

Annex J: Notes for dressage competitors

At some stage every rider has had to compete for the first time. This is a step-by-step document that follows the order of preparation for both you and your horse. The majority of the information is procedure rather than rules. You should have a rule book handy at all times whilst competing.

There are various rules and sections from the EA Dressage rules referred to in this document. This document *must* be read in conjunction with the rules and is not intended to replace the rules.

Please make sure that you have read and are familiar with the EA Competitor's Code of Conduct.

J.1 Setting goals

A lot of riders go to trainers with the expectation of becoming an Olympian or at least being able to ride like one. There is nothing wrong with being ambitious. However, with the help of your trainer you should set **achievable** short-term goals.

In this case, an achievable goal is that you are going to prepare for your first competition and ride at least one but hopefully two tests. To achieve this goal you might:

- a) set a time-frame of about two/three months in order to work towards that goal
- b) find a local competition where you feel within your comfort zone
- c) enter a test that suits your level of training and competency
- d) try to time your competition to coincide with training or practice days at the venue where you will be competing.

J.2 Welfare of the horse

Be aware of the EA's requirement for the welfare of the horse (refer to Section 1).

J.3 Membership/Registration requirements

- a) Refer to the EA General Regulations for membership requirements.
- b) Obtain an entry form for the competition you feel is appropriate.
- c) The entry form will point out the conditions of entry which are fairly standard but sometimes may have some local rules.

J.4 Entries

- a) Refer to Section 1 for information about entries.
- b) Keep a copy of your entry in order that you can refer back to it if necessary.

J.5 Verifying which Preparatory and Freestyle tests apply

There are different versions of Preparatory tests and Freestyles used throughout Australia. Therefore you should obtain from the organisers of the event a copy of the test you have entered, including time permitted.

J.6 Learning the test

Refer to the EA rule book for the diagram of the arenas. If a caller is used, you must still know the test. Refer to the EA rules for information.

J.7 Pre-Competition requirements

Important paperwork required includes:

- a) EA Dressage Rules and test sheet which you should read. It is your responsibility to know the rules
- b) horse registration papers, if applicable
- c) the time draw from the event organiser
- d) conditions of entry for the local event and
- e) copy of entries.

J.8 Transport requirements

- a) Do not leave it until the day of competition to see if your horse will load.
- b) Do you need to borrow a horse trailer? If so, try and arrange to have a practice run to the event venue.
- c) Is your vehicle legally able to tow the trailer?

J.9 Competition day

- a) Leave yourself plenty of time to arrive and be at the venue before you ride.
- b) On arrival report to the event office and obtain your identification number if applicable.
- c) Check if there are any scratchings/withdrawals.
- d) If arenas are already going, are they running to time?
- e) Check location of gear steward.
- f) Check that your dress and the horse's equipment comply with the rules as the legality and use of some equipment is restricted to specific areas (see Section 2).
- g) Check location of your competition area, your warm-up and exercise areas.
- h) Locate the area set aside for lunging, if required.
- i) Keep hydrated at all times.

J.10 Warm-up techniques

For further information regarding warm-up techniques, please refer to Annex G , FEI Hyperflexion Guidelines, which is available on the FEI website www.fei.org.

J.10.1 Preparation and mounting

- a) Only the nominated rider can ride a horse at an event, with the exception of a groom who, when mounted, may walk on a comfortable long rein.
- b) Riders must be neatly dressed at all times when mounted. It is best that once you mount the horse you are correctly attired (see Section 2), with the exception of a competition jacket.
- c) Once you have finished your final warm-up go straight to the competition area via the Gear Steward.

J.10.2 Etiquette for the warm-up arena

As there are many horses warming up in a restricted area it is important that all riders have knowledge of the etiquette required in group riding. This ensures safe riding and achieves harmony in busy areas.

- a) Safety is paramount and a collision should be avoided at all times.

- b) Before entering the warm-up area make sure the gateway and immediate track are clear.
- c) Riders should pass left shoulder to left shoulder when on the outside track.
- d) When not on the outside track, e.g. on a diagonal line, riders should give way to horses on their left.
- e) The more progressive gait has priority on the track (e.g. horses trotting should give way to horses cantering).
- f) A halt should not be on the track.
- g) Walking should not be on the track and does not have right of way.
- h) Trot has priority over walk.
- i) Canter has priority over trot.
- j) Lateral work has priority over **all** paces.
- k) When circling, anticipate your return to the track so as to not stop the flow of other riders.
- l) Mounting, dismounting and gear adjustment should be done off the track.
- m) Consideration should be given to behaviour of other horses in the arena that may upset your horse.
- n) It may be necessary to leave the area if your horse is upsetting others .
- o) If a horse is upsetting the majority, an official should be sought with a view to requesting that horse's removal for safety's sake.

J.10.3 Gear check

Section 2 refers to the areas in which certain gear is allowable. Be familiar with these rules. Report to the Gear Steward 10 to 15 minutes before your test. Gear check is required before each test.

J.11 Entering the competition area

Care must be taken to get no closer than 15 m, if possible, to the competition arena (as defined in Section 3) whilst there is a competitor in that arena.

J.12 Reporting to the judge and riding the test

The time draw allocates you a time for riding. You cannot be forced to ride before this time. However, if the horse prior to you is scratched and you are ready to ride, consideration should be given to approaching the judge.

By presenting to the judge, even if you are early, you are indicating that you are ready to ride. Therefore, if you are not ready to enter the arena immediately, wait away from the competition area until such time as you are ready or your start time arrives. The reason for this is to allow all competitors equal warm-up time around the arena, therefore, not benefiting any particular combination.

J.12.1 Reporting to the judge

- a) If bridle numbers have been issued there is no need to stop and talk to the judge; simply ride past each judge ensuring that your bridle number/identification number can be clearly seen.
- b) If you have a medical problem that restricts your hearing let the judge know so that they can make a clear indication when to start the test.
- c) If bridle numbers are not issued, once the horse before you leaves the arena, progress to the Chief Judge at C and await instructions.
- d) A judge's instruction may be 'I have a bell' or 'I will ring the bell and hold my hand out the window' to let you know when to enter the arena.
- e) If you do not have a bridle number make sure all judges know your name and the name of your horse.
- f) Once you have given this, recommence warming up around the arena

- g) Once the judge rings the bell you have 45 seconds to enter the arena. The penalty is 2 marks per judge if this exceeded. If you are not sure if you heard the bell, circle again and re-present to the Chief Judge.
- h) Entering the arena before the bell may entail a penalty of 2 points per judge.

J.12.2 Riding the test

- a) At the salute competitors must take the reins in one hand. A whip may be held in either hand at the salute.
- b) The requirement is to only salute the Judge at C.
- c) Salute, then pick up the reins and continue when ready.
- d) Only at the salute at the beginning and end of a test and when exiting the arena may the reins be held in one hand (except for Freestyles as part of the degree of difficulty).
- e) In Preliminary and Novice tests a rider has the option of doing sitting or rising trot.
- f) In all higher tests, trot work is executed sitting unless otherwise stated.
- g) See Section 9 for the rules on how to perform a movement.

J.13 Elimination and penalties

Refer to Section 3 for information on riding the test and the various penalties for errors of course and other types of penalties, including elimination.

J.14 Callers and video operators

- a) Callers should stand with their back to the wind so riders can hear them. This can be at either E or B.
- b) It is advisable to for riders to have a predetermined subtle signal to give to their callers if they need the movement to be re-called.
- c) Riders must not speak to their callers but the rules permit the repeating once only of the calling of a movement.
- d) Calling with too loud a voice should be avoided.
- e) Videoing from the centre line at A gives you the reverse of the judge's point of view.
- f) Any videoing is to be carried out at least 10 m back from the arena.

J.15 After the competition

- a) Once the placings are posted for the test you rode you can pick up your test sheets.
- b) Check that there is a point in each box. If you are unsure of the result you can check the adding up.
- c) If a protest is to be lodged it must be within 30 minutes of the posting of the placings.
- d) Officials and competitors need to abide by the Codes of Conduct as contained in the EA Member Protection Policy (located on the EA website <http://www.equestrian.org.au/sites/default/files/Equestrian%20Australia%20Member%20Protection%20policy.pdf>)
- e) If a rider would like to discuss their marks with the judge/s concerned then they should do this in a polite non-confrontational manner and have test sheets with them for reference. The discussion should take place in a private area. Refer to EA General Regulations 169.6.3 for the penalty in relation to incorrect behaviour towards event officials or any other party connected with the event (other rider, journalist, public, etc).
- f) If you are unable to stay at the event venue to collect your test the organisers will post the test to

you if you provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

- g) Remember to thank the organisers before you leave the ground, it may encourage them to run another competition for you.

J.16 Role of stewards

Stewards are responsible for ensuring the welfare of horses is upheld, that the rules for the event are adhered to and that events are conducted safely.

In this role they are expected to supervise training and warm-up areas, stables and other areas where horses are held, ridden or treated, as well as the field of play for competitions.

Any official is authorised to:

- a) intervene in order to prevent any abuse of horses by riders, grooms, owners or any other person
- b) intervene in order to prevent any contravention of the common principles of behaviour, fairness and accepted standards of sportsmanship.

Stewards, please ensure you read and understand the rules relating to:

- Code of Conduct for the welfare of the horse (see rule 1.2)
- Abuse of the horse (see rule 1.3)
- Bleeding (see rule 1.4)
- Anti-doping and medication control (see rule 1.6)
- Dress, saddlery and equipment (see Section 2)
- Dress, saddlery and equipment for Para-Equestrian competitors (see rule 13.7)
- Eventing Dressage judging (See Annex L)
- FEI guidelines for pre- and post-competition training techniques (with particular reference to the directive that *no single neck position should be maintained which may lead to tiredness or stress, see Annex H*).

Under EA and FEI rules stewards are required to stop riders if they have observed:

- neck stretching achieved through forced or aggressive riding
- the use of extreme flexion if it does not comply with the definition of stretching
- a rider deliberately maintaining a sustained fixed head or neck carriage longer than 10 minutes
- in cases where the horse is showing signs of general stress and/or fatigue.

The steward may also ask the rider to walk for a certain amount of time in situations where the rider's stress may cause undesired riding (refer to Annex G).

A maximum duration of pre-competition warm-up of one hour is the standard; riders require permission from the Chief Steward (which will be granted only in exceptional circumstances) to extend a training session beyond one hour. The training session must include relaxation periods. Riders are also reminded that post-test repetition of movements may not exceed 10 minutes.

If you are competing at an FEI-approved event (i.e. CDI, CDIY, CDIJ, CDIP) it is essential that you make yourself aware of rules that specifically relate to FEI events. In particular, riders are reminded that no one, other than the rider may carry a whip in training or warm-up areas.