

FDRC Rules for Dressage Competitions

Equipment - The Rider

Dress Guidelines

Jackets, Shirts and Body protectors

Jacket may be dark blue or black with a white stock. Tweed jacket with coloured stock or collar and tie. White stocks, white American collar or white shirts with collar and tie may be worn.

N.B. At the discretion of the Organiser, competitors may be permitted to ride without coats in excessively hot weather, but a suitable shirt that fastens at the neck (not bright or multicoloured) with a tie, American collar or correctly fastened stock must be worn. Body protectors may be worn. Plain, dark coloured waterproof coats may be worn in wet weather.

Hats

Competitors must wear a hard hat to at least the minimum standard, with a harness properly adjusted and fastened. Hats marked EN1384, PASO15:1998, ASTM F1163, BSEN14572:2005 or SEI. American standard SNELL E2001, ASTM 95, SNZ3838 1998. Skullcap hats must be worn with a silk.

If a hat comes off during a test it must be replaced immediately; either the competitor may dismount or the hat may be handed to them. The test will be restarted at the beginning of the movement during which it came off. There will be no penalty for an error of course but if the hat is not replaced the competitor will be eliminated.

Breeches/Jodhpurs

Must be white, cream or beige.

Gloves

Must be worn.

Boots

Must be black or brown and may be top boots or Jodhpur boots. Gaiters may be worn providing they are of identical leather to the boots and have no decoration of any sort.

Spurs

Spurs of excessively severe design may not be worn, such designs include spurs with necks set to inside of heel, spurs with roughened/cutting edges and serrated spurs with or without necks. Spurs with smooth rowels not exceeding 1cm are allowed. Spurs may only be worn in the traditional manner, with the curve, if any pointing downwards. Spurs that have a smooth rotating rubber or plastic ball on the shank are permitted.

Whips

It is permitted to carry a whip. A whip may always be carried by ladies riding side saddle, but at no time may more than one whip be carried during a test or warming up. For Riding Club competitions the whip must not exceed 110cm.

A whip must not be used in a way or be of a length that disturbs other riders and may not be picked up if dropped during a test.

When saluting, competitors must take the reins and whip, if carried, in one hand. The free hand should be lowered to the rider's side and the rider should nod the head.

Hair and Jewellery

No jewellery or any items worn in facial or body piercings are permitted. Hair must be neatly secured and must not hang lower than the shoulder line when standing normally.

Permitted Tack and Equipment

Saddles

Saddles must be worn and be of English or Continental style and must be brown, black, grey or navy.

Stirrup leathers and irons are compulsory and must be attached to the saddle and used in the conventional way. The rider's boots must not be fixed to the stirrup iron by mechanical means. Western style or brightly coloured saddles are not permitted. It is permissible to ride side saddle. Saddle covers are not permitted except during riding-in. A gel pad seat saver is permitted, provided that it is unobtrusive and matches the colour of the saddle. Other types of seat saver including sheepskin/fur fabric are not permitted. Treeless saddles are permitted.

Saddle cloths - logos

Logos on each side of the Saddle Cloth are permitted but must not exceed 200 square cm (approx 14cm x 14cm or equivalent).

Bridles

Should be used as follows:

Preliminary and Novice standard Ordinary snaffle

Elementary - Advanced standards Ordinary snaffle or Double bridle

Bridles may not be decorated with tassels or any additions to the normal configuration. Discreet padding of the bridle at the poll or noseband is permitted.

Nosebands

It is obligatory to use a noseband. Either a drop, flash or cavesson noseband must be used with a snaffle bridle. A cavesson noseband only

must be used with a double bridle. Drop nosebands and flash straps must lie in the chin groove. Nosebands must not cause discomfort.

Bitguards

Bitguards are not allowed.

Other Tack

Martingales and bearing, side or running reins of any kind are forbidden. Reins with elasticated inserts are not permitted, neither are bandages, boots and any sort of blinkers. Tongue straps are not permitted.

Breastplates and breast girths are permitted. Cruppers are permitted. Neckstraps may be used in Preliminary classes, in 4yo young horse classes, in young horse classes where horses are ridden in groups and while riding in, but are not permitted in classes of Novice standard upwards. Balancing Straps (a loop on the front of the saddle) are permitted.

Any unusual decoration of the horse with unnatural things, such as ribbons, flowers, glitter etc. in the mane/tail or applied to the coat is forbidden. Discrete red bows in the tail are permitted for horses that kick.

Fly Fringes, Gauzes and Ear Covers

Fly fringes, nose gauzes and ear covers which cover any part of the horse's head may be worn when riding-in but not during a Test.

Anti fly impregnated browbands and fly repellent discs

Anti Fly Impregnated Browbands and fly repellent discs are permitted while riding-in and during a Test.

Eligibility of Ponies/Horses

Ponies or horses may only compete in riding club activities from 1 January in the year they become 4 years old.

Warming up

While exercising any horse, whether competing or not, at a dressage competition it is permissible to use only the saddlery allowed for unaffiliated dressage competitions, i.e. a suitable saddle and either a double bridle or snaffle with a cavesson, dropped or flash noseband for the duration of the competition.

Horses competing in Novice and Preliminary classes may only warm up in snaffles.

Introductory/Preliminary - Novice Snaffle

Elementary - Advanced Snaffle/Double bridle

Boots, bandages, neck straps and whips are permitted when warming up.

Lungeing - the lunge rein must be attached to the bit or cavesson and two reins are permissible. Side reins may be used, but not running or balancing

reins etc. The rider may be mounted while the horse is being lunged and may hold the reins. Permission to lunge must be obtained from the organiser who may designate a specific area.

Warming up in anything other than the permitted saddlery will entail the elimination of both horse and owner/rider from all classes on the day.

Stallions may be identified by the rider wearing a yellow cross band whilst working in. A stallion disc must be displayed on each side of a stallions bridle at all times.

Permitted Bits

Snaffle

1. Loose ring snaffle.
2. Snaffle with jointed mouthpiece where middle piece is rounded.
3. Egg-butt snaffle.
4. Racing snaffle D-ring.
5. Egg-butt snaffle with cheeks.
6. Loose ring snaffle with cheeks (Fulmer).
7. Snaffle with upper cheeks only.
8. Hanging cheek snaffle.
9. Straight bar snaffle. Permitted also with mullen mouth and eggbutt rings.
10. Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece.
11. Double jointed with roller in the centre.

Bits of rubber, nylon or other synthetic materials are permitted. Bits must be used in their manufactured condition without any addition to/on any part. A mix of metals in the mouthpiece is permitted.

A plastic snaffle with a cylindrical rotating mouthpiece is permitted.

Minimum diameter of the mouthpiece should be 10mm. Snaffles used in Young Horse classes must have a minimum diameter of 14mm.

Double bridle

Bits should follow the configuration of those illustrated below:

Bridoons:

1. Loose ring bridoon bit.
2. Bridoon bit with jointed mouthpiece where the middle piece should be rounded.
3. Egg-butt bridoon bit.
4. Bridoon bit with hanging cheeks.

Curbs:

5. Half-moon curb bits.
6. Curb bit with straight cheeks and port.
7. Curb bit with port and sliding mouthpiece (Weymouth)
A curb bit with rotating lever arm is also allowed.

8. Curb bit with S-curved cheeks.
9. Curb chain (metal or leather or a combination).
10. Lip strap.
11. Leather cover for curb chain.
12. Rubber cover for curb chain.

Bits must be used in their manufactured condition without any addition to/on any part.

The lever arm of the curb is limited to 10 cm in length (length below the mouthpiece). The ring of the bridoon bit must not exceed 8 cm in diameter. If the curb has a sliding mouthpiece, the lever arm of the curb bit below the mouthpiece should not measure more than 10cm when the mouthpiece is at the uppermost position. The diameter of the mouthpiece of the bridoon and/or curb must be such as not to hurt the horse.

Rigid bits coated in plastic are permissible in a double bridle however flexible rubber bits are not permissible.

The curb chain may be made of leather, metal or a combination and must be fitted in the conventional way.

Riding the Tests

Riding in Collecting Ring or practice areas/arenas

In order to extend courtesy to other riders and to prevent accidents, it is customary to practise the following conduct:

- a) Pass left hand to left hand when meeting another rider coming in the opposite direction unless he/she is in counter canter in which case you should give way by circling.
- b) Make tack adjustments outside the arena if possible or near the middle of the arena but without obstructing the diagonal or centre lines.
- c) Announce that you intend to enter an indoor practice area to avoid an accident.
- d) Ensure your whip is not so long that it could upset a passing horse.
- e) Do not halt or walk in the outside track but always leave room for other riders to pass.
- f) Do not lunge in practice areas without the permission of the Organiser and only if there is sufficient room so as not to cause inconvenience to other riders.
- g) Trainers or other pedestrians should not stand in the collecting rings or practice areas/arenas.

Commanders

- a) Where Commanders are allowed it is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that only the printed text or extracts therefrom are read out and that there is no emphasis on any part of the command. Failure to observe this rule may entail elimination.

- b) Repetition of any part of the text may incur an error of course if used to redirect a competitor in process of making such an error.
- c) Commanders may be introduced partway through the test at the Judges discretion
- d) Commanders may not stand inside the arena.
- e) Commanders should be courteous when multiple arenas are running and position themselves to avoid disturbing other riders.

Outside assistance

Any outside assistance by voice, or signs, etc. designed to help a competitor improve their performance during a test will entail elimination.

Entering arena before the signal to start

Under normal circumstances no horse either ridden or led may enter any arena, other than the practice arena, except when actually competing in a contest, on penalty of elimination. Competitors must wait until the Judge has sounded the horn, rung the bell or in some way signified that he/she may start, before entering the arena. Once the signal has been given competitors have 45 seconds to enter the arena at 'A'. Entering before the signal to start or failure to start within 45 seconds will result in a 2 mark penalty per Judge being awarded.

Where the class is held on an artificial surface and or the construction of the arena makes it impossible for the competitor to ride round the outside, before the judge's signal to enter is sounded, he/she may, on the instruction of the Organiser, ride inside the area. Where a 40m x 20m arena has been created within a 60m x 20m arena the competitor should be permitted to ride in the entire arena. Depending on the circumstances, riders have the option of entering at A from the inside or outside the arena.

It is not permitted to enter any part (in or around) the competition arena during a break or whilst the Judge is not present.

Execution of test

All movements must follow one another in the order laid down in the Test. In a movement which must be carried out at a certain point of the arena, it is at the moment when the rider's body is above the point that the movement is executed. All tests will be ridden with both hands except where stated otherwise on the test sheets. In all tests, up to and including Elementary, transitions may be progressive except where stated otherwise on the test sheets; in simple changes the upward transition is always direct.

A competitor is not allowed to repeat a movement or put in an extra circle or loop, unless the Judge decides that an error of course has been made, and sounds the horn or bell. If, however, the rider has started a movement and tries to do the same movement again, the Judge must

consider the first movement only and, at the same time, penalise for an error of course. A rider who starts the wrong test for the class will be allowed to restart at the Judge's discretion as long as they can do so immediately.

They will be penalised as a first error of course.

Salute

Competitors must take the reins and whip, if carried, in one hand. The free hand should be lowered to the rider's side and the rider should nod their head. Gentlemen may salute in the same manner, or, if they wish, they may remove and lower their hat with their free hand before nodding.

Sitting and rising

For all tests at elementary level and below used at British Dressage competitions trot work may be executed sitting or rising.

At medium level and above all trot work must be executed sitting.

Leaving the arena

Riders must leave the arena (after the final salute) at walk on a long rein at an appropriate place.

Under National Rules, a horse is eliminated if, during a Test, it leaves the arena when the surround is continuous and 9 in. high or more. Where the surround is less than 9 in. and is marked by boards or similar, no marks shall be given for the movement when the horse places all four feet outside the arena.

Where the arena is marked by a line only or intermittent boards, it is left to the discretion of the Judges as to the marks deducted. Any horse leaving the arena not under control will be eliminated. The Test begins when the horse enters at A and finishes when it moves off from the final salute.

Dismounting and/or fall off horse

If, after the rider has entered the arena, he/she dismounts without a reason acceptable to the Judges, no marks will be given for the movement. **In the case of a fall of horse and/or rider, the combination will be retired immediately from that test but can ride in future tests should the rider declare they are fit to continue.**

Resistance

a) Any horse failing to enter the arena within 45 seconds of the bell being sounded will have a 2 mark penalty per Judge awarded. Prolonged failure to enter for significantly more than 45 seconds may lead to elimination.

b) Any horse refusing to continue the test for a period of 20 consecutive seconds during the course of a test shall be eliminated.

Grinding teeth and tail swishing

Grinding the teeth and swishing the tail may be signs of nervousness, tenseness, or resistance on the part of the horse and can be taken into account by the judges in their marks for the movements concerned as well as in the appropriate collective mark at the end.

Voice

The use of the voice is prohibited and will be penalised by the loss of two marks from those that would have been awarded for each movement in which this occurred.

Errors of Course

When a competitor makes an 'error of course' (takes the wrong turn, omits a movement etc.) the Judge at C 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.

Penalties for errors of course

Every 'error of the course', whether the bell is sounded or not, must be penalised:

- the first time by 2 points
- the second time by 4 points
- the third time the competitor is eliminated, although he may continue his performance to the end, the marks being awarded in the ordinary way.

Errors of the test

When a competitor makes an 'error of the test' (trots rising instead of sitting, at the salute does not take the reins in one hand, etc.) he must be penalised as for an 'error of course'. The judge should put a star against the movement concerned and mark for an error at the bottom of the sheet.

Time

The approximate time given on each national test sheet is for guidance only.

Lameness

In the case of marked lameness, the Judge informs the rider that he is eliminated.

There is no appeal against the decision. If there are any doubts as to the soundness of a horse, the competitor will be allowed to complete the test and any unevenness of pace will be severely penalised.

It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure that a horse with loss of use is fit to compete.

Scoring - method

The Judge will allot from 0-10 points for each numbered movement. These marks are then added together and any penalty marks are deducted. In the event of equality of total marks, the collective marks should be added together and the horse with the higher collective marks shall take the higher placing. If the total of the collective marks is also equal the horses concerned shall be given the same placing.

Scale of marks

The scale of Marks is as follows:

10 Excellent

9 Very Good

8 Good

7 Fairly Good

6 Satisfactory

5 Sufficient

4 Insufficient

3 Fairly Bad

2 Bad

1 Very Bad

0 Not Executed

The marks 10 and 0 must be awarded where the performances warrant their use. By "not executed" is meant that nothing which is required has been performed.