



BEYOND THE BELL

The NSW Judges Journal



WELCOME!

Welcome to the second 2026 edition of the NSW Judges' Journal, Beyond the Bell! The activity from the first quarter of the year certainly flowed into the second with CDI, Hawkesbury Dressage Festival, many competitions and some exciting upgrades.

We hope everyone who was able to make Sydney CDI enjoyed a fabulous event, as judges, spectators and competitors. The master class with Christof Umbach certainly didn't disappoint.

The JSC has been busy not only with the Christof Umbach masterclass but also with two seminars with Sue Cunningham at CDI and ensuring as many upgrade opportunities were available at the Hawkesbury Dressage Festival as possible. In the second half of the year, we're taking seminars to regional areas. Keep an eye on NSW Judges Facebook and your emails for more details as they are confirmed.

In this edition, Robyn Targa provides a detailed article on judging shoulder-in. We've gone to Wisemans Club based on the Central Coast for our Around the Grounds spotlight, and Sue Cunningham provides background on the growing diversity and inclusion in dressage.

We also pay tribute to the great Stephen Clarke who left such an incredible legacy, and I include a reminder of his fabulous scoring guide as our last page.

I hope you find some interesting bits and pieces in this edition, if you have any suggestions for future issues, as always, please let me know.

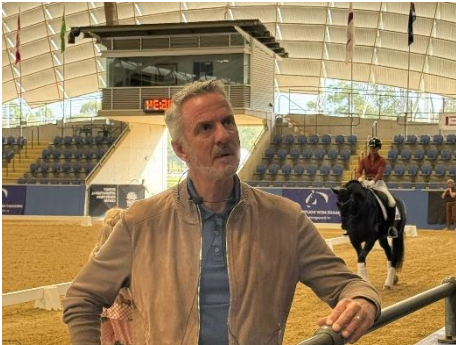
Happy Judging! *Mel*

OVER THE PAGE

In this edition, we:

- report on Sydney CDI;
- celebrate recent upgrades and report on upcoming potential sit-in and shadow opportunities;
- introduce our Regional Seminar Series;
- join Robyn Targa for a close look at judging Shoulder-in;
- explore those things that almost "never" happen in Quirky Corner
- learn a little bit about inclusive dressage pathways with Sue Cunningham;
- pay respect to Stephen Clarke; and
- have a look around the Grounds with Wisemans Club.

Report from SYDNEY CDI



On Sunday 3 May 2026 we were treated to a fabulously informative Master Class from Luxembourg's 5* FEI judge Christof Umbach, who stayed for an extra day after judging at Sydney CDI. Not only were there tips for judges and the demonstration riders (so kindly backing up after CDI) but also insight into the new FEI tests which have now been tested with international riders for feedback and are well on their way to being ready for 2027.



Christof is on the working group that writes the FEI tests and with the new tests expected to be released later this year, for effect in 2027, we had a "front row" preview into the tests, the changes, how we would want to see them executed and what they were designed to achieve. With the "stretchy trot" now to appear in all tests including Grand Prix.



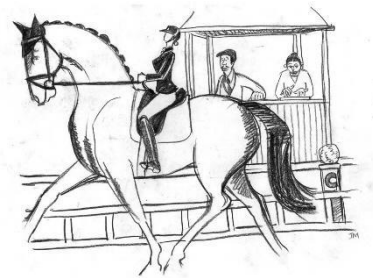
In addition to Christof's insight, judges enjoyed workshops with Sue Cunningham on judging Freestyles and Young horse classes giving them a front row seat to the tests performed by the very exciting young horses.

CONGRATS TO RECENT UPGRADES!

Congratulations to Ann-Maree Lourey and Justin Bayley for successfully completing their pinnacle upgrade and successfully passing their A Grade exam! A lifetime in the making and so wonderful to have 2 new A level judges in NSW.

Congratulations also to Christine Hill on passing her D level exam at Hawkesbury Festival and Anne Hawkins who joined the official ranks as a G level judge.

We have a lot of judges working through upgrades to the next level at the moment and will no doubt see more taking their practical exams as State and National dressage championships are held.



Artwork by Jacqui Melbourne

Night-in with Nell



The first of our casual, unofficial judges' chats was held in June with a great roll up of about 40 judges to chat with experienced Judge Educator Nell Marshman. This provided us all with a wonderful opportunity to bounce ideas around, raise issues with Nell and clarify any problems that we had experienced whilst judging. Nell was a wonderful host, and we look forward to more of the same in the future!

Upcoming events and potential sit-in/shadow opportunities

With winter upon us, the competitions slow down a little, but the Hawkesbury Dressage Festival kept the upgrading calendar alive in June. With 20 judges doing multiple shadows, sits-ins and exams, it was a mammoth effort to organise and no doubt a surprise to our fabulous riders to find 6 cars around arenas at times.

You asked, we listened! With the Sydney focused seminar action done for the start of 2026, we now move to the regions to provide our **REGIONAL SEMINAR SERIES**. These seminars will provide regional judges with more training opportunities closer to home. We hope this provides encouragement for more to join our judging ranks, for regional Judges to pursue upgrades and also retain their accreditation. The first, which will be a standalone seminar run by Jindera Equestrian, will be held at Howlong, approximately 30kms from Albury.

REGIONAL SEMINAR SERIES

IN ALBURY IN ASSOCIATION WITH JINDERA EQUESTRIAN



**G /F LEVEL
SEMINAR
WITH JOBINA KENNEDY**

**Sunday 16th August
at HOWLONG**

**WORKSHOP VIA ZOOM
WEDNESDAY 12TH AUGUST AT 7PM**



DRESSAGE
NEW SOUTH WALES

Closely following the Albury seminar will be a seminar held in conjunction with the ACTDA event at Equestrian Park in Canberra. It is hoped that this event will provide a seminar and also shadow/sit-in opportunities for our judges.

REGIONAL SEMINAR SERIES IN CANBERRA - IN ASSOCIATION WITH ACTDA



G and E/F LEVEL
SEMINARS
WITH

NELL MARSHMAN

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27
September

WORKSHOPS VIA ZOOM
DATE - TBA

In addition to these Seminars we are also planning to move north in NSW and run:

G/F Seminar in Grafton on 6 September (TBC in conjunction with Championships)
G and E/F seminars at Alexander Park in October

Many of these events are being held in spring in our picturesque cities and towns, a fabulous time to see these town and cities shine at the same time!

Training link available on EA website!

Did you know there is a national calendar for dressage judge education on the EA website. Here is the link:
[National Calendar of Dressage Seminars-Workshops July 2026.pdf](#)

You can find it under the Education tab on the EA home page, then under the I AM AN OFFICIAL heading choose Course Calendar and then scroll down to near the bottom of the page and dressage has its own button to take you through to the above calendar.

Links to ENGAGE

Don't forget to jump onto Engage and review a course or two on these cold and wintry days. In case you're wondering where to find them, here's the link:

[Engage LMS | Dressage New South Wales](#)

If you've never logged into Engage before, you'll need a New User activation email. Contact admin@dressagensw.com.au and Mary will assist you. If you have logged in before but need to reset your password, you can do this from the login page.

Here is the login page for Engage LMS:

<https://officialstraining.ensw.org.au>

Shoulder-in from a Judge's perspective

By Robyn Targa

Shoulder-in is one of the most important lateral movements in dressage and is often described as the “foundation exercise” for developing collection, engagement, suppleness, and straightness. It appears simple when performed well, but it is one of the movements that quickly reveals weaknesses in balance, connection, and rider influence.

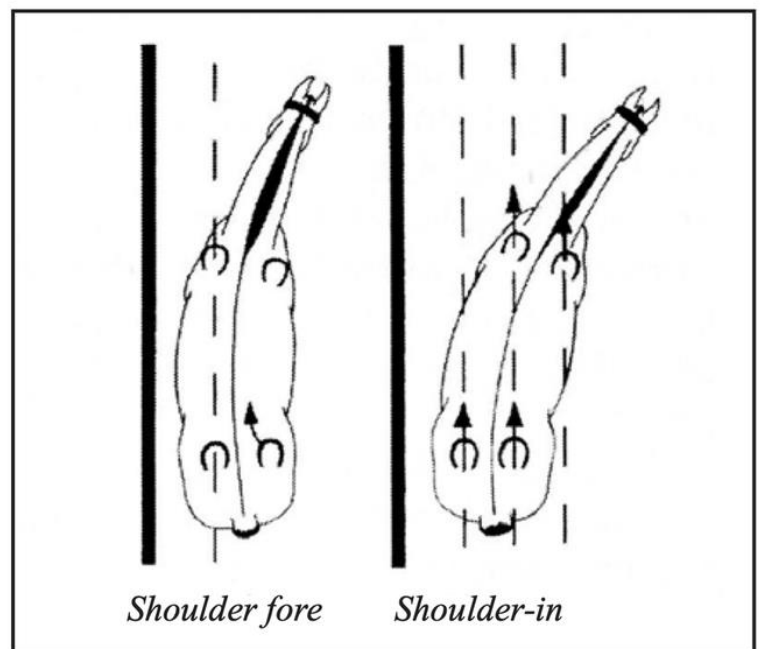
A quality shoulder-in should appear effortless: the horse travels forward with clear bend, maintains rhythm, and shows engagement from the inside hind leg while remaining balanced and light in the forehand.

What Is Shoulder-In?

Shoulder-in is ridden with:

- The horse bent around the rider's inside leg
- Slight flexion at the poll to the inside
- The shoulders displaced from the track
- Hindquarters remaining on the original line
- Three tracks visible
- Approximately 30 degree angle to the direction of travel

The movement is not a sideways exercise. It remains primarily a **forward movement with lateral positioning**.



How It Looks to the Judge at C

From C, the judge sees the horse approaching head-on. This position gives an excellent picture of:

- Number of tracks
- Alignment
- Bend
- Straightness
- Symmetry
- Position of shoulders versus quarters

Correct Shoulder-In Seen from C

A correct movement will show:

- Forehand displaced inward
- Three clear tracks
- Consistent flexion
- Inside hind stepping toward centre of gravity
- Even shoulders
- Balanced approach

The horse appears bent around the rider's inside leg rather than merely turning the neck.

Faults Seen from C

1. Excessive angle (Four tracks) - The shoulders are moved too far inward.

- Shoulder-in becomes leg yield-like
- Engagement decreases
- Horse loses balance

Judge comment could be: *"Too much angle, needs better positioning, maintain three tracks."*

Likely score: **5–6**

2. Neck bend only

- The neck is flexed but body remains straight.
- No true lateral work
- Inside hind not engaged

Judge comment could be: *"Flexion shown, insufficient body bend."*

Likely score: **5–6**

3. Haunches leading

- Horse position resembles travers.

Judge comment could be: *"Haunches leading, needs better shoulder placement."*

Likely score: **4–5**



How It Looks to the Judge at E/B

The side judge sees details sometimes hidden from C:

- Quality of steps
- Impulsion
- Frame
- Engagement
- Self-carriage
- Throughness

Correct Picture from E/B

A good shoulder-in from the side shows:

- Forward tendency maintained
- Poll highest point
- Consistent bend through body
- Active hind legs
- Uphill balance
- Even rhythm

The movement should look flowing rather than mechanical.

The shoulders lead slightly while the horse continues marching forward.

Faults Seen from E/B

1. Loss of impulsion

- Horse slows or becomes hesitant.
- The movement may still look correct from C but lacks quality.

Judge comment could be: *"Needs more activity and impulsion."*

Likely score: **6**

2. Horse falls onto inside shoulder

- Loss of self-carriage
- Forehand becomes heavy

Judge comment could be: *"Improve balance and uphill tendency."*

Likely score: **5–6**

3. Excessive neck bend

- Neck curls inward while body stays straight.

Judge comment could be: *"Too much neck bend; maintain true body bend."*

Likely score: **5**

4. Loss of rhythm

- Steps become uneven due to:
 - tension
 - restriction
 - reduced quality

Judge comment: *"Rhythm inconsistent; maintain regularity."*

Likely score: **4–5**

Shoulder-In Check List

Correct	Incorrect
✓ Three tracks visible ✓ Shoulders displaced inward ✓ Hindquarters remain on the line ✓ Inside hind steps under ✓ Even rhythm ✓ Poll highest point ✓ Consistent bend ✓ Forward energy maintained	✗ Four tracks ✗ Neck bend only ✗ Quarters trailing ✗ Haunches leading ✗ Falling onto inside shoulder ✗ Loss of impulsion ✗ Crooked body ✗ Irregular rhythm

Score Guide for Shoulder-In

Score 9–10 — Excellent	Judge comments
• Three tracks clear • Correct angle • Active inside hind • Uphill carriage • Consistent bend • Excellent self-carriage	<i>"Very good shoulder-in, expressive and balanced."</i> <i>"Excellent engagement and alignment."</i>
Score 7–8 — Good	
• Correct movement established • Minor issues only • Rhythm and balance maintained	<i>"Good shoulder-in; could show slightly more engagement."</i> <i>"Well ridden with minor loss of bend."</i>
Score 6 — Satisfactory	
• Recognisable shoulder-in • Some loss of quality • Bend or engagement incomplete	<i>"Shoulder-in shown; needs more activity."</i> <i>"Maintained position but-; improve bend."</i>
Score 5	
• Inconsistent angle • Poor body bend • Reduced engagement • Loss of line	<i>"Insufficient shoulder displacement."</i> <i>"Needs clearer bend and alignment."</i>
Score 4 and Below	
Movement no longer recognisable as shoulder-in. May include: • Four tracks • Travers • Straight horse • Major crookedness • Loss of rhythm	<i>"Shoulder-in not established."</i> <i>"Incorrect positioning throughout movement."</i>

Further look at problems

Loss of rhythm or tempo

The trot should remain regular and consistent. Common problems are slowing down or becoming stick, rushing through the movement, uneven steps, loss of clear trot rhythm. A correct shoulder-in keeps the same tempo before, during and after.

Incorrect bend

The horse should bend uniformly around the writers inside leg faults include neck bend only, over bent neck, poll not the highest point, horse looking to the outside, body straight while neck bent. You want to see bend through the entire body not just the head and neck.

Incorrect angle

Shoulder in is typically performed on three tracks problems include angle to steep, horse fall sideways, angle to shallow, insufficient positioning four tracks instead of three, haunches leading instead of shoulders. Too much angle often causes loss of impulsion and crossing.

Loss of forward energy or impulsion

Common a very common issue horse becomes behind, the leg steps lose activity, hind legs trail out behind, movement becomes laboured. Shoulder in must still travel forward not just sideways.

Poor engagement of the hindquarters

The inside hind leg should step under the body towards the centre of gravity. Faults include hind legs trailing, lack of carrying power, flat or earthbound steps, horse on forehand especially noticeable when you're judging from the side.

Crookedness

The horse should stay aligned from pole tail. Common crooked issues are quarter swinging in or out, horse drifting off the line, shoulders escaping, neck disconnected from body alignment.

Resistance or Tension

A quality shoulder in should appear supple and fluent. Some negative signs are tail swishing mouth opening head tossing bracing through the top line a tight back. Tension will lower the movement score and submission.

Balance problems

Horse should remain uphill, Issues include falling onto the inside shoulder, loss of self-carriage and heavy in the hand tipping onto the forehand

Inconsistent connection

The rein connection should stay elastic and steady. We may see include inside rein pulling, unsteady contact, horse above or behind the bit. Contact becoming uneven.

Final Thoughts

From **C**, the judge focuses on **alignment, tracks, and correctness of the lateral positioning**.

From **E/B**, the judge evaluates **quality of movement, engagement, balance, and throughness**.

A successful shoulder-in is not the one with the greatest angle. It is the one where the horse remains supple, active, balanced, and clearly on three tracks with true bend through the entire body

Shoulder in is both a schooling exercise and a test of correct training. It develops both the horse's gymnastic ability and a rider's control. We train shoulder-in to make the horse straighter stronger more soft and more balanced while preparing for collection and higher level movements.



A special thanks goes to Rodney's Photography for sponsoring local photos in this article!



Things that surely never happen...and then they do

We've all spent hours poring over the rule book, we have it with us when we judge, and

we feel that we should be all good to judge for the day. Then something happens that we don't expect and almost never see. That "one in a million" event. There's no time to reach for the rule book or check with a more experienced judge, you're on your own and you've got what feels like a nano-second to act. Needless to say, you want to do the "right thing". We've all been there, done what we felt was best at the time, but was it?

To try and make these situations a bit easier and hopefully bring some consistency, we thought we'd have a little section here just to highlight some of the obscurities and a guide on what to do.

Arena crashes when the combinations start from inside the arena

This could happen where the riders were entering from inside the arena and they have a problem with one of the corners. You ring the bell and the rider hasn't gone down the centreline when the horse ran backwards in the corner, hits the fence and tips it over but stayed in. In this case, it wasn't the riders fault they had to enter from inside the arena. If they had been outside, it wouldn't have happened so it would be unfair to penalise the rider in this instance. There is no penalty.

Letters not quite where you hoped?

Unfortunately, this one is preventable by following the rules, so it's on us! Some organisers pay relatives or anyone they can find, to set up the arenas for the competition. Unfortunately, many of these lovely helpers don't know the importance of a B from an A. So, make sure you walk your arena, check that A is 10-15 metres back from the entry and centered for your ease of judging the very first movement. Riders are also more likely to make a happy enthusiastic start if they don't have to dodge A to get in.

Rule 7.2 doesn't say you should walk the arena, it says you **MUST** physically inspect the arena. Once the competition starts, conditions should remain the same for all riders as much as possible.

You're at B, E, H or M and the C judge doesn't notice the rider miss a movement

This happened to me, and I'll admit, I panicked, how could I save the test and my lovely C judge? Well, now I know, in most instances you can't. The computer systems generally don't run fast enough to alert the C judge. Before you can find a button, you're 3 movements along. So, what to do? After the test is finished, have a chat with the C judge about what has happened in case their writer hasn't already alerted them. In this case under rule 7.7 the rider should be given a score equal to the average of their other movement scores (excluding collectives). No error of course is recorded because the C judge would have been responsible for stopping them, to give them the opportunity to perform the movement. This would also apply where you've omitted a score for a movement and you can't recall the movement.

And the classic of a rider learning the wrong test

Helpfully, the EADC/EADOC have issued a directive (6 October 2023) regarding the procedure for this occurring in official tests. They have advised:

The usual process would be to ring the bell and confirm with the rider that they have learnt the wrong test and immediately give them the opportunity to read the correct test and see if they can recall it. If they can't recall it, inform the rider that they will be allowed to have a caller if one is immediately in the vicinity. (To facilitate the draw timetable). This is only applicable where a caller is allowed under EA rules. Either way an error is applied, and judging commences from the point where the error was made. If none of this has been possible or the rider decides not to continue, they are counted as Retiring. Where an event such as State and National championships does not permit callers, as per Rule 10.3, learning the wrong test would lead to elimination. Under no circumstances is the rider permitted to leave the arena and come back at a later time. This would constitute elimination. **Of course, at a Participant or Restricted Club event, the judge may choose to follow a different process in order to be "rider friendly"**

* * * * *

This is just the start, please let me know obscure or quirky things that happened in your arena, and we can help everyone by sharing the rule details (where there is a specific rule) or raise the issue further for a consistent approach.

Inclusive Dressage Pathways – Understanding the Options

With Sue Cunningham

The landscape of inclusive dressage in Australia has expanded significantly in recent years. As judges, many of us are increasingly being invited to officiate at Para Dressage, VIRTUS, Equibility and RDA competitions. While these programs all share the common goal of making equestrian sport accessible, each serves a different purpose and presents its own considerations for judges.



Para Dressage provides the high-performance pathway for riders with measurable physical impairments, including progression to World Championships and the Paralympic Games. Athletes are classified according to functional ability and compete in tests specific to their grade.

Each grade is viewed separately from the others. Riders generally do not move from one grade to another, although in some cases, depending on the underlying cause of the disability this may happen. Each grade has 5 levels of test: novice, intermediate, Grand Prix A and Grand Prix B and a compulsory freestyle. Competitions are also held at the different * star levels in the same way our FEI tests are.



Para riders may use approved adaptive aids, and judges may occasionally see modified saddlery, stabilised stirrups, two whips or riders competing without saluting in the traditional manner. These aids are approved to compensate for an impairment and should not influence marks. Para Dressage, like all dressage, is judged against the principles of the training scale and the requirements of the test.



Virtus is the international governing body for athletes with an intellectual impairment. Australia has embraced Virtus dressage and enjoyed considerable success on the world stage. Many competitions are now incorporated into EA and FEI Para Dressage events, often sharing arenas and officials.



Virtus riders are graded by a strict panel of medical specialists, psychologists, and designated sports eligibility officers who determine riders' levels, using their own tests and some para tests.

Perhaps the most important consideration for judges is communication. Some riders may process information differently or take longer to respond to directions. A patient, calm and welcoming approach can make a significant difference to a competitor's experience while ensuring the competition runs smoothly and professionally.

Equibility provides an inclusive and welcoming environment for riders with physical and/or intellectual disabilities who may not wish to pursue formal Para Dressage classification. Specially designed tests cater for assisted walk and walk/trot classes, and participation rules are intentionally flexible, designed for events at club level.

For judges, these classes are often a reminder that dressage is fundamentally about harmony and correct training. The emphasis is on participation and enjoyment within safety parameters. Judges should be encouraging, generous and look for intent rather than precision.



Riding for the Disabled (RDA) has been part of the Australian equestrian landscape since the early 1970s and is often where many riders begin their journey. With a strong focus on therapy, confidence and participation, RDA provides opportunities across a range of disciplines, including dressage. Judges do not require Para Dressage accreditation to officiate at RDA events, and classes may include RDA tests, EA Preparatory tests or Para Dressage tests.

Typically, the primary dressage events held by RDA are held annually and include the NSW State Championships and the National Championships.

While the collectives may differ slightly, the principles of judging remain the same. Riders should be assessed according to the requirements of the test, with marks reflecting paces and way of going, use of the arena, rider's position and balance and the rider's use of aids. As with any competitor, our role is to judge what we see on the day.

* * * *

As opportunities for inclusive participation continue to grow, Australia's commitment to accessibility in equestrian sport is stronger than ever. Regardless of the pathway, the fundamentals of judging remain unchanged: know the rules, understand the purpose of the class, and judge the performance in front of you with fairness, consistency and empathy. After all, every rider enters the arena with their own challenges and aspirations, and it is our privilege as judges to play a small part in supporting that journey.

Chatter from around the world in Dressage

Vale Stephen Clarke

The worldwide dressage community are mourning the loss of British 5* dressage judge Stephen Clarke who lost his brave battle against cancer on Saturday 13 June 2026. Stephen was one of the most highly respected and admired dressage judges in the World.

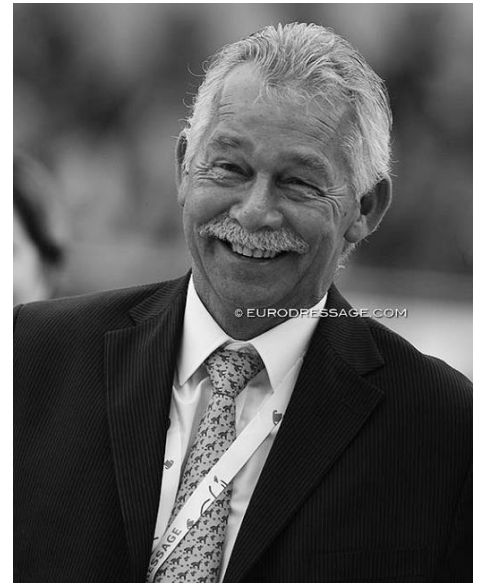
The **International Dressage Officials Club** wrote the following tribute:

It is with profound sadness, and yet with an equally profound sense of gratitude, that we share the news of the passing of our dear friend, colleague and former IDOC President, Stephen Clarke.

Stephen was, quite simply, one of the greatest gifts the sport of dressage has ever received. His passing leaves a stillness in our world that will take a long time to fill — and yet, if we listen carefully, we can still hear his voice: warm, measured, often wonderfully witty, and always pointing us toward what is right and good in this sport we all love.

Euro Dressage went on to remind us:

“Stephen Clarke was one of the most highly respected dressage judges in the world. As a 5* FEI judge, he officiated at countless international championships — including as President of the Ground Jury at the London 2012 Olympic Games and on the judging panel at the Rio Games in 2016, as well as numerous World Cup Finals, European Championships and World Equestrian Games. Athens 2004 was his first Olympic assignment, London 2012 his finest hour — presiding over a ground jury at the Games in his homeland, an honour he described as one of the proudest moments of his life.



To be on the judging panel when Totilas and Valegro broke the world records was, in his own words, "beyond exciting." The privilege of awarding 10s for movements where you just cannot imagine how it could be better — that was the joy Stephen brought to his work every single time he sat behind the judging board.

He never shied from the difficult calls either. At the World Equestrian Games in Kentucky, he made one of the toughest calls in a world championship — the disqualification of Adelinde Cornelissen when her horse bled from the mouth. It was correct, it was courageous, and it was entirely Stephen. He understood that integrity in judging is not a convenience — it is the foundation upon which the sport rests.

In 2013, Stephen was unanimously elected [FEI Dressage Judge General](#), succeeding Ghislain Fouarge. The FEI's own words at the time describe him perfectly: "a first-class judge and a natural communicator." He also sat on the FEI Dressage Committee for several years and was

instrumental in putting together the FEI Judge's Book — now considered the bible of modern judging.”

Perhaps important things that Stephen would want us to remember were outlined in his thoughts on judging shared at the General Assembly when he was President of the IDOC, outlined in January 2016 where he reminded us, as judges, to:

- “judge exactly what we see on the day and always remain ready to be 'surprised' by both the well and lesser known combinations, and to react accordingly.”
- “be as clear and courageous as possible in our judging”..., be “prepared to give the high marks when we see good work and give the low marks when we see poor quality or serious mistakes”.



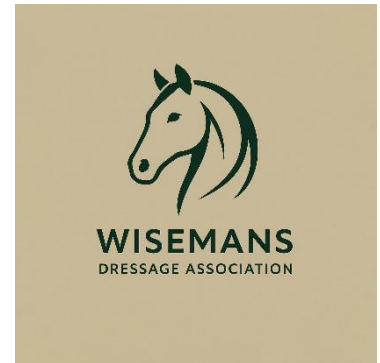
He summed up by saying “Our main responsibility as Judges is simply to be fair to the riders by awarding them correct and justifiably points for each and every movement they perform.”

We attach Stephen’s guide to dressage marks at the end of this newsletter. This is also available in the judge’s resources in Dressage NSW website.



AROUND THE GROUNDS IN NSW

This quarter I caught up with one of our newer NSW clubs, Wisemans Dressage Association. Wisemans was established in August 2025 by its committee with a view to providing a friendly, down to earth, inclusive relaxed place for riders of all levels and particularly grass roots level riders to enjoy a day out with their horses.



Wisemans is based on the Central Coast and run sits events at the stunning Stonewall facility. A private facility with multiple fibre/sand and grass arenas, stabling and camping areas surrounded by rock walls, lakes, meandering fences and roads.

The committee wanted to provide access to a great venue to those just starting out as well as more

experienced competitors. Wisemans aim to run up to 4 competitions a year. Comps are run over 2 sand arenas overlooked by a big shed with a wraparound verandah where everyone can congregate for prize giving and socialising.

While the committee openly admits they've been on a steep learning curve, they've benefitted from the support of a number of our senior judges including Julie Jones, Sue Birch as well as having Bruce McVey to support them as their Steward. By now, they're familiar with the dreaded blackout Wifi zones and fun and games of trying to navigate events around the weather!

Judges are well catered for at these events with one of their local volunteers catering the lunches for judges which are seasonally based and I believe often include a very special gluten free orange cake 🍰 to butter up one of their regular judges.



Using The Scale of Marks - *Stephen Clarke (UK 5* Judge)*

The following was written by **Stephen Clarke** to give some indicators as to what each mark means.

USING THE SCALE OF MARKS

To be a good judge you need a clear picture in your mind of what each mark 'looks like'. This together with saying the corresponding words for a mark, ie fairly bad, sufficient etc, helps one to use the scale consistently.

O-NOT PERFORMED

I have only given a 0 when a horse continued in passage and did no piaffe because the rider knew he would resist. Neither the transitions or the piaffe were performed, but this is very rare. Also once when a horse jogged or passed through the entire walk movements.

Usually there is always a fragment of the movement performed. for example if the horse trotted through a flying change there is still some canter to mark.

1 – VERY BAD & 2 – BAD

These marks are about severe resistance. For example if a horse stops, runs back or naps. Provided the nap is not for more than 20 seconds (when he would be eliminated) then the movement has to be bad or very bad.

3 – FAIRLY BAD

This could be given if there is fairly bad resistance, or a resistance combined with a lack of quality and/or other mistakes. If there is a total lack of quality and mistakes it would also be possible to give a 3 or even a 2.

4 – INSUFFICIENT

The most important thing when giving a 4 is that one thinks of the movement as 'insufficient'. If in the quality area the horse loses the regularity throughout the movement, such as half pass, through stiffness or resistance rather than unsoundness then it is a 4 or even a 3.

Serious mistakes like changing leg in a pirouette, breaking pace, dropping out of canter, jogging through part of a walk movement, not walking in a simple change are examples of when a 4 or even a 3 would be appropriate.

5 – SUFFICIENT (MARGINAL)

If the horse has achieved the movement it is usual to give at least a 5. Even if the movement is a somewhat restricted, earthbound, lacking suppleness or impulsion as long as the regularity is clear and the figure is fairly accurate, it can still warrant a 5. The important point is that in your remarks you state clearly why the movement is not 'satisfactory'.

When there is nothing wrong with the quality but there has been a fairly serious mistake it is also usually a 5. For instance if the quality of the rein back is good but there were two steps too many or too few and on

the other hand it is still a 5 if the steps were correctly numbered but the quality was lost as if it is crooked.

When there is a mistake in the number of flying changes or a mistake in one of the changes but they are of a good quality then it is usually a 5. However, remember that it is not automatic to give a 5 for one mistake, as it could be 4 if the quality is not very good and a 6 if the quality is very high.

6 – SATISFACTORY

This covers a multitude of sins. It is normally a 6 when the movement is basically correct but lacking in quality – not supple enough, needing more engagement and balance, or maybe the contact is inconsistent.

Also a 6 can be for a high quality movement with a small mistake or inaccuracy, for example a good quality walk or canter pirouette that is too big. Straightness issues often result in 6s as long as otherwise the quality is good.

7 – FAIRLY GOOD

There is usually nothing to really complain about when I give a 7. Normally everything needs a little more impulsion, suppleness, expression and/or cadence. The basic qualities are clear and show a certain amount of harmony and ease within the movement itself.

8 – GOOD

For an 8 there must be no basic problems. The movement has been properly executed. Maybe there was an extended trot that was worth a 9 but it came down to 8 because the transition was not good enough. Usually it is the secondary part of the movement that stops it being a 9, like that transition or the collected trot along the short side. Or sometimes there could be more brilliance. A 20m working trot circle may be balanced and regular but could do with some more impulsion and elasticity.

9 – VERY GOOD

'Goose bump material' with most of the movement being excellent.

10 – EXCELLENT

For a 10 you cannot imagine that a movement could be done better. It is however something very special to give a 10 and if given too lightly will lose its significance.

USE THE RANGE

Our job as judges is to be fair and clear with the marks as we can. If we see a 'very good' or 'excellent' movement we should be brave enough to reward the competitor. However, if the movement is only worth a 6, then we can only give a 6. The main point is that when a movement is good enough go up to the 9s and even the 10s, and if you see major problems be prepared to go down to the lower marks.