

FIELD GUIDE – WESTERN DRESSAGE

GENERAL

- Competitions may offer breed-restricted or open-to-all-breeds Western Dressage classes. All classes must be run under the USEF Western Dressage (WD) chapter rules.
- Equestrian Canada Western Dressage is run according to USEF and WDAA rules and tests.

EXCEPTIONS FOR A/HA/AA-RESTRICTED CLASSES.

- A separate number must be issued for each *horse*, not horse/rider combination (AR112.2a).
- Age for Junior Division to be determined according to AR110.6.
- Ties *must* be broken in all A/HA/AA-restricted classes using AR278/EC Article B2304.2.

BEFORE THE SHOW – Read the prize list!

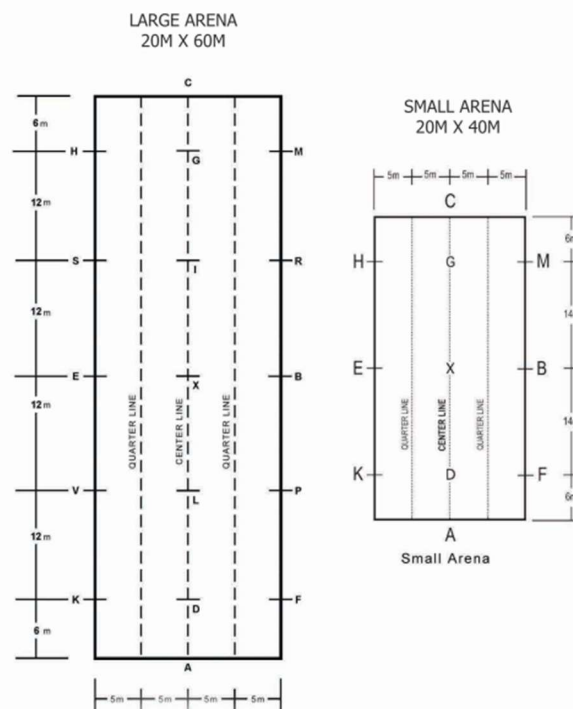
- Competitions may limit the number of rides per horse and level *if* stated in the prize list. (WD102.5)
- Prize list must state if ties will be broken for non-Arabian classes. (WD129.13b)
- Judges must be Western Dressage-licensed by USEF/EC. A small 'r' WD judge may officiate only through *First* Level.
- Exception: group rail classes (Suitability, Hack, and Equitation with or without pattern) may be judged by appropriate Federation-licensed breed judge. (WD124.1a) Be sure the judge has been provided with this document: <https://wdaa.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/2023-WDAA-Equitation-Tests/2023%20Rail%20Class%20Guide%20for%20Judges.pdf>

TESTS & SCORESHEETS.

Individual tests, freestyle scoresheets, guidelines for scoring WD rail classes, eq patterns, etc. are all found here: www.westerndressage.org under the Tests & Resources tab.

REFER TO THESE SECTIONS IN THE DRESSAGE AT ARABIAN COMPETITIONS FIELD GUIDE...

- **Personnel Required.** Same as for DR, except methodology for WD equipment checks is different. See EQUIPMENT CHECKING, below.
- **Arena Set Up.** All WD individual tests may be conducted in the large court, but if the show is heavy on Intro & Basic rides, encourage management to hold them in the short court. Not only will it save at least one minute per test, but many of these riders have had no access to a large court for practice.



RAIL CLASSES.

WD Suitability, Hack and Eq on the Rail (no pattern) may be held in a large dressage court or performance arena.

Horsemanship (pattern only) and Combined Equitation to be held in a dressage court: walk-jog & Intermediate patterns are designed for short court (20x40m); Advanced patterns require large court (20x60m).

DIFFERENCES FROM Dressage (DR)

- A Western Dressage horse may have no more than two riders per show. (WD102.5)

- Each horse/rider *combination* (not each horse) is limited to two consecutive levels. (WD102.2)
- Musical freestyles do not have a prerequisite score. (WD131)
- Callers (test readers) and whips are allowed in all classes* at all levels of competition; no exception for Arabian Regional/National Championships. (WD121.9 and WD126.1)
* Freestyles must be ridden from memory.
- As of this writing, WDAA membership (or non-member fee) is required of everyone who signs the entry form for a WD class, even at a breed-restricted competition. (WD102.8a)
- Accommodation for impairment/disability: *provide medical certificate to Steward* prior to competing. (WD102.13 & 14)
- Quiet use of the voice and clicking of the tongue is permitted during the test. (WD119.5)
- Polo wraps (white or color matching the horse) are permitted in competition. (WD121.7)
- Protective headgear is *not* required (WD123.1)
- If spurs have rowels, they must be vertical (WD123.2c)

EQUIPMENT

USEF and EC: See WD121 Tack, WD122 Prohibited Equipment, and WD123 Attire. For more detail, *see also* **WDAA Equipment and Attire Guide**, rev. 4/2024, here: <https://wdaa.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/Judges-Docs/WDAA%20Equipment%20and%20Attire%20Guide%204%2011%202024.pdf>

- Bitless bridles (without sidepulls), hackamores (bosals), and Western two-rein bridles with either snaffle or curb bits are permitted at all levels.
- *Both snaffle and curb*: mouthpiece bars 5/16" min-3/4" max measured 1" in from cheek; must be smooth; may be wrapped with latex.
- "Standard American Western stock saddle (or working Western sidesaddle)" required. No Australian, McClellan, Baroque, English, Spanish. Bucking rolls OK; no thigh or knee rolls.

EQUIPMENT CHECKING

Tack and bits on both sides of the horse of a minimum of one-third (1/3) of the horses in each class/test must be inspected. (WD124.3)

- Once the exhibitor leaves the arena, they must remain mounted until they reach the C2/EC Steward or equipment inspector. At that time, the exhibitor *must* dismount for the equipment inspection. Competitors will be asked to drop the bridle of the horse, removing the bit to below the mouth of the horse. A metal detector and/or magnet may be used to detect the presence of metal in nosebands. Random pulling of leg wraps will also occur at this time. *See* WDAA Equipment and Attire Guide for recommended equipment check process.
- 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.
- A horse must be eliminated from the test just completed if tongue has been tied. (WD120)
- New disposable gloves must be available for and used by bit inspectors if a mouthpiece must be handled.
- The responsibility for the correct attire and equipment rests with the competitor.

ELIMINATION AT POST-RIDE CHECK

Since checks are performed immediately on exiting the court, **whatever is found at the post-ride check is the responsibility of the judge**, not management. **Before rides start, discuss with management and judge how judge wishes to be informed if you find blood or illegal equipment.** Bring them photos? Actual equipment? Hold horse at gate for judge to inspect *in situ*? Management and judge might decide that the process will be for steward to notify scribe via radio to hold the test score sheet of the entry with a violation, and then the steward will meet with the judge during a break, or even in between rides if that's what the judge prefers. *The steward should have the entry number, class number, rule violation, equipment and/or photo(s) documenting the violation.* It may be advisable to bring management (if needed) in on the violation at that point if they are available. The judge will eliminate the entry if necessary.

Always remember, most violations are not intentional. There are a lot of rules for exhibitors to understand!