

Dressage Ireland Clg Rule Book 2020



Note

These Rules cannot provide for every eventuality. In any unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, it is the duty of the relevant officials to make a decision in a sporting spirit, approaching as near as possible the intention of these Rules.

If any of these Rules are found to be invalid, that invalidity will not affect the remainder of the rules.

These rules relate to all competitions affiliated to Dressage Ireland Clg, and to all competitions run under the rules of Dressage Ireland Clg.

Where these rules refer to 'horse' or 'horses', this should be understood to mean 'horse and/or pony and horses and/or ponies respectively, unless otherwise specified.

Contents

1.	GENERAL RULES.....	5
1.1.	Acceptance of the rules and Responsibility of the Board	5
1.2.	Welfare of the Horse	5
1.3.	Child Protection and Code of Ethics	5
1.4.	Conduct and Discipline.	5
1.4.1.	Discipline	5
1.4.2.	Social Media Policy.....	6
1.4.3.	Bullying and Equality	6
1.4.4.	Anti-Bribery	7
1.4.5.	Health and Safety	7
1.4.6.	Volunteers	7
1.4.7.	Suspension.....	7
1.5.	Doping Control.....	7
1.5.1.	Equine Doping Control	7
1.5.2.	Human Doping.....	7
1.6.	Insurance	7
1.7.	Data Protection.....	7
2.	2. DRESSAGE IRELAND MEMBERSHIP AND HORSE REGISTRATION	8
2.1.	Maintenance of Registers.....	8
2.2.	Dressage Ireland Clg Membership.....	8
2.3.	Rider Categories	8
2.4.	Horse Registration	8
2.5.	Equine Passports	9
2.6.	Influenza Vaccination for National Competitions	9
2.7.	Horse Grading and Points.....	9
2.7.1.	Points.....	9
2.7.2.	Grades	10
2.7.3.	Exception for National Championships and Winter Finals.....	11
2.7.4.	Registration and Grading of imported Horses	11
2.7.5.	Grading of imported Horses previously registered with British Dressage	12
2.7.6.	Grading of Horses training abroad	12
2.7.7.	Downgrading	12
2.8.	Competing in British Dressage Competitions.....	12
3.	RULES FOR DRESSAGE IRELAND DRESSAGE COMPETITIONS	13
3.1.	Definition	13
3.2.	Conduct of Competitors	13
3.3.	Stewards	13
3.4.	Classes at Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions	13
3.5.	Unregistered riders.....	14

Dressage Ireland Clg. Rule book 2020

3.6.	Freestyle classes	14
3.7.	Dressage Tests	14
3.8.	Entries for Regional and National Shows	15
3.9.	Declarations	15
3.10.	Hors concours	15
3.11.	Withdrawals	15
3.12.	Refund of entry Fees.	16
3.13.	Starting Times	16
3.14.	Prizes 16	
3.15.	Prize-giving	16
4.	EQUIPMENT -THE RIDER.....	16
4.1.	Hats	16
4.2.	Dress	17
4.3.	Gloves	17
4.4.	Footwear.....	18
4.5.	Bling/diamante	18
4.6.	Spurs	18
4.7.	Whips	18
4.8.	Hat Cams.....	18
5.	EQUIPMENT THE HORSE.....	18
5.1.	Competition numbers.....	19
5.2.	Saddles	19
5.3.	Saddle Covers	19
5.4.	Saddle cloths.....	19
5.5.	Bridles	19
5.6.	Permitted Bits, nosebands and accessories	19
5.7.	Snaffle	20
5.8.	Double Bridle	20
5.9.	Nosebands	21
5.10.	Bit guards.....	21
5.11.	Other tack	21
5.12.	Fly fringes, gauzes and ear-covers.....	21
5.13.	Insect repellent impregnated brow bands and fly repellent discs.....	21
5.14.	Tack while warming up	22
5.15.	Permitted tack and equipment - summary	22
5.16.	Accumulative Penalties.	22
5.17.	Non accumulative penalties.	22
5.18.	Para-equestrian Dressage Riders.....	23
6.	GENERAL COMPETITION RULES	23
6.1.	Warming up	23
6.2.	Riding in Collecting Ring or Practice Areas/Arenas	24
6.3.	Arenas	25
6.4.	Markers.....	25

Dressage Ireland Clg. Rule book 2020

6.5.	Execution of Test	26
6.5.1.	Entering the arena.....	26
6.5.2.	Commanders	26
6.5.3.	Outside Assistance	26
6.5.4.	Riding the Test.....	27
6.5.5.	Duration of judging	27
6.5.6.	Salute	27
6.5.7.	Reins in one Hand during Test	27
6.5.8.	Sitting and rising Trot	27
6.5.9.	Leaving the Arena.....	27
6.5.10.	Falling/dismounting during a test	27
6.5.11.	Resistance.....	28
6.5.12.	Grinding teeth and tail swishing	28
6.5.13.	Voice	28
6.5.14.	Errors of course	28
6.5.15.	Penalties for errors of course	28
6.5.16.	Errors of Test	29
6.5.17.	Time	29
6.5.18.	Lameness/ Bleeding	29
6.5.19.	Scoring Method	29
6.5.20.	Scale of Marks	29
6.5.21.	Judges Sheets	30
6.5.22.	Judges' Decisions.....	31
6.5.23.	Objections to Results.....	31
6.5.24.	Show Accident and Incident Book.....	31
6.6.	International Competitions	31
6.6.1.	General	31
6.6.2.	Qualifications.....	32
6.6.3.	Senior.....	32
6.6.4.	Young Riders.....	32
6.6.5.	Juniors	32
6.6.6.	Ponies	32
6.7.	Judges	33
6.7.1.	Appointment	33
6.7.2.	Foreign Judges.....	33
6.7.3.	Judging Restrictions.....	33
6.7.4.	Standards at which Judges may officiate	33
	ANNEX 4 PERMITTED BITS AND NOSEBANDS FOR USE WITH SNAFFLE BRIDLES	39
	ANNEX 5 PERMITTED BITS FOR USE WITH DOUBLE BRIDLES	42
	ANNEX 6 NOTES ON THE INTERPRETATION OF DRESSAGE TEST SHEETS.....	44
	ANNEX 7 ARENAS	62

1. GENERAL RULES

1.1. Acceptance of the rules and Responsibility of the Board

The Board is responsible for the direction and oversight of Dressage Ireland Clg on behalf of its members and is accountable to them. The Board recognises that in conducting its business the Company should be responsive to other stakeholders. The Board believes that good governance involves the clarity of roles and responsibilities, and the proper utilisation of distinct skills. The Board shall have the power and authority from time to time to appoint representatives to the HSI and such other similar bodies involved or interested, directly or indirectly, in the activity of dressage and according to then number of places set aside on such body or bodies for the Company. Exco is the executive committee responsible for implementing the strategy and policies set by the Board and for the daily running of the Company. Exco is accountable to the Board.

Every member of Dressage Ireland Clg has, by the completion of his membership application form, agreed to be bound by the Constitution of Dressage Ireland Clg, the Rulebook and all rules, regulations and bye-laws made hereunder, and has agreed that the decisions of the Board, and other competent authorities of Dressage Ireland Clg given in accordance therewith, shall be final and binding upon him/her. Membership application includes temporary membership. [Link to Constitution](#)

Making an entry for an Official Dressage Competition constitutes acceptance confirmation of acceptance of all these rules, regulations and bye-laws. and binds an entrant to abide by them. Any member of Dressage Ireland Clg participating in any way at any FEI or Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions or demonstrations in any country who conducts him or herself in a disgraceful manner, behaves with incivility or contempt towards an official, or in a manner which may bring the name of Dressage Ireland Clg. into disrepute, shall be guilty of a breach of the rules. It is the responsibility of every member at all times to ensure that he or she is familiar with the rules or any amendments made.

1.2. Welfare of the Horse

The welfare of the Horse is paramount. Owners and riders of horses competing at an Official Dressage Competition are responsible for the welfare of their horse. All persons attending events organised by Dressage Ireland events must be aware of and observe to the fullest extent practical the Code of Conduct Annex 1

1.3. Child Protection and Code of Ethics

Dressage Ireland has adopted the Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children' Sport in Ireland" (Code of Ethics), as may be amended from time to time. The Code of Ethics shall have effect and be binding upon all persons required to be vetted under the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 and all persons referred to in the Code of Ethics, and all such persons shall be deemed to have agreed to be bound by and comply strictly with the Code of Ethics. [Link to Sport Ireland Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children' Sport in Ireland.](#)

1.4. Conduct and Discipline.

1.4.1. Discipline

All members, including temporary members and volunteers, of Dressage Ireland must observe the Members' Code of Conduct Link to [DI Members Code of Conduct.](#)

Every Member and Temporary Member should have ease of access to fair procedures in dealing with any Complaint or Disciplinary Action. Link to [DI Complaints and Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.](#)

Dressage Ireland Clg Rule Book. 2020

The Rules and Procedures allow for a grievance procedure for Complaints to be made by any Member or Region against any other Member or Region and allow for Disciplinary Action to be taken against any Member or Region for breaches of the Regulations.

Sanctions include (a) Written warning (b) Reprimand, (c) Suspension from participation in: - Show(s) for any period or - A team for any period, (d) Suspension from being a Member (e) Expulsion from being a Member (f) Fine.

Any member of Dressage Ireland Clg participating in any way at any FEI or Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions or demonstrations in any country who conducts him or herself in a disgraceful manner, behaves with incivility or contempt towards an official, or in a manner which may bring the name of Dressage Ireland Clg. into disrepute, shall be guilty of a breach of the rules. It is the responsibility of every member at all times to ensure that he or she is familiar with the rules or any amendments made

1.4.2. Social Media Policy.

All officials, instructors, volunteers, members, their families and visitors shall abide by the Dressage Ireland Clg Code of Conduct which includes the social media and email policy.

a) Be aware that publication of information and comment on social media carries the same obligations as any other kind of publication.

b) Not post, share or submit on social media any statement, image, or information that is malicious, misleading, threatening, offensive, abusive, racist, intimidating, menacing or blasphemous.

c) Not post, share or otherwise submit on social media statements, material, images, information which could directly or indirectly damage the name, reputation, business of any Dressage Ireland member.

d) Not disclose on social media any personal information about any Dressage Ireland member.

e) Photographs of minors will not be used on Social Media unless signed consent has been gained from parent / guardian”

Dressage Ireland Clg accepts no liability for legal breaches by Dressage Ireland Clg members on social media. Contents posted by members of Dressage Ireland Clg are accountable for their actions.

Dressage Ireland Clg reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, social media postings that include reference to Dressage Ireland Clg or its members. All members consent to social media monitoring by their agreeing to abide by all rules of Dressage Ireland Clg, when becoming a member.

Dressage Ireland Clg or Regions thereof may require/instruct a member to remove posts, threads, comments that they deem to be in breach of social media policy. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

If any member as a user of social media identifies potentially damaging content or content that is in breach of the policy, please contact Dressage Ireland Clg.

Link to [DI Members Code of Conduct](#)

1.4.3. Bullying and Equality

Bullying can occur between an adult and young person, young person to young person and adult to adult. Bullying is not acceptable within Dressage Ireland.

Link to [DI Anti Bullying Policy](#)

Dressage Ireland Clg endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in Dressage Ireland, whether as casual participants, team members, volunteers, coaches, office-bearers in clubs or those within the Dressage Ireland:

has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, ethnic origin, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation; and

can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

1.4.4. Anti-Bribery

Dressage Ireland aims to uphold sound, responsible and fair business operations. It is committed to promoting and maintaining the highest possible ethical standards in relation to all of its business activities. Dressage Ireland's reputation for maintaining lawful business practices is vital and therefore has a zero-tolerance policy towards bribery and corruption. It is committed to acting fairly and with integrity in all of its business dealings and relationships.

1.4.5. Health and Safety

Health and safety is a high priority for Dressage Ireland Clg. We aim to safeguard the safety, health and welfare of all officials, instructors, volunteers, members, their families and visitors. Health and safety is a high priority and all members of Dressage Ireland should be aware of their responsibility for Health and Safety. Link to [DI Safety Policy](#).

1.4.6. Volunteers

Dressage Ireland Clg seeks to involve volunteers who share our values and interest in dressage. Our volunteer policy is set out in link to [DI Volunteering Policy](#).

1.4.7. Suspension

The Board of directors will uphold suspensions, imposed by the F.E.I. on any horse and/or rider, and they will automatically be suspended from national events until the end of the FEI suspension.

1.5. Doping Control

1.5.1. Equine Doping Control

The equine anti-doping rules of Dressage Ireland are the General Rules of Horse Sport Ireland, including, without limitation, General Rules 1.2, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19 and the Appendix, as may be amended from time to time, and these General Rules are and shall have effect and be construed as the rules of Dressage Ireland and apply to and are effective and binding on all members or licensees, all participants in a competition, event or other activity organised, convened, authorised or recognised by Dressage Ireland, and any other person who is subject to the jurisdiction of Dressage Ireland, and all such persons shall be deemed to have agreed to be bound by and to comply strictly with the applicable Horse Sport Ireland General Rules.

1.5.2. Human Doping

The Dressage Ireland Anti-Doping rules are the Irish Anti-Doping Rules as adopted by the Irish Sports Council, as amended from time to time. The rules contained in the said Irish Anti-Doping Rules shall have effect and be construed as rules of Dressage Ireland.

1.6. Insurance

The liability insurance arranged by Dressage Ireland Clg covers the legal liability of directors, officials, committees, volunteers and members of Dressage Ireland for injuries to third parties or damage to third party properties. It should be noted that the liability insurance deals with claims made against Dressage Ireland Clg or the directors, officials, committees, volunteers and members thereof on a legal liability basis and not on a moral liability basis.

1.7. Data Protection

Data Protection is the means by which the privacy rights of individuals are safeguarded in relation to the processing of their personal data. [Link to Data Protection Policy](#).

2. DRESSAGE IRELAND MEMBERSHIP AND HORSE REGISTRATION

2.1. Maintenance of Registers

The Secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of both the Register of members and a Register of horses which compete or have competed, and the number of points accrued in respect of their percentage scores achieved at registered Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions, British Dressage competitions and FEI competitions.

2.2. Dressage Ireland Clg Membership

In order to be eligible to ride in Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions or to register a horse, Riders **MUST** be registered with Dressage Ireland by close of entries for any show the rider is entering to be eligible for Points/ qualifying scores

In order to be eligible to ride in Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions or own and register a horse with Dressage Ireland, it is necessary to be a member of Dressage Ireland.

There is no lower age limit for registration as a rider.

Subscriptions run for twelve months from 1st January to 31st December each year.

By way of exception to the above, for first time members joining on or after 1st November, memberships will run until 31st December of the following year.

For health and safety reasons registered owners of horses or ponies must be 18 years or over.

Junior members (under 18) may only become members if a parent or guardian is a member of Dressage Ireland.

The Dressage Ireland Board may decide that registered members of certain HSI affiliated bodies can join Dressage Ireland at a discounted fee. Details of any reduced fees currently available are published on the [Dressage Ireland Website](#).

2.3. Rider Categories

Category 0 Trailblazers and Sportsmans riders are considered Category 0

Category 1 Riders that have NOT competed above Novice Level Dressage or CCI 1* Eventing

Category 2 Riders that have NOT competed above Medium Level Dressage or CCI 2* Eventing

Category 3 Riders that have competed at Advanced Medium/above including CCI 3* Eventing

Riders **must** declare their category when joining or renewing their annual membership.

At regional shows, all categories of rider entered into Preliminary and Novice classes (and Elementary, if warranted by the quantity of entries at that level) could be competing in the same class, but results will be divided into category 1,2 and 3 sections.

At National Championships and National Winter Finals, Preliminary, Novice, Elementary and Medium, results will be subdivided into categories at the discretion of the show organisers.

No rider categories apply in Young Horse Classes.

When a Category 1 rider enters for their first Elementary or higher class or a Category 2 rider enters their first Advanced Medium or higher class, they must inform the Show Secretary and the Dressage Ireland office by email of their impending Category change.

Members who fail to accurately declare their category/level will face disciplinary action.

For full details on membership categories please see the [Dressage Ireland Website](#).

2.4. Horse Registration

In order to earn points and qualifying scores all horses and ponies MUST be registered with Dressage Ireland Clg. **before** entering for any Dressage competition held or organised by or under the auspices of the Company with the exception of unregistered classes. If a horse's registration has lapsed no points or qualifications can be gained, and they will not be given retrospectively.

Registration for horses runs from 1st January to 31st December each year. The registration fee payable by members in respect of their horses shall be fixed from time to time by the Board, who may impose different scales for horses and ponies. Registration fees shall become due and payable by members on and by such date in any year as may be determined by the Board in any year. A horse shall not be considered registered in any year unless the relevant registration fee has been paid and a registration number allocated. Horses can only be registered by the named owner on the passport.

By way of exception to (b) above, the registrations of any horses registered for the first time on or after 1st October will run until the 31st December of the following year.

Horses must have passports and be vaccinated against Equine Influenza prior to registration (see sections [2.5](#) and [2.6](#)).

There is no lower height limit for registration. Ponies may be registered and compete on equal terms with horses in all affiliated competitions with a rider of any age.

Horses must be four years old or over at the time of registration. The age is taken from 1st January in the year of birth.

The owner(s) of any pony being put forward for selection for international pony classes must supply a valid height certificate to the selectors on request. The selectors can request re-measuring at any time.

A horse or pony is a member of the genus *Equus* unless context requires otherwise.

2.5. Equine Passports

Under national and EU regulations a valid passport must accompany a horse at all times whilst it is being transported. This must accompany the horse to all competitions and be produced on request of the show organiser (to protect the health of the other competing horses and the biosecurity of the venue). Failure to comply with these requirements is a Dressage Ireland Clg disciplinary offence and will debar the horse from competing at the event for which it has been entered.

2.6. Influenza Vaccination for National Competitions

In order to register with Dressage Ireland Clg., a horse must have a valid vaccination certificate, which undeniably relates to the horse, completed, signed and stamped by a veterinary surgeon, who is not the owner of the animal, stating that it has received a basic primary vaccination against Equine Influenza.

The basic primary vaccination consists of received two injections, given between 1 and 3 months apart. In addition, a further vaccination must be administered within 6 months (+/-21 days) following the second vaccination of the primary course.

Thereafter, in order to retain the vaccinated status, the horse must receive a further booster vaccination within each succeeding 12-month period.

It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the vaccination certificate is up to date prior to entering a competition. This certificate must be produced on demand, on penalty of elimination.

Influenza Vaccination for FEI Competitions Prior to taking part in FEI competitions, all horses must meet the requirements of the FEI as set out on their website www.fei.org.

2.7. Horse Grading and Points

2.7.1. Points

Horses are graded using a points system. Points for grading classification purposes will only be allocated for performance at Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions, which such allocation

Dressage Ireland Clg Rule Book. 2020

shall be at the sole discretion and power of the Board. Points will not be awarded for Intro, Para, music, young horse or restricted classes including Trailblazers and Sportsmans. Points will be awarded based on the percentage achieved by eligible combinations in eligible classes, in accordance with the scales below:

Score (percentage)	Points Awarded
60 – 61.99%	1
62 – 63.99%	2
64 – 65.99%	3
66 – 67.99%	4
68 – 69.99%	5
70 – 71.99%	6
72 – 73.99%	7
74 – 75.99%	8
76 -77.99%	9
78 -79.99%	10
80.00% and above	11

An 'eligible combination' is a registered horse graded at or below the grade of the class, ridden by a full or junior/young rider member of Dressage Ireland Clg.

An 'eligible class' is a graded class (see section [3.4](#)) providing that the judge, presiding on the day, is a suitably qualified dressage judge recognised by Dressage Ireland Clg at that level.

All eligible combinations that obtain the percentages shown above in eligible classes will be allocated points regardless of placing and prize money.

2.7.2. Grades

Subject to the exception covered by section [2.7.3](#), horses may compete only at the level they are graded at or higher. The point band for each grade is as follows:

Grade	Points
Preliminary	0 to 99 points.
Novice	100 to 174 points.
Elementary	175 to 249 points.
Medium	250 to 349 points.
Advanced Medium	350 to 424 points.
Advanced	Over 425 points

Horses already registered with Eventing Ireland or holding British Eventing points will be graded as follows:

A horse that has competed 1* shall be given 100 points.

A horse that has competed 2* shall be given 175 points.

A horse that has competed 3* be given 250 points.

It is the rider's responsibility to declare the competition record when registering.

Restricted Classes

The following classes are classified as restricted classes will not be eligible for points

Trailblazers

Sportsmans

Freestyle

2.7.3. *Exception for National Championships and Winter Finals*

Horses should only be entered for classes graded at their grade or above. By way of exception, horse and rider combinations that gain the required qualifying scores in the specified period for national championships while at one grade may compete at that grade in the championships, even if the horse exceeds the points for the grade after qualifying but before the championships take place.

2.7.4. *Registration and Grading of imported Horses*

Please allow 4-6 weeks to register an imported horse.

The following procedure applies for registration and grading of imported horses (other than those competed under British Dressage rules - see section [2.7.5](#))

To register an imported horse the owner must complete the horse registration form and submit it, along with the supporting documents listed on the form, to the Dressage Ireland secretary.

Horses imported to Ireland at 4 years of age will be registered as preliminary and given 0 points.

Owners wishing to register an imported horse aged over 4 years must a letter/email from the relevant National Federation declaring the level/records of the horse. They will be awarded points corresponding to their record. Newly imported horses over the age of 4, without Dressage competition records, will be automatically allocated 15 points at each level according to their age at the time of registration, to the scale given in the table below.

Age at import	Points allocated
4	0 points
5	115 points (100 for Novice, +15 = 115)
6	190 points (175 for Elementary + 15 = 190)
7	265 points (250 for Medium + 15 = 265)
8	365 points (350 for Advanced Medium + 15 = 365)
9	440 points (425 for Advanced + 15 = 440)

If it can be proved that a horse without a competition record was imported at an earlier age the points allocated can be altered with approval of the Board. It is the owner's responsibility to provide proof of age at import. i.e. Official import document or record of a vaccination administered in Ireland.

Where the declared grading is 'Advanced', no further assessment is required, and the horse is registered.

For a declared grading, other than 'Advanced' the horse is registered but if the rider feels that the horse has been allocated too high a grade, they may enter an "assessment period". Tests must be entered HC during the assessment period.

For this assessment period the horse must compete at a minimum of 2 shows and 3 tests with different judges. The rider must send the test score sheets to the Dressage Ireland office for the attention of the Grading Committee. It is not sufficient to just report scores: the score sheets signed by the judges must be submitted. From January 2020 grade reviews will take place four times a year; at the end of March, June, September and December.

The grading decision will be one of the following options:

Decision 1: The **Grading committee** agrees with the declared grading. In such cases the horse is awarded the number of points necessary to place it at either the start or the middle of the grading band, as the Board deem appropriate, from the date of registration. In such cases, all results gained during the assessment period will be retroactively validated and can be counted as qualifying results for Regional and National Championships. Points will be awarded for these results in line with section 2.7.1 of these rules.

Decision 2: The Grading Committee considers that the declared grade was incorrect, and the horse will be graded at the level deemed appropriate by the Board, based on the score sheets submitted. In the case of the horse being graded at a higher level, none of the scores gained during the assessment period will be validated as qualifying results or considered eligible for points.

In cases where the Board's Grading Committee's assessment is that the horse's training level may be significantly above the declared grade, they may decide to extend the assessment period until at least 3 further score sheets from at least 3 further shows for tests ridden at a level above the declared grade have been submitted.

In the event of the grading not being accepted the decision of the Grading Committee can be appealed to the Board

2.7.5. Grading of imported Horses previously registered with British Dressage

By way of exception to the rules laid down in [2.7.4](#), for horses that are imported to Ireland from or through the United Kingdom and had competed under British Dressage rules, a full competition record must be submitted with the registration form so that grading points can be allocated accordingly. Please note that horses with British Dressage points will automatically be allocated an additional 50 Dressage Ireland points as BD do not allocate points at Preliminary level. Horses that have competed under British Dressage rules with full results submitted to DI office will not be subject to grade assessment.

2.7.6. Grading of Horses training abroad

Horses, which go abroad for training and compete in national competitions abroad, will NOT be categorised as imported horses on their return to Ireland. However, full competition results must be regularly sent to the Dressage Ireland Office as the appropriate number of points, according to results achieved, will be added to the points the horse had when it left Ireland. It is the rider's responsibility to ensure that they apply for permission to compete abroad in accordance with Section 4.

2.7.7. Downgrading

Downgrading is only permitted under exceptional circumstances and is entirely at the discretion of the of Dressage Ireland Clg. board or authority delegated to the appointed grading committee. In order to apply for a downgrade, the member must ride 3 tests at their required level at Dressage Ireland shows. The three tests must be judged by 3 different judges.

Copies of these three tests along with a letter/email of application and the €30 downgrade application fee must be sent to the DI office for the Grading Committee. From January 2020 grade reviews will take place four times a year; at the end of March, June, September and December.

Each downgrading runs until the 31st December in the year it is applied for and is for the nominated rider only. If required, downgrades must be re-applied for each calendar year.

2.8. Competing in British Dressage Competitions

Dressage Ireland members who travel to the UK to compete in British Dressage Competitions must notify the Dressage Ireland Office of their intention to travel and must submit their full results to the Dressage Ireland office on their return so that the horse's competition record can be updated. This must be done in a timely fashion i.e. within one month of competing. Failure to do so may impact qualifying scores for National Competitions.

3. RULES FOR DRESSAGE IRELAND DRESSAGE COMPETITIONS

3.1. Definition

A dressage competition is composed of one or more classes between mounted competitors, performing specified Dressage tests in front of suitably qualified judges.

The Dressage Ireland Clg either directly through its Board or indirectly through the Sub Committees and the Regional Committees shall be responsible for the conduct of all Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions held in Ireland, meaning:

Dressage competitions organised by or on behalf of or with the express prior consent of the Company and conducted in accordance with the Rules of Dressage Competitions.

Each Regional organiser or independent third party of a Dressage Ireland Dressage Competition shall pay a fee to central office of the Company. The amount of fees payable shall be set by the Board on an annual basis. The Board in setting the amount shall have regards to representations by the Regions.

3.2. Conduct of Competitors

Riders and owners of competing horses and their attendants must, under penalty of elimination, obey any reasonable request or direction given to them by an official, and they must, in particular, be careful not to do anything liable to upset or hinder the undisturbed progress or safety of the competition.

It is not permitted for a trainer to judge his/her pupil. If a conflict of interest is likely, it is incumbent on the rider to either withdraw their entry (with refund of entry fee) or compete hors concours, if possible. If a conflict of interest has occurred, the horse/pony does not earn DI points and/or qualification scores. At all times, it is the responsibility of the Rider and Judge. (See DI Rule 6.7.3), or in the case of a Child Rider, their parent/guardian, to ensure that no judging Conflict of Interest arises.

3.3. Stewards

Where possible the show organiser or secretary shall nominate in advance responsible people to act as stewards.

If, in the opinion of a steward or Dressage Ireland official any member of Dressage Ireland Clg., rider, competitor, owner, trainer or any other person taking part in any competition or any person assisting any member rider, competitor, owner or trainer has been guilty of dangerous riding or lunging or a breach of the rules, they will be informed that such behaviour is dangerous/incorrect and asked to stop. A reprimand will be given. Failure to do so will entail elimination from all classes on that day. **It is recommended that it be written up in the Show Accident and Incident Book.**

On the day, any or all of the following penalties may be imposed:

A reprimand.

Disqualification of the horse and/or rider from any/all classes on the day(s).

Suspension the horse and/or rider from taking any further part in any class at the competition.

Any intervention required by a steward/organiser/committee member/senior judge shall be reported to the Board of Dressage Ireland in writing within seven days and written into the show incident book. The Board of Dressage Ireland may decide to take extra actions

See [Complaints and Disciplinary Rules and Procedures](#)

3.4. Classes at Dressage Ireland Dressage Competitions

Graded classes are divided into six standards: Preliminary, Novice, Elementary, Medium, Advanced Medium, and Advanced.

Current Dressage Ireland or British Dressage tests can be used.

In addition, FEI Pony Preliminary, Team and Individual tests may be used in Medium level classes.

FEI Junior Preliminary, Team and Individual tests may be used in Advanced Medium level classes.

FEI Young Rider Team and Individual tests may be used in Advanced classes.

FEI and British Dressage tests at Prix St Georges and above are also used.

Only riders who are full or junior/young rider members of Dressage Ireland, mounted on registered horses not graded higher than the grade of the class, are eligible to take part in these classes and gain grading points and qualifying scores for national championships. Horses graded higher than the grade of the class can only enter and participate in the class *hors concours*.

3.5. Unregistered riders

Non-members may enter Dressage Ireland on payment of a temporary membership fee and are bound by these rules. Non-members may only enter designated classes (Sportsmans Preliminary, Novice, Elementary and Medium or designated Eventing classes or Trailblazer classes if underage).

3.6. Freestyle classes

Freestyle tests may be ridden either with or without music. No grading points or qualifications are given for any freestyle competition, whether with or without music. In all other respects, they are run in accordance with graded classes of the comparative level.

Tests will be timed from the move off after the first halt until the halt before the final salute. Halts must be shown at the beginning and the end of all freestyle tests, and these must be on the centre line facing the judge.

Tests should be timed to run approximately 15 seconds under the specified time to allow for a slight variation in the running speed of CD players. Two penalty points will be deducted from the final total if a test exceeds the time allowed or is more than 30 seconds shorter than the stated time. The music may start either before the entry at 'A' or after the first halt and salute. No more than 20 seconds of introductory music may be played before the entry at 'A'

Any faults in the reproduction of the music at a competition should be taken into account by the judge. Judges have the authority to re-start a competitor should the music fail for any reason.

3.7. Dressage Tests

Dressage tests for graded classes eligible for points

Tests used in graded classes eligible for points should be either:

Current Dressage Ireland tests (apart from Intro level tests).

Current FEI Prix St Georges, Intermediaire I, A, B, II, Grand Prix or Grand Prix Special, Pony, Junior and Young Rider (not the YR preliminary test) tests

current British Dressage tests (apart from Intro level tests).

FEI Para-Equestrian tests.

Freestyle to music tests

Only British Dressage test sheets for freestyle tests at Preliminary, Novice, Elementary, Medium and Advanced Medium levels can be used. FEI Freestyle test sheets for Prix St Georges (FEI. YR freestyle) Inter 1 and Grand Prix are to be used for the higher levels.

Test sheets include a list of compulsory movements and additional movements occurring at the grade that may also be shown. If included, movements of a higher standard than the grade of the class will be penalised by the deduction of two points each time they are performed.

Availability of tests

Copies of Dressage Ireland tests can be downloaded free of charge from www.dressageireland.ie.

British Dressage tests may be purchased either:

direct from British Dressage, Meriden Business Park, Copse Drive, Meriden, West Midlands, CV5 9RG (www.britishdressage.co.uk); or

from www.dressagediagrams.com.

FEI TESTS Can be downloaded free of charge from the [FEI Website](#)

3.8. Entries for Regional and National Shows

Making an entry to a Dressage Ireland Dressage Competition constitutes acceptance of the rules. It is the responsibility of owners and riders to ensure that horses are eligible to compete in the classes for which they are entered.

All entries must be:

made on an official entry form (paper or online);

accompanied by the correct fees; and include the Dressage Ireland Clg membership number for each rider and owner and registration number for each horse.

Horses registered name as displayed on its passport must be used on OFFICIAL entry form (online or hard copy)

No horse or pony may compete in more than three tests in any one day of competition

At regional shows a registered horse may be ridden by more than one rider if they are of the same category, and points will be awarded accordingly. If, however, riders are of different categories *both ride hors concours*, and no points will be awarded. Trailblazers and Sportsmans horses will be exempt.

A horse may only be ridden once in any class at National Championships and, where applicable, National or Regional Finals.

Riders must state on their entry form which category they are (see section [2.3](#)) and which section of each class they are entering.

Entry fee for each class is given in the schedule. Entries received without entry fees, without the registration/membership numbers, late or verbally will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of both the owner and rider to ensure that the horse is eligible to compete in the class for which it is entered. Failure to enter in the correct class will result in no points or qualifying score being awarded, and the owner will be required to return any prize money awarded.

The show secretary must be informed of any change of rider from the original entry. It is the responsibility of the owner and rider to obtain their starting time(s) as described in the show schedule.

3.9. Declarations

On arrival at a competition, all riders must declare their intention to compete to the show secretary. In addition, they must report to the steward (where present), for the appropriate arena at least 15 minutes before their allotted time. It is the competitors' responsibility to ensure that they arrive at the arena at the correct time for their test, and that they ride immediately to the judge and correctly identify themselves by clearly showing their competition number to the judge/scribe.

3.10. Hors concours

Registered horses can only be ridden Hors Concours at the level below or above the points bracket they are within. Members wishing to compete hors concours must make this request on their entry form and obtain permission from the organiser of the competition concerned. They will not be eligible for any points, prizes or prize money, no collectives will be awarded, and the score will not be totalled or shown on the scoreboard or published in any form. The Horse and rider must be registered with Dressage Ireland Clg and must comply with Dressage Ireland rules in all respects. Under no circumstances may a rider declare to be hors concours after the class commences.

In the event of an unavoidable change of judge, a horse/ rider may compete hors concours at their level.

3.11. Withdrawals

If for any reason a competitor cannot compete at a dressage show the organiser/secretary must be informed as soon as possible. The organiser may report to the Head Office anyone who does not take part yet fails to withdraw in accordance with the above paragraph. Once the test has been completed (i.e. the final halt at the end of the test) it is not permissible to withdraw or retire.

3.12. Refund of entry Fees.

No refund will be made to those withdrawing after the close of entries.

Entry fees are returned to those who withdraw before the close of entries.

In the event of a competition being cancelled, organisers are entitled to retain up to 25% of each entry fee to cover costs. The remainder is refunded to all entrants.

3.13. Starting Times

These must be obtained as described in the show schedule.

3.14. Prizes

The amount of prize money at National Championships and National Winter Finals shall be stated in the schedule and is unrestricted. Once stated, this can only be reduced in the event of entries falling below the minimum scale for rosettes as set out below. Rosettes must be given to the following minimum scale for all grades, but organisers may give more if they wish:

1 st	1 to 4 competitors
2 nd	5 to 8 competitors
3 rd	9 to 12 competitors
4 th	13 to 16 competitors
5 th	17 to 20 competitors
6 th	21 to 24 competitors
7 th	over 25 competitors

3.15. Prize-giving

Competitors (in correct dress -as per Dressage Ireland Clg. Rule [3.8.2](#)) must attend the prize-giving when requested by the organiser or ensure that they are represented. Failure to attend may entail the forfeiture of prize money, rosettes and other awards.

4. EQUIPMENT -THE RIDER

4.1. Hats

A 'riding hat', designed to provide protection, with the harness correctly fitted, must be worn at all times when mounted by anyone, whether or not a competitor, at a Dressage Ireland Clg competition, including exercising, warming up and competing. Hats and hat covers may be in any conservative colour in muted tones. Hats that are completely mirrored are not permitted.

From 1st January 2017, it will be compulsory for all hats to be inspected and tagged before a full or temporary member mount's their horse/pony at any Dressage Ireland Clg show, training session, demonstration, or any other mounted activity run by Dressage Ireland Clg

Hats can be inspected by show secretary's and tagged when approved to be of the correct standard. Spot checks can be carried out by show secretary, steward or committee member of region or board of Dressage Ireland Clg

Harnesses must be correctly fastened at all times whilst mounted. competitors are strongly recommended to check their hats regularly and to replace them if damaged or following a fall. Damage to a hat may not be visible to the eye

Protective hats must meet one of the following approved standards;

All PAS 015,

VG1, EN1384 -2017

American SEI ASTM F1163 04a onwards and SNELL E2001 and E2016

Australia and NZ AS/N2s 3838 2003 onwards)

If a hat comes off during a test the rider is eliminated and must dismount and lead the horse out of the arena.

If the judge notices that a rider starts their test without wearing the correct headgear, the judge is to ring the bell and instruct the rider to dismount and leave the arena. At the discretion of the

organiser and the judge, the rider may restart the test once properly attired. A penalty of -2 (not accumulative) will be given

If a rider fails to comply with the instruction, the organiser is to eliminate the competitor from all classes on that day. this will also apply if, as a result of a spot-check, a rider's hat is found not to comply with the required standard

4.2. Dress

Advanced and above: Uniform or tailcoat or coat of a conservative colour, correctly tied white/cream stock or tie, with protective hat compliant with most current safety standards.

Other grades: uniform or conservative colour or tweed coat with correctly tied stock, white American collar or shirt and tie, and protective hat as described in section compliant with most current safety standards. Only white or cream stocks with conservatively coloured coats or coloured stocks with tweed coats are correct. A fitted plain, dark coloured waterproof may be worn in wet weather.

Only riders who have been selected to represent Ireland officially in a FEI team competition or as a nominated individual at a championship are entitled to wear the tricolour on their breast pocket. Friendly Home Internationals are not considered to fall into this category and specific rules apply – the Dressage Ireland secretary should be contacted prior to participation in a Friendly Home International to confirm current applicable rules.

Body protectors may be worn. Back protectors and soft-shell air jackets in any conservative colour in a muted tone are permitted providing they closely resemble a competition jacket in fit and style.

At all National shows and regional finals jackets must be worn

Exception will be for trailblazers

At the discretion of the judge /ground jury competitors may ride without jackets in warm temperatures. A fitted competition waistcoat in a conservative colour may be worn with a short or long-sleeved shirt that fastens at the neck, white or cream, with a tie or stock.

Plain dark coloured waterproof coats may be worn in wet weather.

Breeches or jodhpurs must be worn. They must be white, cream or beige, except when worn with official uniform, when they may be of the uniform colour.

Only riders who have been selected to represent Ireland officially in a FEI team competition or as a nominated individual at a Senior or Para European Championships or World Games, Olympic or Paralympic Games or a CDIO are entitled to wear the tricolour pocket badge permanently on the breast pocket.

Riders competing in a CDI are eligible for a small recognition pocket badge. This can be worn on the breast pocket for two years following the last occasion they competed internationally.

Entitlement to wear this badge does not affect their eligibility to compete.

Riders competing privately in international competitions or foreign national competitions are not eligible to wear the tricolour.

Combinations who ride in the European Championships at Pony, Junior and Young Rider level are entitled to wear their Tricolour badge on their breast pocket for the two years following the last occasion they were at the relevant competition.

Riders selected to for friendly internationals should apply to Dressage Ireland Clg for current rules on tricolour eligibility. Any badge allowed for the friendly international may NOT be worn at any subsequent competition.

4.3. Gloves

Gloves must be worn. Failing to do so will incur deduction of two (2) points per Judge, but they are not cumulative and will not result in elimination (including Freestyle test).

4.4. Footwear

Boots must be black or brown and may be top boots or jodhpur boots. Gaiters are allowed providing they are indistinguishable from the jodhpur boots in colour and leather and carry no decorations of any sort except discreet manufacturer's logo studs. Patent top boots may be worn, but multi-coloured or patterned boots are not permitted.

4.5. Bling/diamante

Must be discreet

4.6. Spurs

Spurs may be worn at all levels and are compulsory from Advanced level upwards. Spurs must be worn as a pair except when riding side saddle.

Excessive use of spurs is forbidden and will entail elimination if in the opinion of the judge it brings Dressage Ireland Clg into disrepute.

Spurs with a smooth rotating rubber, metal or plastic ball on the shank are permitted. The band round the heel must be smooth; "comb" spurs are not permitted. **They must not be worn upside down; spurs must be of smooth material (metal or plastic)**

The shank must point towards the rear and the end must be clearly horizontal to the ground or pointing downwards.

Dummy spurs are permitted, as are swan necked spurs subject to the above restriction.

There is no restriction on the type of shank and rowels are permitted provided that they are fitted vertically and are free to rotate. Rowels, which have points, must have rounded ends.

Only blunt spurs without rowels may be worn in Young Horse classes swan necked spurs are permitted

Riders competing in International or age restricted FEI Pony tests are not permitted to wear spurs exceeding 3.5 centimetres in length **(measured from back of boot)**

4.7. Whips

Excessive use of the whip at any time is forbidden, and it should never be used or carried in a manner which affects other horses.

It is permitted to carry a whip in all national classes except Finals and Championships or at the request of the selectors. A whip may not be carried when riding in International and age restricted FEI pony, junior or young rider classes.

Whips are permitted in all 4, 5 and 6-year-old national qualifying classes but are only allowed to be carried in four-year-old Championships, not five and six-year olds. Whips are not permitted when the FEI young horse tests are ridden. 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 -unless as permitted equipment for a 'carded' disabled rider.

A whip may not be picked up if dropped during a test.

Whips must not be of a length that affects other riders or horses.

NOTE At National Championships and Finals, it is permitted to carry a whip in the warmup area only,

The whip must be dropped before entering the space around the arena, failing to do so will incur a deduction of two (2) points per judge, but they are not cumulative and will not result in elimination (including for Freestyle test).

4.8. Hat Cams

Hat cameras or go pros may NOT be worn in warm up or competition arena at any DI shows.

5. EQUIPMENT THE HORSE

It is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that all saddlery and equipment conforms with the rules, whether or not there is a tack steward present.

5.1. Competition numbers

In order to assist the judges and stewards at all competitions, competition numbers **MUST** be worn on both sides. Competition numbers may be worn either on the bridle the numnah, or the rider's sleeve.

5.2. Saddles

Saddles must be worn and be of English or continental style and must be black, brown, grey or navy. Side saddles and treeless saddles are permitted, but riders choosing to ride side saddle must notify the secretary clearly on their entry form. Western style, traditional Iberian or Arabian (with raised pommel and/or cantle are not permitted. Brightly coloured saddles are not permitted, however small panels of colour on areas such as the cantle are permitted. 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 any mechanical means and if this is done without Dressage Ireland Clg. or Para Equestrian Ireland dispensation, it will result in elimination.

5.3. Saddle Covers

Saddle covers are not permitted under any circumstances, except during riding in, or as permitted equipment by a "carded", disabled rider. A gel pad or memory foam seat saver is permitted, provided that it is unobtrusive and matches the colour of the saddle. Other types of seat saver, including sheepskin or fur fabric are not permitted, unless a written dispensation is obtained from Dressage Ireland Clg. Riders with this dispensation must send a copy of their dispensation letter to the show secretary who must inform the relevant judges.

5.4. Saddle cloths

If used, saddle cloths may be white, cream or a dark conservative colour.

Only a competitor officially representing Ireland at an **International** competition may wear a tricolour saddle cloth badge if sanctioned to do so by Horse Sport Ireland/Dressage Ireland Clg. Logos on each side of the saddlecloth are permitted but must not exceed 200 square cm (approx. 14cm x 14cm)

Friendly Home Internationals are not considered to fall into this category and specific rules apply – the Dressage Ireland Clg secretary should be contacted prior to participation in a Friendly Home International to confirm current applicable rules.

5.5. Bridles

A bridle **with a bit** is compulsory and must be used in the conventional manner. The loop of the reins must be above the horse's neck with the reins attached to the bit. 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.

Bridles should be used as follows:

Preliminary and Novice: Ordinary snaffle bridle.

Elementary to Advanced: Ordinary snaffle bridle or double bridle. NB. Ponies being ridden in FEI Pony tests should wear a snaffle bridle.

Prix St Georges to Grand Prix tests that are ridden under national rules: Snaffle or double. Double bridles may be requested by the selectors.

International Prix St. Georges to Grand Prix tests ridden under F.E.I. rules: double bridle. In some cases, a snaffle bridle is permitted during warm up – see relevant FEI rules.

The "Micklem" multi bridle is permitted in National competitions. It must be used with a permitted snaffle bit and without the plastic bit clips.

Mojo holograms are permitted.

5.6. Permitted Bits, nosebands and accessories

In general, equipment permitted under FEI rules for dressage is acceptable under Dressage Ireland rules, with the exception of use of the double bridle in Trailblazers, Sportsmans, Intro,

preliminary and novice classes. For illustrations of permitted bits and mouthpieces please see Annex 4 (Snaffle bridles) and Annex 5 (Double Bridles) & link to [FEI website re Art. 428.3](#)

5.7. Snaffle

Where there is any doubt, guidance should be sought from Dressage Ireland Clg.

Permitted snaffle bits include:

Egg-butt snaffle either without cheeks or with cheeks

Loose ring snaffle with double-jointed mouthpiece (French link)

Racing Snaffle (D ring)

Loose ring snaffle with jointed mouthpiece with Lozenge

Egg butt or loose ring snaffle with cheeks

Snaffle with upper cheeks only

Hanging cheeks egg butt snaffle or loose ring hanging snaffle

Unjointed snaffle

Ordinary snaffle with rotating middle section

Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece.

Rotary bit with rotating middle piece.

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

Straight bars must be straight and may not have 'lumps or bobbles' on the mouthpiece.

Straight bars may also have a Mullen mouth.

Rigid bits coated in plastic are permissible in a double bridle however flexible rubber bits are not permissible. The illustrated bits may be used with any of the cheeks or rings illustrated.

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

Snaffles may be used at Advanced to Grand Prix

In addition to those illustrated, the following bits have recently been approved for use in Fei (DI) competitions are;

Bombers Equestrian Flexible Mullen and Loose Ring Ultra Comfy bit. Happy Mouth bits HB-6000-SP, HB-6801-SP and HB-2700. Myler Weymouth (Curb) Bits, Myler 02 as Bridoon, Myler 32 as Bridoon, Myler 04 as Snaffle and Bridoon, Myler 06 as Snaffle and Bridoon, Myler 36 as Snaffle and Bridoon, Myler 33WL as Snaffle, Myler 33 as Snaffle.

Reins must be attached to the bit. Plastic bits with a cylindrical joint are permitted.

5.8. Double Bridle

Where there is any doubt, guidance should be sought from Dressage Ireland.

Bits must be used in their manufactured condition without any addition to/on any part. The upper cheek must not be longer than the lower cheek. The lever arm of the curb is limited to 10cm in length (below the mouthpiece.) and the ring of the bridoon bit must not exceed 8cm in diameter. All competitors are advised to check their FEI Rule Book before taking part in a competition run under FEI rules.

Double bridle. Bridoon.

All permitted snaffle bits may be used with the exception of any mouthpiece with full cheeks. Where there is any doubt, guidance should be sought from Dressage Ireland Clg.

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

Double bridle. Curb bit.

Curbs may have straight or s-shaped cheeks, they may have fixed, rotating or sliding mouthpieces. The lever arm of the curb is limited to 10cm in length (length below the mouthpiece).

The upper cheek must not be longer than the lower cheek.

The ring of the bridoon bit must not exceed 8cm in diameter.

If the curb has a sliding mouthpiece, the lever arc 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. The curb chain (and its cover) may be made of metal, leather, neoprene or rubber or a combination thereof and must be fitted in the conventional way.

Double bridles are compulsory for all FEI Junior and Young Rider classes held at national championships, finals or Internationally. See FEI rules for bits for under 21 classes –www.fei.org. For all other Junior and young rider national classes, snaffles are allowed.

5.9. Nosebands

It is obligatory to use a noseband. The following nosebands are permitted with a snaffle bridle: cavesson; dropped; flash; and crossed/Mexican or Grackle. Only one of these types may be used at any one time.

Permitted noseband configurations are illustrated in [Annex 4](#).

Drop nosebands and flash straps must lie in the chin groove. Rope or sheepskin nosebands are not allowed. A cavesson noseband only, must be used with a double bridle.

Nosebands must not cause discomfort.

5.10. Bit guards

Bit guards are not permitted, any horse warming up or performing a test with a bit guard on will be eliminated. **With the exception of trailblazers**

5.11. Other tack

Martingales, bearing, side or running reins of any kind are forbidden, as are nasal strips and any sort of blinkers. A breastplate is permitted. Reins with elastic inserts are not permitted. Tongue straps are not permitted. Cruppers are permitted but are not allowed for tests run under F.E.I. rules.

Boots and/or bandages may be used during warming up but must be removed prior to riding tests.

Neck straps may be used.

Balancing straps (a loop on the front of the saddle) are permitted.

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

Horse Body/Belly bandages are not permitted during warm up or competition. Kinesiology tape may be used in the warmup but not in competition

5.12. Fly fringes, gauzes and ear-covers

Fly fringes, Gauzes, Ear covers, and Fly hoods are permitted for all competitions, and may also provide noise reduction. Ear cover/fly hoods must not cover the horse's eyes. The cover/hood should be discreet in colour and design Ear hoods may not be attached to the noseband

Ear plugs are **not** permitted

Head shakers will be allowed to wear a specific type of nose net during warm up and competition with a dispensation certificate from Dressage Ireland. Applications should be made to the Dressage Office.

Nose nets must be discreet, black, brown or white and cover the nose only, leaving the bit and mouth visible. Nose nets are not permitted under F.E.I. rules which may be applied to certain competitions in Ireland.

5.13. Insect repellent impregnated brow bands and fly repellent discs

Insect repellent impregnated brow bands and fly repellent discs are permitted while warming up and during a test.

5.14. Tack while warming up

Whilst warming up, horses may wear only the saddlery allowed for their level of competition, apart from boots and bandages. Only rugs designed for riding may be worn. Whips are permitted in both warm up and tests in all competitions apart from Finals and Championships or at the request of the selectors.

Riders who are visually impaired should wear a white armband.

Warming up in anything other than permitted saddlery (unless specified above) will entail the elimination of both horse and owner/rider from all classes on the day. Anyone seeing this rule being breached should immediately report it to the Organiser who is to eliminate the horse/rider

5.15. Permitted tack and equipment - summary

This section provides an overview of permitted tack and equipment for to serve as a quick guide for judges and competitors. Please note that some rules vary slightly, when tests are being ridden under the rules of a different discipline. In such cases the rules of the relevant discipline should be consulted.

Key to symbols: p – Permitted x – Forbidden c – Compulsory

Grade	Snaffle	Double	Whip*	Spurs	Flash/drop Grackle/Mexican nosebands**	Commander*
Preliminary and Novice	p	x	p	p	p	p
Elementary to Advanced Medium	p	p	p	p	p	p
Advanced Prix St Georges to Grand Prix national competition	p	p	p	c	p	p
Prix St Georges to Grand Prix FEI competition	x	c	x	c	x	x

* Whips and commanders are not allowed in Finals, Championships, except the horse age restricted 4-year-old Championship, or at the selectors' request.

** Flash, drop, Grackle, Mexican nosebands may only be used with a snaffle bridle.

Tack stewards should refrain from inserting a hand into the horse's mouth before the rider enters the competition arena and should wear disposable surgical gloves. The rider may request that the bit is checked after the test is ridden if they feel their horse may get upset. If the bit in use is in question, the bridle should be removed following the test. In the event of the bit proving illegal the horse will be eliminated from the competition.

5.16. Accumulative Penalties.

Errors of course are penalised by:

The deduction of two points the first time.

The deduction of an additional four points the second time

Elimination the third time.

5.17. Non accumulative penalties.

Penalties for contravening the rules will range from a two-point deduction for each occurrence such as incorrect dress, to elimination for major infringements, such as forbidden tack, or when stated explicitly in the rule concerned. See table at 3.10.6.

5.18. Para-equestrian Dressage Riders

Any rider with a physical disability, which prevents him/her from riding the test in accordance with the rules, should join Para Equestrian Ireland and apply for classification by a qualified FEI Para Equestrian International or National Classifier.

Following classification, the riders grade will be loaded on to the FEI master classification list which can be found at <http://inside.fei.org/fei/disc/para-dressage/classification>.

A copy of the relevant page of the master sheet MUST be lodged with the relevant show secretaries as they will be advising the judges of allowed compensating aids at each show.

Para dressage competitors must be capable of riding in, and competing in, the facilities provided for all the other competitors.

Riders with a disability requiring additional equipment who have not yet been classified may apply to the Board of Dressage Ireland for a temporary dispensation letter, which must be photocopied and sent in with each entry. Such riders must enter and compete hors concours until classified.

Any horse ridden by a para- equestrian rider at a Dressage Ireland competition in a Para Class must be 6 years of age or over. (Dated from 1st January of the foaling year). It is the rider/coach responsibility to ensure that the horse/pony is safe to be ridden in company in the normal warm up facilities.

If a para-equestrian rider is eligible to have a companion horse/pony as part of their dispensation they must declare this to the organising committee. The companion horse/pony must wear a bridle and a bridle number.

A para- equestrian horse/pony behaving in a manner deemed to put the para- equestrian rider in danger will be asked to leave the warmup.

6. GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

6.1. Warming up

At all shows only the rider competing on the horse will be permitted to ride it. While exercising any horse, whether competing or not, only the permitted tack (as set out in section [3.9](#)) may be used.

Warming up in anything other than the permitted tack will entail elimination of both horse and rider from all classes on that day. Anyone seeing this rule being breached should immediately report the occurrence to the organiser or secretary who is empowered to eliminate the horse and rider. This must be reported in the show incident book and to the Board of Dressage Ireland Clg. At no time during warm up or competition should an owner, lessee, authorised agent or rider produce a stallion without taking adequate precautions to ensure that other members of Dressage Ireland Clg or the public are not put at risk of injury. Stallion sashes (worn by the rider), or identification tags on the bridle, are compulsory and must be clearly worn at all times when mounted. Due regard for safety must be taken by every rider, regardless of the sex of their horse. Lunging in the warm-up area should only be undertaken with permission from the event organiser or arena steward. A coach/groom may lunge the horse and only if permission has been gained from the organiser. The lunge rein may be attached to the bit or lunge cavesson and two reins are permissible. Side reins may be used attached to either side of the saddle or girth (not between the horse's front legs). The rider may be mounted while the horse is being lunged and may hold the reins. Running or balancing reins of any kind may not be used.

If at any time during a competition run under Dressage Ireland Clg. Rules, a horse is seen behaving in a dangerous manner, which could threaten the safety of other competitors or spectators, a steward, organiser or Dressage Ireland Clg official is authorised to require the removal of this horse from the venue. Such removal must be reported in the show incident book and to the Board of Dressage Ireland Clg.

6.2. Riding in Collecting Ring or Practice Areas/Arenas

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

Pass left hand to left hand when meeting another rider coming in the opposite Direction, unless they are in counter canter in which case give way, by circling.

Make tack adjustments outside the arena if possible or near the middle of the arena, without obstructing the outside track, diagonal or centre lines.

Announce by voice or knocking on the door, that you intend to enter an indoor practice arena.

Ensure that the use of the whip does not upset passing horses.

Do not halt or walk on the outside track but always leave room for other riders to pass.

Do not lunge in practice arenas without permission of the organiser and, even then, only if there is sufficient room, and in a place, that does not cause inconvenience to other riders.

Do not gallop horses in, or in the vicinity of, the collecting ring or test arenas.

Riders with impaired vision should wear a white armband whilst warming up as an indication to other riders

Trainers or other pedestrians should not stand in the warmup/collecting rings but at the sides and should minimize disruption to other riders when helping their clients.

Riders of stallions must wear a sash to indicate they are riding a Stallion

Earphones and electronic communication devices are prohibited while competing but are permitted in the warmup arena if they do not interfere with other electronic devices at the venue.

Rule	Rule no	Penalty
Gloves – not worn	3.8.3	Two mark deduction
Gaiters – not matching the boot	3.8.4	Two mark deduction
No hat / Incorrect head gear	3.8.1	Elimination
No spurs at Advanced level upwards. Spurs worn upside down. Excessive use of spurs.	3.8.5	Elimination
Carrying a whip in the arena at Regional Championships, Finals and Championships (without dispensation).	3.8.6	Elimination
Carrying a whip round the outside of the arena at National Championships and Finals.		Two mark deduction.
Carrying more than one whip. Excessive use of the whip.	3.8.6	Elimination
Padding of cheek pieces	3.9.5	Elimination
No bridle numbers worn or incorrect number	3.9.1	Two mark deduction
No noseband		Elimination
Only one bridle number worn	3.9.1	Two mark deduction
Double bridle at Preliminary & Novice.	3.9.5	Elimination
Bit guards Trailblazers exempt	3.9.6.4	Elimination
Martingales, bearing, side or running reins of any kind; any sort of blinkers.	3.9.6.5	Elimination
Bandages or boots worn during the test	3.10	Elimination or removal Two mark deduction
Bandages, boots, whips worn/carried whilst riding round outside arena at Championships/Finals		Two mark penalty.
Tongue straps	3.9.6.5	Elimination
Prohibited bits	3.9.6.1	Elimination
Any outside assistance by voice or signs, etc. designed to help a competitor improve their performance	3.16.8	Elimination
Intentionally Entering the arena before the signal to start	3.16.6	Two mark deduction. Judge need not restart competitor

		if they have seen all the work.
Incorrect salute	3.16.11	Two mark deduction
Fall of horse and/or rider	3.16.15	Eliminated
Horse refusing to enter arena for 45 seconds Failure to start after 90 seconds from the signal to start	3.14.6	Two mark deduction Elimination
Horse refusing to continue for a period of 20 consecutive seconds	3.16.16	Elimination
Use of voice	3.16.18	Two mark deduction for each movement
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'.	3.14.21	Appropriate to error
Rising trot in Advanced Medium and above tests	3.16.13	Two mark deduction for each movement
Lameness		Elimination
Commanders reading anything other than the printed text or extracts there from or emphasising any part of the command	3.16.7	Elimination
Any outside assistance by voice or signs, etc. designed to help a competitor improve their performance	3.16.8	Elimination
Leaving the arena not under control	3.16.14	Elimination
Rider dismounting without a reason acceptable to the judge	3.16.15	Zero for that movement

6.3. Arenas

[Arenas should be set out to the dimensions shown in the diagrams in Annex 7.](#)

No alterations can be made to arena or positioning of letters once a class has commenced unless the arena or letters are knocked during the class in which case it must be put back to where it was:

Wherever possible the arena should be level and separated from the public by a distance all round of 15 metres for International competitions and at least 10 metres for other events if more room is not available. Roping may be used around the arenas when necessary to prevent intrusion. The arenas may be marked in the following ways:

By a continuous surround of white boards. To be officially continuous the boards at A must be removed when the bell goes to start a test and replaced once the rider has entered the arena. On completing the test, the boards at A are removed whilst the rider leaves the arena and then replaced until the bell for the next competitor goes.

By intermittent white boards placed at each corner and opposite each marker and should be equally spaced to mark the dimensions of the arena. Extra boards, if used, should be evenly placed opposite each other to maintain a uniform balance.

A centre line is recommended but is left to the discretion of the Organising Committee. When a centre line is used, it should be clear, but discreet, and D-L-X-I-G should NOT be marked. In the case of artificial surfaces, a centre line can be rolled.

6.4. Markers

Arenas should be marked as illustrated in Annex 7, except that D, L, X, I and G are not marked. The outer markers must be clearly visible with the letters displayed in black or white. They should be placed about 50 cm outside the arena. Pegs between 2.5cm and 5cm in length should be

placed close to the outside of the arena boards, showing not less than 15cm above them, opposite each outside marker.

A gap of about one metre each side of the centre line must be left at A to form an entrance, and the A marker placed far enough back, 10 metres if possible, to allow the horses to enter the arena on a straight track.

Inspection of Arenas

It is the ultimate responsibility of the judges to check that the arena is satisfactory and have it corrected if not, before the class starts. Once a class has started no alteration to the arena is allowed, thus giving every rider the same arena for the whole class. The Organising Committee (OC) is responsible for: outside of the arena (helicopter landing in adjoining field, loose horse or dog) and for interference/assistances, (like 'drop your whip', 'your boots are still on') and the footing inside of the arena. If the OC intends to open the space around the arena, it should be publicly announced in good time so that all competitors can avail of the opportunity. Judges are to confer with the OC or their representative and/or the arena steward on the day to resolve any issue regarding the space outside the arena.

6.5. Execution of Test

6.5.1. Entering the arena

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 other way signified that they 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.

By way of exception, where a class is held on an artificial surface or the construction of the arena makes it impossible for the competitor to ride round the outside before the judges signal to enter is sounded, they may, on the instruction of the organiser and/or judge, ride inside the arena and start the test from inside the arena.

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. Under these circumstances, riders have the option of entering at A from inside or outside the arena.

If a competitor or anyone associated with a competitor approaches a judge during the competition they do so under penalty of elimination.

It is not permitted to enter the arena during a break or whilst the judge is not present.

6.5.2. Commanders

It is permissible for all tests run under Dressage Ireland Clg rules to be commanded except at Finals and Championships, or unless stated otherwise in the schedule.

Where commanders are allowed, it is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that only the printed text or extracts from it are read out, and no other form of assistance is given. Failure to observe this rule may entail elimination.

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.

Commanders should be careful when multiple arenas are running and position themselves to avoid disturbing other riders.

Commanders may only be introduced part way through a test at the judge's discretion.

6.5.3. Outside Assistance

Any outside assistance by voice, signs, etc., designed to help a competitor improve their performance during a test, will entail elimination. This rule applies once the judge has rung the bell to signal the start of the tests and applies whether the rider is inside or outside the competition arena. Headsets/earpieces or other electronic devices are strictly prohibited during a test unless dispensation has been granted.

6.5.4. Riding the 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 this point that the movement must be executed. All tests will be ridden with both hands on the reins, 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 decided 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 must be allowed to restart, as long as they can do so immediately. They will be penalised for a first error of course. However, if this is not possible and both judge and organiser agree, the competitor will be allowed to enter the arena again later and perform the test hors concours.

6.5.5. Duration of judging

The judging begins when the rider enters at A and finishes when the rider moves off from the final salute.

6.5.6. Salute

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.

Para equestrian riders may always salute simply by nodding the head.

6.5.7. Reins in one Hand during Test

The reins, and whip if carried, should be held in the outside hand, with the inside arm held down by the rider's side.

6.5.8. Sitting and rising Trot

For all tests at Elementary level and below, trot work may be executed sitting or rising. At Medium level, trot work must be executed sitting, except in movements of medium and extended trot, where trot work may be executed sitting or rising. At Advanced Medium level and above all trot work must be executed sitting unless otherwise stated on the score sheet. In all FEI tests trot work, must be executed as instructed on the score sheets.

6.5.9. 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 9 inches high or more and continuous. Where the surround is less than 9 inches, and is marked by boards or similar, no marks shall be given for the movement where the horse places all four feet outside the arena. Where a line marks the arena only or intermittent boards, it is left to the discretion of the judge as to the marks deducted. Any horse leaving the arena not under control will be eliminated and, for this purpose, the test begins when the horse enters at 'A' and finishes when it moves off from the final salute.

6.5.10. Falling/dismounting during a test

In the case of a fall of horse and/or rider, the competitor will be eliminated from the class. If no ambulance is needed, they and their guardian/representative must report the fall to the show organiser who must enter all details into the accident/incident book and get the rider and their guardian/representative to sign it. The judge must record "FALL" clearly on the score sheet and will also be required to fill in their report on the fall in the show accident book and sign their declaration.

Riders may compete in any following classes or in the same class on another horse, should the rider declare to the show organiser in writing to be fit to ride. HOWEVER the organiser has the right to refuse the competitor permission to ride/compete again at the show on the day if they have any concerns about the rider's health and safety.

If, after the rider has entered the arena, they dismount without a reason acceptable to the judges, no marks will be given for the movement.

6.5.11. Resistance

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 more like 90 seconds may lead to elimination.

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

6.5.12. 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 may 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.

6.5.13. Voice

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

6.5.14. 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 to pause the test. The judge then explains the error to the rider, and if necessary, the point at which the rider must take up the test again and the next movement to be executed, then leaves the rider to continue. The judge gives a penalty of -2 on the score sheet.

However, in some cases when, although the competitor makes an 'error of course', the sounding of the bell would unnecessarily impede the fluency of the performance -for instance if the competitor makes a transition from working trot to medium walk at V instead of K, or makes a transition to canter at F instead of A - it is up to the judge at C to decide whether to sound the bell or not. The penalty of -2 is still given.

In fairness to the competitor, it is recommended that the bell should be rung when a movement is executed at the wrong marker, if there is the possibility of a similar mistake when the movement is repeated on the other rein. However, if the bell is not sounded at an error of course and the test requires the same movement to be repeated, and the rider makes the same error again, the rider is only penalised once.

If the judge for any reason does not realise until the competitor has left the arena that one or more movements have been omitted, he must:

Adjust as necessary the position of his marks and comments on his sheet to accord with the movements actually performed.

Give to each of the movements not executed a mark equal to the average of the collective marks entered at the bottom of his sheet (averaged to the nearest whole number, point 5 to be rounded upwards)

Record the penalty for error of course.

6.5.15. Penalties for errors of course

Every 'error of course', noted on the test sheet whether the bell is sounded or not, must be penalised, unless otherwise specified in section [6.5.14](#). The scribe must denote the movement concerned with a clear asterisk opposite the movement, and a tick in the box below. It is the responsibility of the judge to check that this is done, and that the total mark for errors to be deducted, is clearly shown.

The first error of course is penalised by the deduction of 2 points.

The second error of course is penalised by the deduction of 4 points. (These points are cumulative so, after two errors of course 6 points are deducted).

The third-time error of course results in elimination. The judge may allow the competitor to finish the test with the marks being awarded in the ordinary way. However, they will inform the rider that they are eliminated, and it will be marked clearly on their sheet.

6.5.16. Errors of Test

When a competitor makes an 'error of test' (e.g. trots rising instead of sitting, or at the salute does not take the reins in one hand,) they must be penalised as for an 'error of course'. In principle, a competitor is not allowed to repeat a movement of a test unless the president of the jury decides that there has been an error of course (and sounds the bell). If, however the rider has started the execution of a movement and tries to do the same movement again, the judges must consider the first movement shown only, and at the same time penalise for the error. If the judge has not noted an error, the competitor will have the benefit of the doubt. The penalty points are deducted on each judge's sheet from the total points gained by the competitor.

6.5.17. Time

The approximate time given on each test sheet is for guidance only. Time penalties are not awarded under Dressage Ireland Clg or FEI Rules, except for freestyle tests (see section [3.4.2](#)).

6.5.18. Lameness/ Bleeding

In the case of marked lameness, the judge at C informs the rider that they are eliminated. There is no appeal against this decision.

Bleeding: If the Judge at C suspects fresh blood anywhere on the horse during the test, he will stop to check. If the horse shows fresh blood, it will be eliminated. The elimination is final. If the Judge through examination clarifies that the Horse has no fresh blood, the Horse may resume and finish its test.

6.5.19. Scoring Method

Each judge may allot from 0 to 10 points, in full and half marks, for each numbered movement and for each collective mark on the score sheet. These marks are then added together, taking account of any coefficients that may be applied to a movement or collective score, and any penalty marks are deducted. It is essential that all penalty marks be deducted from the individual totals before these are added together. Under both FEI and Dressage Ireland Clg rules the judges' marks are totalled to find the final mark. 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.

6.5.20. Scale of Marks

Under both FEI and Dressage Ireland Clg rules the scale of marks is as follows: The marks 10 to 0 must be awarded where the performances warrant their use (see section [3.17.2](#))

10.0	Excellent	5.0	Sufficient
9.5		4.0	Insufficient
9.0	Very good	3.0	Fairly Bad
8.5		2.0	Bad
8.0	Good	1.0	Very bad
7.5		0.0	Not executed
7.0	Fairly good		
6.5			Half marks are seldom used below the mark of 5.
6.0	Satisfactory		
5.5			

Guidelines for Awarding of Marks

10.0 EXCELLENT: All the requirements of the training scale are fulfilled to their utmost. The movements are performed with excellent precision, exactly on the correct lines from marker to marker

9.0 VERY GOOD: All of the requirements of the training scale are fulfilled. The movements are performed with very good precision, exactly on the correct lines from marker to marker

8.0 GOOD: All the requirements of the training scale are regarded as good. Movements are performed accurately, following the correct lines

7.0 FAIRLY GOOD: All of the requirements of the training scale are regarded as fairly good. Movements are performed fairly accurately, following the correct lines

6.0 SATISFACTORY: Either the movements are performed with accuracy and precision, but with some weaknesses within the training scale, or the movements are lacking accuracy and precision, but still demonstrating good qualities of the training scale

5.0 SUFFICIENT: Either the movements are performed fairly accurately, but there are some clear weaknesses within the training scale, or there are some fairly serious mistakes, movements are inaccurate but still demonstrating satisfactory qualities of the training scale

4.0 INSUFFICIENT: Either the movements are performed fairly accurately, but there are some serious weaknesses within the training scale, with some obvious errors within the movement, or movements may be very inaccurate but still demonstrate sufficient qualities of the training scale

3.0 FAIRLY BAD: Inaccurately performed movements with serious problems within the training scale

2.0 BAD: Inaccurately performed movements with severe problems within the training scale

1.0 VERY BAD: Movements performed are barely recognisable. Showing severe resistance throughout, i.e. rearing, running backwards, etc.

0.0 NOT EXECUTED: Movements not performed. No part of the movement is performed.

Half marks from 0.5 to 9.5 may also be used both for movements and collective marks in tests of Prix St Georges to Grand Prix standard, all FEI Para tests and FEI Under 21 tests at the discretion of the judge.

While the score for certain movements or collectives may carry a coefficient, at no time is a mark out of 20 (e.g. 15 or 17). Instead, a mark out of 10 is given by the judge and then multiplied by the coefficient by the scorer. It is the scorer's responsibility to ensure that all movements carrying coefficients are scored correctly.

Further guidance on the interpretation of dressage test sheets is given at [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 6](#).

6.5.21. Judges Sheets

Marking sheets, one per horse per judge, will be required. Dressage Ireland and FEI test sheets can be downloaded free from <http://www.dressageireland.ie/members/dressage-ireland-tests> and <https://next.fei.org/fei/your-role/organisers/dressage/tests>

British dressage sheets and may be purchased from British Dressage (or Dressage Ireland Clg, stocks permitting).

N.B. British Dressage tests are protected by copyright. Photocopying is not permitted. British Dressage Clg will take legal action against offenders.

Competitors taking part in two dressage classes on the same day, judged by the same judge, shall not have access to their judging sheets before competing in the second contest.

Judges' marking sheets, with remarks duly signed by the Judge, must be treated as confidential until given to the competitor, when they become his or her private property. The organisers of a competition are not obliged to make public any figures other than the total marks, collective marks and percentage score awarded, and the classification of results, although they are at liberty to do so, should they wish.

It is the responsibility of riders who leave a show before their sheets or rosettes are released to make arrangements with the secretary to forward them. It is suggested that competitors leave a large A4 stamped, addressed envelope with their name, the name of their horse(s), and classes entered with the show secretary.

6.5.22. Judges' Decisions

The judge's decision is final. However, if there is a question of fact and there are available official electronic recordings of the event the evidence may be used.

A report will then be made to the Board.

In all cases, the judges' decision is final. Any complaint against a judge must be made in writing and in accordance with the complaint's procedure. The Dressage Ireland Clg Judges Committee will deal with the complaint and report their findings and actions back to the Board. They may dismiss the complaint and/or offer the judge advice or training. If it is in the best interest of Dressage Ireland Clg, they have the right to re-test any judge following a complaint that has been substantiated. The Judges Committee can recommend to the Board of Dressage Ireland Clg that an underperforming judge be removed from the Official Panel providing they are able to give substantial reasons for their concerns. Any judge under review after a complaint may be temporarily suspended until the matter has been concluded satisfactorily.

6.5.23. Objections to Results

Only a member who is the owner, agent or rider of a horse taking part in a competition may lodge an objection to a result. Objections must be made to the secretary of the competition. They must be made in writing and accompanied by a deposit of €250, not later than one hour after the final results are put onto the scoreboard, or, in the case of objection to the qualification of a horse or competitor, not later than the end of the class, and before results are posted. The senior dressage judge present should adjudicate whenever possible. If this is not possible the objection should be made in accordance with the Complaints and Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

The deposit will be forfeited, unless the objection is upheld, or it is decided that there were good and reasonable grounds for the lodging of an objection.

Appeals against scoring errors must be made within one hour of the score sheets being released.

In the event that the objection relates only to the adding up of the score, arithmetical or procedural error, the competitor must notify the organiser within 48 hours of the result being announced, if a change needs to be made or a possible qualification registered.

6.5.24. Show Accident and Incident Book

Each show must have an accident and incident book to record full details of any accidents that happen or incidents.

6.6. International Competitions

Definition

International Dressage Competitions are run in accordance with the rules as laid down by the Federation Equestrian International (FEI). Annual International Championships are held for the four categories of competitors, senior, young rider, junior and pony.

6.6.1. General

Dressage Ireland Clg shall adjudicate on all matters concerned with the activity of Dressage in Ireland. The Company together with HSI shall from time to time decide on the criteria for determining the qualifications which should govern the eligibility of riders for selection on a national squad or team.

No member shall seek to represent, hold themselves out as, or otherwise compete on behalf of Ireland without being first considered eligible and approved by the Company so to do.

Riders wishing to compete at international competitions are advised to refer to the Dressage Ireland High Performance Manager.

Further information on venues, invitations and competitions can be obtained by accessing the [F.E.I. website](#) and the [Horse Sport Ireland web site](#).

Riders and horses competing internationally in all equestrian disciplines must be registered with the FEI. Prior to international competition the riders must apply to Horse Sport Ireland for a competition licence for themselves and a FEI Passport for their horse. Forms are available on

the [Horse Sport Ireland web site](#) and the [Dressage Ireland web site](#) or from the secretary of Dressage Ireland Clg. Email: info@gdressageireland.ie

6.6.2. *Qualifications*

Details of scores necessary to qualify to compete internationally are up-dated regularly and available at

6.6.3. *Senior*

A full update of all results gained abroad must be sent Dressage Ireland Head Office by 31st December of the year in which they were gained.

No horse/rider combination which has gained the relevant qualification and has been ratified by Dressage Ireland to compete at a show abroad, may be substituted/changed without the express approval of Dressage Ireland.

6.6.4. *Young Riders*

Riders wishing to compete at International Competitions must apply to Dressage Ireland Clg for permission. They must supply the competition plan and all results for the last twelve months to Dressage Ireland Head Office and keep Dressage Ireland fully notified of all their plans and results Young riders wishing to compete internationally or to represent Ireland should apply to the Board of Dressage Ireland.

Competitors may take part in Young Rider competitions from the beginning of the year of their 16th birthday until the end of the year of their 21st birthday. Their horse must be over 14.2½ hands high (148 cm) in height, at least 6 years of age and must not have taken part under a senior competitor in any Grand Prix at a C.D.I.O. Championship, Regional or Olympic Games, or have been placed in the top 5 under a senior competitor in a Grand Prix at a C.D.I during the preceding or current year. They must be members of Dressage Ireland Clg.

Competitions are of Prix St. Georges Level at the European Young Rider Championships.

6.6.5. *Juniors*

Riders wishing to compete at International Competitions must apply to Dressage Ireland Clg for permission. They must supply the competition plan and all results for the last twelve months to Dressage Ireland Head Office and keep Dressage Ireland fully notified of all their plans and results Junior riders wishing to compete internationally, or to represent Ireland, should apply to the Board of Dressage Ireland.

Competitors are eligible to take part in Junior international competitions from the beginning of the year of their 14th birthday until the end of the year of their 18th birthday. They may ride ponies up to the end of the year of their 16th birthday. Competitions are of Advanced Medium level.

6.6.6. *Ponies*

Riders wishing to compete at International Competitions must apply to Dressage Ireland Clg for permission. They must supply the competition plan and all results for the last twelve months to Dressage Ireland Head Office and keep Dressage Ireland fully notified of all their plans and results Young riders, juniors and pony riders wishing to compete internationally, or to represent Ireland, should apply to the Board of Dressage Ireland.

Competitors are eligible to take part in Pony Competitions from the beginning of the year of their 12th Birthday until the end of the year of their 16th Birthday. They must ride ponies, which do not exceed 148 cm without shoes, and 149 cm with shoes.

Competitions are at Medium level.

N.B. Riders cannot compete in European Pony and Junior Championships, in the same year.

After each competition, the rider must return full official results of all relevant classes to the Dressage Ireland Head Office.

6.7. Judges

6.7.1. *Appointment*

All judges judging affiliated classes must be on the Dressage Ireland Judges Panel or judges covered under section [6.7.2](#). They are invited by the organisers of competitions, or by the Judges Committee.

6.7.2. *Foreign Judges*

Foreign Judges may be invited to judge at affiliated Dressage Competitions if suitably qualified.

6.7.3. *Judging Restrictions*

The following restrictions for affiliated dressage competitions should be observed:

The judge should not be the owner of or have a financial interest in any horse in the class. The judge may not be in a relationship with or be a close relative of a rider or owner. Nor shall the judge be in regular contact with the rider, i.e. stabled on the rider's yard or receiving regular training with the rider.

No judge should judge a horse at Advanced level, which has been in his or her ownership within 2 years of the date of the competition.

No judge should judge a horse up to and including Advanced Medium, if that horse has been in their ownership within one year of the date of the FEI competition concerned.

It is not permitted to judge any rider with who's training the Judge is involved in any way for the six (6) weeks prior to any DI Competition. This restriction also applies to judging at any other HSI Affiliated Competitions. The judge must try to avoid judging any combination with whose training he/she has been regularly involved in up to six weeks before the competition date. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness of another judge) a judge may step in but must notify the organiser of any conflict of interest.

No judge should judge a musical freestyle if they have participated in the making of a musical tape used by a competitor in this class.

When accepting an invitation to judge at Championships, judges must declare the names of any horses/riders in which they have any interest.

Judges, writers or other persons within earshot of the judge, may not write up for publication any aspect of the class concerned.

Judges who have commercial or contractual agreements with a rider (financial or product supply) may not judge those riders.

6.7.4. *Standards at which Judges may officiate*

List 1: Dressage tests of all levels. For Grand Prix and Intermediaire II (non-qualifiers) one list 1 judge is required but for Grand Prix where possible two Judges would be desirable. Potential Young horse classes. All Eventing tests.

List 2A: Dressage tests up to and including Intermediaire 1, Eventing tests to all levels

List 2: Dressage tests up to and including Prix St Georges, Potential Young Horse Classes. All Eventing tests.

List 3A: Dressage tests up to and including Advanced Medium, All Eventing tests.

List 3: Dressage tests up to and including Medium. FEI level II eventing judges may judge all levels of eventing tests at Dressage Ireland competitions.

List 4: Dressage tests up to and including Elementary, Eventing tests up to and including Open Intermediate

List 5: Dressage tests up to and including Novice, Eventing tests up to and including Novice

List 6: Dressage tests of Preliminary standard, Pony Club and Riding Club up to and including Novice standard, Eventing training level tests.

Annex 1 FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse

Please note that the code quoted below was correct at the time of issue of these rules. The FEI may periodically up-date the code. The latest version of the code can be found on the FEI website: www.fei.org. All persons attending events organised by Dressage Ireland events must be aware of and observe to the fullest extent practical the FEI Code of Conduct.

The FEI requires all those involved in international equestrian sport to adhere to the FEI Code of Conduct and to acknowledge and accept that at all times the welfare of the Horse must be paramount. Welfare of the horse must never be subordinated to competitive or commercial influences. The following points must be particularly adhered to:

1. General Welfare:

a) Good Horse management

Stabling and feeding must be compatible with the best Horse management practices. Clean and good quality hay, feed and water must always be available.

b) Training methods

Horses must only undergo training that matches their physical capabilities and level of maturity for their respective disciplines. They must not be subjected to methods which are abusive or cause fear.

c) Farriery and tack

Foot care and shoeing must be of a high standard. Tack must be designed and fitted to avoid the risk of pain or injury.

d) Transport

During transportation, Horses must be fully protected against injuries and other health risks. Vehicles must be safe, well ventilated, maintained to a high standard, disinfected regularly and driven by competent personnel. Competent handlers must always be available to manage the Horses.

e) Transit

All journeys must be planned carefully, and Horses allowed regular rest periods with access to food and water in line with current FEI guidelines.

2. Fitness to compete:

a) Fitness and competence

Participation in Competition must be restricted to fit Horses and Athletes of proven competence. Horses must be allowed suitable rest period between training and competitions; additional rest periods should be allowed following travelling.

b) Health status

No Horse deemed unfit to compete may compete or continue to compete, veterinary advice must be sought whenever there is any doubt.

c) Doping and Medication

Any action or intent of doping and illicit use of medication constitute a serious welfare issue and will not be tolerated. After any veterinary treatment, sufficient time must be allowed for full recovery before Competition.

d) Surgical procedures

Any surgical procedures that threaten a competing Horse's welfare or the safety of other Horses and/or Athletes must not be allowed.

e) Pregnant/recently foaled mares

Mares must not compete after their fourth month of pregnancy or with foal at foot.

f) Misuse of aids

Abuse of a Horse using natural riding aids or artificial aids (e.g. whips, spurs, etc.) will not be tolerated.

3. Events must not prejudice Horse welfare:

a) Competition areas

Horses must be trained and compete on suitable and safe surfaces. All obstacles and competition conditions must be designed with the safety of the Horse in mind.

b) Ground surfaces

All ground surfaces on which Horses walk, train or compete must be designed and maintained to reduce factors that could lead to injury.

c) Extreme weather

Competitions must not take place in extreme weather conditions that may compromise welfare or safety of the Horse. Provision must be made for cooling conditions and equipment for Horses after competing.

d) Stabling at Events

Stables must be safe, hygienic, comfortable, well ventilated and of sufficient size for the type and disposition of the Horse. Washing-down areas and water must always be available.

4. Humane treatment of horses:

a) Veterinary treatment

Veterinary expertise must always be available at an Event. If a Horse is injured or exhausted during a Competition, the Athlete must stop competing and a veterinary evaluation must be performed.

b) Referral centres

Wherever necessary, Horses should be collected by ambulance and transported to the nearest relevant treatment centre for further assessment and therapy. Injured Horses must be given full supportive treatment before being transported.

c) Competition injuries

The incidence of injuries sustained in Competition should be monitored. Ground surface conditions, frequency of Competitions and any other risk factors should be examined carefully to indicate ways to minimise injuries.

d) Euthanasia

If injuries are sufficiently severe a Horse may need to be euthanised on humane grounds by a veterinarian as soon as possible, with the sole aim of minimising suffering.

e) Retirement

Horses must be treated sympathetically and humanely when they retire from Competition.

5. Education:

The FEI urges all those involved in equestrian sport to attain the highest possible levels of education in areas of expertise relevant to the care and management of the Competition Horse. This Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse may be modified from time to time and the views of all are welcomed. Particular attention will be paid to new research findings and the FEI encourages further funding and support for welfare studies.

Annex 2 Notes for Judges – Assessment of test

Extracted from the 2007 FEI Dressage Handbook – Guidelines for Judging

The judge's main tasks are to set standards, to enhance the quality of dressage riding and to help riders and trainers by scoring and commenting on marks

Judge what is seen on the day, in that test, and that performance

Judge movement after movement according to the classical principles of dressage

This means forgetting all past experiences with that rider and / or his horse

No external influences should affect the scoring

Approach the marking with goodwill

Avoid developing merely a "fault" registration machine attitude

Reward the highlights with high marks

Try to differentiate, as a mark of 8 means (only) "good" and a 4 "insufficient", and the range is from 10 (excellent) to 0 (not executed)

The responsibility of the dressage judge is to record what takes place in the arena, and to be fair in assessing each movement of the test

The judge's expectation, and mental image, of the collection required at each level must be especially clear

Collection, often a misinterpreted word, is the ultimate goal in riding

Every horse, from a young age, until it is correctly trained to the limits of its ability, will have a degree of collection [an ability to bend the joints of the hindquarters] even in working paces

The degree of collection required at each of the levels is just enough so that the horse can perform its test, and the movements in it, with ease and fluency

Judges need to encourage riders to be bold, and take risks

If the risks are successful, they should give high marks

Risk taking invites brilliance, but may lead to mistakes

Mistakes sometimes occur as a result of a loss of balance or confusion between the horse and rider, as opposed to when the rider misrepresented the movement, or went off course

When the judge sees a mistake, he/she first thinks of the mark that he was going to give for the movement

Then he/she has to adjust the mark he would otherwise have given, according to the gravity of the mistake

Precision is very important and needs to be rewarded, as it adds to the degree of difficulty of the test.

In the case of outside disturbances (noisy children, loose horse or dog, severe wind, noise, etc.) forgive a horse's momentary lack of attention on the first occurrence

The basic principles must always prevail, and these are to fulfil the requirements of the training scale

"A horse has to be obedient, but before that, the man must understand the needs of the horse."

Xenophon – 420 B.C.

Link to: [DI Judges Code of Conduct](#)

Annex 3 Doping and Medication

The Dressage Ireland Clg Anti-doping rules are the Irish Anti-doping rules as adopted by the Irish Sports Council as amended from time to time. The rules contained in the said Irish Anti-doping rules shall have and be construed as the Rules of Dressage Ireland Clg.

National Testing Programme

The Irish Sports Council manages the National Testing Programme for National Governing Bodies of Sport in accordance with the [WADA.](#)

[International Standard of Testing](#)

Under the National Testing Programme both urine and blood testing are completed. Testing can be completed either in-competition or out-of-competition.

In-Competition Testing is "the period commencing twelve (12) hours before a competition in which the athlete is scheduled to participate through the end of such competition and the sample collection process related to such competition." In-competition takes place after the athlete has finished competing for the day.

For in-competition testing the Anti-Doping Officer (or other nominated person) acts as an Event Contact Person to liaise with testers. Full details of the role of the Event Contact Person are outlined in the [Event Contact Person Handbook.](#)

Out-of-Competition Testing is "any period which is not in-competition." Out-of-competition testing usually takes place at the residence or training grounds of athletes on the Registered Testing Pool or the training grounds of teams.

Doping control

Dressage Ireland follows the FEI principles and practice with regard to fair play and doping control.

Excerpt from the FEI rules:

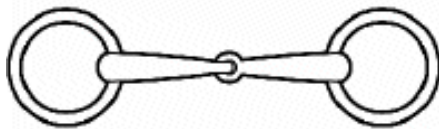
Equestrian sport derives its credibility and public acceptance from the concept of [fair play](#), the idea that the best athlete or team should win fairly and squarely, having competed under equitable conditions and under rules that are fair and applied evenly with true competence. To be valid and meaningful, competition results must be achieved on a level playing field.

Doping and the inappropriate use of normal medications present a serious threat to the integrity and reputation of our sport, because they give athletes an unfair advantage and threaten the welfare of horses. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the entire equine community: [athletes](#), [veterinarians](#), [grooms](#), [managers](#), [coaches](#), [owners](#), [officials](#), and our [National Federations](#) to join together to help combat doping and the inappropriate use of medications through better education and increased vigilance.

Equestrian sport is a unique case of a sport that involves animal and human athletes working together as a team. The FEI's Clean Sport Campaign is a coordinated effort at many levels to provide all our stakeholders with the information and tools necessary to address the issue of doping and inappropriate medication usage head on. We hope the campaign will also serve as a call to action to all to reaffirm their commitment to [fair play](#) and [horse welfare](#). The concept of Clean Sport is about much more than a new list of prohibited substances and a new rulebook. It's also about better judgment, professionalization of the officials that regulate our sport and consistency of decisions. It's a complete package and its success depends on everyone playing their part to maintain that level playing field.

ANNEX 4 PERMITTED BITS AND NOSEBANDS FOR USE WITH SNAFFLE BRIDLES

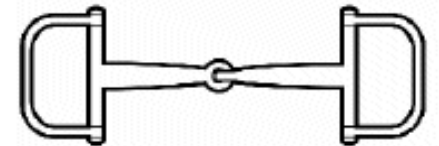
Bits should follow the configuration of those illustrated below.



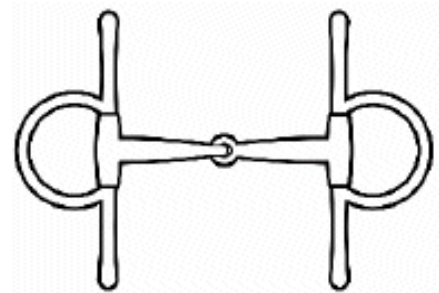
1



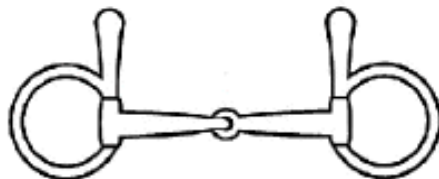
3



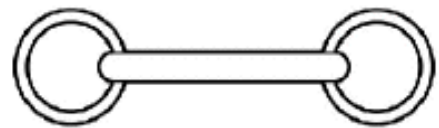
4



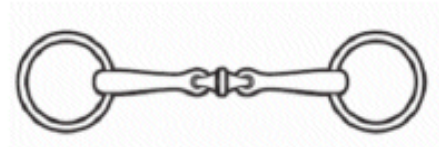
5



7



9



11



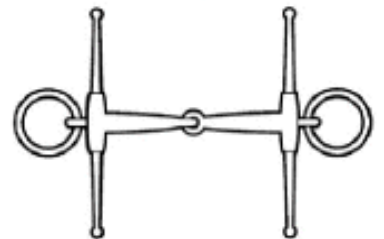
2a



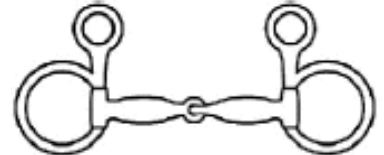
2b



2c



6

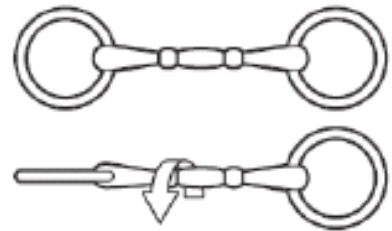
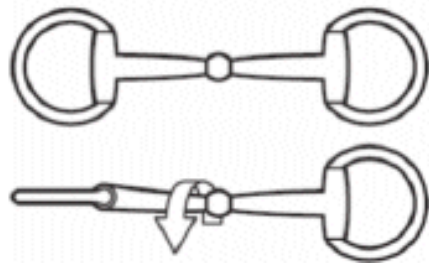
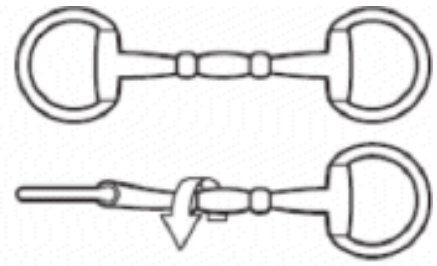
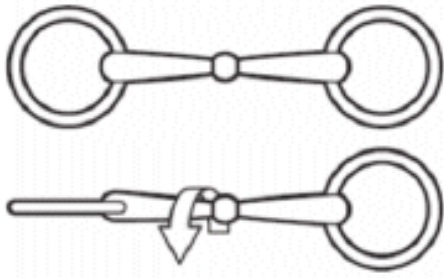


8



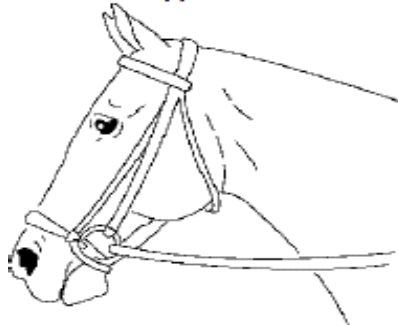
10

Examples of rotary bits:

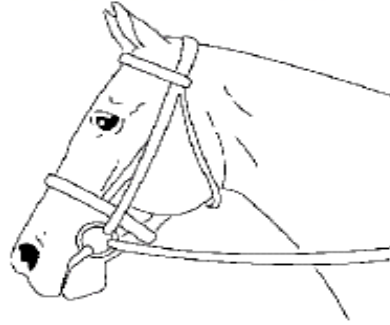


Examples of nosebands and bridle configurations:

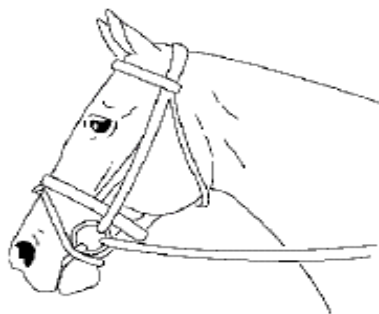
1. Dropped noseband



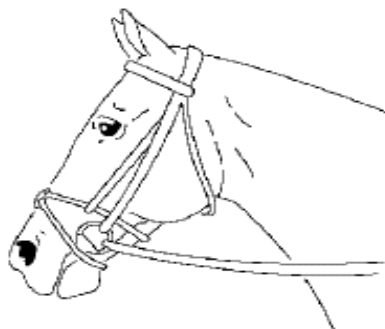
2. Cavesson noseband



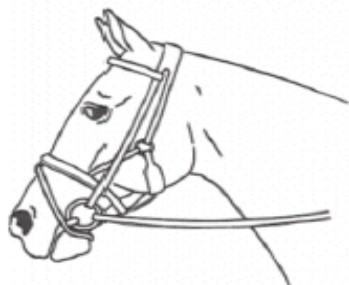
3. Flash noseband



4. Crossed noseband (pictured) / Mexican noseband



5. Combined noseband – no throat lash



6. Micklem bridle



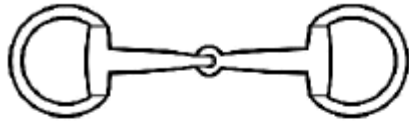
ANNEX 5 PERMITTED BITS FOR USE WITH DOUBLE BRIDLES

Bits should follow the configuration of those illustrated below.

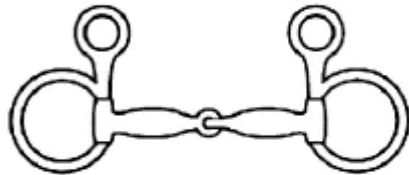
Permitted bridoons:



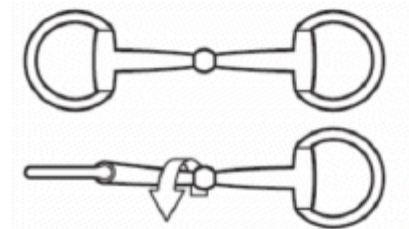
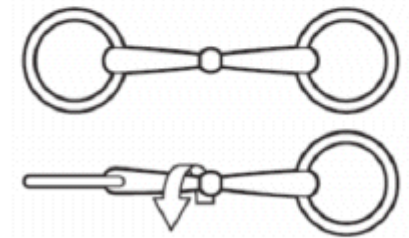
1



3



4



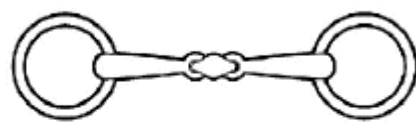
2e



2a



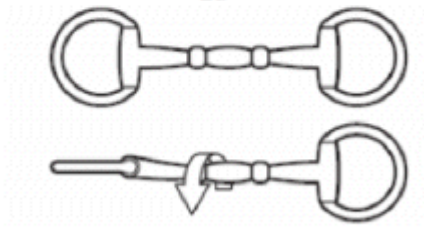
2b



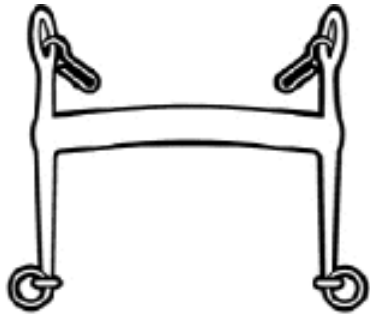
2c



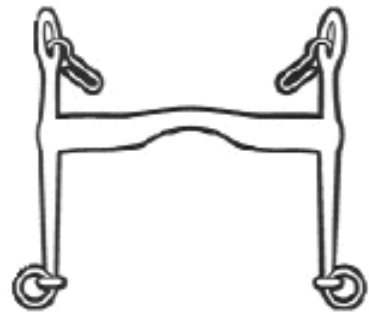
2d



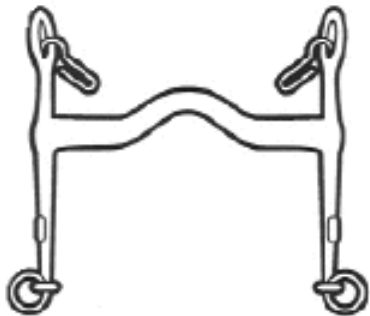
Permitted curbs:



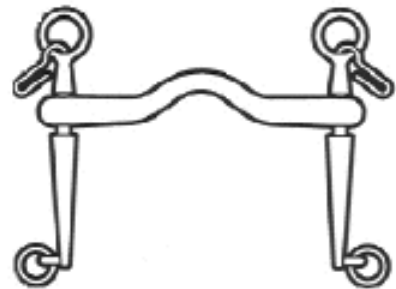
5



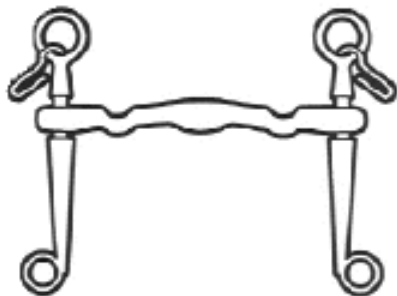
6



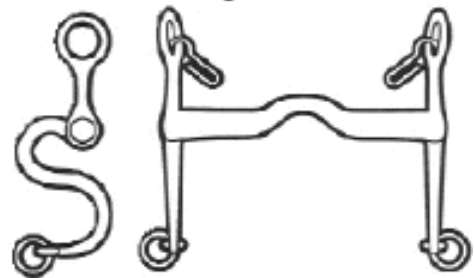
7



8



9



10



11



13



12



14

ANNEX 6 NOTES ON THE INTERPRETATION OF DRESSAGE TEST SHEETS

Turns and Circles

A rider in movement along the outer track will continue along it on the same rein, without alteration of pace or manner of riding, until instructed to do otherwise. If required to leave the track and return to it (e.g. when circling), the rider will continue along the track in the same manner of going as he left it and on the same rein unless instructed to do otherwise. For a simple 'Turn right (or left) the rider will change direction through 90 degrees by riding a quarter of a small circle (as at a corner) beginning before reaching the marker and finishing on a line at right angles to the track and directly opposite the marker. For 'Turn right (or left) at any marker the rider will turn in a similar manner but will finish on the outer track. (N.B. -the horse must not begin by swinging out in the opposite direction and then cross the line of approach.)

Change of pace at a given marker

The horse should make the first step in the new pace as the rider passes the marker. (It follows that when the transitions are progressive, they must begin before reaching the marker). Where a movement requires medium or extended canter followed by a transition to collected trot, some collection in canter should be shown just before the transition. Where a transition is required at the end of a diagonal it should be executed on the end of the diagonal while the horse is still straight.

Simple Change of leg at the Canter

This is a change of leg where the horse is brought back immediately into walk and after approximately one horse's length (three to five walk steps) is restarted immediately into canter, with the other leg leading. The walk steps should be clearly shown, and correct. A simple change is always through the walk.

If walk steps are not required, the movement should be described as a 'change of leg/lead through the trot' and NOT as a simple change.

Give and Re-take the Reins/Stroke the Horses Neck

The rider pushes forwards both hands to clearly release the contact and then retake it. The movement of the hands should be continuous and achieved over two or three strides. As this is a test of 'self-carriage' the horse should stay in balance, keeping the rhythm, level of engagement, suppleness of the back, and accept the restoration of contact without any loss of submission.

Free walk on a Long Rein

Free walk on a long rein is a pace in which the horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch out his head and neck while the rider maintains a light contact through the rein. The horse covers as much ground as possible, without haste and without losing the regularity of his steps. The hind feet must touch the ground clearly in front of the footprints of the forefeet.

Canter on a long rein

The horse is allowed the freedom to lower and stretch his head and neck forward and down, while the rider maintains a light contact through the reins.

The horse should continue to canter in the same rhythm, with suppleness of the back and self-carriage.

F.E.I. Definitions of Paces and Movements

Object and general principles

The object of Dressage is the development of the horse into a "happy athlete", through harmonious education. As a result, it makes the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible,

but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with his rider.

These qualities are revealed by:

- The freedom and regularity of the paces.
- The harmony lightness and ease of the movements.
- The lightness of the forehand and the engagement of the hindquarters, originating from a lively impulsion.
- The acceptance of the bridle, with submissiveness throughout, and without any tenseness or resistance.

The horse thus gives the impression of doing of his own accord what is required of him. Confident and attentive he submits generously to the control of the rider, remaining absolutely straight in any movement on a straight line and bending accordingly when moving on curved lines.

The walk is regular, free and unconstrained. The trot is free, supple, regular, sustained and active. The canter is united, light, and cadenced. The hindquarters are never inactive or sluggish. The horse responds to the slightest indication of the rider and thereby gives life and spirit to all the rest of his body.

By virtue of a lively impulsion and the suppleness of the joints, free from the paralysing effects of resistance, the horse obeys willingly and without hesitation and responds to the various aids calmly and with precision, displaying a natural and harmonious balance both physically and mentally.

In all the work, even at the halt, the horse must be "on the bit". A horse is said to be "on the bit" when the hocks are correctly placed and the neck is more or less raised and arched according to the stage of training and the extension or collection of the pace, accepting the bridle with a light and soft contact and submissiveness throughout. The head should remain in a steady position, as a rule slightly in front of the vertical, with a supple poll as the highest point of the neck, and no resistance should be offered to the rider.

Cadence is shown in trot and canter and is the result of the proper harmony that a horse shows when it moves with well-marked regularity, impulsion and balance. Cadence must be maintained in all the different trot exercises and in all the variations of trot.

The rhythm that a horse maintains in all the paces is fundamental to dressage.

The halt

At the halt, the horse should stand attentive, motionless and straight, with the weight evenly distributed over all four legs, being by pairs abreast with each other. The neck should be raised, the poll high and the head slightly in front of the vertical. While remaining 'on the bit' and maintaining a light and soft contact with the rider's hand, the horse may quietly chew / champ the bit, and should be ready to move off at the slightest indication of the rider.

The halt is obtained by the displacement of the horse's weight to the hindquarters by a properly increased action of the seat and legs of the rider, driving the horse towards a more and more restraining but allowing hand, causing an almost instantaneous but not abrupt halt at a previously fixed place.

The walk

The walk is a marching pace in which the footfalls of the horse's feet follow one another in a regular four-time beat. This regularity, combined with full relaxation, must be maintained throughout all walk movements.

When the foreleg and the hind leg on the same side move almost on the same beat, the walk tends to become an almost lateral movement. This irregularity, which might become an ambling / pacing movement, is a serious deterioration of the pace.

It is at the pace of walk that the imperfections of dressage are most evident. This is also the reason why a horse should not be asked to walk 'on the bit' at the early stages of training. A too precipitated collection will not only spoil the collected walk, but the medium and the extended walks, as well.

The following walks are recognised: collected walk, medium walk, extended walk, and free walk. There should always be a clear difference in the attitude and over-tracking in these variations.

In collected walk the horse remaining on the bit moves resolutely forward, with his neck raised and arched and showing a clear self-carriage. The head approaches the vertical position; the light contact being maintained with the mouth. The hind legs are engaged with good hock action. The pace should remain marching and vigorous, the feet being placed in regular sequence. Each step covers less ground and is higher than at the medium walk, because all the joints bend more markedly. In order, not to become hurried or irregular, the collected walk is shorter than the medium walk, although showing greater activity.

Medium walk is a free, regular and unconstrained walk, of moderate lengthening. The horse, remaining "on the bit", walks energetically but calmly, with even and determined steps, the hind feet touching the ground in front of the hoof prints of the fore feet. The rider maintains a light, soft and steady contact with the mouth, allowing the natural movement of the head and neck.

In extended walk the horse covers as much ground as possible, without haste and without losing the regularity of the steps, the hind feet touching the ground clearly in front of the footprints of the fore feet. The rider allows the horse to stretch out the head and neck without losing contact with the mouth and control of the poll.

Free walk is a pace of relaxation in which the horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch out his head and neck.

The trot

The trot is a pace of "two time" on alternate diagonal legs (left fore and right hind leg and vice versa) separated by a moment of suspension.

The trot, always with free, active and regular steps, should be moved into without hesitation.

The quality of the trot is judged by the general impression, i.e. the regularity and elasticity of the steps, the cadence and impulsion in both collection and extension. This quality originates from a supple back and well-engaged hindquarters, and by the ability of maintaining the same rhythm and natural balance, even after a transition from one trot to another.

The following trots are recognized: working trot, lengthening of steps, collected trot, medium trot and extended trot.

Working trot is a pace between the collected and the medium trot, in which a horse, not yet trained and ready for collected movements shows himself properly balanced and remaining "on the bit", goes forward with even, elastic steps and good hock action. The expression "good hock action" does not mean that collection is a required quality of working trot. It only underlines the importance of an impulsion that originates from the activity of the hindquarters

In collected trot the horse, remaining "on the bit", moves forward with his neck raised and arched. The hocks, being well engaged and flexed, must maintain an energetic

impulsion, enabling the shoulders to move with greater ease in any direction. The horse's steps are shorter than in the other trots, without losing elasticity and cadence, and he is lighter and more mobile.

Medium trot is a pace between the working and the extended trot, but more "round" than the latter. The horse goes forward with clear and moderately lengthened steps and with obvious impulsion from the hindquarters, always keeping the same character as in the working trot. The rider allows the horse, remaining "on the bit", to carry his head a little more in front of the vertical than at the collected trot and the working trot, and allows him to at the same time to lower his head and neck slightly. The steps should be even, and the whole movement balanced and unconstrained.

In extended trot, the horse covers as much ground as possible. Maintaining the same cadence, the steps are lengthened to the utmost as a result of great impulsion from the hindquarters. The rider allows the horse, remaining "on the bit" without leaning on it, to lengthen the frame with a controlled poll, and to gain ground. The fore feet should touch the ground on the spot towards which they are pointing. The movement of the fore and hind legs should be similar [parallel] in the forward movement of the extension. The whole movement should be well balanced and the transition to collected trot should be smoothly executed by taking more weight on the hindquarters.

All trot work must be executed sitting unless otherwise indicated on the test concerned. Lengthening of steps is a variation between the working and medium trot in which a horse's training is not developed enough for medium trot.

The canter

The canter is a pace of three time, where at canter to the right, for instance, the footfall is as follows; left hind, left diagonal (simultaneously left fore and right hind), right fore, followed by a moment of suspension with all four feet in the air before the next stride begins.

The canter, always with light, cadenced and regular strides should be moved into without hesitation.

The quality of the canter is judged by the general impression, the regularity and lightness of the three-time pace and the uphill tendency and cadence originating from the acceptance of the bridle with a supple poll and in the engagement of the hind quarters with an active hock action -and by the ability of maintaining the same rhythm and a natural balance, even after a transition from one canter to another. The horse should always remain straight on straight lines and correctly bent on curved lines.

The following canters are recognised: working canter, lengthening of strides, collected canter, medium canter and extended canter.

Working canter is a pace between the collected and the medium canters, in which a horse's training is not yet developed and ready for collected movements. The horse shows himself properly balanced, while remaining 'on the bit', and goes forward with even, light, and cadenced strides and good hock action. The expression "good hock action" underlines the importance of an impulsion originating from the activity of the hindquarters and does not mean that collection is required at working canter.

Lengthening of strides is a variation between the working and medium canter in which the horse's training is not developed enough for medium canter.

In collected canter the horse, remaining "on the bit" moves forward with his neck raised and arched. The collected canter is marked by the lightness of the forehand and the engagement of the hindquarters i.e. is characterised by supple, free and mobile shoulders and very active quarters. The horse's strides are shorter than at the other canters, but he is lighter and more mobile.

Medium canter is a pace between the working and the extended canters. The horse goes forward with free, balanced and moderately extended strides and an obvious impulsion from the hindquarters. The rider allows the horse, remaining “on the bit” to carry his head a little more in front of the vertical than at the collected and working canters, and allows him at the same time to lower his head and neck slightly. The strides should be long and as even as possible. And the whole movement balanced and unconstrained

In extended canter, the horse covers as much ground as possible. Maintaining the same rhythm, the strides are lengthened to the utmost, whilst remaining calm, light and straight as a result of great impulsion from the hindquarters. The rider allows the horse, remaining “on the bit” without leaning on it, to lower and extend his head and neck, the tip of the nose pointing more or less forward.

The cadence in the transitions from medium canter, as well as from extended canter to collected, should be maintained.

Counter-canter is a movement where the rider, for instance on a circle to the left, deliberately makes his horse canter with the right canter lead (with the right fore leading). The counter canter is a balancing movement. The horse maintains his natural flexion at the poll to the outside of the circle, and the horse is positioned to the side of the leading leg. His conformation does not permit his spine to be bent on the line of the circle. The rider, avoiding any contortion causing contraction and disorder, should especially endeavour to limit the deviation of the quarters to the outside of the circle, and restrict his demands according to the degree of suppleness of the horse.

Simple change of leg at the canter is a movement in which, after a direct transition out of the canter into a walk, with 3 to 5 clearly defined walk steps, an immediate transition is made into a canter with the other leg leading.

Flying change of leg or change of leg in the air is a change of leg is executed in close connection with the period of suspension, which follows each stride of the canter. Flying changes of leg can also be executed in series, for instance at every 4th 3rd 2nd stride, or at every stride. The horse, even in the series, remains light, calm and straight with lively impulsion, maintaining the same rhythm and balance throughout the series concerned. In order, not to restrict or restrain the lightness and fluency of the flying changes of leg in series, the degree of collection should be slightly less than otherwise at collected canter.

Rein back

The rein back is an equilateral, retrograde (backward) movement in which the feet are raised and set down by diagonal pairs. The feet should be well raised, and the hind feet remain in line.

At the preceding halt, as well as during the rein back the horse, although standing motionless and moving backwards respectively, should remain “on the bit”, and maintain his desire to move forward.

Anticipation or precipitation of the movement, resistance to or evasion of the hand, deviation of the hindquarters from the straight line, spreading or inactive hind legs and dragging fore feet are serious faults.

If in a dressage test a trot or canter is required after a rein back, the horse should move off immediately into this pace, without a halt or an intermediate step.

See-saw is a combination of two rein backs with walk steps in between. It should be executed with fluent transitions and the required number of steps.

Transitions

The changes of pace and speed should be clearly shown at the prescribed marker; they should be quickly made yet must be smooth and not abrupt. The cadence of a pace should be maintained up to the moment when the pace is changed, or the horse halts.

The same applies to transitions from one movement to another, for instance from the passage to the piaffe and vice versa.

The primary requirement is that transitions are fluent. The higher the level of test the greater the emphasis is of them being direct. Therefore, PROGRESSIVE transitions at the lower levels can still earn high marks, but from Elementary onwards the highest marks should be reserved for the fluent, direct transitions.

Half halt

The half-halt is a hardly visible, almost simultaneous, co-ordinated action of the seat, the legs and the hand of the rider, with the object of increasing the attention and balance of the horse in the execution of several movements or transitions to lower and higher paces. In shifting slightly more weight onto the horse's quarters, the engagement of the hind legs and the balance on the haunches are facilitated, for the benefit of the lightness of the forehand, and the horse's balance as a whole.

Changes of direction

At changes of direction, the horse should adjust the bend of his body to the curvature of the line he follows, remaining supple and following the indications of the rider, without any resistance or change of pace, rhythm or speed.

Changes of direction can be executed in the following ways:

- a) When changing direction at right angles, for instance when riding corners, the horse should describe one quarter of a circle of approximately 6 metres diameter, at collected and working paces.
- b) When changing direction in the form of counter-change of hand, the rider changes direction by moving obliquely either to the quarter line, or the centre line, or to the opposite long side of the arena, after which he returns on an oblique line to the line he was following when he started the movement.
- c) At the counter-change of hand the rider should make the horse straight an instant before changing direction.
- d) When, for instance, at counter-change of hand at half pass to either side of the centre line, the number of metres or strides to either side is prescribed in the test, it must be strictly observed, and the movement executed symmetrically.

The figures

The figures asked for in Dressage tests are *voltes*, serpentines and the figure of eight.

The *volte* is a circle of 6, 8 or 10 metres diameter, if larger than 10 meters one uses the term circle, stating the diameter.

The Serpentine with several loops touching the long side of the arena consists of half circles connected by a straight line. When crossing, the centre line the horse should be parallel to the short side. Depending on the size of the half circles, the straight connection varies in length.

Serpentines with one loop on the long side of the arena are executed with a specified distance (e.g. 5m, 10m) distance from the track.

Serpentines around the centre line are executed between the quarter lines.

The figures of eight consists of two exact *voltes* or circles of equal size, as prescribed in the test, joined at the centre of the eight. The rider should make his horse straight an instant before changing direction at the centre of the figure.

Work on two tracks

A distinction must be made between the following movements:

- Leg yielding
- Shoulder-in
- Travers
- Renvers
- Half pass.

The aim of movements on two tracks is:

1. To improve the obedience of the horse to the co-operative aids of the rider;
2. To supple all parts of the horse, thereby increasing the freedom of his shoulders and the suppleness of his quarters, as well as the elasticity of the bond connecting the mouth, the poll, the neck, the back and the haunches.
3. To improve the cadence and bring the balance and pace into harmony.

In leg yielding the horse is almost straight, except for a slight flexion at the poll away from the direction in which he moves, so that the rider is just able to see the eyebrow and nostril on the inside. The inside legs pass and cross in front of the outside legs.

Leg yielding should be included in the training of the horse before he is ready for collected work. Later on, together with the more advanced movement of shoulder-in, it is the best means of making a horse supple, loose and unconstrained, for the benefit of freedom, elasticity and regularity of his paces, and the harmony, lightness and ease of movements. Leg yielding can be performed "on the diagonal", in which case the horse should be as near as possible parallel to the long side of the arena, although the forehand should be slightly in advance of the quarters. It can also be performed "along the wall", in which case the horse should be at an angle of 35 degrees to the direction in which he is moving (see diagrams 5 and 6)

Lateral movements

The aim of lateral movements is to develop and increase the engagement of the hindquarters and thereby also the collection.

In all lateral movements -shoulder-in, travers, renvers, and half pass -the horse is slightly bent and moves with the forehand and the quarters on two different tracks.

The bend or flexion must never be exaggerated so that it impairs the balance and fluency of the movement concerned.

In the lateral movements, the pace should remain free and regular, maintained by a constant impulsion, yet it must be supple, cadenced and balanced. The impulsion is often lost, because of the rider's preoccupation mainly in bending the horse and pushing him sideways.

In shoulder-in the horse is slightly bent round the inside leg of the rider. The horse's inside foreleg passes and crosses in front of the outside leg; the inside hind leg is placed in front of the outside leg. The horse is looking away from the direction in which he is moving.

Shoulder-in, if performed in the right way, with the horse slightly bent round the inside leg of the rider, and at the correct tracking, is not only a suppling movement, but also a collecting movement, because the horse, at every step, must move his inside leg underneath his body and place it in front of the outside leg, by lowering his inside hip (see diagram 1).

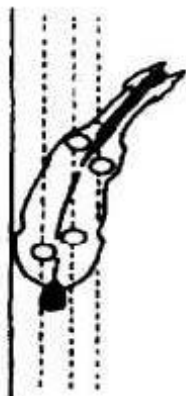
In travers, the horse is slightly bent round the inside leg of the rider. The horse's outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. The horse is looking in the direction in which he is moving (diagram 2).

Renvers is the inverse movement in relation to Travers, with the tail, instead of the head, to the wall. Otherwise the same principles and conditions are applicable as at the Travers (see diagram 3)

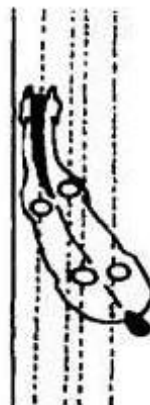
The Half-pass is a variation of Travers, executed "on the diagonal" instead of "along the wall". The horse should be slightly bent round the inside leg of the rider in order to give more freedom and mobility to the shoulders, thus adding ease and grace to the movement, although the forehand should be slightly in advance of the quarters. The outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. The horse is looking in the direction in which he is moving and should maintain the same cadence throughout the whole movement. In order to give more freedom and mobility to the shoulders, which adds to the ease and grace of the movement it is of great importance, not only that the horse is correctly bent and thereby prevented from protruding his inside shoulder, but also to maintain the impulsion, especially the engagement of the hind leg (see diagram 4).

In the canter, the movement is performed in a series of forward sideways elevated strides.

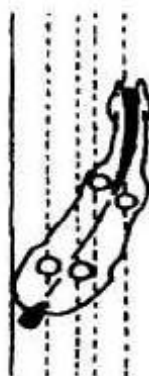
1) *Shoulder in*



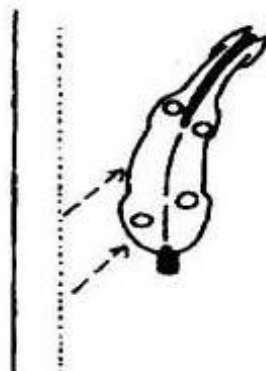
2) *Travers*



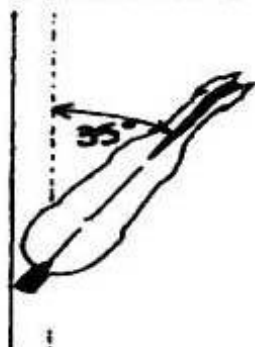
3) *Renvers*



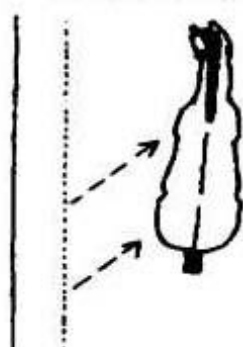
4) *Half-Pass*



5) *Leg-yielding along the wall*



4) *Leg-yielding on the diagonal*



Turn on the haunches, pirouette and half pirouette

In turn on the haunches from halt to halt (180 degrees), to maintain the forward tendency of the movement, 1 or 2 forward steps at the beginning of the turn are permitted. During the turn, the horse moves around a point whereby the inner hind leg remains close to that point while stepping around the point in a clear four beat rhythm. The front legs and the outside hind leg move around the inner hind leg, which is lifted and lowered in rhythm, clearly in the direction of the centre of gravity and meets the ground in the same spot or only slightly in front thereof. After the completion of the turn, the horse is brought back to the track in a forward sideways manner before the second halt. The horse returns to the track without the hind legs crossing. When executing the turn, the horse should be flexed in the direction of the turn.

In turn on the haunches from walk (180 degrees), the same criteria apply as for the turn on the haunches from halt to halt. The only difference is that the horse does not come to a halt before and after the turn. Before starting the turn, the steps of the walk should be shortened.

The pirouette. (half pirouette) is a circle (half circle) executed on two tracks, with a radius equal to the length of the horse, and the forehand moving around the haunches. Pirouettes (half pirouettes) are usually carried out at collected walk or canter but can also be executed at piaffe.

At the pirouette (half pirouette) the forefeet and the outside hind foot move round the inside hind foot, which forms the pivot and should return to the same spot or slightly in front of it, each time it leaves the ground.

At whatever pace the pirouette (half pirouette) executed, the horse, slightly bent to the direction in which it is turning, should, remaining "on the bit" with a light contact, turn smoothly round, maintaining the exact cadence and sequence of footfalls of that pace. The poll stays the highest point during the entire movement.

During the pirouette (half pirouettes) the horse should maintain his impulsion, and never in the slightest way move backwards or deviate sideways. If the inside foot is not raised and returned to the ground in the same rhythm as the outside hind foot, the pace is no longer regular.

In executing the pirouette or half pirouette in canter, the rider should maintain perfect lightness of the horse while accentuating the collection. The hindquarters are well engaged and lowered and show a good flexion of the joints.

An integral part of the movement is the canter strides before and after the pirouette. These should be characterised by an increased activity, straightness and collection before the pirouette; and the movement having been completed, by the balance being maintained as the horse proceeds.

The quality of the pirouettes (half pirouettes) is judged according to the suppleness, lightness, cadence and the regularity, and to the precision and smoothness of the transitions; pirouettes (half pirouettes) at canter are judged according to the balance, the elevation and the number of strides (6 -8 for a full pirouette, 3 -4 for a half pirouette, are desirable).

Passage

Passage is a measured, very collected, very elevated and very cadenced trot. It is characterised by a pronounced engagement of the hindquarters, a more accentuated flexion of the knees and hocks, and the graceful elasticity of the movement. Each diagonal pair of feet is raised and returned to the ground alternately, with cadence and a prolonged suspension.

In principle, the height of the toe of the raised foreleg should be level with the middle of the cannon bone of the other foreleg. The toe of the raised hind leg should be slightly above the fetlock joint of the other hind leg.

The neck should be raised and gracefully arched with the poll as the highest point and the head close to the vertical. The horse should remain light and soft, "on the bit" and be able to go smoothly from the passage to piaffe and vice-versa, without apparent effort and without altering the cadence, with the impulsion always being lively and pronounced. Irregular steps with the hind legs, swinging the forehand or the quarters from one side to the other, as well as jerky movements of the forelegs or the hind legs, or dragging the hind legs, are serious faults.

Piaffe

The piaffe is a highly collected, cadenced, elevated diagonal movement giving the impression of being on the spot. The horse's back is supple and elastic. The quarters are slightly lowered; the haunches with active hocks are well engaged, giving great freedom, lightness and mobility to the shoulders and forehand. Each diagonal pair of feet is raised and returned to the ground alternately, with an even cadence.

In principle, the height of the toe of the raised foreleg should be level with the middle of the cannon bone of the other foreleg. The toe of the raised hind leg should reach just above the fetlock joint of the other hind leg.

The neck should be raised and arched; the head vertical. The horse should remain, "on the bit" with a supple poll, maintaining a light and soft contact on a taut rein. The body of the horse should move up and down in a supple, cadenced and harmonious movement.

The piaffe must always be animated by a lively impulsion and characterised by perfect balance. While giving the impression of being in place, there may be a visible inclination to advance, this being displayed by the horse's eager acceptance to move forward as soon as it is asked.

Moving even slightly backwards, irregular steps with the hind legs, crossing of either the fore or hind legs, or swinging either the forehand or the quarters from one side to the other, are serious faults.

A movement with hurried, unlevel or irregular steps, without cadence or spring cannot be called a true piaffe.

Collection

The aim of the collection of the horse is:

- To further develop and increase the balance and equilibrium of the horse, which has been more or less displaced by the additional weight of the rider.
- To develop and increase the horse's ability to lower and engage his quarters for the benefit of the lightness and mobility of his forehand.
- To add to the "ease and carriage" of the horse and make him more pleasurable to ride.

Collection is developed through the use of shoulder-in, travers, renvers and last, but not least, half pass and especially half halts.

Collection is, in other words, improved and achieved by engaging the hind legs, with the joints bent and supple, forward under the horse's body by a temporary but often repeated action of the seat and legs of the rider, driving the horse forward towards a more or less stationary restraining hand, allowing just enough impulsion to pass through. Collection is consequently not achieved by shortening the pace through a resisting action of the hand, but instead by using the seat and legs to engage the hind legs further under the horse's body.

However, the hind legs should not be engaged too far forward under the horse, as this would shorten the base of support excessively, and thereby impede the movement. In such a case, the line of the back would be lengthened and raised in relation to the supporting base of the legs, the stability would be impaired, and the horse would have difficulty in finding a harmonious and correct balance.

On the other hand, a horse with too long a base of support, which is unable or unwilling to engage his hind legs forward under his body, will never achieve an acceptable collection, originated in the activity of the quarters.

The position of the head and neck of a horse at the collected paces is naturally dependent on the stage of training and, to some degree, on his conformation. It should, however, be distinguished by the neck being raised unrestrained, forming a harmonious curve from the withers to the poll, being the highest point, with the head slightly in front of the vertical.

However, at the moment the rider applies his aids in order to obtain momentary and passing collecting effort, the head may become more or less vertical.

Submission and impulsion

Submission does not mean subordination, but an obedience revealing its presence by a constant attention, willingness and confidence in the whole behaviour of the horse as well as by the harmony, lightness and ease he is displaying in the execution of the different movements. The degree of submission is also manifested by the way the horse accepts the bridle; with a light and soft contact and a supple poll, without resistance to, or evasion of, the rider's hands; not being either "above the bit" or "behind the bit" respectively.

Putting out the tongue, keeping it above the bit or drawing it up altogether, as well as grinding the teeth and swishing the tail are mostly signs of nervousness, tension or resistance on the part of the horse and must be taken into account by the judges in their marks for the movement concerned, as well as in the collective mark for "submission".

Straightness is also an important part of submission. A horse is straight when the hind feet follow the tracks of the fore feet on straight and curved lines and when the horse shows equal and submissive bend in both directions.

The fulfilling of the main requirements / movements of a dressage test is a main criterion of submission.

Impulsion is the term used to describe the transmission of an eager and energetic, yet controlled, propulsive energy generated from the hindquarters, into the athletic movement of the horse. Its ultimate expression can be shown only through the horse's soft and swinging back to be guided by a gentle contact with the rider's hand.

Speed, of itself, has little to do with impulsion: the result is more often a flattening of the paces. A visible characteristic is a more pronounced articulation of the hind leg, in a continuous rather than staccato action. The hock, as the hind foot leaves the ground, should first move forward rather than being pulled upward, but certainly not backwards. A prime ingredient of impulsion is the time a horse spends in the air rather than on the ground: in other words, an added expression within the paces, always provided that there is a clear distinction between the collected trot and the Passage. Impulsion is, therefore, seen only in those paces that have a period of suspension; therefore, impulsion is a precondition for good collection in trot and canter.

If there is no impulsion, then there is nothing to collect.

The position and aids of the rider

All the movements should be obtained with invisible aids and without apparent effort of the rider. The rider should be well balanced, with his loins and hips supple, thighs and legs steady and well stretched downwards. The upper part of the body easy, free and erect, with the hands low and close together without, however touching each other or the horse, and with the thumb as the highest point, the elbows and arms close to the body, enabling the rider to follow the movements of the horse smoothly and freely, and to apply his aids imperceptibly. This is the only position making it possible for the rider to school his horse progressively and correctly.

Not only are the aids of the hand and the legs, but also of the seat of great importance in dressage. Only the rider, who understands how to contract and relax his loin muscles at the right moment, is able to influence his horse correctly.

Riding with both hands is obligatory in tests at all National and International Dressage events. However, when leaving the arena at a long rein, after having finished the performance, the rider may at his own discretion, ride with only one hand. Riding with reins in one hand is however permitted in the Freestyle Tests.

The use of the voice in any way whatsoever, or clicking the tongue once or repeatedly, is a serious fault, involving the deduction of at least two marks from those that would otherwise have been awarded for the movement where this occurred.

The Training Scale

Judges are looking for a systematic approach to training and with that in mind the following training scale should be constantly referred to when assessing a horse's way of going.

1. Rhythm –Regularity and tempo

- The first step of the training scale that should be established is the rhythm.
- The rhythm is the regularity of the beat in all paces.
- The regularity is the correct sequence of the footfall, and the tempo is the speed of the rhythm.
- Steps and strides in each variation of the pace should cover equal distances and also be of equal duration, remaining in a constant tempo.
- The rhythm should also be maintained through the transitions within a pace and in all turns, also in the corners, as well as on straight lines.
- No exercise can be “good” if the horse is losing the rhythm, which is often a sign of incorrect training. In order to judge the correctness of rhythm, the judge must understand how the horse moves in the basic paces.

2. Suppleness – Elasticity and freedom from anxiety

- Suppleness, together with rhythm, is an essential aim of the preliminary training phase.
- Even if the rhythm is maintained, the movement cannot be considered correct unless the horse is working through its back, and the muscles are free from tension.
- Suppleness is a central theme throughout the schooling. It should never be neglected and should be constantly checked and reinforced.
- Only if the horse is physically and mentally free from tension or constraint, can it work with suppleness and use itself fully.
- The horse's joints should bend and straighten equally on both sides of its body, and with each step or stride.
- The horse should convey the impression that it's putting its whole mind and body into its work.

- Lack of suppleness can take many different forms, e.g. tightness of the back, severely agitated tail, rhythm faults, hind legs lacking activity, a tense and dry mouth and crookedness.

Indications of suppleness:

- A content happy expression – freedom from anxiety
- The elasticity of the steps – the ability to stretch and contract the musculature smoothly and fluently
- A quiet mouth gently chewing the bit with an elastic content
- A swinging back with the tail carried in a relaxed manner
- Soft and rhythmical breathing, showing that the horse is mentally and physically relaxed
- The best confirmation and proof of the suppleness is that when the reins are given, the horse stretches the neck downward and forward to the bit, without losing rhythm or balance

3. Contact – Acceptance of the bit and aids/self-carriage

Contact is the soft, steady connection between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth. The horse should go rhythmically forward from the rider's driving aids and "seek" contact with the rider's hand, thus "going into" the contact.

"The horse seeks the contact, and the rider provides the contact"

- A correct, steady contact allows the horse to find its balance under the rider and a good rhythm in all paces.
- The poll should always be the highest point of the neck, except when the horse is being ridden forward / downward with longer reins
- The contact must result from the energy of the active hind legs being transferred over a swinging back, to the bit.
- It is totally wrong to try to obtain contact by pulling back with the hands
- This way of riding will always stop the energy coming through from behind.
- The horse should go forward confidently into the contact, in response to the rider's driving aids.

Indications of good contact are:

- The horse steps forward to the bit through a straight and supple poll
- The horse accepts an elastic content with a quiet mouth, gently chewing the bit.
- The tongue is not visible
- The poll is the highest point
- The line of the nose is in front of the vertical, and, in highly collected exercises, at the vertical
- In medium and extended paces, there should be visible lengthening of the frame

Judges should always differentiate between:

- Nose behind the vertical, which is caused by hands being used too strongly. This fault may result either from a momentary mistake in applying the aids or it may be a symptom of long-term incorrect schooling
- Behind the bit, dropping the contact, when the horse refuses to accept the bit. Often associated with this is a flexion of the vertebrae further down the neck, rather than at the poll
- Broken arch in the neck. This occurs as a result of the rider attempting to establish the contact by using the hands in a backward direction. The highest point of the neck is no longer at the poll, but a point further back, usually between the second and third vertebrae.

- Leaning on the bit. Because the horse is not working sufficiently from behind, it seeks support from the rider's hands, using them as a "fifth leg"
- Against the hand, above the bit. The horse's nose is well in front of the vertical. This horse will not flex at the poll and uses the muscles on the underside of the neck to resist the hand, while at the same time stiffening and hollowing the back

When judging whether a horse is correctly accepting the contact or "on the bit", it is not enough to look only at the head and neck. Judges need to look at the whole horse, its position and carriage and, in particular, the way it moves.

4. Impulsion – Increased energy from the hindquarters

- Impulsion is the transmission of controlled, propulsive energy generated from the hindquarters into the athletic movement of the eager horse
- Its ultimate expression can be shown only through the horse's soft and swinging back and is guided by a gentle contact with the rider's hand
- Impulsion should not be confused with "action" which refers to the horse's inherent ability to take expressive, ground-covering trot steps
- If the horse is working with impulsion, the moment of suspension will be more pronounced, however it should not be too exaggerated because this is associated with incorrect 'hovering' steps that result from tension, a stiff back and resistance
- The most important criteria of impulsion is the time the horse spends in the air, rather than on the ground
- Impulsion is therefore seen only in those paces that have a period of suspension
- Therefore, impulsion is only possible in the trot, canter, piaffe and passage
- There can be no impulsion in the walk, because there is no moment of suspension; therefore, in walk we talk about ACTIVITY
- Impulsion is about the desire to go forward with the energy and carrying power that is produced from behind, and goes through to the bridle, through a supple and swinging back
- Impulsion allows the horse to move in a powerful and athletic way and to show elastic and expressive movement
- Impulsion is of good quality if the hocks are carried energetically forward and upward, immediately after the feet leave the ground, rather than being carried only upward, or being drawn backward
- The movement is absorbed by the horse's back muscles, so that the rider can sit softly and go with the movement
- Impulsion is a question of training, the rider using the horse's natural paces and adding looseness, forward thrust and suppleness
- If the horse is pushed so hard that it quickens its steps, the moment of suspension is shortened because it puts its feet down sooner. In this case, even if the regularity is maintained, the tempo is too fast, and the impulsion will suffer as a result
- Speed itself has little to do with impulsion, and results more often in a flattening of the paces
- The desire to go forward with hind legs that push actively, and that clearly over track, is necessary in extensions

- The horse covers more ground in medium and extended trot and canter, the hind legs swinging through and forward in the moment of suspension
- The development and improvement of the impulsion is fundamental, and it's important for the development of the forward thrust and the carrying power of the hindquarters
- Impulsion is also a prerequisite for straightening the horse and for collection

5. Straightness – Equal bend on both reins

- The development of impulsion and straightness is essential to prepare the horse for collection and to make it more supple
- Straightening the horse is a “never ending” task, since every horse has some degree of natural crookedness
- The horse is straight when its forehead is in line with its hindquarters, that is, when its longitudinal axis is in line with the straight or curved track it is following
- Straightening a horse means that the horse has to be able to be bent and flexed on both reins equally
- The main reasons for straightening a horse are:

To help the horse to stay healthy and sound through evenly distributing weight on both sides

- a) To prepare the horse for collection.
- b) Only a straight horse can push and collect effectively, using its hind legs equally and having an even contact in both reins
- c) Only if the horse is straight can it be supple and “through” equally in both directions
- d) If the horse is straight, the hind legs will push towards the centre of gravity

6. Collection – Engagement and balance

The aim of collection is:

- To further develop and improve the equilibrium of the horse, which has been more or less displaced by the additional weight of the rider
- To develop and increase the horse's ability to lower and engage its hindquarters for the benefit of the lightness and mobility of its forehead
- To add to the “ease of carriage” of the horse, thereby making it more pleasurable to ride
- Collection is developed through the use of half-halts and the lateral movements of shoulder-in, travers, renvers and half pass
- Collection is improved and achieved by the use of the seat and legs, with a containing hand, to engage the hind legs
- The joints bend and are supple, so that the hind legs can step forward under the horse's body
- However, the hind legs should not be engaged so far forward under the horse, that they shorten the base of support excessively, thereby impeding the movement
- In such a case, the line of the back would be lengthened and raised too much, in relation to the supporting base of the legs, the stability would be impaired, and the horse would have difficulty in finding a harmonious and correct balance

- On the other hand, a horse with an over-long base of support, which is unable or unwilling to engage its hind legs forward under its body, will never achieve acceptable collection, characterized by "ease of carriage" as well as a lively impulsion originating from the hindquarters
- The position of the head and neck of a horse at the collected paces is naturally dependent on the stage of training and, to some degree, on its conformation
- It is distinguished by the neck being raised without restraint, forming a harmonious curve from the withers to the poll, which is the highest point, with the nose slightly in front of the vertical
- At the moment that the rider applies his aids to obtain a momentary and passing collecting effect, the head may become more or less vertical • The arch of the neck is directly related to the degree of collection

Correct Collection:

- The more intensive bending of the hind legs leads to the centre of gravity being shifted further backwards
- This results in the increased lightening of the forehead
- Through the systematic development of collection, the horse will show enhanced quality of the natural paces
- Through the increased Engagement of the hind legs and lightness of the shoulders, the paces will appear lighter and freer
- Through the development of impulsion, the paces will show more cadence
- It is only through true development of collection that breath-taking extensions can be produced correctly
- The collected horse gives the impression of moving "uphill"
- The steps and strides become shorter, but activity / impulsion is sustained and makes the horse's movement appear more cadenced

"From the collection, you take the energy into extension; from extension, you take the impulsion into collection"

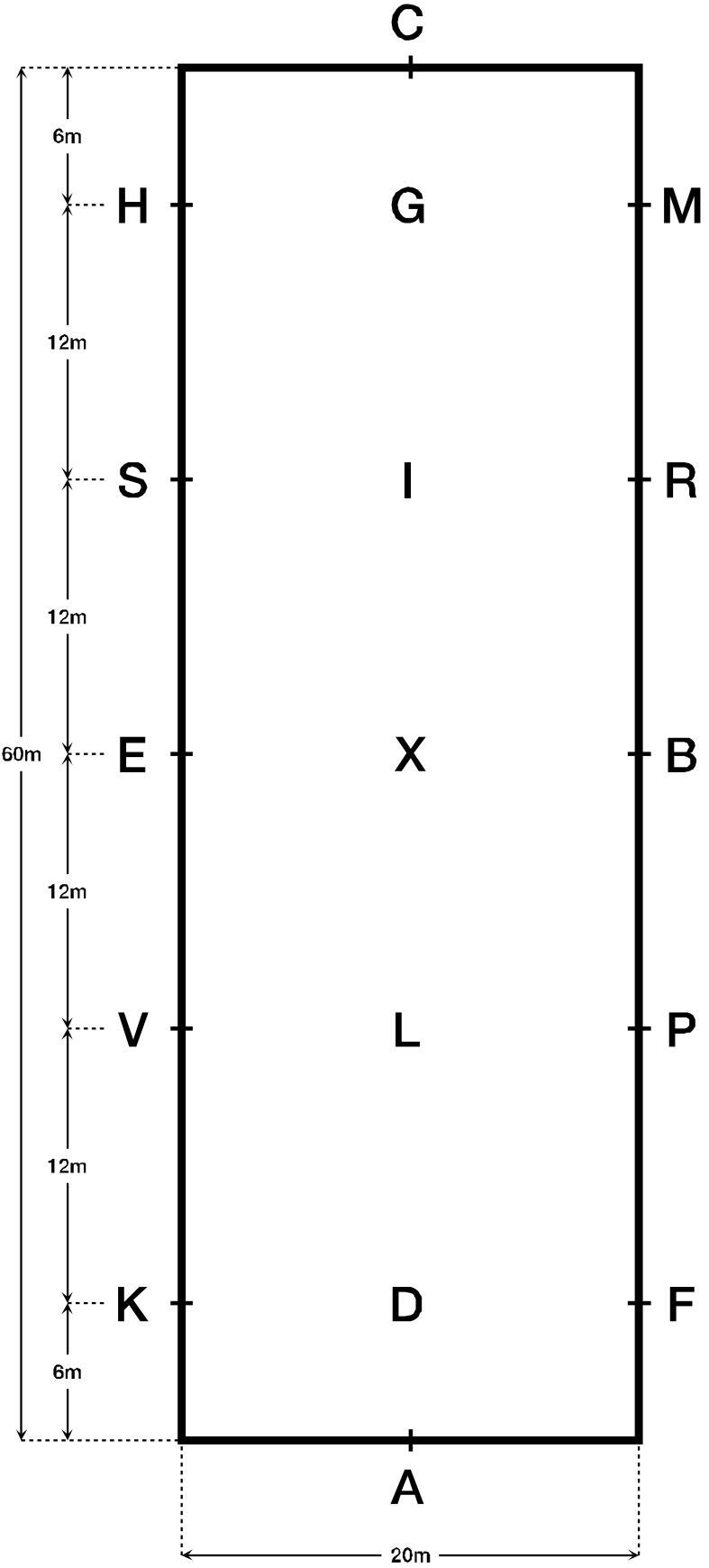
The degree of collection required in the tests at each level is that which enables the horse to perform the required movements with ease and fluency. Therefore, insufficient collection results in a loss of submission because the horse is not able to perform the movements with ease and fluency.

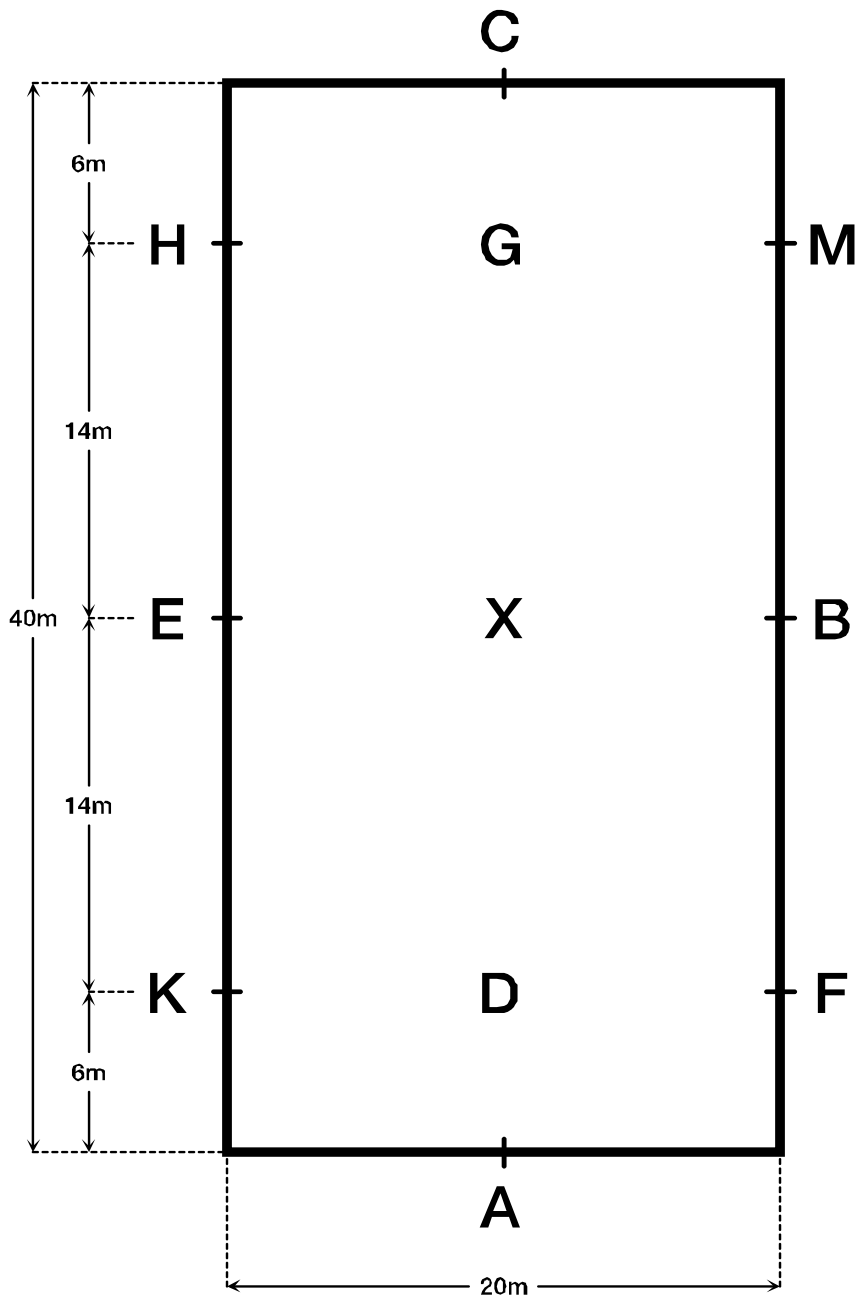
The overall aim of the training scale

- Being "through" or "letting the aids through" means that the horse is prepared to accept the rider's aids obediently, and without tension • The horse should respond to the driving aids without hesitation, its hind legs swinging through, and actively creating pushing power.
- At the same time the rein aids should be "allowed through" from the mouth, via the poll, neck and back, to the hindquarters, without being blocked by tension at any point.
- The horse is "through" when it remains supple during all exercises, responds to the rider's aids, accepts half halts without any hesitation or resistance and listens to the lightest aids of the rider.
- Thoroughness allows the rhythm to be maintained consistently in all three paces.
- Only if the horse moves with suppleness can the energy from the hindquarters pass forward through the horse's body.

- Also, without suppleness, the restraining aids cannot act, via the mouth, poll, neck and back on the hindquarters.
- Any problems in the contact, that is unsteadiness or stiffness in the connection between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth, will interfere with the horse's ability to let the aids come through.
- A horse that works with impulsion, supple through its back, and swinging through with its hind legs, will be in a better position to allow both driving and the restraining aids to come through.
- Not until the horse becomes completely straight can it accept half halts equally on both reins and go more positively into the contact in response to the ride's driving aids, without its hind legs escaping to the side.
- The straightness, in its turn, is absolutely essential for collection and consequently for the correct carriage of the head and neck.
- If the horse responds correctly to the exercises in collection, by stepping forward with both hind legs equally in the direction of the centre of gravity, and by taking more weight on the hindquarters, this is an indication that it has achieved a high degree of "throughness".

All items of the training scale are components of the COLLECTIVE MARKS of standard dressage tests. Therefore, the judges must always check the elements of the training scale when awarding the COLLECTIVE MARKS.





The rules of Dressage Ireland regarding children in sport in Ireland are the Irish Sports Councils "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children' sport in Ireland" and the Department of Health's Publication of "Children First". These documents can be found at:

http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/

and

http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/Children_First_HSP.pdf