test (Score 1)
- Second Test – Ride 1 (Score 2a)
- Second Test – Ride 2 (Score 2b)

The scoring structure for Dressage and Western Dressage divisions operates as a discipline-specific exception to the cumulative scoring method described in General Rules Section 7.2. Division standings are calculated using Score 1 plus the higher of the two Score 2 rides; the lower Score 2 ride is dropped.

1.3 Division Objectives

Introductory:

To introduce the horse and rider to dressage fundamentals. The horse should move freely forward in a steady tempo and clear rhythm, accepting contact with the bit. Accurate geometry and test execution should be demonstrated.

Training / Basic:

To confirm that the horse demonstrates correct basics: suppleness both laterally and longitudinally, free forward movement in a clear rhythm with steady tempo, and willing acceptance of the bit. Correct geometry and lines of travel should be shown.

First Level / Level 1:

To confirm correct basics with improved balance, lateral suppleness, and throughness. The horse should demonstrate the thrust required to perform lengthenings of stride and should be consistently on the bit.

Second Level / Level 2:

To confirm correct basics while beginning to accept more weight on the hindquarters as collected and medium gaits develop. A greater degree of straightness, suppleness, throughness, and balance are required. The horse should demonstrate self-carriage.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Animal Eligibility

All horses and burros competing in the Dressage division must meet the eligibility requirements stated in the General Rules.

Minimum age requirements:

Horses ridden under saddle must be a minimum of 4 years of age at the time of competition.

Mares may not compete during or after their eighth month of pregnancy or within three months of foaling.

2.2 Competitor Eligibility

Competitors must be a minimum of 13 years of age to compete.

No formal age/amateur/professional designation applies to this event. The divisions are only categorized by level.

3. Tests

3.1 Test Selection

Competitors will ride the tests published on HorseSpot for their declared division. Tests are based on the standard published tests for each corresponding level in Dressage (USDF) and Western Dressage (WDAA).

3.2 Calling the Test

Tests may be called (read aloud by a designated person) at all levels. It is the competitor's responsibility to arrange for their own caller. Calling is limited to reading the movement once as written. Event management will not be responsible for providing callers.

Calling errors or late calls do not relieve the competitor of error penalties. The bell will be sounded to indicate an error of course.

3.3 Test Execution

The test begins when the competitor enters the arena at A after the judge has signaled the rider. The test ends after the final salute.

Competitors must enter the arena within 45 seconds of the judge's signal or they will be eliminated.

4. Equipment

4.1 Saddles and accessories

Any English-type saddle is required for the Dressage tests. Any Western-type saddle is required for the Western Dressage tests.

Martingales are **prohibited** in competition. In warm-up, a running martingale may be used on a snaffle rein only. A running martingale consists of a divided strap attached to the girth, with each strap connecting from the point of division to the rein on the same side. The reins must slide freely through the rings.

Draw reins are **prohibited**.

4.2 Bridles

A plain snaffle bridle or a western headstall is permitted for all division levels. Double bridles are **prohibited** at these levels.

Nosebands or cavessons, if used, must be adjusted loose enough to allow for two fingers to comfortably fit under the noseband on the side of the face.

All bridles must be made of leather or leather-like, flexible, non-metallic material.

A bitless bridle of any style may be used in place of a bitted bridle by competitors in either dressage or western dressage.

Mechanical hackamores — those incorporating shanks and a curb chain or strap — are **prohibited**.

4.3 Reins & Hand positions

Reins must connect the bit or bitless bridle to the rider's hand without mechanical additions or attachments.

Hand Position — *Western Dressage riders only*

The following hand position rules apply to Western Dressage riders. A rider may not switch between one and two hands during a test.

- Riders using a bitless bridle may ride with one or two hands.
- Riders using a snaffle bit with split reins may ride with one or two hands.
- Riders using a curb bit may ride with one or two hands.
- Riders using Romal reins must use one hand only.

4.4 Bits

Snaffle Bits — Dressage or Western Dressage

A snaffle bit may be used by competitors in either discipline. A snaffle is a non-leverage bit in which the rein attaches at the same ring as the cheekpiece.

All snaffle bits must be:

- Smooth with a solid surface
- Made of metal, rubber, or synthetic material
- A minimum of 10mm in diameter where the mouthpiece meets the rings

Snaffle bits may be unjointed, single-jointed, or double-jointed. In double-jointed snaffles, the center link must be smooth and curved on all surfaces (lozenge-shaped). French link and Dr. Bristol center links are **not permitted**.

The following snaffle bits are **prohibited** in both dressage and western dressage:

- Twisted bits or bits with wire, cable, or non-smooth surfaces
 - Bits with mechanical restraint on the tongue
 - Bits with joints that can pinch or trap oral tissue
 - Any bit with separate attachment points for the cheekpiece and rein
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Curb Bits — *Western Dressage only*

Standard Western curb bits are permitted for Western Dressage riders only. A standard Western curb bit must meet the following specifications:

- Shank length: maximum 8½ inches (215.9mm) overall
- Mouthpiece diameter: 5/16 inch (7.9mm) to ¾ inch (19.05mm), measured one inch from the shank
- Port height: maximum 3½ inches (88.9mm)
- Mouthpiece must be smooth; jointed mouthpieces are permitted
- Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (no extensions, prongs, or rivets)

A curb chain or curb strap is required with any curb bit. It must be flat, a minimum of ½ inch (12.7mm) wide, and lie flat against the jaw of the horse. Round, rolled, braided, or rawhide curb straps are **prohibited**.

The following are **prohibited** for Western Dressage riders:

- Slip or gag bits
- Kimberwicks
- Bits with hooks, slots, or flat/donut/polo mouthpieces
- Any device that increases the effective leverage of the shank
- Prongs, extensions, or rivets below the mouthpiece

4.5 Protective Headgear or Hat

Dressage riders must wear a helmet meeting current safety standards while mounted, including in warm-up areas.

Western Dressage riders may wear a suitable western hat in lieu of a helmet.

4.6 Attire & Spurs

Competitors should wear neat, appropriate riding attire for their discipline.

Spurs are optional. If worn, spurs must be:

- Made of metal
- One spur worn on each boot
- Pointed directly back from the center of the spur when on the rider's boot
- If curved, worn with the shank directed downward

Rowels, if present, must be blunt and free to rotate. The inside arm of the spur must be smooth. The maximum shank length is 5 cm (2 inches), including rowels.

4.7 Whips

One whip, bat, or crop no longer than 120cm (approximately 47 inches) including the lash may be carried during competition. This applies to both Dressage and Western Dressage riders.

5. Judging & Scoring

5.1 Scale of Marks

All movements and collective marks are scored on the following scale. Half-point increments (0.5 through 9.5) are permitted at the judge's discretion. All scores must be recorded with a decimal (e.g., 6.0 rather than 6).

Score	Description
10	Excellent
9	Very Good
8	Good
7	Fairly Good
6	Satisfactory
5	Marginal
4	Insufficient
3	Fairly Bad
2	Bad
1	Very Bad
0	Not Executed

A score of 0 means the movement was essentially not performed.

5.2 Collective Marks

After the competitor has completed their test, the judge will award collective marks (0-10, including half marks) in the following categories:

- **Gaits:** Freedom, regularity, and elasticity of steps.
- **Impulsion:** Engagement of the hindquarters; transmission of forward energy through the horse's back; suppleness.
- **Rider's Position, Seat & Hands:** Balance, depth of seat, independence of hand from seat.
- **Rider's Use of Aids:** Correctness and effectiveness of aids; accuracy of figures and transitions.
- **Harmony:** The horse's willing acceptance of the rider's aids; relaxation, confidence, and partnership between horse and rider.

5.3 Class Structure & Division Scoring

Each division consists of three scored classes:

- **First Test (Score 1):** Competitors ride the first published test for their declared level and discipline. This score counts in full toward the division total.
- **Second Test – Ride 1 (Score 2a):** Competitors ride the second published test for their declared level and discipline.
- **Second Test – Ride 2 (Score 2b):** Competitors ride the same second test a second time.

The division standing is calculated as follows:

Division Score = Score 1 + the higher of Score 2a or Score 2b

The lower of the two Score 2 rides is dropped. This structure gives competitors the opportunity to improve on the second test, rewarding consistency and development across the event.

This scoring method operates as a discipline-specific exception to the cumulative scoring method described in General Rules Section 7.2.

5.4 Scoring & Results

Scores are multiplied by the applicable coefficient where indicated on the test sheet, then totaled. Penalty points for errors of course are deducted from the total on the judge's sheet.

Division standings are calculated using Score 1 plus the higher of the two Score 2 rides. The lower Score 2 ride is dropped.

Final results are expressed as a percentage, calculated to three decimal places. Scores must be posted as soon as possible after each ride and no later than one hour after the ride is completed.

5.5 Tie-Breaking

In the event of a tie in division standings, the following procedure applies in order:

1. The competitor with the higher total collective marks score is declared the winner.
2. If a tie remains, the competitor with the higher free walk score is declared the winner.
3. If a tie remains, the competitor with the higher sum of scores carrying a coefficient greater than one is declared the winner.
4. If a tie still remains, the judge will break the tie.

6. Arena & Test Procedures

6.1 Arena Specifications

The standard dressage arena is 60 meters long and 20 meters wide. The small arena is 40 meters long and 20 meters wide. Arena measurements refer to the interior of the enclosure.

The small arena is used for Introductory and Training/Basic divisions. The large arena is required for First Level/Level 1 and Second Level/Level 2 divisions.

The arena enclosure must be completely closed except for the entrance at A, which must be at least two meters wide. The enclosure fence should be approximately 0.3 meters high and must not present an entanglement hazard to horses.

6.2 Test Procedures

The test begins when the competitor enters the arena at A after the judge has signaled. The test ends after the final salute, when the horse moves forward. The competitor should leave the arena at A at a walk on a long or loose rein.

Competitors must enter the arena within 45 seconds of the judge's signal. Failure to enter within this window is grounds for penalties.

Any action taken before the entry at A or after the final salute does not affect scoring.

6.3 Falls

A fall of the horse and/or rider results in elimination.

6.4 Leaving the Arena

If the horse leaves the arena — all four feet outside the fence or line marking the arena perimeter — between the beginning and end of the test, the competitor is eliminated.

7. Errors & Penalties

7.1 Penalties

The following penalties are deducted from the competitor's total score:

Infraction	Penalty
First error of course	2 points deducted
Second error of course	4 points deducted
Third error of course	5 points deducted
Each subsequent error	5 points deducted
Switching between one and two hands during a test (Western)	2 points deducted
Unauthorized assistance	5 points deducted

Unauthorized assistance is obvious or repeated intervention by a person outside the arena intended to assist the competitor, including coaching, voice signals, or gestures. A single incidental remark does not constitute unauthorized assistance. Calling the test as permitted under Section 3.2 does not constitute unauthorized assistance.

An error of course occurs when a competitor takes the wrong turn, omits a movement, or otherwise deviates from the prescribed test. The judge will sound the bell and indicate where the competitor should resume. If the same error is repeated immediately after correction, only one error is recorded.

7.2 Voice Cues

The quiet use of the voice and clicking of the tongue is permitted for all competitors in both disciplines.

7.3 Entering the Arena Early

If a competitor enters the arena before the judge has signaled, the judge can sound the bell, the competitor must leave the arena, and the test will restart from the beginning. No penalty is applied provided the competitor complies promptly.

7.4 Eliminations

A competitor is eliminated from the current test under the following circumstances:

- Fall of horse and/or rider
- Horse leaves the arena with all four feet outside the arena perimeter
- Failure to enter the arena within 45 seconds of the judge's signal
- Resistance that endangers the rider, horse, judge, or the public
- Use of prohibited equipment
- Horse's tongue tied down

- Evidence of blood on the horse's mouth or sides in the competition arena
- Marked lameness, as determined by the judge
- Cruelty or excessive use of spurs
- Misrepresentation of entry

Elimination from one class does not automatically withdraw the competitor from remaining classes in the division unless the grounds involve welfare, cruelty, or prohibited equipment, in which case event management retains authority to withdraw the entry entirely.