

DRESSAGE

The principles of Dressage are found as far back as 400 B.C. in a book written by the Greek statesman and general, Xenophon. His philosophy of training, which renounced force, resulted in a symphony of beauty and harmony between horse and rider that is still the essence of Dressage. Today, Dressage is both an equine discipline and a training method to prepare the horse for other equine sports.

Dressage riders compete in a 20 by 60 meter arena, performing a pattern of required movements at specific letter points set along the rail. Nine levels of increasing difficulty require a higher degree of physical and mental development with tests at each level.

Judges mark each movement from zero to 10 and award points for paces, impulsion, submission of the horse and rider's position. Individual marks of 7 or 8 are considered extremely good as are overall scores in the 70s.



Dates as far back as 400 B.C.

WESTERN DRESSAGE

The goal of Western Dressage is to develop a partnership between a happy equine 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.

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. The Western Dressage horse demonstrates free-flowing, comfortable strides. The gaits are free, regular in cadence and rhythm, consistent in speed and tempo. The horse presents a balanced appearance. 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. 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 horse advances in his training and development.

