


Rulebook 2021 Edition

Amendments in **blue print** take effect from 1 July 2021

Sections shaded in this colour are under review

	WESTERN DRESSAGE ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA - RULEBOOK	
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RULEBOOK – Doc. No 20	Version 21.3
Contact Officer: Secretary	Page 1 of 67



## **Western Dressage Association of Australia Rulebook 2021**

The Western Dressage Association of Australia is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation formed in 2015 to create a uniform national entity through and by which Western Dressage can be encouraged, conducted, promoted and administered and to be the governing body of Western Dressage in Australia.

The National Board originally sought and gained permission from the Western Dressage Association of America to use their Rules as an interim measure until such time as an Australian Rulebook could be developed that would be appropriate to our unique circumstances.

We would like to thank the Western Style Dressage Association of Canada for permission to base our rules on their Rulebook. This Rulebook has now been adopted by the National Board who will make further changes as deemed necessary. The Rulebook will be subject to review by the National Board every two (2) years. The current approved version of the Rulebook will be available on the Association's website.

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## CONTENTS

<b>Section One</b>	<b>ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE</b>
1.1	Statement of Purpose
1.2	Objectives of the Association
1.3	Organisational Structure
1.4	Individual Membership
1.5	Standard of Excellence
1.6	Objectives of Western Dressage Training
1.7	Objectives of Western Dressage Competition
1.8	Horse Competition Licence, Grading System and Awards
<b>Section Two</b>	<b>COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS</b>
2.1	Competitions and Events
2.2	Sanctioned Western Dressage Test Competition
2.3	Non-sanctioned Western Dressage Test Competition
2.4	Virtual Western Dressage Competition
2.5	Western Dressage Test Levels and Scores
2.6	Voice and Touch during Competition
2.7	Calling Western Dressage Tests
2.8	Commencement of Western Dressage Test and Salute
2.9	Western Dressage Test Errors and Penalties
2.10	Peripheral Western Dressage Competitions
2.11	Western Dressage Freestyle Tests
2.12	Western Dressage Pattern Events
2.13	Western Dressage Equitation Classes
2.14	Western Dressage Dry Work Classes
2.15	Western Dressage Trail Classes
2.16	Pattern Event Levels, Class Conditions and Scoring
2.17	Training and Promotional Events and Competitions
2.18	'Come and Try' Western Dressage Classes
2.19	Assisted Rider Events
2.20	Western Dressage In Hand Tests
2.21	Western Dressage Freestyle Versatility Tests

**Section Three    EVENT MANAGEMENT**

- 3.1    Event Convenor**
- 3.2    Draw**
- 3.3    Open Pen**
- 3.4    Scribes**
- 3.5    Arena Specifications**
- 3.6    Scoring and Award Presentation**

**Section Four    JUDGES**

- 4.1    Approved Western Dressage Judges**
- 4.2    Western Dressage Judge Accreditation Program**
- 4.3    Recommended Fees and Reimbursement of Expenses**
- 4.4    Judges' Protocols**
- 4.5    Judges' Code of Conduct**
- 4.6    Conflict of Interest**
- 4.7    Procedures for Judges**

**Section Five    PRESENTATION OF HORSE AND RIDER**

- 5.1    Bridles**
- 5.2    Snaffle Bits**
- 5.3    Curb Bits**
- 5.4    Spade Bits and Two Rein Bridles**
- 5.5    Bosals and Bosalita**
- 5.6    Bitless Bridles**
- 5.7    Reins**
- 5.8    Saddles**
- 5.9    Optional Equipment**
- 5.10    Illegal Equipment**
- 5.11    Equipment in Warm-Up Ring and Training Areas**
- 5.12    Gear Check**
- 5.13    Presentation of Horse**
- 5.14    Attire**
- 5.15    Optional Attire**

**Section Six**      **PERFORMANCE OF HORSE AND RIDER**

- 6.1**    **Overview**
- 6.2**    **Walk**
- 6.3**    **Jog**
- 6.4**    **Lope**
- 6.5**    **Halt**
- 6.6**    **Back-Up**
- 6.7**    **Counter-Lope**
- 6.8**    **Transitions**
- 6.9**    **Simple Change of Lead through the Walk**
- 6.10**    **Simple Change of Lead through the Jog**
- 6.11**    **Flying Change**
- 6.12**    **Release of Rein**
- 6.13**    **Leg-Yield**
- 6.14**    **Side-pass**
- 6.15**    **Shoulder-In**
- 6.16**    **Haunches-In**
- 6.17**    **Haunches-Out**
- 6.18**    **Half-Pass**
- 6.19**    **Zig-Zag**
- 6.20**    **Turn on the Forehand**
- 6.21**    **Turn on the Haunches**
- 6.22**    **Counter-Bending Exercises**
- 6.23**    **Circles, Serpentine, Loops and Figure Eights**
- 6.24**    **Straight Lines, Turns and Corners, Change of Direction**
- 6.25**    **Rider Proficiency**
- 6.26**    **Rein Handling Techniques**
- 6.27**    **Riders With Disabilities (RWD)**
- 6.28**    **Illustrations and Diagrams**

## **Section One ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE**

- 1.1 Statement of Purpose**
- 1.2 Objectives of the Association**
- 1.3 Organisational Structure**
- 1.4 Individual Membership**
- 1.5 Standard of Excellence**
- 1.6 Objectives of Western Dressage Training**
- 1.7 Objectives of Western Dressage Competition**
- 1.8 Horse Competition Licence, Grading System and Awards**

### **1.1 Statement of Purpose**

The aim of Western Dressage is to further enhance the harmony and partnership between horse and rider and to develop a well-rounded and disciplined horse regardless of breed or type.

Our Mission is:

*To develop and govern a national equestrian discipline that supports and encourages the pursuit of classical dressage for any breed of horse and their rider. We value the harmonious partnership between horse and rider, building the relationship through ethical training, lightness of rein, suppleness, accuracy and with the wellbeing of the horse paramount.*

Western Dressage provides systematic and progressive training for the western horse and rider in western style tack and attire. It integrates the lightness of the western horse and classical dressage foundations to improve performance for the purpose of enjoying a safe and versatile horse.

The purpose of the Western Dressage Association of Australia is to:

- a) be the governing body of Western Dressage in Australia.
- b) develop and promote Western Dressage as an equestrian discipline in Australia.
- c) provide standards of governance, education, competition of Western Dressage in Australia.
- d) preserve the integrity of the discipline and its execution.
- e) create awareness and communicate to the wider equestrian community the principles of Western Dressage.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Association**

The objectives of the Western Dressage Association of Australia are to:

- a) create a uniform entity through and by which Western Dressage can be encouraged, conducted, promoted and administered and to be the governing body of Western Dressage in Australia.
- b) define and interpret the rules for Western Dressage in Australia in keeping with other national governing bodies for Western Dressage.
- c) promulgate and secure uniformity in such rules and standards as may be necessary for the management of Western Dressage, competitions and related activities, including but not limited to the rules of Western Dressage and coaching and officiating standards.

- d) formulate and implement appropriate policies, including policies in relation to Member protection, risk, codes of conduct, health, safety, youth and senior programs, horse welfare, and such other matters as arise from time to time as issues to be addressed by Western Dressage.
- e) establish and conduct education and training programs for riders, coaches, Judges and officials in the implementation and interpretation of Western Dressage rules and standards.
- f) in conjunction with Branches, State Associations and Affiliates further develop the Association and Western Dressage into an organised institution having regard to these objectives.
- g) maintain a points system for end of year awards gained by riders at approved Western Dressage Association of Australia competitions.
- h) give recognition to successful Members, officials and other individuals participating in Western Dressage and issue appropriate awards.
- i) act as an arbiter (as required) on all matters pertaining to the conduct of Western Dressage in Australia, including disciplinary matters.
- j) pursue such commercial arrangements, including sponsorship and marketing opportunities as are appropriate to further the interests of the Association.
- k) represent the interests of its Members and the Association generally in any appropriate forum in Australia and Internationally.

### **1.3 Organisational Structure**

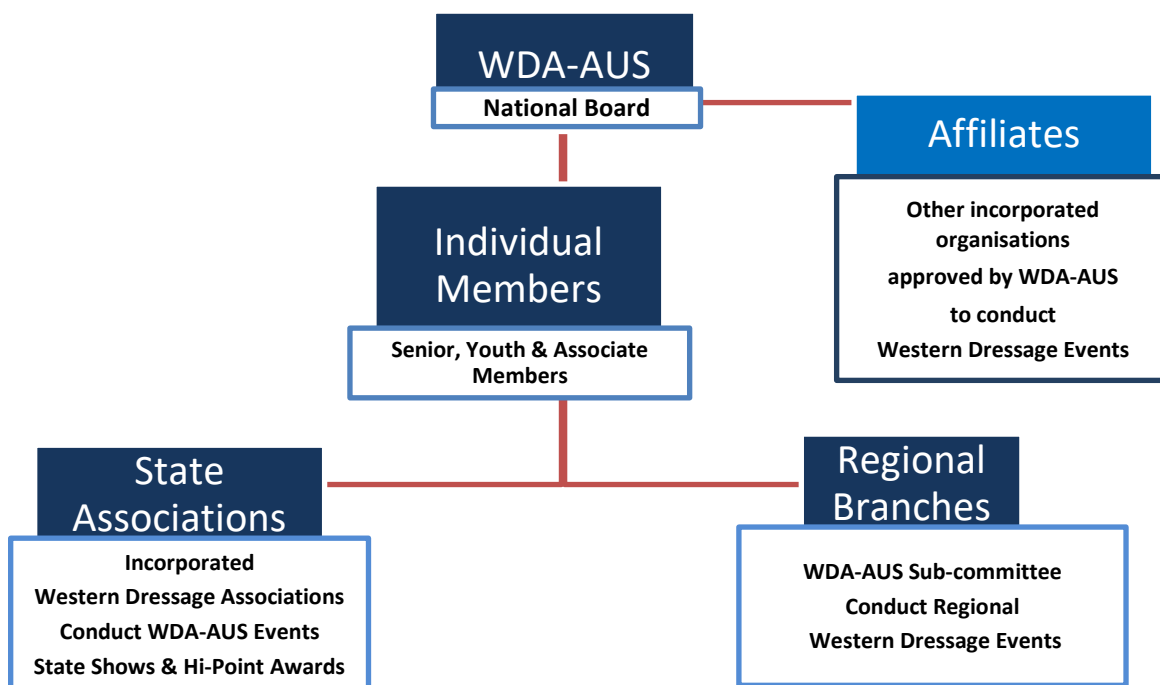
WDA-AUS is the national governing body responsible for setting national standards in all aspects of Western Dressage for Members, Branches, State Associations and Affiliates, thereby establishing unity in training and competing in this discipline.

WDA-AUS provides the foundation and structural framework supporting sport development and event organisation by the regional Branches, State Associations and Affiliates.

- a) Regional Branches enable groups of like-minded individuals to participate in local Western Dressage events. A WDA-AUS Sub-committee of at least three (3) current financial Senior or Associate Members is required to form and operate a Branch on behalf of the national Association. Individual Membership with WDA-AUS is all that required to participate in Branch activities and functions.
- b) State Associations are incorporated Western Dressage Associations representing their Australian state or territory. State Associations assist the national body to advance the aims and objectives of Western Dressage. Each State Association has the primary responsibility for conducting their State Championships and Hi-Point Awards for WDA-AUS Members riding and competing in that state or territory. Individual WDA-AUS Members are automatically considered to be Members of the relevant State Association closest to their place of residence.
- c) Other incorporated organisations that wish to conduct Western Dressage events as part of their existing program may apply to become an Affiliate. An annual fee is paid to WDA-AUS and a formal agreement between WDA-AUS and the Affiliate is accepted. These Affiliates may conduct Western Dressage events as approved by WDA-AUS and subject to WDA-AUS Rules and Guidelines.
- d) Overseas Members and organisations are welcome to contact WDA-AUS if they wish to apply for Membership and affiliation.
- e) All Australian Members will be covered by the national insurance program. This includes Public and Product Liability; Associations Liability and Voluntary Workers Personal Accident insurance. This excludes Personal Injury/Accident and Affiliate insurance.

- f) Formal agreements are to be accepted between WDA-AUS and all Western Dressage Branches, State Associations and Affiliates.

**Organisational Structure:**



**1.4 Individual Membership**

Individual Membership with WDA-AUS is all that required to participate in Western Dressage in Australia.

- a) *Senior Members*, subject to the relevant WDA-AUS rules and conditions, may participate in all events and activities, and compete in all categories of competition including Sanctioned classes, and accrue grading/competition points. Senior Members have the right to be present, speak and vote at General Meetings and to apply serve as a National or State Board Member or Regional Branch Committee Member and apply to become a Judge.

For the purpose of this document, existing *Life Members* are included as and considered to be, Senior Members wherever there is any reference to Senior Members in this Rulebook.

- b) *Associate Members*, subject to the relevant WDA-AUS rules and conditions, may participate in all training events and activities, excluding Sanctioned, Non-sanctioned and Peripheral competitions and therefore do not accrue grading/competition points. Associate Members have the right to be present, speak and vote at General Meetings and to apply to serve as a National or State Board Member or Regional Branch Committee Member and apply to become a Judge.
- c) *Youth Members* must be eighteen (18) years or less at the commencement of the Membership year and, subject to the relevant WDA-AUS rules and conditions, may participate in all training events and activities, and compete in all categories of competition including Sanctioned classes, and accrue grading/competition points. **For example – a youth turns 18 on their birthday 01 October 2020. The youth is 18 years of age on 1 July 2021 when the membership year for the 2021-22 period starts. The youth is current in their youth membership when they turn 19 on 01 October 2021. They remain a Youth Member until 30 June 2022, which is the end of the 2021-22 membership year. On 1 July**



2022 the youth becomes a Senior Member. Youth Members do not have the right to cast a vote at General Meetings, nor be able to serve as a Judge or Member of the Board or a Committee except a Committee to represent Youth Members.

Youth are not permitted to handle, ride or exhibit colts or stallions within the perimeter of the grounds at any competitions or any events.

- d) *Event Only Membership* is required by participants in all training events and activities, and to compete in Non-sanctioned and Peripheral competitions, and where the individual is not a WDA-AUS Member or a Member of the host Affiliate organisation. These riders are not eligible for Sanctioned competitions and do not accrue grading/competition points.

### 1.5 Standard of Excellence

- a) An ideal Western Dressage horse is responsive, confident, willingly guided and performs all the required movements correctly with authority and finesse.
- b) The horse has a ground-covering stride of reasonable length in keeping with its individual conformation.
- c) The hindquarters are engaged to create the energy required for each movement and enable self-carriage and lightness of the forehand.
- d) The head and neck are carried in a relaxed, natural position appropriate for each individual horse's conformation and the level of training being demonstrated.
- e) The horse requires only subtle, light aids to maintain connection and communication with the rider. When using a snaffle bit the rein contact is light. When using a curb bit or bosal the reins should be slightly draped but not excessively loose.
- f) The rider is confident, balanced and effective. The rider demonstrates empathy, tact and smoothness to invite and allow the horse to perform at its best.
- g) The horse and rider are seen to work in unison and harmony.

### 1.6 Objective of Western Dressage Training

The objective of Western Dressage is the correct development of the horse and education of the rider to meet the Standard of Excellence resulting in a calm, confident horse that is a pleasure to ride and works in harmony with the rider. The training develops each individual athlete so that they are able and willing to perform at their optimum level.

- a) The quality of this training is seen in:
  - i) Willingness to move forward, backward and laterally as required by the rider.
  - ii) Compliance and the ability to maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit congruent with the level of training.
  - iii) Drive, cadence and regularity of the gaits.
  - iv) Balance, straightness and alignment, especially through transitions.
  - v) Suppleness and elasticity enabling the horse to perform with fluency and smoothness.
  - vi) Engagement of the hindquarters and lightness of the forehand; ease of movement and athleticism.
- b) The horse gives the impression of doing, of its own accord, what is required. The horse is confident

and attentive, accepting the aids of the rider.

- c) The rider is composed and focused. The rider uses subtle, correct aids and has light, responsive hands.
- d) The horse and rider develop a useful working partnership and are pleasing to watch.

### **1.7 Objectives of Western Dressage Competition**

Western Dressage competition is integral to both the development of the discipline and the individual athlete. Competitions provide a supportive, progressive and structured environment that rewards and recognises achievements and encourages and empowers riders to set new goals. It encourages riders to develop effective riding skills and fosters the Western Dressage culture through shared experiences.

The central element of Western Dressage competition is the Western Dressage Test. These tests reflect and measure the progressive development of the horse and rider.

Additional competition can be offered through Peripheral Event classes. The purpose of these Events is to relate Western Dressage to other disciplines and show the enjoyment of riding a safe, versatile horse. Non-sanctioned tests, 'Come and Try', In Hand and Assisted Rider classes are used to introduce new people to Western Dressage and make it easier for a wide range of people to become involved in the sport.

Western Dressage Tests and Events have courses and patterns designed to develop and demonstrate a useful working partnership between horse and rider.

- a) Each series of Western Dressage Tests are grouped in Levels to show the progression of training. The Levels are Introductory (Walk/Jog only), Basic and Levels One, Two, Three and Four.
- b) Peripheral Events include Western Dressage Freestyle Tests, Equitation, Trail and Dry Work Patterns. The competition classes and the patterns, tests and courses used for these events should generally align with the Test Levels.
- c) Any combination of two or more Peripheral Events and/or Western Dressage Tests can constitute a Western Performance Challenge competition.
- d) All Tests and Patterns are Copyright of the Western Dressage Association of Australia and may not be copied or reproduced or used without the Association's express permission.**
- e) Tests and Patterns may only be used and ridden subject to WDA-AUS Rules and judging by WDA-AUS approved Judges, with any exceptions and other criteria for Training and Promotional Events and Competitions described in **Sections 2.16 to 2.20**.
- f) Competition results are determined by the Judge who gives an evaluation of each individual performance of the Test or Pattern.
- g) Over time, the Judges' scores and feedback influences the training and presentation of competition horses and consequently acts as a key influence on the evolution of the discipline. The Judge will objectively assess each movement and pattern or test with regards to the following qualities and how each of these impact on the overall appearance of harmony between the horse and rider.
  - i) *Finesse* describes the quality of a rider who is confident, graceful and proficient. The rider's effectiveness and connection with the horse is established and maintained through a balanced position, feel, timing and correct use of aids
  - ii) *Fluency* describes the quality of a test that is pleasing to watch and flows through correct execution of movements and accurate pattern placement

- iii) *Attitude* of an ideal Western Dressage horse is demonstrated by being willingly guided, responsive, attentive, light, smooth and confident
- iv) *Rideability* is demonstrated by the horse's consistency in self-carriage, ease of movement and regularity of gaits, developed through its drive, straightness, cadence, suppleness and balance

### 1.8 Horse Competition Licence, Grading System and Awards

WDA-AUS has a Grading System and Awards for licenced horses to recognise and reward progressive and successful training and promote fair competition. Points are allocated according to the Grading System for results achieved by all horses, 3 years of age and over, exhibited in Sanctioned Western Dressage Test classes. Horses must have a Competition Licence to compete in Sanctioned competitions.

- a) There is a once-off fee to apply for a licence and this licence stays with the horse for its entire life.
- b) The rider does not have to be the owner of the horse.
- c) The horse owner does not have to be a Member of WDA-AUS.
- d) Horses are graded according to the points accumulated through competition results during their lifetime and are upgraded where applicable on 1 July each year. The Grading Level of Horses for the competition year is listed on the WDA-AUS website.
- e) Grading points can only be gained through results achieved from competing in Sanctioned classes. No grading points are awarded for results from Peripheral, Non-sanctioned and 'Come and Try' classes.
- f) Class eligibility for the competition year is determined by a horse's grading level as at 1 July and this eligibility does not change during this competition year.
- g) Riders may choose the Test Level that they wish to enter at a competition provided that it is not lower than the horse's grading and meets the conditions required if competing in Levels 3 and 4.**
- h) Riders can apply to WDA-AUS to have a horse's grading level downgraded in certain circumstances (e.g. returning to competition after a lengthy break or injury, is purchased by a less experienced rider, etc.).
- i) Grading points are awarded to the horse according to its percentage score, placing and number of entrants in the class. These points are awarded to the horse irrespective of rider except for Youth class placings, ie. only placings from "Open" classes will earn grading points.**
- j) Places from 1st to 5th to be awarded for each class. For consistency of awards ribbons should be awarded in the following colours:

Placing	Non-Sanctioned classes (All ribbons are the "thinner" types)	Sanctioned classes (Ribbons will be wider – 3" – with silver writing/logo)
1 <sup>st</sup>	Blue	Black
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Red	Grey
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Yellow	Yellow
4 <sup>th</sup>	White	White
5 <sup>th</sup>	Green	Green
Champion	Nil	Black & Gold writing – wide ribbon with fringe or Black & Gold rosette
Reserve Champion	Nil	Silver & Black writing – wide ribbon with fringe or Black and silver rosette

- k) In the case of equal scores (percentage to 2 decimal places), all tied riders will receive the same place and the rider/s with the next highest score will be awarded the next placing.
- l) All equal placegetters receive the full grading points applicable.
- m) Introductory Tests are always Non-sanctioned or 'Come and Try' classes and therefore no points are awarded. ~~and all horses and riders are eligible to compete in these classes irrespective of the horse's grading.~~
- n) Basic Tests may be offered as Sanctioned, Non-sanctioned or 'Come and Try' classes. For Non-sanctioned or 'Come and Try' classes no points are awarded. ~~and all horses and riders are eligible to compete irrespective of the horse's grading.~~
- o) Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 Tests are only offered as Sanctioned classes.
- p) ~~End of Year National and State High Point Open Awards are determined by grading points accrued within each Level by horse and rider combinations during the competition year. National, State and/or Branch Hi-Point Championships and Awards may be determined by grading points accrued within each Level by horse and rider combinations during the competition year.~~
- q) ~~End of Year National and State High Point Youth Awards are determined by the total grading points accrued from results in all levels by youth rider and horse combination during the competition year from "Youth" class placings only. National, State and/or Branch Hi-Point Youth Awards may be determined by the total grading points accrued from results in all levels by youth rider and horse combination during the competition year from "Youth" class placings only.~~
- ❖ Youth (all classes) Champion is the Horse/Rider combination with the highest average % from two (2) sanctioned tests from any level.
- Explanatory note:** The best scores can be from different levels ie one from Basic Level and one from Level 1. The same Horse/Rider combination that is awarded Champion can not also be eligible for Reserve Champion.
- r) Horse and rider combinations must compete in tests from at least 2 separate events during the competition year to be considered for National or State Hi-Point Awards.
- s) **There is no requirement to qualify to attend a State or National Show. At State and National Shows, riders must be a financial member of WDA-AUS. Horses must hold a competition license (registered), except for the Introductory Level. Basic level tests will only be offered as sanctioned.**
- t) **No shows are to be held 1 week (7 clear days) either side of the National Show, Australia wide.**
- u) Each State may hold a State Championship event once a year. If the relevant State Association is unavailable, declines or is not able to host the event, then any other Branch can apply to WDA-AUS for approval to host this competition.
- v) Further information about Sanctioned competition rules and guidelines is provided in **Section 2.1 Sanctioned Western Dressage Test Competition.**

### Grading System – Criteria

SANCTIONED TESTS		
Test Level	Grading Points	Conditions
Basic	Up to 50 pts	Horses must be at least 3 years old
1	Up to 80 pts	Horses must be at least 3 years old
2	Up to 120 pts	Horses must be at least 4 years old
3	Over 120 pts	Horses must be at least 4 years old; Horses graded Level 2 or below must have achieved at least 75% in a Level 2 class
4	Over 120 pts	Horses must be at least 4 years old; Horses graded Level 2 or below must have achieved at least 75% in a Level 2 class; May only be ridden two-handed in a snaffle bit, transitional bit, bosal or bitless bridle, or one-handed in a curb bit or two-rein bridle

**Riders may choose the Level that they wish to enter at a competition provided that it is not lower than the horse's grading (must meet conditions required if competing in Levels 3 & 4)**

### Grading System - Points Scale (Sanctioned Tests only)

Minimum Percentage	Number of riders in class	Placing	Points Awarded
65%	1- 4	1 <sup>st</sup>	4
65%	1- 4	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3
65%	1- 4	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2
65%	1- 4	4 <sup>th</sup>	1
60%	5 or more	1 <sup>st</sup>	5
60%	5 or more	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4
60%	5 or more	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3
60%	5 or more	4 <sup>th</sup>	2
60%	5 or more	5 <sup>th</sup>	1

NON-SANCTIONED TESTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No grading/competition points are awarded</li> <li>• Introductory and Basic Test Levels only</li> <li>• All horses and riders eligible to compete irrespective of horse's grading</li> <li>• Horses are at least 3 years old and don't need to be registered with WDA-AUS</li> <li>• Riders must be Senior, Associate or Youth WDA-AUS Members or Members of the host Affiliate or pay an Event Only Membership fee</li> </ul>
COME AND TRY CLASSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> <li>• Event Convenor's may choose to allow any style of saddle to be used</li> <li>• Associate WD-AUS Members may also participate</li> </ul>

## **Section Two      COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS**

- 2.1            Competitions and Events**
- 2.2            Sanctioned Western Dressage Test Competition**
- 2.3            Non-sanctioned Western Dressage Test Competition**
- 2.4            Virtual Western Dressage Competition and Events**
- 2.5            Western Dressage Test Levels and Scores**
- 2.6            Voice and Touch during Competition**
- 2.7            Calling Western Dressage Tests**
- 2.8            Commencement of Western Dressage Test and Salute**
- 2.9            Western Dressage Test Errors and Penalties**
- 2.10          Peripheral Western Dressage Competitions**
- 2.11          Western Dressage Freestyle Tests**
- 2.12          Western Dressage Pattern Events**
- 2.13          Western Dressage Equitation Classes**
- 2.14          Western Dressage Dry Work Classes**
- 2.15          Western Dressage Trail Classes**
- 2.16          Pattern Event Levels, Class Conditions and Scoring**
- 2.17          Training and Promotional Events and Competitions**
- 2.18          ‘Come and Try’ Western Dressage Classes**
- 2.19          Assisted Rider Events**
- 2.20          Western Dressage In Hand Events**
- 2.21          Western Dressage Freestyle Versatility Tests**

### **2.1            COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS**

#### ***Overview***

Western Dressage competitions and events are conducted by WDA-AUS Branches, State Associations and Affiliates. These competitions and events are open to riders on all types of equines including horses, ponies, mules and donkeys (collectively referred to as ‘horses’ throughout this document) subject to WDA-AUS Rules, Policies and Guidelines.

Each participant, and if a minor, the consenting parent or guardian, authorises the use of any picture, still or video which may be taken in conjunction with their participation in these WDA-AUS event and activities for WDA-AUS official uses.

Where appropriate, spectators are invited to positively engage with the performances. Acclamation and verbal encouragement of riders during their performance is allowed and therefore is not considered to be unauthorised assistance.

Members are responsible for setting and maintaining the image and culture of Western Dressage. As ambassadors for the sport and their Association, they are expected to conduct themselves with dignity, integrity and display good sportsmanship. Results and awards achieved at a competition are less important than the manner used to gain them.

### ***Elimination from an Event***

Elimination from an Event by the Judge or Event Management, as relevant, occurs as a result of any of the following:

- a) Cruelty to the horse.
- b) Use of illegal equipment or misuse of equipment in a manner that is intended or likely to cause injury or abuse to the horse including excessive use of whips or spurs.
- c) Evidence of blood on a horse or marked lameness in the competition arena shall be cause for elimination from the event by the Judge.
- d) Evidence of blood on a horse outside the competition arena shall be cause for elimination from the event by event management.
- e) Engaging in unsporting, disreputable or abusive behaviour by any participant anywhere at the venue including in the warm up areas shall be cause for elimination from the event by event management.

### ***Competition and Event Summary Only – for detailed information refer to Sections 2.0 to 2.20***

<b><i>Western Dressage Competitions and Events are only conducted by WDA-AUS Branches, State Associations and Affiliate Organisations</i></b>				
<b><i>All Western Dressage Competitions and Events may also be organised as Virtual Competitions and Events (refer to Section 2.3 for details)</i></b>				
<b>Classes</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>Sanctioned Tests</b>	<b>Sections 5; 6.25</b>	<b>Section 2.1; 2.4 to 2.8</b>	Basic and Levels 1 to 4	Licensed Horses Senior or Youth WDA-AUS Members
<b>Non-sanctioned Tests</b>	<b>Sections 5; 6.25</b>	<b>Sections 2.2; 2.4 to 2.8</b>	Introductory and Basic	As above and Affiliate. Organisation Members or Event Only Membership; Entry to these events may be restricted by the Event Convenors
<b>Peripheral Classes:</b> Equitation Patterns Dry Work Patterns Trail Patterns	<b>Sections 5; 6.25</b>	<b>Sections 2.9 to 2.15</b>	Introductory, Basic, Level One, Level Two, Level Three, Level Four	
<b>Freestyle Tests</b>	<b>Section 2.10</b>			
<b>Training and Promotional Events</b>				
<b>Events and Classes</b>	<b>Equipment/Conditions</b> <i>(additional information)</i>		<b>Participants</b>	
Clinics, seminars, demonstrations, lessons, training days, social and recreational events	<b>Sections 5; 6.25; 2.16</b> Type of saddle is at the Event Convenor's discretion		As above and WDA-AUS Associate Members	
'Come and Try' Classes	<b>Sections 2.16 and 2.17;</b> Type of saddle is at the Event Convenor's discretion; Introductory and Basic Level Tests only			
Assisted Rider Classes	<b>Sections 2.16 and 2.18</b> (riders must be led)			
In Hand Classes	<b>Sections 2.16 and 2.19</b>			
Western Dressage Versatility Tests	<b>Sections 2.16 and 2.20</b>			

## 2.2 Sanctioned Western Dressage Test Competition

Sanctioned Western Dressage Test classes may be conducted as a stand-alone event or in conjunction or concurrently with other classes and events.

Event Convenors apply for approval by WDA-AUS to host Sanctioned competitions subject to the following:

- a) A Show Approval Request is submitted at least 30 (thirty) days prior the event to WDA-AUS with the details of the competition. WDA-AUS reviews this application and accordingly advises the Event Convenor of approval or other requirements.
- b) In the case of Sanctioned Competitions only, a nominal Show Approval Fee is payable by Affiliates, Branches and State Associations to WDA-AUS.
- c) Event Convenors must use the online event system at [www.nominate.com.au](http://www.nominate.com.au) for participant registration and nominations.
- d) All classes are subject to WDA-AUS Rules, Policies and Guidelines.
- e) Judges must be approved by WDA-AUS and be current financial members of WDA-AUS.
- f) Only Senior and Youth WDA-AUS Members are eligible for Sanctioned classes.
- g) Horses must have a WDA-AUS Horse Competition Licence and comply with criteria as per **Section 1.7**.
- h) Only WDA-AUS Western Dressage Tests from Basic, Levels One, Two, Three and Four may be used.
- i) A Horse may compete in a maximum of two (2) consecutive test Levels (excluding Non-sanctioned classes) and a maximum of four (4) test rides in any competition day.
- j) A Horse may be ridden by more than one rider during any competition day but may not be ridden more than once in each class.

## 2.3 Non-sanctioned Western Dressage Test Classes

Non-sanctioned Western Dressage Test classes may be conducted as a stand-alone event or in conjunction or concurrently with a Sanctioned competition or other classes and events.

Event Convenors apply for approval by WDA-AUS to host Non-sanctioned Western Dressage Test Classes subject to the following:

- a) A Show Approval Request is submitted at least 30 (thirty) days prior the event to WDA-AUS with the details of the competition. WDA-AUS reviews this application and accordingly advises the Event Convenor of approval or other requirements.
- b) Ribbons, prizes and other awards are determined and arranged by the event organisation. Eligibility criteria and other any other stipulations for awards should be publicised no later than the opening of nominations for the relevant competition/s.
- c) Event Convenors must use the online event system at [www.nominate.com.au](http://www.nominate.com.au) for participant registration.
- d) All classes are subject to WDA-AUS Rules, Policies and Guidelines, with the exception that entry to these events may be restricted and the class eligibility for horse and riders may be defined by the Event Convenors.
- e) Judges must be approved by WDA-AUS and be current financial members of WDA-AUS.



- f) No WDA-AUS Grading Points are recorded.
- g) Results are not counted for WDA-AUS Hi-Point awards.
- h) Horses must be at least 3 years old (age as at 1 August).
- i) Horses do not need to be licensed.
- j) Introductory Level (walk/jog) tests may be used for Non-sanctioned classes.
- k) Basic Level tests may be used for Non-sanctioned classes and judged concurrently with the Sanctioned classes for this Level.
- l) Level One, Two, Three and Four Tests cannot be used for Non-sanctioned classes.
- m) A Horse may compete in a maximum of two (2) consecutive test Levels (including Sanctioned classes) and a maximum of four (4) test rides in any competition day.
- n) A Horse may be ridden by more than one rider but may not be entered in the same class with two different riders.
- o) Riders must be Senior or Youth WDA-AUS Members, Affiliate organisation Members or pay an Event Only Membership Fee.

#### 2.4 Virtual Western Dressage Competition and Events

Virtual Western Dressage Competition encourages riders to develop effective riding skills and provide riders with the opportunity to compete in a progressive and structured environment. Virtual competition ensures that all riders across the country are not geographically isolated, have the chance to compete. Branches, State Associations and Affiliates can organise virtual competitions and events in accordance with the WDA-AUS Rules and Guidelines, with reference to conditions detailed in **Section 2**.

- a) Western Dressage Test competition rules and guidelines are as for **Sanctioned and Non-sanctioned Western Dressage Test Competitions, Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 to 2.8**.
- b) The rider competes in class by submitting to the Event Convenor a video of their entire uninterrupted test performance taken from the actual position of the judge at C.
- c) Peripheral Western Dressage competitions, Training and Promotional events and competitions may also be organised as Virtual events subject to the relevant conditions stipulated in **Section 2**.

#### 2.5 Western Dressage Test Levels and Scores and Allocation of Points

The Levels of Western Dressage are offered as a means of evaluating a horse as its training progresses. The performance of the horse shall be considered in light of the degree of training it should have achieved to be shown at that Level.

Judges observe the performance of each individual combination and make a balanced objective assessment so that the comments and scores accurately reflect the quality presented and differentiates between serious faults and minor mistakes.

The Judge should maintain a consistent standard for all riders within a class and across all competitions. The Judge's attitude towards riders should be friendly without being overly familiar and should not be prejudiced by prior knowledge of riders, horses or their past performances.

- a) Tests and patterns are comprised of several distinct manoeuvre groups which Judges are asked to evaluate on an individual basis dependent on execution as dictated by the pattern description and the rules for judging, and against the standard and expectations for that level.

- b) Points are awarded from 0 to 10 in 1/2 point increments with 4 points or below denoting extremely poor quality to 10 points for excellent quality and a score of 7 denoting a movement that is correctly executed and of average quality. There is an expectation of an average performance scoring 70%, i.e. averaging 7 out of 10 points for each movement.
- c) Each movement to be marked by the Judge is numbered on the Judge's sheet.
- d) Overall points are awarded from 0 to 10, including half points, after the rider has finished their performance.
- e) Certain movements and overall points within the test patterns may have a co-efficient. The points are multiplied by the corresponding co-efficient where applicable and then totalled.
- f) Penalty points for errors are deducted on the Judge's sheet from the rider's total movement and overall points.
- g) The rider's Score is their total points awarded expressed as a percentage of the total points available for the test.

*Points Scale*

Points Awarded to Western Dressage Movements – Must relate to the Test Level for the class		
Points	Expectations	Reason
9 -10	Excellent exhibition of Western Dressage principles, does not have to be perfect	Excellent to exceptional – a joy to watch regardless of the spectator’s level of understanding. <b>Demonstrates the objectives considering the degree of difficulty/level of competence required to perform the set pattern.</b>
8	Very good example of Western Dressage, pleasing to watch	Very good display of the partnership’s <b>confidence and skill</b> development. A <b>consistent, structured and accurate</b> performance. Any minor or momentary lapses or inaccuracy have little effect on the overall presentation.
7	Average performance meets most of the expectations of Western Dressage for the Level	A <b>competent</b> performance demonstrating a <b>good understanding of the objectives and skill development</b> . There may be a simple mistake in execution of the movement that can be easily corrected. There will be areas for improvement and further development; nonetheless a good working partnership is demonstrated.
6	The performance meets some of the requirements of the Level	The movement displays an <b>understanding of and working towards most of the objectives</b> . There may be <b>one or two of the following issues occurring</b> : occasional tension or resistance; figures or transitions not precisely the correct placement, shape or size; inconsistent gait or cadence; the horse sometimes lacks straightness, suppleness or balance; the rider’s position and use of aids not always effective.
5	The performance meets a few of the requirements of the Level	The movement is executed but <b>lacks the proficiency and consistency</b> to meet the objectives with <b>some of the following issues</b> occurring: tension, resistance, disobedience; figures or transitions are incorrect placement, shape or size; loss of gait or cadence; horse lacks straightness, suppleness or balance; rider’s position or use of aids needs to demonstrate better balance, timing and smoothness. Horse and rider are not consistently attentive and responsive to each other.
4 or below	Does not meet the expectations of Western Dressage	There is a <b>lack of harmony and understanding in the partnership</b> ; the movements are <b>not correctly executed</b> ; there is <b>tension; unwillingness; safety concerns</b> ; rider is <b>unbalanced</b> ; aids are used <b>roughly, imprecisely or poorly timed</b> .
0	Not executed	<b>Nothing</b> of required movement has been performed or is recognisable.
Overall Points awarded at the conclusion of Test for overall impression of these demonstrated qualities		
Horse	Attitude	<i>Attitude</i> of an ideal Western Dressage horse is demonstrated by being willingly guided, responsive, attentive, light, smooth and confident.
Horse	Rideability	<i>Rideability</i> is demonstrated by the horse’s self-carriage and ease of movement developed through its cadence, drive, balance, suppleness and straightness.
Rider	Finesse	<i>Finesse</i> describes the quality of a rider who is confident, graceful and proficient. The rider’s effectiveness and connection with the horse is established and maintained through a balanced position, feel, timing and correct use of aids.
Rider	Fluency	<i>Fluency</i> describes the quality of a test that is pleasing to watch and flows through correct execution of movements and accurate pattern placement.

## Expectations of the Levels for Western Dressage Tests

Introductory Level	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Movements</b>
<p>The horse is safe to ride and calmly complies with the rider's commands and moves with purpose and regularity of gaits.</p> <p>The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers in working paces.</p> <p>The horse's balance and connection through the bridle is reasonably consistent.</p> <p>The rider can confidently control the horse in walk and jog to execute the movements with a fair degree of accuracy. The rider can balance and follow the horse's movement, maintaining a steady rhythm and tempo. <b>All jog may be ridden sitting or rising.</b></p>	<p>Working walk</p> <p>Free walk</p> <p>Working jog</p> <p>Free jog</p> <p>Halt</p> <p>Circles, figure eights and serpentines (no less than 20m diameter of circle)</p> <p>Loops (5m and 10m from track)</p> <p>Half 10m circles</p> <p>Turns on forehand</p>
Basic Level	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Additional Movements</b>
<p>Horse is calm, obedient, maintains a consistent outline; moves freely forward in a clear rhythm with a steady tempo; transitions are smooth and balanced; accepts a light contact and yields to the rider. The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers in working paces.</p> <p>Rider is confident, maintains a steady position and demonstrates the ability to control and connect with the horse using correct aids and light contact with the reins. Horse and rider cooperate and appear to have a reasonable understanding of each other so that the execution of movements is more accurate. <b>All jog may be ridden sitting or rising.</b></p>	<p>Working lope</p> <p>Walk and jog 10m circles</p> <p>Leg Yield in working jog</p> <p>Counter-bend/flexion</p> <p>Backup</p> <p>Progressive transitions</p>
Level One	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Additional Movements</b>
<p>Horse is more cadenced, straight, supple and balanced and shows willingness to engage the hindquarters to promote lightness and ease of movement. The horse is attentive and responsive.</p> <p>Rider's position is stable and balanced. The rider guides the horse calmly and confidently with light contact and unobtrusive leg and hand aids. Horse and rider demonstrate a good working partnership through an accurate performance.</p> <p><b>Collected jog is ridden sitting; all other jog may be sitting or rising.</b></p>	<p>Lengthening stride at jog and lope</p> <p>Turns on the haunches</p> <p>Counter lope loop 5m from track</p> <p>Circles, figure eights and serpentines (no less than 15m diameter of circle)</p> <p>Jog loops quarter line to quarter line</p> <p>Shoulder-in at collected jog</p> <p>Side-pass</p> <p>Direct transitions</p>
Level Two	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Additional Movements</b>
<p>As for Level One and with a higher degree of athletic development of the horse and consistency.</p> <p><b>Working and collected jog is ridden sitting; lengthened and free jog may be sitting or rising.</b></p>	<p>Collected jog</p> <p>Free lope</p> <p>Circles, figure eights and serpentines (no less than 10m diameter of circle)</p> <p>Counter lope loops 10m from track and quarter line to quarter line</p> <p>Haunches in and haunches out at collected jog</p>
Level Three	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Additional Movements</b>
<p>Horse demonstrates a high degree of suppleness, balance, straightness, cadence and self-carriage; clearly defined transitions between collected and lengthened gaits; changes of bend and direction are fluent. The horse is willingly guided, attentive, and confident.</p> <p>The rider is confident and proficient, demonstrating a balanced position, feel, timing &amp; correct use of aids. The horse and rider perform in unison and harmony. <b>Free jog may be ridden rising; all other jog is sitting.</b></p>	<p>Collected lope</p> <p>Minimum 4 strides release of reins at the collected lope</p> <p>Half-pass at collected jog and collected lope</p> <p>Counter lope circles</p> <p>Change of lead through the walk</p>
Level Four	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Additional Movements</b>
<p>As for Level Three with a higher degree of athletic development of the horse. Level 4 movements should be performed with greater engagement, straightness, suppleness and balance. The horse and rider's execution of the movements demonstrates their authority and finesse. The performance is pleasing and exciting to watch. <b>Free jog may be ridden rising; all other jog is sitting.</b></p>	<p>Zig-zag at collected jog and collected lope</p> <p>Flying change (including sequential changes)</p> <p>360 degree turn on the forehand</p> <p>Half pirouette and quarter pirouette</p> <p><del>Volte</del> Circles of less than 10m diameter</p> <p>Pivot one and a half turns</p> <p>Extended walk</p> <p>Collected walk</p>

## **2.6 Voice and Touch during Competition**

- a) Subtle use of the voice and limited clicking of the tongue is permitted.
- b) Touching the horse as a reward is permitted.

## **2.7 Calling Western Dressage Tests**

- a) All tests may be called during the competition.
- b) It is the responsibility of the rider to arrange for a person to call the test if required. Lateness and mistakes in calling the test will not release the rider from any penalties for Errors.
- c) Calling the tests is limited to reading the movement as it is written twice only.
- d) All Freestyle tests and other patterns must be ridden from memory.

## **2.8 Commencement of Western Dressage Test and Salute**

- a) After the ring of the bell, the rider should enter the arena at A within sixty (60) seconds to commence the test.
- b) A test begins with the entry at A and ends after the final salute.
- c) At the salute, all riders must take the reins (and whip if carried) in one hand. The rider drops the other arm down and bows their head to the Judge at C. Men wearing cowboy hats may take off the hat to the Judge instead.
- d) Only riders who are in Military Dress Uniform may salute in Military Fashion.
- e) After the final salute the rider should leave the arena at A at a free walk.
- f) The Judge may stop a test and/or allow a rider to restart a test from the beginning or from any appropriate point in the test if, in the Judge's discretion, some unusual circumstance has occurred to interrupt a test. Time-outs are not permitted.

## **2.9 Western Dressage Test Errors and Penalties**

### ***Error of Pattern***

An Error of Pattern occurs when there is a deviation from or omission of a movement, such as a wrong turn, taking the incorrect gait at a marker or forgetting a movement entirely.

- a) When a rider makes an Error of Pattern the Judge may warn the rider by ringing the bell. It is up to the Judge to decide whether to ring the bell or not.
- b) In some cases, the ringing of the bell would unnecessarily impede the flow of the test. For instance, the rider makes a transition from Free Walk to Working Walk at R instead of M.
- c) The Judge shows the rider, 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 test.
- d) In principle, a rider is not allowed to repeat a movement of the test unless the Judge decides on an Error of Pattern and rings the bell.
- e) If the rider has started the execution of a movement and attempts to repeat the movement, the Judge must consider only score the first movement and penalise for the Error of Pattern.
- f) The decision as to whether an Error of Pattern has been made will be at the sole discretion of the Judge.

- g) If the Judge has not noted an error the rider has the benefit of the doubt.
- h) Every Error of Pattern, whether the bell is sounded or not, is to be noted by the Judge and is penalised as follows:
  - i) First time by two (2) points.
  - ii) Second time by four (4) points.
  - iii) Third time by elimination. At the Judge's discretion, the rider may continue to finish the test unless this will interfere with the start of the next scheduled ride. In this case the Judge must excuse the rider from the ring.

#### ***Error of Execution***

An Error of Execution occurs when the rider makes a mistake in the execution of the movement but there is no omission or deviation from the movement.

- Some examples of Errors of Execution include: rising in collected jog; failing to take the reins (and whip if carried) in one hand at the salute; changing from riding one handed to two handed or and vice versa during a test.
- The Judge does not usually ring the bell as this is a rider inaccuracy and does not interrupt the flow of the test.
- If the error is likely to be recurring, for example, the reins are being held incorrectly, or rising instead of sitting for collected jog, then the Judge may choose to ring the bell and let the rider know that the error has occurred. It is up to the rider to decide whether they repeat the error for the remainder of the test.
- Where the jog is permitted to be either sitting or rising, the rider may change from one method to the other at any point within or between the movements.
- The decision as to whether an Error of Execution has been made will be at the sole discretion of the Judge.
- If the Judge has not noted an error the rider has the benefit of the doubt.
- Every Error of Execution is to be noted by the Judge and penalised as follows:
  - i) The rider is penalised by two (2) penalty points for each error.
  - ii) These errors do not result in elimination.
  - iii) The penalty is recorded in the movement where the error occurred.
  - iv) The rider can only be penalised once for a specific error within a movement. If the error is repeated in a subsequent movement/s, a further 2-point penalty is recorded in each movement where this occurs.

#### ***Examples:***

- a rider goes from one handed to two handed in Movement 3 and then stays two handed for the rest of the test. The rider is given 2 penalty points in Movement 3 and each subsequent Movement.
- a rider goes from one handed to two handed in Movement 3 and stays two handed until Movement 11 where they revert to one handed for the rest of the test. The rider is given 2 penalty points in each Movement from 3 through 10.
- a rider performs the collected jog rising instead of sitting throughout the test. The rider is given 2

penalty points in each Movement where this occurs.

- the riders enter the arena before the Judge rings the bell.
- not entering the arena within sixty (60) seconds after the bell, but within ninety (90) seconds.

#### ***Elimination from the Class***

Elimination from the Class by the Judge, or event management where relevant, occurs as a result of any of the following:

- a) Three (3) Errors of Pattern.
- b) Not entering the arena within ninety (90) seconds after the ring of the bell.
- c) Loss of control such as bucking, rearing or being unable to guide the horse.
- d) Use of illegal equipment or use of equipment that is not permitted for the class.
- e) Free hand or the romal/rein ends are used to strike and intimidate the horse.
- f) The leg or spur is used in front of the cinch.
- g) All four feet of the horse leave the arena at the same time during the test is elimination. Provided there is no issue with safety, there is no penalty for knocking down part of arena fence or stepping out of the arena with less than four feet – it may affect the Movement and/or Overall scores.
- h) Blatant disobedience or loss of control for longer than twenty (20) seconds (individual or cumulative) or any disobedience or loss of control such as bucking, rearing or being unable to guide the horse that presents a safety concern for the rider, horse, Judge, other participants, or public will result in elimination earlier than twenty (20) seconds.
- i) In the case of a fall of horse and/or rider the rider will be eliminated (it is considered to be a fall of the horse when both the shoulders and quarters of the horse have contacted the ground).
- j) Concern for the safety or welfare of rider, horse, Judge, other participants, or public.
- k) Misrepresentation of entry or inappropriate entry.

#### **2.10 Peripheral Western Dressage Competitions**

WDA-AUS Peripheral competition includes Western Dressage Freestyle Tests, Western Dressage Equitation, Trail and Dressage Work Pattern class and combined Western Performance Challenge competitions.

- a) Peripheral classes may be conducted as a stand-alone competition or in conjunction or concurrently with other Western Dressage Test classes.
- b) Peripheral competition may be conducted by Branches, State Associations and Affiliates subject to the following:
  - i) A Show Approval Request is submitted sixty (60) days prior to the event to WDA-AUS with the details of the competition. WDA-AUS reviews this application and accordingly advises the Event Convenor of approval or other requirements.
  - ii) All classes are subject to WDA-AUS Rules, Policies and Guidelines with the exception that entry to the event may be restricted and eligibility for horse and riders may be defined by the Event Convenors.
  - iii) Judges must be approved by WDA-AUS.

- iv) Riders must be Senior, Associate or Youth WDA-AUS Members, Affiliate organisation Members or pay an Event Only Membership Fee.
- v) Events Convenors must use the online event system at [www.wdaustralia.com.au](http://www.wdaustralia.com.au) for participant registration.
- vi) No WDA-AUS Grading Points are recorded.
- vii) Horses do not need to be licensed.
- viii) Horses must be at least 3 years old to enter Peripheral competitions.

#### **Elimination for the Class**

- a) Resistance of longer than twenty (20) seconds of any nature, disobedience or loss of control that presents a safety concern for the rider, horse, Judge, other participants, or public.
- b) Concern for the safety of rider, horse, Judge, other participants, or public.
- c) Fall of horse and/or rider.
- d) Failure to comply with the directives for the specified class requirements.
- e) Free hand or the romal/rein ends are used to strike or intimidate the horse.
- f) The leg or spur is used in front of the cinch.
- g) Other rule breaches resulting in elimination as specified in the WDA-AUS Rules for use of illegal equipment or abuse of horse.

## **2.11 Western Dressage Freestyle Tests 2021 TESTS WILL BE RELEASED SOON**

### **Overview**

Western Dressage Freestyle is a demonstration of the discipline performed to music. The rider is free to choose the music and choreography and is encouraged to be creative and entertain the audience while clearly demonstrating the key elements of Western Dressage and highlighting the harmony of the horse and rider.

- a) Western Dressage Freestyle may be offered as Introductory, Basic, Level One, Level Two, Level Three and Level Four classes.
- b) Each class will specify the required movements, figures, gaits and paces to be displayed within the given time and the optional movements that may be included in the presentation.
- c) The Freestyle Test execution and judging is the same as for other tests with these additional requirements and considerations:
  - i) All equipment and attire should be based on WDA-AUS Rules and Guidelines and any equipment or attire not specifically covered by or in conflict with standard equipment guidelines must be able to be used safely and without abuse of the horse.
  - ii) Riders will only be judged astride or side-saddle.
  - iii) The horse must wear legal headgear. Riders may choose to ride with one or two or no hands on the reins and if necessary the reins may be secured to the saddle in a safe and appropriate manner.
  - iv) Costumes and Props are permitted but not required or expected.
  - v) The rider must provide a recording of their music in the format (e.g. CD, USB, iPod, etc) and at the time requested by the Event Convenors.



- vi) The Freestyle must be no more than six (6) minutes. There is no minimum time limit.
  - vii) Time and judging of the test begins when the horse enters at A and ends with the final halt and salute.
  - viii) A halt and salute at the beginning and end of an Introductory, Basic & Level 1 test. In Level 2 & Level 3 it is only compulsory at the end. All must be facing C. After the final salute the rider must leave the arena at A at a free walk.
  - ix) If music fails during a Freestyle Test, the rider may leave the arena with permission of the Judge. The rider may decide whether to restart the test from the beginning or to commence from the point where the music failed. Judging restarts at the point of interruption. The marks already given do not change.
  - x) At the Judge's discretion, if some other unusual circumstance has occurred to interrupt a test, the Judge may stop a test and/or allow a rider to restart a test from the beginning or from any appropriate point in the test.
- d) The Judge shall judge the class in accordance with the freestyle scoring sheet. Any penalties are deducted on the Judge's sheet from the total points for Technical Merit. Scoring guidelines as follows:
- i) Failing to enter the arena after more than twenty (20) seconds of music will incur 2 penalty points.
  - ii) Failure to complete the performance within the time limit will incur 2 penalty points. Movements executed after the time limit are not scored.
  - iii) Collected jog must always be ridden sitting.
  - iv) Free jog may be ridden either sitting or rising.
  - v) Working and lengthened jog may be ridden either sitting or rising in Introductory, Basic, Level One and Level Two. This must be ridden sitting for Level Three and Level Four.
  - vi) Each time the jog is ridden rising where it should be performed sitting will incur 2 penalty points for the duration of that jog (up until a correction or change of gait occurs).
  - vii) To be judged as a required movement, a lateral movement must be at least 12m of continuous steps and may be performed on a straight or curved line.
  - viii) All required turns on the haunches or forehand a minimum of a half turn. No more than 8 continuous, successive revolutions are permitted and exceeding this will incur 4 penalty points.
  - ix) Required backup is a minimum of 4 steps. No more than 12 continuous, successive backward steps are permitted and exceeding this will incur 4 penalty points.
  - x) All required gaits and paces must be a minimum of 20m continuous steps and may be performed on a straight or curved line.
  - xi) Each required movement has a maximum of 10 points. Additional repetitions of required movements are appropriate, but will only add or subtract from the existing scores already given for that element and are not additional scores.
  - xii) Failing to perform a required movement or if the Judge is unable to recognise that a movement has been performed will incur a score of 0 points for that movement.
  - xiii) Intentionally including movements other than those that are optional or required for this class

will incur 4 penalty points. Reoccurrences of the same element will not incur further deduction. An unintentional mistake such as breaking gait and loping a few strides in **Introductory** Walk/Jog Level may detract from the movement score but does not incur penalty points.

- xiv) For the overall points at the end of the test, the Judge considers the expectations for the Level for correctness of the movements and adherence to the Standards and Objectives of Western Dressage while also recognising creativity, suitability of music and choreography and audience appeal.
- xv) The total points for all Movements, Degree of Difficulty, Rideability and Attitude of the Horse comprise the Technical Merit score.
- xvi) The total points for Harmony, Choreography and Musical Interpretation comprise the Artistic Merit score.
- xvii) Both the Technical Merit and Artistic Merit scores are converted to percentages. These percentages are combined and averaged to give the percentage that is the Final Score.

#### **Levels for Freestyle Tests**

##### **Introductory Walk/Jog**

- a) Required: working walk; free walk; free jog; working jog circle in both directions; final halt and salute. All jog may be ridden sitting or rising.
- b) Optional: 15m and **20m** circle; any movements, figures, transitions, gaits and paces described in WDA-AUS Western Dressage Tests up to and including Basic Level, excluding the lope.
- c) Expectation: horse is calm, obedient, maintains a consistent outline; moves freely forward in a clear rhythm with a steady tempo; transitions are smooth and balanced; accepts a light contact and yields to the rider. Rider is confident, maintains a steady position and demonstrates the ability to control and connect with the horse using correct aids and light contact with the reins. Horse and rider demonstrate a good working partnership.

##### **Basic**

- a) Required: working walk; free walk; free jog; working jog circle in both directions; working lope circle in both directions; final halt and salute. All jog may be ridden sitting or rising.
- b) Optional: 15m and **20m** circle; any movements, figures, transitions, gaits and paces described in WDA-AUS Western Dressage Tests up to and including Basic Level.
- c) Expectation: horse is calm, obedient, maintains a consistent outline; moves freely forward in a clear rhythm with a steady tempo; transitions are smooth and balanced; accepts a light contact and yields to the rider. Rider is confident, maintains a steady position and demonstrates the ability to control and connect with the horse using correct aids and light contact with the reins. Horse and rider demonstrate a good working partnership.

##### **Level One and Two**

- a) Required: working walk, free walk, working jog, **free jog**, working lope; lengthening of stride at jog; lengthening of stride at lope; backup; final halt and salute; Movements in both directions: jog 10m circle; lope 15m circle; leg yield in working jog; half turn on the haunches; counter lope loop 5m off the track. Collected jog must be ridden sitting. All other jog may be ridden sitting or rising.
- b) Optional: **free jog**, any movements, figures, transitions, gaits and paces described in WDA-AUS Western Dressage Tests up to and including Level 2.

- c) Expectation: horse is cadenced, straight, supple and balanced and shows willingness to engage the hindquarters to promote lightness and ease of movement; attentive and responsive. Rider's position is stable and balanced. The rider guides the horse calmly and confidently with light contact and unobtrusive leg and hand aids. Horse and rider demonstrate a good working partnership.

#### Levels Three and Four

- a) Required: walk; lengthened paces at jog and lope; backup; final halt and salute; minimum 4 strides demonstrating release of reins at collected lope; Movements in both directions: shoulder-in at collected jog; turn on the haunches; counter-lope; change of lead (flying change and/or simple change through walk are acceptable); 10m collected jog circle; 10m collected lope circle; haunches-in or haunches-out; half pass at collected jog. **Free jog may be ridden sitting or rising and all other jog is to be ridden sitting. All jog is to be ridden sitting.**
- b) Optional: sequential flying changes; multiple turns on haunches; turn on haunches in lope; side-pass; any movements, figures, gaits and paces described in any WDA-AUS Western Dressage Test up to and including Level 4. **Free jog may be ridden sitting or rising.**
- c) Expectation: horse demonstrates a high degree of suppleness, balance, straightness, cadence and self-carriage; clearly defined transitions between collected and lengthened gaits; changes of bend and direction are fluent. The horse is willingly guided, attentive, and confident. The rider is confident and proficient, demonstrating a balanced position, feel, timing & correct use of aids. The horse and rider perform in unison and harmony.

### 2.12 Western Dressage Pattern Events

#### Overview

Western Dressage Pattern events require riders to perform a compulsory pattern set by the Judge or Course Designer/Event Convenor. Western events include Western Dressage Equitation, Trail and Dry Work classes.

Each performance should clearly demonstrate the key elements of Western Dressage and highlight the harmony of the horse and rider while accurately completing the required pattern. Judging and scoring is based on the system that applies to Western Dressage Tests and aligns with the Standards and Objectives of Western Dressage.

### 2.13 Western Dressage Equitation Classes

- a) Western Dressage Equitation patterns use movements derived from the Western Dressage tests.
- b) The Judge should place most emphasis on the points allocated to the rider's position, attitude and effectiveness and the accuracy and correctness of the pattern.
- c) A standard arena set up is desirable but not required, however, the arena letter markers must be used and the area should have a suitable surface be defined and no less than 20m x 40m and no more than 40m x 80m.

### 2.14 Western Dressage Dry Work Classes

- a) Western Dressage Dry Work patterns use movements derived from the Western Dressage tests that are most closely related to conventional reining and working stock horse patterns.
- b) Patterns might include free, lengthened and/or collected jog and lope, lead changes, circles of different sizes, turns on the haunches or multiple turnarounds, and back up as well as other movements that help prepare, develop and maintain the horse's correct form throughout the class.

- c) Other movements that may be included in a Dry Work pattern are the Rollback and the Stop.
- i) Rollbacks are executed by the horse coming to a stop, turning 180° and departing in the same gait as prior to the stop. The horse must continue on the correct lead, i.e. if performing a left rollback the horse will depart on the left lead as they leave the turn. A well-executed rollback appears to be one smooth continuous motion. However, it is quite acceptable for the horse to momentarily pause to balance, regain their footing and prepare their position prior to turning.
  - ii) The pattern may specify that the horse may either come to a stop or a direct transition to a gait with no intermediate gait. The judge, if necessary, and the method chosen by the rider should be clearly recognizable.
    - To execute the halt, the horse makes a direct transition from the lope to a square halt without any intermediate jog or walk strides.
    - To execute the stop, the horse comes to a stop from a lope by bending their back and bringing both hind legs under their body, locking the stifles to allow the hind feet to slide through the arena surface. The momentum carries the horse forward in a straight line and the horse maintains cadence with the front legs until the end of the stop.
    - Serious faults in a rollback and stop include the horse:
      - not travelling straight and in alignment;
      - running through, resisting or refusing to stop;
      - stopping abruptly or roughly;
      - losing cadence with the front legs while sliding to a stop;
      - anticipating or attempting to stop before being asked by the rider (scotching);
      - breaking gait in the lope especially when attempting a flying lead change;
      - being on the incorrect lead or being disunited;
      - being stiff, unbalanced and lacking sufficient hindquarter engagement;
      - resisting the bridle; leaning on the forehand and pulling against the rider's hands;
      - loping excessively fast or too slowly;
      - losing correct form and composure at any time during the rundown, stop or turn.
- d) The Judge should place most emphasis on the points allocated to the horse's attitude, rideability and accuracy in the execution of the pattern.
- e) A standard arena set up is not required, however, markers must be used and the area should have a suitable surface and be defined and not less than 60m x 20m or more than 40m x 80m.

#### 2.15 Western Dressage Trail Classes

- a) Western Dressage Trail courses are designed to show the correct training of the horse as it relates to Western Dressage with a series of obstacles.
- b) The courses and patterns are designed with obstacles and movements relative to the Level of training and the safety of the horses and riders is to be the first consideration. The courses are used to demonstrate the horses' athletic development and functionality by maintaining correct form and being willing and attentive.
- c) The Judge should place most emphasis on the points allocated to the horse's attitude, rideability, confidence and smoothness in negotiating the course.

#### 2.16 Pattern Event Levels, Class Conditions and Scoring

##### *Levels for Pattern Classes*

- a) Introductory (Walk/Jog), Basic, Level One, Level Two, Level Three and Level Four classes similar to the Levels for Freestyle competition standards may be offered.
- b) Event Convenors may choose to offer other classes. The class conditions, expectations and patterns should be clearly described and made available to riders as soon as practical.

#### ***Class Conditions and Scoring***

Pattern execution and judging is the same as for Western Dressage Tests with these additional requirements or allowances and considerations:

- a) All equipment and attire used as per WDA-AUS Rules and Guide etc.
- b) The class is judged in accordance with the Pattern scoring sheet.
- c) The highest total score wins the class and in the case of a tie, the riders shall be awarded the same placing.
- d) Each Pattern will specify the movements, gaits and other requirements to be performed and should contain 6 to 10 elements that are separately scored.
- e) The overall sections are Rideability; Attitude; Fluency; Finesse and Harmony.
- f) Riders are scored on a basis of a maximum 10 points (including half points) per movement in the pattern and the overall sections at the end of the pattern.
- g) No penalty points apply to these classes.
- h) A movement or obstacle omitted, taken out of order, refused or declined will result in a score of zero (0) points for that movement or obstacle but will not disqualify entry.
- i) At the Judge's discretion, if some unusual circumstance has occurred to interrupt the pattern, the Judge may stop the performance and/or allow a rider to restart from the beginning or from any appropriate point in the pattern.

## **2.17 Training and Promotional Events and Competitions**

### ***Overview***

Western Dressage training and promotional events and classes are designed to encourage greater participation and introduce new people to Western Dressage and include, but are not limited to:

- Training days, lessons, clinics and seminars.
- Demonstrations.
- Social/recreational activities.
- 'Come and Try' Western Dressage Introductory and Basic Level classes.
- Assisted Rider events.
- In Hand events.
- Western Dressage Versatility tests.

Branches, State Associations and Affiliates conduct these events and competitions subject to the following:

- a) An Event Notification is submitted at least 30 (thirty) days prior the event to WDA-AUS with the details of the event. This notification provides the opportunity to promote the event through WDA-AUS associated websites and other media, and for WDA-AUS to provide advice or assistance to the

event Convenor.

- b) Participants must be Senior, Youth or Associate WDA-AUS Members, Affiliate Members or pay an Event Only Membership Fee.
- c) Events Convenors must use the online event system at [www.nominate.com.au](http://www.nominate.com.au) for participant registration.
- d) WDA-AUS rules and guidelines apply to these events, with the exception that entry to the event may be restricted and eligibility for horse and riders may be defined by the Event Convenors.
- e) The Event Convenors may choose to allow riders to use any style of saddle with any legal headgear for ridden events.
- f) Additional criteria and exemptions apply to equipment and attire for Assisted Rider classes (refer to **Section 2.18**), In Hand classes (refer to **Section 2.19**), and Freestyle Versatility Tests (refer to **Section 2.20**).
- g) Ribbons, prizes and other awards, if given, are determined and arranged by the event organisation.
- h) Eligibility criteria and other any other stipulations for classes should be publicised no later than the opening of nominations for the relevant event or classes.
- d) Horses do not need to be licensed. No WDA-AUS Grading Points are recorded. Results are not counted for WDA-AUS or any other Hi-point awards.
- i) WDA-AUS Approved Judges are recommended but not required. These events provide an opportunity for 'Trainee' judges to gain experience and mentoring.
- j) Classes are judged in accordance with WDA-AUS Rules and Guidelines.

## **2.18 'Come and Try' Western Dressage Classes**

'Come and Try' classes may be conducted as a stand-alone event or in conjunction or concurrently with other competitions and events.

In addition to the stipulations detailed in **Section 2.16**, Branches, State Associations and Affiliates conduct 'Come and Try' classes subject to the following:

- a) Introductory (walk/jog) and Basic Level tests may be offered as 'Come and Try' classes and may be judged concurrently or in conjunction with other classes, as part of a training or promotional day, or as a stand-alone event.
- b) Horses must be at least 3 years old to enter 'Come and Try' classes.
- c) The Event Convenors may choose to allow riders to use any style of saddle with any legal headgear. The other equipment and attire should adhere to the requirements stated in **Sections 5 (Presentation of Horse and Rider) and 6.25 (RWD)**.
- d) These classes cannot earn any grading points or provide eligibility for any other awards. Ribbons or other prizes are not necessarily awarded.
- e) The class may also be structured to allow for some coaching and individual feedback during or immediately following the performance; to provide the opportunity to 're-ride' all or selected movements; to use 'live' judging where the comments and scores are announced during the performance for the benefit of riders, coaches, trainee judges and spectators.
- f) WDA-AUS Approved Judges are recommended but not required. These events provide an

opportunity for 'Trainee' judges to gain experience and mentoring.

- g) Classes are judged in accordance with the relevant rules and guidelines in **Sections 2.4 to 2.8**.
- h) A Horse may compete in a maximum of four (4) test rides (including Sanctioned or Non-sanctioned classes) in any competition day.
- i) A Horse may be ridden by more than one rider but may not be entered in the same class with two different riders.

## 2.19 Assisted Rider Events

WDA-AUS has opted to include specific 'Assisted Rider' events to support participation for those who require assistance to compete and this may include Riders with Disabilities, young and/or inexperienced riders. In doing so, WDA-AUS does not assume responsibility for safety of participants.

- a) **Riders participating in Assisted Rider classes may not show in other classes, but their horse may be ridden in those classes by other riders.**
- b) No grading points are earned from any results in the Assisted Rider classes.
- c) The Judge and Event Management may modify a test, pattern or course or set their own to make the class more suitable for the participating riders.
- d) The emphasis of this program is on providing the rider with the opportunity for safe, fun participation in the event and rewarding the rider's effort.
- e) Each rider **must be led** by a suitable experienced assistant who is (sixteen) 16 years of age or older and may be accompanied by a side walker who is (sixteen) 16 years of age or older. The assistant's main role is not to lead the horse, but to guide or control the horse when necessary to ensure the rider's safety. If needed, the assistants can explain what is required and help the rider. The rider is encouraged to make an effort to be in control, maintain their balance and use the aids properly to guide the horse.
- f) Riders do not have to attempt or complete all elements of the patterns but a rider who omits a movement or does it incorrectly cannot be placed above a rider who does the correct pattern.
- g) The assistants and side walkers should wear western style pants/jeans, enclosed safe shoes, long-sleeved shirt with a collar and a western hat.
- h) The lead line should be approximately 2m long and is attached to a halter that is properly fitted and worn under the bridle. The lead must not be attached to the bit.
- i) The reins may be attached to the side rings of the halter or to the bit, depending on rider's level of experience, but the rider should make an effort to retain control of the reins at all times.
- j) Riders must wear a properly fitted and fastened with harness, current approved Australian Standard protective helmet.
- k) Riders may use any legal headgear and any style of saddle. Riders may hold the horn of the saddle and the use of neck reins and 'monkey grips' is permitted. Other equipment and attire should adhere to the criteria described in **Sections 5 (Presentation of Horse and Rider) and 6.25 (RWD)**.

2.20

Western Dressage and Tents

Overview

In hand work is the starting point for the development of horse and rider partnerships. Western Dressage In

Hand Events encourages riders to consider the key elements of Western Dressage training in all their interactions with their horses. It is also acknowledged that while riding may not be an option for some people and/or horses there remains a strong commitment to the Purpose, Aims and Objectives of Western Dressage. This event also provides a platform to encourage people to enjoy their horses, develop their skills and share in the Western Dressage experience.

Each performance should clearly demonstrate the key elements of Western Dressage and highlight the harmony of the handler and rider while accurately completing the required pattern. Judging and scoring is based on the system that applies to Western Dressage Tests and aligns with the Standards and Objectives of Western Dressage Competition and Training.

Safety is always paramount and particularly long-reining could involve a situation where the handler has taken reasonable steps to acquire the necessary skills and time has been taken to properly accustom the horse to the long-rein. Supervision and instruction should be sought from an experienced person with the handler commencing practice with a quiet, experienced horse.

**Always be mindful of your position when working your horse from the ground, bearing in mind that the horse, especially if startled or confused, may kick or cow-kick, strike, rear or move swiftly and unexpectedly.**

**There is the added danger of entanglement with the reins or ropes. The reins or ropes must never be joined or coiled around the hand or any part of the body. The tail of the reins or ropes must either be looped across the palm of the hand, or allowed to fall freely if safe to do so. The handler must not wear spurs. The use of gloves is strongly recommended.**

**Incorrect or unsafe handling will result in immediate elimination from the class and the handler will be required to cease working the horse until the matter is rectified.**

#### ***Class Conditions and Scoring***

- b) Event Convenors may use the Western Dressage In Hand Patterns, or set the pattern or criteria to be used for the class or alternatively, may require the handlers to design their own test. The class conditions, expectations and patterns should be clearly described and made available to riders as soon as practical.
- c) Patterns may specify that the horse is presented:
  - i) on a single lead of a minimum/maximum length
  - ii) in two long-reins
- d) The Horse may be shown in any type of halter or cavesson, snaffle or bitless bridle that complies with WDA-AUS Rules and Guidelines. No leads with chains under or over the horse's jaw or face are permitted. While lunging, long-reining or working in hand, side-reins or headset attachments from the bit or headstall to the saddle/roller and the use of one whip are permitted.
- e) The handler may discreetly use their hand, a whip, lariat or rope, or training stick to guide the horse. As with ridden events, subtle use of the voice and touching as a reward is permitted.
- f) Attire and equipment should align with the WDA-AUS Rules and Guidelines for ridden events. The use of gloves is optional, but is strongly recommended. Spurs must not be worn due to the risk of tripping or becoming entangled with the horse.
- g) Horses over six (6) months of age are permitted to participate in events. Handlers and Event Convenors should be mindful of the horse's welfare at all times and in particular to ensure that young horses are not overworked or subjected to undue stress or pressure.



- h) The class may be conducted in a standard arena or in open areas no less than 20m x 40m with a suitable surface.
- i) Obstacles may be included in the pattern and where appropriate the event may also be conducted outdoors over varying terrain with natural obstacles such as water, logs and bridges.
- j) The class is judged in accordance with the Pattern scoring sheet.
- k) The highest total score wins the class and in the case of a tie, the handlers shall be awarded the same placing.
- l) The performance is evaluated on the basis of a competent demonstration of the Key Elements of Western Dressage Training as related to the Handler's work.
- m) Handlers and horses are scored on a basis of a maximum 10 points (including half points) per movement in the pattern and the overall sections at the end of the pattern.
- n) Each Pattern will specify the movements, gaits and other requirements to be performed and should contain 6 to 10 elements that are separately scored.
- o) No penalty points apply to these classes.
- p) A movement or obstacle omitted, taken out of order, refused or declined will result in a score of zero (0) points for that movement or obstacle but will not disqualify the entry.
- q) At the Judge's discretion, if some unusual circumstance has occurred to interrupt the pattern, the Judge may stop the performance and/or allow a handler to restart from the beginning or from any appropriate point in the pattern.
- r) The overall sections are ***Finesse; Attitude; Form and Function; Fluency; and Harmony.***
- i) The Handler demonstrates *Finesse* through the following qualities: composure, focus, confidence, attentiveness, feel, timing, balance, smoothness, light connection with the horse, effective control using correct techniques for handling leadline or long reins and subtle communication with the horse.
- ii) The horse demonstrates its *Attitude* by being calm, attentive, confident, willingly guided, light & responsive.
- iii) The horse demonstrates good *Form and Function* by the quality of its balance, drive, cadence, regularity of gaits, suppleness, straightness/alignment and ease of movement.
- iv) The *Fluency* of the pattern is judged by the accuracy of the performance and how it flows smoothly and with ease from one movement to the next.
- v) The *Harmony* of the horse and handler is revealed by their attentiveness to each other, the subtlety of the handler's cues, the willingness and smoothness of the horse's response, and the overall calmness and composure of the horse and handler. The depth of connection between the horse and handler should be evident and enjoyable for those watching.
- s) The following movements as described in ***Section 6 (Performance of the Horse and Rider)*** may be included for In Hand classes:
- i) Gaits and paces - Working, free, lengthening and collected paces at walk, jog and lope.
- ii) Movements and exercises - Halt, back-up, counter-lope, progressive and direct transitions, simple change of lead through the jog, simple change of lead through the walk, flying change, lateral yield, side-pass, shoulder-in, haunches-in, haunches-out, half-pass, zig-zag, turn on the

forehand and turn on the haunches.

- iii) Figures - circles, figure eight, loops, serpentine; changes of direction: straight lines, turns, corners and change of hand.
- t) Position and direction for the handler when using single lead reins:
- i) When leading the horse forward the handler should be positioned adjacent to or slightly in front of the horse's shoulder.
  - ii) When backing the horse on a lead the handler should be positioned in front and preferably slightly to one side of the horse, or the handler may step backwards alongside the horse.
  - iii) When side-passing the horse on a lead the handler should be positioned in front and preferably slightly to one side of the horse, or the handler may be alongside the horse.
  - iv) When sending the horse forward on a circle the handler should remain in the centre of the circle with at least 3m distance between the horse and handler. The handler should not step backwards when directing the horse on the circle.
  - v) Changing sides of the horse may be achieved either by having the horse stand still while the handler steps across in front of the horse, or by the handler standing still and directing the horse to step across in front of the handler.
  - vi) When changing direction on the circle, the handler asks the horse to turn towards the handler and then move away on the new direction. There are two methods to perform this change of direction. Unless otherwise specified in the test, the handler may choose the method and in this case both methods must be judged equally. The two methods are as follows:
    - The horse may be asked to stop on the circle, parallel to the handler, turn on the haunches 180° (rollback) and without hesitation continue at the same gait as for the previous circle.
    - The handler may allow the horse room to change direction through an 'S' shaped turn by drawing the horse towards the centre of the circle and then directing it back out onto the new circle. In this case the change should occur as a fluid movement without any change of gait or rhythm and tempo in the walk and jog. In the lope this will require a flying change to maintain the gait or may be executed by a simple change through the jog or walk.
- u) Position and directions for the handler when using two long reins:
- i) The long reins must consist of two unjoined ropes or reins of a suitable material running directly from the hands of the handler, through a ring or dee on the roller or saddle, to the bit or halter of the horse. The reins may run through the stirrups provided they are the appropriate length and fixed to the girth.
  - ii) The basic positions for long-reining are:
    - Driving position, where the handler follows directly, or slightly off to one side, behind the horse and follows it through the movements.
    - Lunging position, where handler stands off to the side of the horse, between the withers and the hip while the horse circles around the handler.
    - In Hand position, where the handler stands off to one side and usually close to the

horse between the hip and the shoulder, as required for the movement being performed.

- The handler should smoothly change position as needed to effectively guide and communicate with the horse, especially when performing more advanced movements.

v) Elimination from Class:

- i) Resistance of longer than twenty (20) seconds or any blatant disobedience that presents a safety concern for the handler, horse, judge or other participants, or public.
- ii) Concern for the safety of handler, horse, Judge, or other participants, or public.
- iii) Failure to comply with the directives for the specified class requirements.
- iv) Other rule breaches resulting in elimination as specified in the WDA-AUS Rules for use of illegal equipment or abuse of horse.

## 2.21 Western Dressage Freestyle Versatility Tests

The Freestyle Versatility Test encourages riders to demonstrate how Western Dressage has enhanced their riding ability and their horse's versatility. The primary purpose of the event is to create new and shared experiences around the enjoyment of working with horses.

### *Class Conditions and Scoring*

- a) Event Convenors may set the pattern or criteria to be used for the class or alternatively, may require the riders to design their own test.
- b) The Event Convenors or the riders, who must design the test, are free to include movements or elements that are not in Western Dressage Tests. This might include reining manoeuvres, working equitation obstacles, jumping, mounted archery, dressage movements, working with a Garrocha or lariat, and so on.
- c) Riders may perform singly or as a group and with or without music as permitted by the Event Convenors.
- d) Tests may be performed in a standard arena or any other suitable area determined by the Event Convenors.
- e) Riders are responsible for arranging, setup and removal of their props or equipment.
- f) All equipment and attire should be based on WDA-AUS Rules and Guidelines and any equipment or attire not specifically covered by or in conflict with standard equipment guidelines must be able to be used safely and without abuse of the horse.
- g) Riders may be mounted or unmounted and use any type of saddle or ride bareback as permitted by the Event Convenors. The use of a neck rein may be permitted.
- h) The horse must wear legal headgear. Riders may choose to ride with one or two or no hands on the reins and if necessary the reins may be secured to the saddle in a safe and appropriate manner.
- i) If music is used the rider must provide a recording of their music in the format (e.g. CD, USB, iPod, etc.) and at the time requested by the Event Convenors.
- j) Prior to the class, as requested by the Event Convenors, riders must submit written description of the

movements or elements to be available to the Judge.

k) The class is Judged as follows:

- i) The Freestyle must be no more than 6 minutes. There is no maximum time limit. A bell or whistle will be used to signal the expiry of time if the performance has not finished. The rider should then end the performance as soon as practical or if necessary, the Judge can excuse them from the arena. Time and judging of the test begins and ends either when the music starts and ends or when the horse enters the arena and ends with a final halt and salute.
- ii) At the Judge's discretion, if some of the unusual circumstances has occurred to interrupt a test, the Judge may stop a test and/or allow a rider to restart a test from the beginning or from any appropriate point in the test.
- iii) Any performance after the expiry of time has been signalled will not be considered for scoring purposes.
- iv) No penalty points apply to this class.
- v) A maximum of 100 points may be awarded for Technical Merit based on the harmony between the horse and rider and demonstration of Western Dressage principles.
- vi) A maximum of 100 points may be awarded for Creativity and Interpretation (choreography; relating other elements to Western Dressage).

#### ***Elimination from Class***

- i) Resistance of longer than twenty (20) seconds (individual), or any blatant disobedience that presents a safety concern for the rider, horse, Judge, other participants, or public.
- ii) Concern for the safety of rider, horse, Judge, other participants, or public.
- iii) In the case of a fall of horse and/or rider the rider will be eliminated.
- iv) Failure to comply with the directives from the Judge and/or Event Convenor in relation to specified class requirements may incur elimination. The Judge's decision is final.
- v) Other rule breaches resulting in elimination as specified in the WDA-AUS Rules for use of illegal equipment or abuse of horse.

## **Section Three    EVENT MANAGEMENT**

- 3.1    Event Convenor**
- 3.2    Draw**
- 3.3    Open Pen**
- 3.4    Scribes**
- 3.5    Arena Specifications**
- 3.6    Scoring and Award Presentations**

### **3.1                    Event Convenor**

Branches, State Associations and Affiliates should appoint an Event Convenor and apply for approval by WDA-AUS to host Western Dressage Competitions subject to the following conditions:

- a)    The Event Convenor submits an application within the time required prior to the event to WDA-AUS with the details of the competition. The application form is available from WDA-AUS.
- b)    WDA-AUS will review the application and notify the Event Convenor of their decision.
- c)    It is recommended that the Event Convenor uses checklists to plan and coordinate the conduct of their event (Event Management Toolkits and the current Rulebook, Tests, Patterns and Scoresheets are available from WDA-AUS).

### **3.2                    Draw**

- a)    Organisers must prepare a draw with scheduled times for all rides. Riders shall be notified of the draw at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to that start of the competition. Judges and riders are to be sent the draw or instructions on where to view it online so that the organisers can be immediately advised of any conflicts of interest.
- b)    Classes must be run in their entirety and rides may only be scheduled out of sequence to allow a reasonable interval between two or more horses entered by the same rider in the same class. Also, when preparing a time schedule, consideration must be given to riders entered in more than one (1) class or riding more than one (1) horse.
- c)    Time intervals should be allowed between rides/classes for Judge's breaks and award presentations. A 15-minute break should be scheduled after approximately 2 to 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours judging (between classes where possible) and half to one hour meal breaks where appropriate.
- d)    A Judge should not be expected to judge more than 10 hours per day, excluding breaks.
- e)    If the number of entries received for a class exceeds 35 horses, the class should be split and the divisions placed separately.

### **3.3                    Open Pen**

- a)    Where possible the arena should be made available for riders to work their horses prior to the start and at the end of competition each day. At the Event Convenor's discretion, the arena may be open during breaks in the competition, especially if warm up areas are limited or because of unfavourable weather conditions. Riders should be advised as soon as possible (preferably when the program is posted) about the availability, times and any conditions regarding Open Pen.

- b) Riders and their helpers should display good sportsmanship and support each other by exercising due care and consideration when using Open Pen.
- c) Where possible, it is preferable that riders are able to use separate areas for lunging and ridden warm up prior to entering the Arena.

### **3.4 Scribes**

- a) Scribes should have knowledge of the tests or patterns being judged.
- b) Scribes must not be an owner, coach, trainer or family member of a rider/horse in the class in which they are scribing.
- c) Scribes must not attempt to manipulate or influence the Judge's decision, commentary or score.
- d) Riders may act as a Scribe for a Judge after all the classes that they have entered (under that same Judge) have concluded.

### **3.5 Arena Specifications**

- a) The arena should be on as flat and as level ground as possible.
- b) The interior measurements of a Standard Arena are sixty (60) metres long and twenty (20) metres wide.
- c) The enclosure itself should ideally consist of a low fence about 30cm high and should be completely enclosed, except for the entrance at A. The width of the entrance must be at least two (2) metres. Exceptions to the height of the fence are allowed for poles or ground markings as long as the arena is visibly marked and presents no safety risk to horse and rider.
- d) The fence should be as such to prevent the horse's hooves from becoming entangled. Rope, stakes, concrete or unbreakable chain fencing is not permitted.
- e) Event management should make every effort to provide the best possible footing in competition and schooling areas.
- f) The Judge is preferably placed a maximum of five metres and minimum of three metres from the end of the arena and must be directly behind the letter C.
- g) Riders should be permitted by management or the Judge to enter the arena prior to their ride if arena conditions do not permit riding around the perimeter of the arena prior to entry. Such permission must be announced prior to the start of the class.

### **3.6 Scoring and Award Presentations**

- a) After each performance the Judge's sheets are collected by the event organisers and given directly to the scorers. Points and comments must be written in ink with errors noted with an asterisk \*. In the case of any corrected points the Judge who has made the correction must initial it. The points are multiplied by the corresponding co-efficient where applicable and then totalled. Penalty points incurred for errors in the execution of the test are deducted from this total, not the individual movement.
- b) This total score for the test must also be given as a percentage to two decimal points. In all competitions the winner is the rider having the highest total score, the second placed rider is the one with the next highest score and so on.
- c) In the case of equal scores (percentage to 2 decimal places), all tied riders will be awarded an

equal place and the rider/s with the next highest score will be awarded the next placing.

- d) Ties in classes that include prize money will remain tied for the purpose of dividing the prize money. Distribution of any other prizes can be decided by mutual agreement between the tied riders and show management or be decided by the toss or a coin.
- e) If a rider withdraws (scratches) prior to a class or is excused, eliminated or is a “no show” prior to, or during the performance of a test, the words “scratched”, “excused”, “eliminated”, or “no show” or abbreviations of each, must appear after the rider’s name in the result sheet.
- f) A Judge is free to leave when all scores from that Judge's class/tests have been totalled.
- g) Immediately after a class has been awarded, the Judge’s score sheet shall be given to the rider. The score sheet should be collected directly by the rider or the rider's representative. Privacy of the score sheets must be maintained. However, at the discretion of the organising committee the scores may be published.
- h) If a mathematical error on the score sheet is discovered by the rider, it must be brought to the attention of event management within one (1) hour of awarding the last class of that competition day.
- i) A video recording may not be used to dispute a Judge’s decision.

The Judge's comments, while judging, may not be audio-recorded without prior written permission of the Judge, the specific rider(s), and event management.

## Section Four JUDGES

- 4.1 Approved Western Dressage Judges
- 4.2 Western Dressage Judge Accreditation Program
- 4.3 Recommended Fees and Reimbursement of Expenses
- 4.4 Judges' Protocols
- 4.5 Judges' Code of Conduct
- 4.6 Conflict of Interest
- 4.7 Procedures for Judges

### 4.1 Approved Western Dressage Judges

Event Convenors must use Judges from the WDA-AUS Judges List

or may assist a suitable candidate, who meets the criteria listed below, to submit an Interim Judge Application Form to WDA-AUS for approval.

Official approval as a WDA-AUS Western Dressage Judge is a privilege, not a right, granted by the WDA-AUS Board. Only current financial WDA-AUS members who are approved Judges are eligible to judge at Sanctioned, Training and Peripheral competitions for WDA-AUS State Associations, Branches and Affiliates.

These are the levels of Judge accreditation:

- a) Interim Judge: Approval to judge all Test Levels and Peripheral Competitions based on the individual's prior experience and qualifications. An Interim Judge, within two (2) years of this approval, must complete the assessment process through attendance and active participation in Judge seminars, shadow judging and online trainings as well as a written theory exam.
- b) 'B' Judge: Approved to judge introductory and basic level Tests and Peripheral Competitions.
- c) 'A' Judge: Approved to judge all Test Levels and Peripheral Competitions.

WDA-AUS seeks applications from suitably experienced and qualified persons who can be granted Interim Approval to judge and these applicants will then have two years to complete the WDA-AUS Western Dressage Judge Accreditation Program. Experienced Judges qualified for other disciplines such as Dressage, Western and Breed Showing and individuals with extensive equestrian knowledge and proficiency are encouraged to apply for Interim Approval to judge.

Recognition of Prior Experience/Qualifications and Current Competency for WDA-AUS Western Dressage Judges

- a) Judges who have officiated at Western Dressage competitions in the last 2 years.
- b) Current or retired Judges from HSAA, AQHA, EA, PC or other recognised Breed/Equestrian Associations.
- c) Current or retired Western and/or Dressage coaches and trainers.
- d) Presenters/Educators who have conducted seminars/training for Judges, coaches or riders.
- e) Riders who have won National or State titles in Western and/or Dressage competition.
- f) Riders who have competed in Western Dressage competitions and achieved a score above 70%.



#### 4.2 Western Dressage Judge Accreditation Program

This program will provide ongoing training, assessment and support to Interim Judges, Applicants and Accredited Judges so that they can objectively assess horse/rider combinations and give accurate feedback through test scores and comments.

The program is based on evaluation of the individual's prior experience and qualifications, assessment during the applicant's attendance and active participation in Judge seminars, shadow judging and online training as well as a written theory exam.

Ongoing education, judging opportunities and individual mentoring to assist and support Judges is recommended and supported.

A Judge's personal conduct and integrity as a WDA-AUS Member, official and rider must be exemplary.

#### 4.3 Recommended Fees and Reimbursement of Expenses

- a) Recommended Fees for Competitions:
  - i) \$5 per test judged with a minimum payment of \$100 per day for Sanctioned classes.
  - ii) \$20 per hour with a minimum of \$100 per day for Peripheral Competitions, 'Come and Try', Assisted Rider, In Hand and Western Dressage Versatility Tests.
  - iii) Judges should not be expected to judge more than 10 hours per day, excluding breaks.
- b) Recommended Fees for Training and Promotional Events:
  - i) \$50 per hour with a minimum of \$250 per day for training days, lessons, clinics, seminars, presentations and demonstrations.
- c) Recommended Reimbursement of Expenses:
  - i) Travel at 50c per km for the round trip (excluding the first 50km).
  - ii) Travel should only be claimed from your residence or where you will be staying at the time of the event (whichever is the shortest, most direct route).
  - iii) Do not claim for the return trip if you are not returning home, for instance going on holidays or travelling on to another event.
  - iv) Airline travel if driving is not practical.
  - v) Accommodation (officials should not expect accommodation the night before or after the event unless they have to drive more than 2 hours to the venue and the event commences at 8am or earlier or is scheduled to conclude after 6.30pm).
  - vi) Meals (Event Convenors cater for officials during an event; meals related to overnight accommodation paid by the Event Convenors to a maximum of ~~\$25~~ \$40 per meal; alcohol is excluded).

#### 4.4 Judges' Protocols

Over time, the Judges' scores and feedback influences the training and presentation of competition horses and consequently acts as a key influence on the evolution of the discipline. Judges, riders, coaches, trainers, spectators and supporters need to have confidence in the integrity and quality of the judging system.

- a) Accredited Western Dressage Judges must adhere to the WDA-AUS Code of Conduct, Procedures and

Policies, including the Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse.

- b) Judges must remember that they are representing WDA-AUS in an official capacity and should conduct themselves in an honourable manner when officiating at any WDA-AUS event. This includes wearing an appropriate standard of dress, not consuming alcohol immediately prior to or during an event, not using electronic communications or mobile phones during the event, not using abusive language or engaging in any other behaviour unbecoming to this position either at the venue or elsewhere for the duration of the event.
- c) A Judge who agrees to officiate at a WDA-AUS sanctioned event is responsible for fulfilling that commitment and should assist the organisers to arrange for a suitable replacement if for any reason he/she is unable to meet this obligation.

#### **4.5 Judges' Code of Conduct**

Western Dressage Judges must adhere to the following WDA-AUS Judges' Code of Conduct.

Judges must:

- a) Make their decisions having regard for the welfare of the horse above the interests of any others involved.
- b) Be aware that they are responsible for setting and maintaining the image and standards of dressage both in the competition arena and away from it and that, as an ambassador for dressage, they should conduct themselves with dignity, honesty and good manners, especially in difficult situations.
- c) The Judge should have with them a current WDA-AUS Rulebook together with any amendments.
- d) Treat requests from riders to explain their decisions as an opportunity to assist the rider to improve their performance.
- e) Honour a commitment to judge and if unforeseen circumstances prevent this, endeavour to help the organisers to find a replacement.
- f) Maintain an objective and fair mind towards all riders which includes:
  - i) Not taking into account anything known about riders, horses or past performances.
  - ii) Guarding against conflicts of interest and avoiding judging in situations in which they have a close personal or professional relationship with a rider or owner.
  - iii) An open and friendly attitude towards all riders while being careful not to show familiarity towards those competing.
  - iv) Ensure to the best of their ability that the same conditions apply to all riders.
  - v) Maintain the same standard for all riders within a competition and at all events.
- g) Judges must know and understand these Rules and be prepared to align their personal opinion with the principles of WDA-AUS.
- h) Judges must have a thorough knowledge of the correct training of the Western Dressage horse and rider and understand the requirements of the test they are to judge.

#### 4.6 Conflict of Interest

- a) Individuals may not judge or be judged by one another where they have, within ~~three (3) months~~ **sixty (60) days** prior to a competition, maintained a regular, ongoing, or contractual business relationship where services are provided and fees and costs are incurred.
- b) A horse may not be exhibited under a Judge where the Judge, or a member of the Judge's immediate family or the Judge's employee/employer, has been an owner, exhibitor or trainer of that horse within the preceding ~~twelve (12) months~~ **sixty (60) days**.
- c) The Judge is responsible of notifying event management as he/she becomes aware that a horse/rider is entered in a class and not in compliance with these guidelines. The horse may be ridden hors concours (HC) but the test may not be placed in the competition and no grading points can be awarded.
- d) All parties involved including but not limited to the owner, exhibitor, and Judge will be held responsible in the event of non-compliance with the above standards. The Judges Panel and the WDA-AUS Board will investigate and deal with the matter according to WDA-AUS disciplinary procedures.
- e) Judges must always act in the best interest of the Western Dressage Association of Australia and avoid any situation that creates a conflict of interest while judging any WDA-AUS approved event.
- f) Judges shall not visit with owners, trainers, participants or agents before or during a WDA-AUS approved event.
- g) Judges are not to be housed in private homes unless the Judge has agreed to it prior to the competition.
- h) The Judges shall talk only with representatives of event management, beyond the exchange of normal greetings, until the entire class or competition that they are judging is completed.
- i) It is recommended that a Judge shall not appear on the venue more than one hour prior to the scheduled start of the event unless as directed or requested by event management.
- j) After an event Judges may provide feedback to riders on an individual basis. These discussions with riders should be monitored by event officials. Competitors are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner and recognise that such a discussion is an opportunity for the rider to learn and improve their performance. Any disrespectful or confrontational behaviour between any participants or officials during an event is not to be tolerated.

#### 4.7 Procedures for Judges

When invited to judge at an event, ask for a contact name, phone number and e-mail address and request that details be confirmed in writing within two weeks and follow up if this confirmation has not occurred at least two weeks prior to the competition.

- a) Agree and confirm in your contract, fees and expense allowances and the distance (most direct route) you have to travel.
- b) Advise the organisers if you are bringing your own scribe.
- c) Advise the organisers if you require a car if judging outdoors.

- d) Arrive at the venue 30 to 60 minutes prior to starting time. Contact the Event Convenor should you be delayed on the way to the venue.
- e) Have your Rulebook with you and be prepared to take action and/or offer assistance to the organisers with regards to rules, guidelines, risk management and event procedures.
- f) The Judge must physically inspect the arena and communicate with the Event Convenor ensure that:
  - i) the arena surface and fence are a satisfactory standard.
  - ii) the marker letters are the correct position and distance outside of the arena (.5 to 1m).
  - iii) the letter A must be placed at least 5-10 metres back from the entry and in line with C.
  - iv) no dogs or any other distractions are at or near the Judge's car or table.
  - v) as much as possible, conditions remain the same for all riders in each class.

Conversation, apart from the exchange of normal greetings, should only occur with the Event Convenors or event representatives until the entire event is completed. The Judge is free to leave when all scores from the classes that they have judged have been totalled and checked.

## **Section Five PRESENTATION OF HORSE AND RIDER**

- 5.1 Bridles**
- 5.2 Snaffle Bits**
- 5.3 Curb Bits**
- 5.4 Spade Bits and Two-Rein Bridles**
- 5.5 Bosals and Bosalita**
- 5.6 Bitless Bridles**
- 5.7 Reins**
- 5.8 Saddles**
- 5.9 Optional Equipment**
- 5.10 Illegal Equipment**
- 5.11 Equipment in Warm-Up Ring and Training Areas**
- 5.12 Gear Check**
- 5.13 Presentation of Horse**
- 5.14 Attire**
- 5.15 Optional Attire**

### **5.1 Bridles**

- a) Any Western or Australian Stock headstall style may be used. A headstall is defined as a leather or leather like item to carry a bit or bosal. The headstall for bitless bridles must be of rope, leather or leather-like material.

### **5.2 Snaffle Bits**

- a) Snaffle bits may be used at any level of competition by any horse of any age.
- b) The rider must use two hands with a snaffle bit.
- c) A standard snaffle is a conventional O-Ring, Egg Butt, Full Cheek or D-Ring, all with rings having an inside diameter no smaller than 50mm (2"), nor larger than 100mm (4").
- d) Bars of the mouthpiece must be round or oval shaped and no less than 8mm to 19mm ( $\frac{5}{16}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ ") in diameter when measured 25mm (1") from the cheek. The mouthpiece may be inlaid or latex wrapped but must be smooth.
- e) The mouthpiece may be Mullen, barrel, or ported and consist of one, two or three pieces.
- f) If a mouthpiece is three pieces, a connecting link must be no larger than 32mm ( $1\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter, or a connecting flat bar must be no longer than 50mm (2"), 9.5 mm to 19mm ( $\frac{3}{8}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ "), measured top- to-bottom, and must lie flat in the horse's mouth.
- g) Other types of snaffle bits such as hanging cheek snaffles are legal and are not considered to be leverage bits. Bits such as the Spanish Snaffle or Kimberwick, which have slots for both the reins and the cheek pieces, are permitted. A chin strap or curb chain is permitted above the reins.
- h) The port of any snaffle bit must be no higher than 32mm ( $1\frac{1}{4}$ ").
- i) Bit hobbles below the reins are permitted.

### 5.3 Curb Bits

- a) A curb bit is a leverage bit and may have loose or fixed shanks. Curb bits must connect directly from the cheek piece to the mouth piece.
- b) **When using a curb bit, the rider may use one or two hands up to and including Level 3.**
- c) **The rider should not go from one to two handed or vice versa during an individual test – penalty points are applied in this case.**
- d) **When used in Level 4 classes the rider may only ride one handed with a curb bit.**
- e) Maximum length from the inside bottom of the top ring to the point of pull on the lower ring is 216mm (8.5") – *see opposite*.
- f) A curb chain or flat leather chin strap must be used with a curb bit and must be at least 12.7mm (1/2") in width and **lie flat** against the jaw of the horse.
- g) The angle created between the shank and lower jaw as the curb strap tightens, should not be less than 45 degrees or more than 90 degrees.
- h) Bars of the mouthpiece must be round or oval shaped and no less than 8mm to 19mm (5/16" to 3/4") in diameter when measured 25mm (1") from the cheek. The mouthpiece may be inlaid or latex wrapped but must be smooth.
- i) The mouthpiece may be one, two or three pieces. A three piece, connecting link of 32mm (1 1/4") or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 9.5 mm to 19mm (3/8" to 3/4") measured top to bottom with a maximum length of 50mm (2"), which lies flat in the horse's mouth, is acceptable.
- j) Jointed and cricket mouthpieces and rollers attached to the centre of the bit and covers are acceptable. All curb bits must be free of mechanical devices. Nothing, such as extensions, rivets or prongs may protrude from the mouthpiece. No curbs may have a double fulcrum effect.



#### **Transitional Curbs**

- a) Transitional Curb Bits permit the shanks to be independently moved.
- b) A transitional curb bit may be used by horses at least three (3) years of age.
- c) Shanks must have an independent swivel action either from the port or the cannons of the bit.
- d) The port of any transitional bit must be no higher than 50mm (2").
- e) Bit hobbles are not permitted on transitional curbs.
- f) May be ridden two handed in all levels.

#### **Fixed Shank Curbs**

- a) The rider should preferably use one hand with a fixed shank with a solid mouthpiece. However, the use of two hands is permitted.
- b) No horse under four (4) years of age may be ridden in a fixed curb with a solid mouthpiece.
- c) Bit hobbles below the reins are permitted.

#### 5.4 Spade Bits and Two Rein Bridles

- a) A Spade Bit or Two Rein Bridle (bosalita and spade bit configuration) is only permitted in Level 3 and 4 and horses must not be under four (4) years of age.
- b) Must be ridden one handed with the exception of the rider's free hand which can be used without penalty in the two-rein setup.
- c) The port of a spade bit may not exceed 90mm (3.5")
- d) Bit hobbles below the reins are permitted.



#### 5.5 Bosals and Bosalitas

- a) Bosals are permitted on horses of any age for any event or competition level.
- b) The bosal and bosalita are rounded in shape, **smooth and constructed of braided rawhide or leather** and must have a flexible non-metallic core, attached to a suitable headstall.
- c) The bosal diameter must be no wider than 19mm (¾") when measured at the cheek or bars just below the side buttons where the hanger (headstall) is connected.
- d) The bosalita is a light bosal approximately 9.5mm (3/8") in diameter that is used in the two-rein set up.
- e) The bosalita may be worn without reins in the manner of a noseband.

#### 5.6 Bitless Bridles

- a) The noseband for bitless bridles must be **smooth and constructed of flat leather or braided rawhide or leather as for a bosal**. There are no knots or protrusions permitted on the noseband.
- b) Control is achieved by direct pressure on the nose. There is neither leverage nor any type of clamping action permitted.
- c) **The reins attach directly to a fixed ring on the noseband – see opposite.**
- d) Reins can be split, looped or joined and are used two handed.



#### 5.7 Reins (see also Section 6.26 rein Handling Techniques)

- e) Reins must be of leather, rope, horsehair, or synthetic material.
- f) Split, looped or joined reins can be used two handed with a snaffle, curb bit or bitless bridle.
- g) Looped or joined reins can be held independently or bridged when riding two handed.
- h) Split reins are bridged when used with two hands.
- i) Split reins can be used one handed with a curb bit. There are two different rein handling methods that can be used. Refer to **Section 6.26** for details.
- j) Romal reins are used one handed with a curb bit.
- k) Mecate reins are used two handed with a bosal.
- l) Romal and mecate reins are used one handed for the Two Rein setup with a spade bit and bosalita.
- m) Slobber straps on snaffle bits can be no wider than 50mm (2") or longer than 216mm (8.5").



## 5.8 Saddles

- a) A Western or Swinging Fender or 'half-breed' saddle is to be used.
- b) All saddles used must meet at least 2 of the 3 following requirements:
  - i) Saddle Skirt.
  - ii) Western Fenders which must be a minimum of 75mm (3") at the narrowest point.
  - iii) Horn.
- c) A saddle pad of suitable size, material and thickness must be used under the saddle.
- d) At the Event Convenor's discretion, English or other styles of saddle and any bridle with a legal bit or legal bitless bridle may be used for Training and unsanctioned events and come and try days. (**Sections 2.16 to 2.20**).

## 5.9 Optional Equipment

- a) A saddle blanket may be used over the top of the saddle pad.
- b) Breastplate.
- c) Crupper.
- d) One whip is permitted when riding provided it is no longer than 120 cm (48") including lash.
- e) A cavesson noseband or bosalita (as described in **Section 5.5**). A cavesson must be constructed of smooth leather, fit comfortably (not too tight) and be appropriately positioned above the bit according to the individual horse's conformation.

## 5.10 Illegal Equipment

The use of illegal equipment will result in elimination from the class and/or competition. The following equipment is illegal:

- a) Martingales.
- b) Bit guards.
- c) Nosebands other than a cavesson or bosalita such as drop, crossover, etc.
- d) Gadgets of any kind (running or draw reins, tongue tie, tie-downs, etc).
- e) Any form of blinkers, earmuffs, earhoods or plugs, or hoods. (Ear plugs are permitted)
- f) Sharp, square, twisted or pointed edges on any mouthpiece or noseband.
- g) Slip or gag bits, donut or flat polo mouthpieces.
- h) Bits with reins attached to a single ring at the centre of a cross bar.
- i) Any rein design or other device that increases the effective length thereby affecting the leverage of the shank of a curb bit.
- j) Anything that alters the intended use of equipment as provided for in the description of appointments for a given class/test.
- k) Curb bits that create double leverage.
- l) Mechanical Hackamores.



- m) Bosalita and snaffle configuration.
- n) Bitless bridles that use straps that have leverage and/or tighten around a horse's head to apply pressure to the nose, jaw, cheek and/or poll are not permitted – *examples below*.



### 5.11 Equipment in Warm-Up Ring and Training Areas

- a) For safety reasons, lunging or long-reining should be in a separate area to the warm-up areas where horses are being ridden. While lunging, long-reining or working in hand, side-reins or headset attachments from the bit or headstall to the saddle/roller and the use of one whip or a training stick are permitted. No training equipment is allowed in the marshalling area or the performance arena one hour prior to the commencement and one hour after the cessation of the show each day.
- b) Side-reins or headset attachments from the bit or headstall to the saddle are prohibited when mounted.
- c) Equipment that is illegal for competition purposes cannot be used at the venue at any time during the venue usage or hire period booked for the event, including the set up and pull-down days immediately prior to and following the event.

### 5.12 Gear Check

- a) The responsibility for the correct attire and equipment rests with the rider.
- b) Inspection of tack and bits may be completed by or at the discretion of the Event Convenor or Judge. A horse must be eliminated from the test just completed if the equipment is in violation of the rules. All horses in each class/test may be inspected at the Judge's discretion if any tack or equipment is thought to be illegal.
- c) Tack and bits on both sides of each horse may be inspected and checked for each class/ test and may be done immediately as the horse leaves the arena if requested by an official.
- d) Any evidence of blood on the horse's mouth or sides will result in elimination of the entry for that competition. Environmental causes such as insect bites shall normally not be the cause of elimination.
- e) If checking of the bridle is performed, it is to be done with due caution, as the horse may be overly sensitive or reactive.
- f) If riders are required to remove the bridle it should be done in a safe manner.
- g) Biosecurity and hygiene protocols must be followed when doing a gear check.

### **5.13 Presentation of the Horse**

- a) Boots or bandages in plain colours (white, off-white, black, brown or beige) may be used. Boots or bandages of other colours may be used for Freestyle classes. Hoof boots designed for riding may be used instead of horse shoes.
- b) False tails, manes and forelocks are permitted.
- c) Manes may be long, trimmed, pulled or hogged and tails may be natural, trimmed or pulled.
- d) Coats and facial hairs may be clipped or trimmed.
- e) With the exception for Freestyle classes, no decoration of the horse with extravagant items, such as ribbons or flowers, glitter, etc is permitted.
- f) With the exception of Freestyle classes, no braiding, banding or plaiting of the mane, tail or forelock is permitted.

### **5.14 Attire**

- a) Helmet or Western style hat must be worn.
- a) WDA-AUS strongly recommends the wearing of a properly fitted and fastened, current safety approved protective headgear at all times when in the saddle.
- b) Riders with Disabilities, 'Assisted' and Youth riders must wear a properly fitted and fastened, current safety approved protective headgear at all times when in the saddle.
- c) Helmet use may be deemed mandatory in any competition and/or warm up areas where the Event Convenor or facility owner requires the use of a helmet.
- b) Western style long-sleeved shirt with any type of collar and Western style trousers or a one-piece long sleeved Western equitation suit provided it includes a collar must be worn.
- c) In the case of inclement weather, it is at the Judge's discretion to make concessions in acceptable clothing such as jackets or raincoats.
- d) Boots must have a minimum of 12.7mm ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " ) well defined square cut heel.
- e) Caps and polo/short sleeved shirts are not permitted for competitions.
- f) High English type boots or leggings are not permitted.

### **5.15 Optional Attire**

- a) Necktie, kerchief, bolo tie or pin.
- b) Vests.
- c) Spurs of western or English type. Rowels are permitted but must be blunt, smooth, vertical and rotate freely. The shank must come from the centre of the back of the heel. The tip of the shank on dummy spurs must be smooth and blunt and not point up or inwards.
- d) Chaps or chinks.
- e) Gloves.

**Section Six**      **PERFORMANCE OF HORSE AND RIDER**

- 6.1      **Overview**
- 6.2      **Walk**
- 6.3      **Jog**
- 6.4      **Lope**
- 6.5      **Halt**
- 6.6      **Back-Up**
- 6.7      **Counter-Lope**
- 6.8      **Transitions**
- 6.9      **Simple Change of Lead through the Walk**
- 6.10     **Simple Change of Lead through the Jog**
- 6.11     **Flying Change**
- 6.12     **Release of Rein**
- 6.13     **Leg-Yield**
- 6.14     **Side-pass**
- 6.15     **Shoulder-In**
- 6.16     **Haunches-In**
- 6.17     **Haunches-Out**
- 6.18     **Half-Pass**
- 6.19     **Zig-Zag**
- 6.20     **Turn on the Forehand**
- 6.21     **Turn on the Haunches**
- 6.22     **Counter-Bending Exercises**
- 6.23     **Circles, Serpentine, Loops and Figure Eights**
- 6.24     **Straight Lines, Turns and Corners, Change of Direction**
- 6.25     **Rider Proficiency**
- 6.26     **Rein Handling Techniques**
- 6.27     **Riders With Disabilities (RWD)**
- 6.28     **Illustrations and Diagrams**

## 6.1 Overview

The quality of the horse's training and the rider's proficiency is assessed according to the principles and standards described in **Sections 1.5 Standard of Excellence; 1.6 Objectives of Western Dressage Training; and 1.7 Objectives of Western Dressage Competition**. According to the Level being demonstrated, **as** they **will may** be required to execute any of the following:

- a) Gaits - walk, jog, and lope.
- b) Paces - working, free, lengthening and collected.
- c) Movements and exercises - halt, back-up, counter-lope, transitions, simple change of lead through the walk, flying change, release of rein, leg-yield, side-pass, shoulder-in, haunches-in, haunches-out, half-pass, zig-zag, turn on the forehand and turn on the haunches.
- d) Figures - circles, figure eights, loops, serpentines; changes of direction; straight lines, turns, corners and change of bend.

## 6.2 Walk

- a) The walk is an evenly spaced four-beat marching gait. Throughout all walk movements the horse should maintain the same rhythm and tempo and move with ease and confidence.
- b) If the walk has a lateral rhythm where the hind and front legs on the same side swing forward almost at the same time, this is a serious fault and irregularity of the gait.
- c) The following paces at the walk are recognized:
  - i) Working Walk – The horse's frame and steps are of moderate length, with the hind feet tracking up or slightly over-tracking and the horse walks with purpose and confidence. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins allowing the natural movement of the head and neck. The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers.
  - ii) Free Walk - The free walk is a pace of relaxation in which the contact is surrendered and the horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch down with its head and neck. The hind feet should overtrack the front footprint and the horse should be calm and willing to move forward and straight as directed by the rider. The poll must be clearly lower than the withers and the nose in front of the vertical.
  - iii) Lengthening of Stride at the Walk - The horse goes freely forward in a longer frame and without hurrying increases the over-track of the hind feet. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins allowing the natural movement of the head and neck. The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers.
  - iv) Collected Walk - The horse marches forward and the hind feet track up into the front footprint. The horse clearly displays self-carriage and the frame is more collected. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins and the neck is more arched and raised but must be allowed to remain open through the gullet and maintain its natural movement.

## 6.3 Jog

- a) The jog is a regular two-beat gait of alternating diagonal legs separated by a moment of suspension. Throughout all jog movements the horse should maintain the same rhythm and tempo and move with ease and confidence.
- b) The quality of the jog is shown by the regularity, cadence and length of the steps. According to the

level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

- c) Excessive speed or slowness, short steps, dragging feet (no clear moment of suspension), leaning on the bit, and inability to maintain a steady rhythm and tempo are serious faults. The rider should be on the correct diagonal when rising to the jog (i.e. in unison with the inside hind and outside foreleg according to the direction of travel).
- d) The following paces at the jog are recognised:
  - i) Working Jog - The horse's frame and steps are of moderate length, with the hind feet tracking up or slightly over-tracking and the horse jogs with purpose and confidence. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins. The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers. The working jog may be ridden either rising or sitting up to and including Level 1 and then must be ridden sitting from Level 2 onwards.
  - ii) Free Jog - The free jog is a pace of relaxation in which the contact is surrendered and the horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch down with its head and neck while maintaining the same rhythm and tempo as the working jog. The hind feet should overtrack the front footprint and the horse should remain calm and balanced. The poll must be clearly lower than the withers and the nose in front of the vertical. The free jog may be ridden either rising or sitting at all levels.
  - iii) Lengthening of Stride at the Jog - The horse goes freely forward in a longer frame and without hurrying increases the over-track of the hind feet. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins. The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers. Lengthening of stride at the jog may be ridden either rising or sitting up to and including Level 2 and then must be ridden sitting from Level 3 onwards.
  - iv) Collected jog - The horse clearly displays self-carriage and willingness to move forward. The hind feet track up into the front footprint and the frame is more collected. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins and the neck is more arched and raised but must be allowed to remain open through the gullet with the nose approaching the vertical position. Collected jog must be ridden sitting.

#### **6.4 Lope**

- a) The lope is an asymmetrical three-beat gait with a moment of suspension between strides. The sequence of footfalls, according to the direction of travel, is: outside hind, diagonal pair, inside front (leading leg), moment of suspension. The quality of the lope is revealed by the regularity and lightness of the steps. Throughout all lope movements the horse should maintain the same rhythm and tempo and move with ease and confidence.
- b) In each lope stride a triangle is formed with the ground and the two hind legs as the sides, and another triangle with the ground and the two front legs as the sides. In a balanced working lope, the two triangles will have about the same dimensions. When a horse is unbalanced and on the forehand, the triangle made by the hind legs will be smaller than that made by the front legs. As the training progresses, the lope will appear more 'uphill' through increased flexion of the hocks and lowering of the haunches that enables the forehand to be lighter and more agile.
- c) If the lope has a four-beat rhythm this is a serious fault and irregularity of the gait. Serious faults also occur if the horse does not travel straight and in alignment (quarters to the inside), falls in or out on the circle or has incorrect bend (away from leading leg). Other faults include excessive

speed or slowness, incorrect lead, being disunited and breaking gait. Stiffness and lack of balance or hindquarter engagement may manifest as abrupt, delayed or rough transitions; leaning on the forehand and pulling against the rider's hands.

- d) The following paces at the lope are recognized:
- i) Working Lope - The horse's frame and stride are of moderate length, with engagement of the hindquarters in accordance with the expectations of the Level being shown. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins allowing the natural movement of the head and neck. The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers.
  - ii) Free Lope - The free lope is a pace of relaxation in which the contact is surrendered and the horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch down with its head and neck while maintaining the same cadence and balance as the working lope. The horse should remain calm and steady. The poll must be clearly lower than the withers and the nose in front of the vertical.
  - iii) Lengthening of Stride at the Lope - The horse goes freely forward in a longer frame and without hurrying increases the distance covered in each stride. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins allowing the natural movement of the head and neck. The horse's nose may be slightly in front of the vertical and the poll must not be lower than the withers.
  - iv) Collected Lope - The horse clearly displays self-carriage and willingness to move forward. There is increased flexion of the hocks, lowering of the haunches and lightening of the forehand. The strides cover less distance and the frame is more collected. The neck more arched and raised but must be allowed to remain open through the gullet with the nose approaching the vertical position. The rider maintains a light connection with the reins allowing the natural movement of the head and neck.

## **6.5 Halt**

- a) At the halt the horse should be straight and stand attentive and motionless with the weight evenly distributed over all four legs.
- b) The horse should maintain a steady outline with a soft connection to the reins for the length of time directed, usually a minimum of four (4) seconds of immobility.
- c) The quality of the pace and frame of the horse before the halt, the transitions into and out of the halt, and the squareness of the halt should meet the expectations of the Level being shown.
- d) Anxiety, inattention, refusing to stand still, stepping back, crookedness, swinging hindquarters, abrupt, delayed or rough transitions and pulling against the rider's hands are serious faults.

## **6.6 Back-up**

- a) The back-up is a rearward diagonal movement with a two-beat rhythm. Each diagonal pair of legs is raised and returned to the ground alternately, with the forelegs aligned on the same track as the hind legs. The horse should appear to carry more of its weight on the hind legs with the hind end lower than the front.
- b) The steps are counted as each foreleg moves back.
- c) The quality of the back-up is shown by the regularity, cadence and length of the steps. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

- d) Anticipation of the movement, resistance to or evasion of the contact, rushing, deviation of the hindquarters from the straight line, spreading hind legs, hesitation and dragging feet are serious faults.

#### **6.7 Counter Lope**

- a) The horse is loping on the opposite lead to the direction of travel. The horse maintains a slight flexion in the direction of the lead.
- b) The counter lope can be used to develop the horse's straightness, balance, coordination and collection and demonstrate the level of communication and understanding between the horse and rider.
- a) Anxiety, failing to maintain the lead, stiffness, resistance to the rider's aids, rushing, deviation of the hindquarters from the straight line, loss of cadence are serious faults.
- b) Any change of direction or transition from true lope to counter lope should be fluent, emphasising the integrity and quality of the horse's movement according to the Level being shown. The horse and rider should remain composed and balanced throughout.

#### **6.8 Transitions**

- a) The changes of gait and pace should be smooth and clearly shown when the rider's leg is adjacent the prescribed marker.
- b) On a diagonal, the transition is made when the rider's leg is adjacent the letter at the end of the diagonal.
- c) The cadence of a gait or pace should be maintained up to the moment when the gait or pace is changed or the horse halts. The horse should remain light in hand, calm and balanced.
- d) Transitions are either direct or progressive. Direct transitions occur without any steps of intermediate gaits and progressive transitions clearly include all intermediate gaits. For instance, a transition from jog to halt through the walk is a progressive transition while a transition from jog to halt without any intermediate walk steps is a direct transition.

#### **6.9 Simple Change of Lead through the Walk**

- a) This is a movement in which, after a direct transition out of the lope into a walk, with 3-5 clearly defined steps at the walk, an immediate transition is made into the other lead. This is considered a Simple Lead Change when done through the walk.
- b) The changes of gait should be smooth and clearly shown.
- c) The quality of the pace and frame of the horse before, during and after each transition, should meet the expectations of the Level being shown.
- d) The cadence of each gait should be maintained up to the moment of transition. The horse should remain light in hand, calm and balanced.

#### **6.10 Simple Change of Lead through the Jog**

- a) This is a change of lead where the horse is brought back into the jog and after 3-5 strides, strikes off into a lope with the other leg leading

#### **6.11 Flying Change of Lead**

- a) The flying change is executed when the horse changes from one leading leg to the other while maintaining the balance and cadence of the lope. The change should be smooth and straight, almost imperceptible, emphasising the integrity and quality of the horse's movement.

- b) Failing to stay straight and cleanly change from one lead to the other (becoming disunited, changing with the front or hind leg first and then developing the new lead, breaking gait), rushing, kicking out or loss of composure by either horse or rider are serious faults.

c) The flying change of lead will ideally begin with the sequence of the new outside hind leg, the diagonal pair and followed by the new leading front leg. The change of lead of the hind and front leg take place immediately after the moment of suspension without a break of gait. The aids should be precise and unobtrusive. Flying changes of lead can also be executed in series. For example, flying changes can be performed at every 4th, 3rd, 2nd or at every stride. The horse, even in the series, remains light, calm and straight with lively impulsion, maintaining the same rhythm and balance. In order to not restrict or restrain the lightness, fluency and groundcover of the flying changes in series, enough impulsion and forwardness must be maintained. The flying lead changes show the reaction, sensitivity and obedience of the horse to the aids

- d)

#### **6.12 Release of Rein**

- a) Release of rein may be asked for at the collected jog or collected lope.
- b) The rider shows a clear release of contact while the horse maintains its frame, cadence and balance.
- c) Release of rein demonstrates self-carriage and is not a free pace or movement.

#### **6.13 Leg-Yield**

- a) The horse is almost straight, except that there may be a slight flexion at the poll away from the direction of movement. In a leg-yield on the diagonal the horse should be almost parallel to the long sides of the arena and the forehand may be slightly in advance of the hindquarters.
- b) When progressing forward and sideways in a leg-yield to the left, the right legs will pass and cross in front of the left legs and vice versa for leg-yield to the right.
- c) The quality of the movement is shown by the regularity, cadence and length of the steps. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

#### **6.14 Side-Pass**

- a) The side-pass is a sideways diagonal movement with a two-beat rhythm. Each diagonal pair of legs is raised and returned to the ground alternately. When side-passing to the left, the right legs will pass and cross in front of the left legs and vice versa for side-pass to the right. The steps are counted as each foreleg moves across or over.
- b) There is little or no forward movement. The horse is almost straight and in alignment, except there may be a slight flexion at the poll towards the direction of movement and the forehand may be slightly in advance of the hindquarters.
- c) The quality of the movement is shown by the regularity, cadence, coordination and smoothness of the steps. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.
- d) Crookedness, hesitation, loss of coordination and stepping behind are serious faults.

#### **6.15 Shoulder-In**

- a) The horse is ridden with a slight but uniform bend around the inside leg of the rider maintaining an angle of approximately 30 degrees. The horse's inside foreleg passes in front of the outside foreleg; the inside hind leg steps forward under the horse's body weight following the same track



of the outside foreleg. The horse's footfalls create three tracks.

- b) The quality of the movement is shown by the regularity, cadence, length and smoothness of the steps. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

**6.16 Haunches-In (Travers)**

- a) The forehand remains on the track and the hindquarters step to the inside of the track. The horse's footfalls create three to four tracks. When travelling on the track or circle to the right the horse will maintain a right bend and flexion. At the end of the haunches-in, the hindquarters are brought back on the track without any counter-flexion as though finishing a circle.
- b) The quality of the movement is shown by the regularity, cadence, length and smoothness of the steps. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

**6.17 Haunches-Out (Renvers)**

- a) This movement is a mirror image of haunches-in where the hindquarters remain on the track while the forehand steps to the inside of the track. The horse's footfalls create three to four tracks. When travelling on the track or circle to the right the horse will maintain a left bend and flexion. To complete the haunches-out, the forehand is re-aligned with the hindquarters on the track and the horse's bend and flexion re-aligns to the track or circle.
- b) The quality of the movement is shown by the regularity, cadence, length and smoothness of the steps. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

**6.18 Half-Pass**

- a) This movement is a variation of haunches-in, executed on a diagonal line instead of along the wall, and performed at the collected jog or lope.
- b) When progressing forward and sideways in half-pass to the left, the right legs will pass and cross in front of the left legs and vice versa for half-pass to the right. The forehand must be slightly leading. The horse should be slightly bent and flexed in the direction of movement.
- c) The quality of the movement is shown by the regularity, cadence, length and smoothness of the steps. The horse will demonstrate clear self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

**6.19 Zig-Zag (Counter Change of Hand)**

- a) A zig-zag is a half-pass performed either at collected jog or collected lope where the horse half-passes in one direction and then straightens momentarily before half-passing in the other direction. At the lope a flying change will coincide with this change of direction.
- b) The quality of the movement is shown by the regularity, cadence, length and smoothness of the steps. The horse will demonstrate clear self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

**6.20 Turn on the Forehand**

- a) The turn on the forehand is executed out of a halt or hesitation of movement. The horse's inside fore leg marks time in place or steps on a circle no more than 1 metre. The hind legs and outside foreleg describe a circle around the inside foreleg while maintaining the rhythm of the walk.

- b) A right turn on the forehand occurs by moving the hindquarters to the left. The horse must bend slightly around the rider's right (inside) leg and maintain right flexion; the right hind leg will pass and cross in front of the left hind leg; the left fore will step around the right fore; and vice versa for a left turn on the forehand. There is minimal forward movement.
- c) The turn may be executed as quarter, half or full revolutions.
- d) The quality of the turn is judged by the regularity and cadence of the steps and smoothness of the movement. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.
- e) Stepping back and loss of rhythm are serious faults.

#### **6.21 Turn on the Haunches (Turnaround)**

- a) The turn on the haunches is executed out of a halt or hesitation of movement. The horse must maintain the same cadence, frame and straightness of movement as for the walk. The horse is almost straight, except there may be a slight bend and flexion towards the direction of movement. Stepping back is a serious fault. The turn may be executed as half, full or multiple revolutions.
- b) There are two methods of performing a turn on the haunches. Both methods must be judged equally, however switching from one method to the other during a test is not allowed. The two methods are as follows:
  - i) The turn on the haunches is executed with the horse pivoting on the inside hind leg and stepping around it with the outside hind leg. The horse pushes off with the outside hind leg. The pivot leg is allowed to pick up and reset when it reaches the point of stress. The pivot foot must stay as near as possible to the same location.
  - ii) The turn on the haunches is executed with the inside hind leg marking time in place or stepping on a circle no more than 1 metre diameter. The forelegs and outside hind leg step around the inside hind leg while maintaining the rhythm of the walk.
- c) The quality of the turn is judged by the regularity and cadence of the steps and smoothness of the movement. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.
- d) Stepping back and loss of rhythm are serious faults.

#### **6.22 Counter-Bending Exercises**

Counter-bending occurs when the horse's bend and flexion is opposite to the direction of travel. Counter-bending exercises improve straightness, balance, coordination and suppleness. These exercises can also promote better communication and understanding between the horse and rider.

- a) Counter-bending exercises include, and are not limited to, the following:
  - i) Change of bend and/or flexion without changing direction. For example, when travelling to the right on the track, circle or turn the horse is asked to establish and maintain left bend and flexion without changing the line of travel
  - ii) Change of direction without changing bend and flexion. For example, on a figure eight, the horse goes from a left circle in true bend to a right circle in counter (left) bend
  - iii) Figure eight where both circles are performed in counter-bend
  - iv) Repeatedly changing every few strides from true bend to counter bend and vice versa while executing a figure

- v) Figures performed in counter-lope, haunches out (renvers) or counter shoulder-in
  - vi) Change of movement while maintaining the same direction of travel, such as shoulder-in to renvers; haunches in to haunches out; shoulder-in to counter shoulder-in and so on
- b) The horse should maintain regularity, cadence and length of the steps throughout the exercise and move fluently through the changes of bend and flexion. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and should remain light in hand, calm and balanced.

**6.23 Circles, Serpentine, Loops and Figure Eights**

- a) The diameters of circles in Tests are generally stated as 10m, 15m or 20m. Circles of 6m, 8m, 12m or 18m may also be specified. A circle of less than 10m diameter is also known as a volte.
- b) Serpentine start and end on the short side of the arena and consist of 3 or more half circles of equal width touching the long side of the arena. When crossing the centre line, the horse should be straight and parallel to the short side. The number of straight steps connecting the half circles and in between the changes of direction varies depending on the width of the half circles. The diameter of the half circle is determined by the number of loops of the serpentine.
- c) Loops start and end on the long side of the arena and are smooth, shallow curves requiring two changes of direction by deviating either 5m or 10m from the track being ridden. They are ridden from the long side to the quarter line or centre line; or from quarter line to quarter line or centre line. The second half of the figure should be a mirror image of the first half. Each change of direction will occur approximately 20m from the short sides.
- d) The figure eight consists of two connected circles of equal size. The horse should be momentarily straight before changing direction at the centre of the figure eight.
- e) When these figures are ridden in lope, a change of direction can either specify a change of lead or continuation in counter-lope. In counter-lope the horse will maintain a slight flexion in the direction of the lead.
- f) The quality of the movement is shown by the fluency, correct execution and accurate placement of the figure.
- g) The horse will demonstrate straightness and clear changes of bend and flexion where required.
- h) The horse's body must stay in alignment with the hind leg directly following the fore leg on the same side. Any deviations such as quarters in, shoulders falling in/out, sideways movement or incorrect bend or flexion are serious faults.
- i) The horse will maintain the regularity, cadence, length and smoothness of the steps throughout the movement. According to the level of the horse's training it will demonstrate self-carriage and maintain a consistent frame and light connection to the bit.

**6.24 Straight Lines, Turns and Corners, Change of Direction**

- a) The horse is required to execute straight lines by proceeding parallel to short and long sides and diagonally across the arena as specified in the test.
- b) Turns and corners are ridden as one quarter of a circle. The diameter of this circle progressively decreases from approximately 12m down to 6m according to the Level being shown.
- c) Changing from a straight to a curved line and back to straight occurs when entering and exiting a turn, corner or circle.
- d) The horse's body must be straight and aligned with track. The hind leg follows the track of the fore

leg on the same side. In lope, the horse maintains a slight flexion of the head and neck towards the leading leg.

- e) In preparing to change track or bend the horse should first establish a slight flexion towards the new direction.
- f) Change of direction can be executed in the following ways:
  - i) Half circles and figure eights.
  - ii) Serpentes and loops.
  - iii) Half turns on the forehand and half turns on the haunches.
  - iv) Zig-Zag (Half-Pass Counter-change of Hand). The horse should be straight momentarily before changing direction and in lope a flying change is required at this point. The Test will specify the locations or stride intervals where changes of direction are to occur.
  - v) Short and long diagonals. When riding on a diagonal, the rider should wait to change bend (and in rising jog to also change diagonal) at the end of the straight line. When loping across a diagonal, the Test may specify that one or more lead changes are required at certain points or stride intervals, or continuation in counter-lope at the end of the diagonal.
- e) Throughout these movements, the bend of the horse's body should adjust to the curvature of the line it follows. The horse maintains balance and regularity, cadence, length and smoothness of the steps. The execution should be fluent and accurate.

## **6.25 Rider Proficiency**

The rider is confident, graceful and proficient. Their performance demonstrates a fluency and finesse that makes it apparent the horse and rider have a mutually cooperative and enjoyable relationship.

- a) The rider's connection with the horse is established and maintained through a balanced upright position. There is vertical alignment of the body through the head, shoulder, hip and heel. The foot should rest home in the stirrup at a natural angle and level. The rider should sit evenly in the centre of the saddle, using their core stability and strength to maintain balance and steadiness.
- b) The suppleness of the body and joints and absence of unnecessary tension allows the rider to smoothly absorb and quietly follow the horse's movement.
- c) The hands should be independent and unobtrusive. The rider should use the appropriate rein handling method as described in **Section 6.26 Rein Handling Techniques** and maintain a light connection to the horse's mouth.
- d) Other Aids:
  - i) Subtle use of the voice and clicking of the tongue.
  - ii) Touching the horse as a reward. The romal/rein ends or free hand must not be used to intimidate the horse.
  - iii) Discreet use of a whip no longer than 120 cm (47.24 inches) including lash.
  - iv) Subtle use of spurs which must be smooth to touch and rowels must also be smooth and rotate freely. Using the leg or spur in front of the cinch is not permitted.
  - v) The bit, spurs and any other tack or equipment should never be used in a manner that intentionally or carelessly causes injury to the horse.

- e) The horse is influenced by the rider's feel, timing and correct use of aids including hands, legs and body position. The horse should be subtly directed with little apparent effort by the rider.
- f) The rider's awareness and ability to feel for the horse's intention and the consequent response or movement is central to being able to use the correct signals and timing to efficiently work with the horse. This understanding is a key ingredient in the development of the horse and rider relationship.
- g) Knowledge and understanding of the discipline is demonstrated by the accurate and correct execution of movements.
- h) Over time, it is the effectiveness and expertise of the rider that fundamentally determines the horse's responsiveness and level of training achieved.
- i) Self-control, focus and awareness are especially revealed by the rider's empathy for the horse and composure under pressure.

#### **6.26 Rein Handling Techniques**

Skilful rein handling and thorough knowledge and understanding of the equipment and techniques are attributes of competent riders. Riders should choose the appropriate equipment and methods to use considering the individual needs, capability and level of training of both themselves and their horse.

A full description of bits, bosals, reins and bridles and related tack that may be used in Western Dressage can be found in **Section 4 Presentation of Horse and Rider**.

The rider may use this equipment in competition as follows:

##### ***Two Handed – Snaffle, Curb, Bosal and Bitless Bridle***

- a) A snaffle bit and a bitless bridle can be used for all Test Levels and must be ridden two handed with either split or joined reins as described below in 6.26 (c).
- b) With the exception of Level 4 Tests and/or for the Two Rein Bridle setup, the rider may ride two handed with a curb bit and use either split or joined reins as described below in 6.26 (c). The rider may not change from one handed to two handed or vice versa during an individual test or pattern.
- c) Joined or split reins can be used two handed with a snaffle, bitless bridle, or curb as per 6.26 (a) and (b) above, as follows:
  - i) Joined or connected reins can be buckled (English style) or looped (mecate or romal style but without the tie-rein or romal extension).
  - ii) These reins may be bridged or held independently. The reins come from the bit and pass across the palm of each hand and exit over the index finger. The fingers are closed and the thumb is kept uppermost and locks down the rein against the index finger.
  - iii) When held independently, the bight (excess rein) should fall on the off (right) side of the horse's neck and underneath the rein.
  - iv) To bridge the reins, the excess rein passes to the opposite side of the neck and is also held by the thumb and fingers of each hand creating a 'bridge' between the hands. Split reins are bridged when used two handed.
  - v) For the bitless bridle the reins should be slightly draped. A signal is given when pressure is applied to one rein and it is released as the horse responds. There should not be a constant contact or pressure and only one rein at a time should be used to signal the horse.

- d) A bosal can be used for all Test Levels and must be ridden two handed with a mecate rein setup.
  - i) The mecate is a single rope or braided rein configured as two parts, the looped rein attached to a bosal and the long tie-rein that comes out of the bottom of the bosal. The tie-rein is attached to the saddle while mounted.
  - ii) The looped rein is held with two hands about shoulder width apart with the thumbs facing inwards and the fingers closed around each rein. The left hand can also hold a loop of the excess rein which can be used to lengthen and shorten the mecate as needed while riding.
  - iii) The mecate should be slightly draped and a signal is given when pressure is applied to one rein and it is released as the horse responds. There should not be a constant contact or pressure and only one rein at a time should be used to signal the horse.

***One Handed – Curb and Two Rein Bridle***

- e) When using a curb bit the rider may ride one handed in all Levels and must ride one handed when using a curb bit in Level 4. Split or romal reins are to be used. The reins can be held in either hand although it is customary for the rein hand to be the non-dominant hand (that is, the left hand if you are right-handed and vice versa).
- f) When riding one handed, the rider is allowed at the end of the free walk, free jog or free lope, to use the free hand to adjust the reins back to the desired length. Riders using romal reins may use the hand holding the romal to alter the tension or length of the reins from the bridle to the rein hand.
- g) There are two methods of riding one handed with a curb bit that may be used with split reins.
  - i) In the first method, the reins come from the bit over the index finger. The reins can be held together or separated by the one finger. The thumb is kept uppermost and locks down the rein/s against the index finger (usually the right rein is on top and the left rein is underneath). The two reins then exit below the closed hand with the ends falling on the same side as the rein hand.
  - ii) The free hand must not be used to alter the length or tension of the reins except as permitted after free paces. The free hand should not touch the reins except to untangle the end of the reins (below the rein hand) if necessary.
  - iii) The second method is similar to the romal setup. The reins are held in a fist with the thumb uppermost. The reins come from the bit under the little finger and pass out over the thumb. No finger separates the reins.
  - iv) The free hand holds the excess rein and rests against the rider's leg. The rein hand and free hand must be held so that there is at least 40 cm (16") of excess rein between the hands. The rider is allowed to alter the tension or length of the reins as long as the hands are held in a legal manner.
- h) Romal rein setup may only be used with a curb bit and ridden one handed.
  - i) Romal reins consist of two parts, the joined reins and the single extension of material (romal) attached at this point. These parts are balanced in length and weight and connect in the middle (the keeper, or hobble, that attaches to the romal is considered to be part of the romal). The reins attach to the bit. The romal has a leather popper or quirt on the end.

- ii) The reins are held in a fist with the thumb uppermost. The reins come from the bit under the little finger and pass out over the thumb. No fingers are permitted between the reins except in the two-rein setup.
- iii) The free hand must hold the romal and is not allowed, at any time, to touch the reins. The reins and romal must be held so that there is at least 40 cm (16") of rein/romal between the hands. The rider is allowed to alter the tension or length of the reins as long as the hands are held in a legal manner.
- iv) The Two Rein Bridle with a bosalita and spade bit configuration may only be used in Level 3 and 4 and the horse must be at least four (4) years old.
- v) The bosalita with mecate reins is worn under the bridle and bit with romal reins.
- vi) The rider holds both sets of reins in the same manner as a romal setup, but is allowed to separate the reins with the fingers as they wish. The free hand holds the romal in the usual way and can be used to adjust the length of the reins.

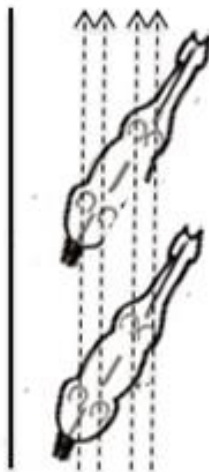
**6.27 Riders With Disabilities (RWD)**

- a) A rider with a physical or intellectual disability (RWD) that has signed documentation from a medical practitioner stating their condition and that equestrian related activities are a safe option for them to pursue are encouraged to participate in Western Dressage events and activities.
- b) This documentation is to be provided the first time that the rider joins WDA-AUS or registers to attend a WDA-AUS event. This enables a rider to gain approval to participate with the use of compensating aids or other appropriate assistance as needed to enable them to ride at their optimum functional level. Youth RWD participants must be seven (7) years of age or older to participate in ridden events.
- c) WDA-AUS recommends that where practical Event Convenors opt to include specific RWD classes and support RWD participation in competition classes and clinics. In doing so, WDA-AUS does not assume responsibility for safety of participants. The Event Organisation conducts these events and controls both the physical facility and all aspects of the event and so responsibility for participant's safety remains solely with the Event Organisation.
- d) Each RWD participant, and if the participant is a minor, the parent or guardian by allowing participation, assumes all risk of personal injury or property damage and releases and discharges WDA-AUS, its Branches, Associations and Affiliates and Event Convenors, their respective officers, directors, representatives, and employees, from any and all liability, whenever or however arising, as to personal injury or property damage occurring as a result of participation in these classes, except for the negligent act or omission, if any, of said indemnities. Further, in the case of a minor, as parent or legal guardian, they agree to indemnify and hold harmless WDA-AUS and Event Organisation from such liability to the minor.
- e) The rider will need to provide a written list of all compensatory aids, modified equipment and assistance required for competition. WDA-AUS will review this and any supporting documentation in order to provide a dispensation notification. Riders are not allowed to use any other aids, modified equipment or assistance while competing that is not specifically listed on their dispensation notification. The rider will provide a copy of this notification to the Event Convenors when registering to attend an event. The Event Convenor shall attach a copy of this notification to all applicable scoring sheets for the Judge's reference.
- f) If an assistant is required, they must be eighteen (18) years of age or over and should wear western style pants/jeans, enclosed safe shoes, long-sleeved shirt with a collar and a western hat. The

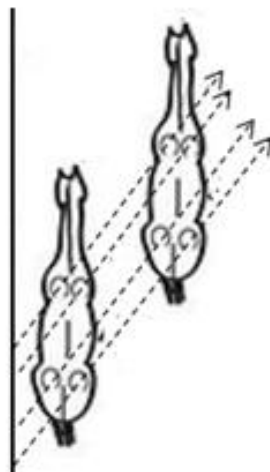
assistant/s remains in a designated area unless their assistance is required and requested by the Judge, rider or event official. If a lead line is needed, the assistant can attach it to a halter that is under the bridle. The lead cannot be attached to the bit.

- g) A RWD with hearing impairment can have an assistant/s who communicates via sign language or cue cards to the rider so they can be informed of event officials and Judge's directives.
- h) Judges are not permitted to alter a test, pattern or course except for specific RWD only classes. In this case the Judge can modify a test, pattern or course or set their own in order to make the class more suitable for the participating riders.
- i) All other competition and event guidelines, apart from the exceptions noted in this Section 6.25, apply to RWD specified classes, and participation by RWD in other WDA-AUS classes and events.**
- j) RWD Eligible conditions:  
Amputation; Arthrogyposis; Asperger's Syndrome; Autism; Batten's Disease; Cerebrovascular Accident; Cerebella Ataxia; Cerebral Palsy; Coffin Lowry Syndrome; Cystic Fibrosis; Down Syndrome; Dwarfism; Fragile X Syndrome; Friedrick's Ataxia; Guillan Barre Syndrome; Hearing Impairment; Hunter's Syndrome; Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis; Intellectual Disability; Microcephaly; Multiple Sclerosis; Muscular Dystrophy; Post-Polio Syndrome; Prader Willie Syndrome; Rhatt Syndrome; Spina Bifida; Spinal Cord Injury; Tourette Syndrome; Traumatic Brain Injury; Trisomy Abnormalities; Vision Impairment; Other diagnoses will be considered upon request.
- k) RWD Ineligible conditions:  
ADHD; Anxiety Disorders; Chronic Fatigue Syndrome; Depression; Dyslexia; Eating Disorders; Fibromyalgia; Learning Disabilities; Psychological Diagnosis.
- l) RWD and Assisted Riders must wear a properly fitted and fastened with harness, Australian Standard protective helmet. No equipment is allowed that would in any way affix the rider to the horse or saddle with the exception of light rubber bands. Safety stirrups (covered or other approved safety stirrups) are required if rider is unable to wear boots with a heel.
- m) RWD tack and equipment is to conform to the needs of the rider and be suitable for the horse. Special adaptive equipment may be used where appropriate. Acceptable adaptive equipment includes:  
Audio Communications; Bareback Pads; Boot Adaptations; Dowel Reins; Hand Holds: Flexible and/or Rigid; Velcro or Rubber Bands to tie stirrups or leathers to girth or cinch; Ladder Reins; Loop Reins; Rein Handles; Rein Handle Tethers; Rubber Bands; Saddle Blocks, Wedges, Cushions; Safety Stirrups; Seat Savers; Surcingles; Whips (one or two); Other equipment will be considered upon request.
- n) The equipment and attire must adhere to the requirements stated in **Section Five Presentation of Horse and Rider** with exceptions of authorised adaptations described in the case of the RWD Dispensation Notification.

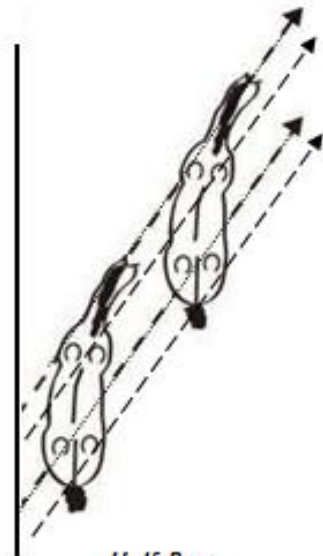




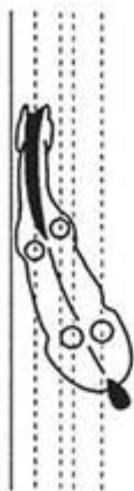
*Leg-Yield  
on the wall*



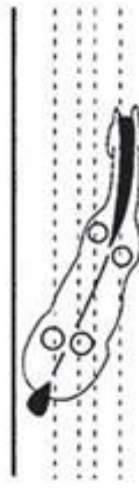
*Leg-Yield  
on the diagonal*



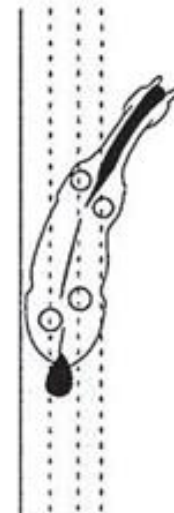
*Half-Pass*



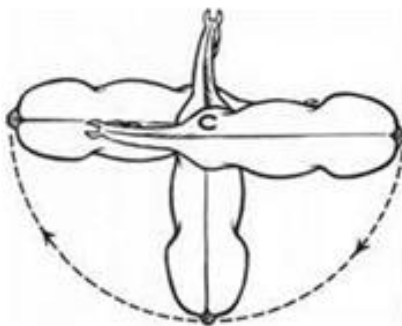
*Haunches-In  
(Travers)*



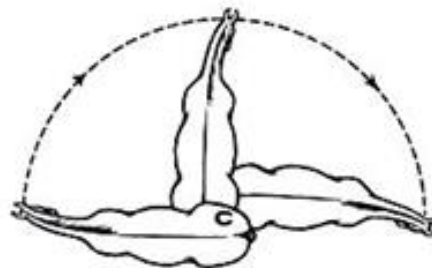
*Haunches-Out  
(Renvers)*



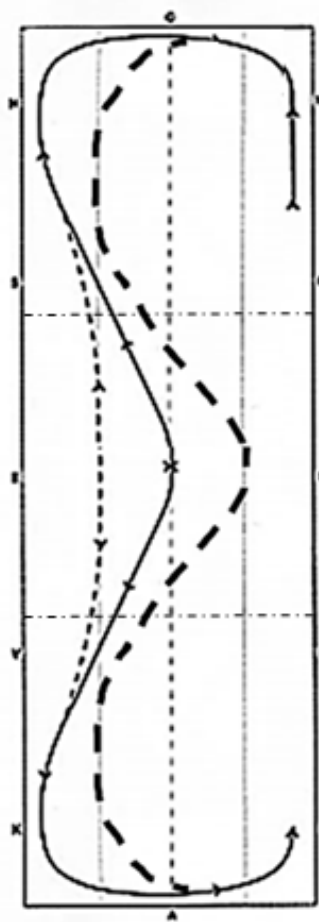
*Shoulder-In*



*Half-Turn on the Forehand*



*Half-Turn on the Haunches*

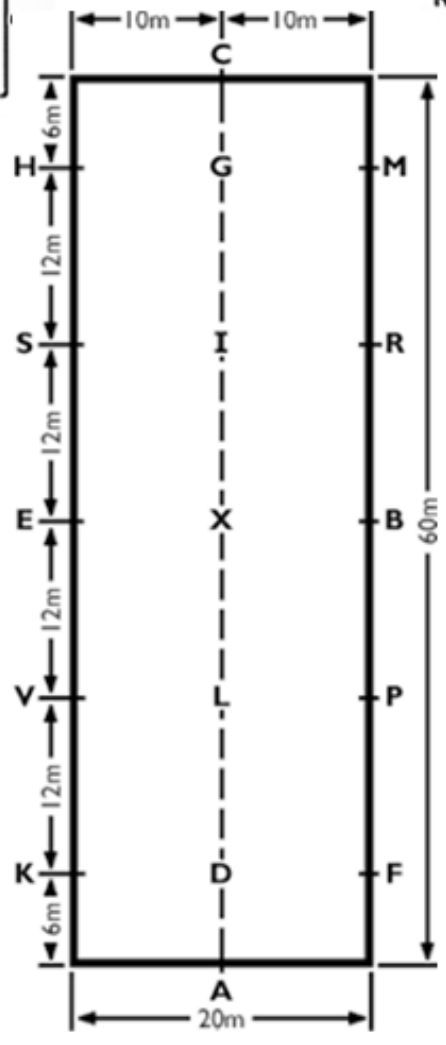
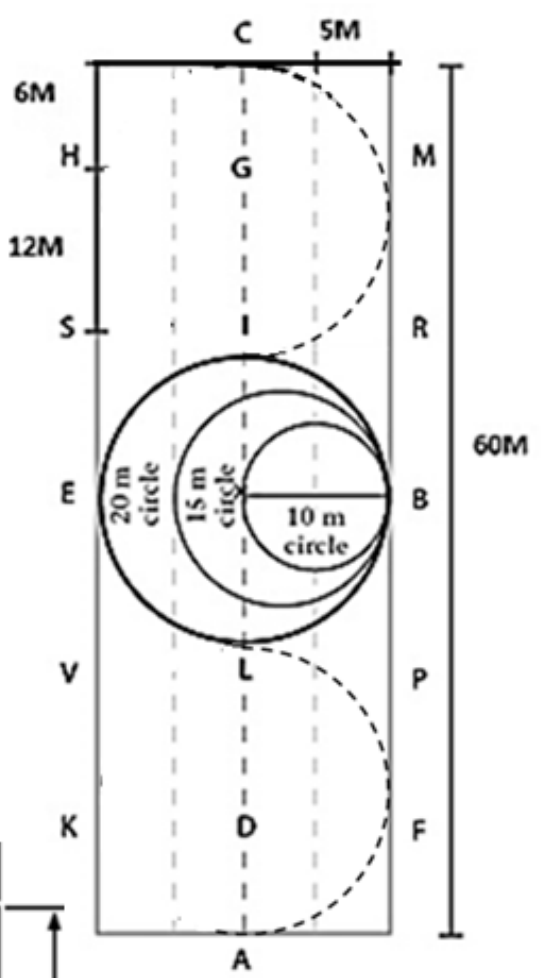


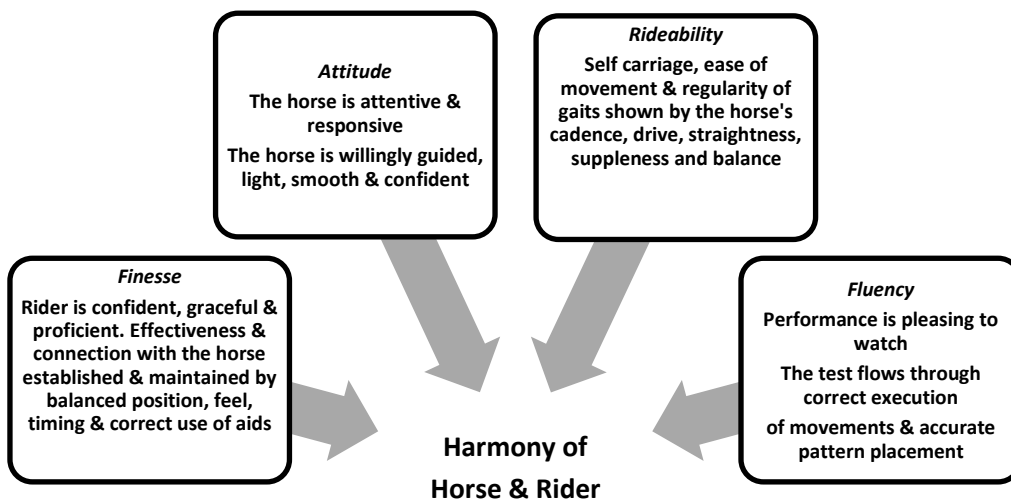
Left:  
 5m Loop from long side to quarter line (H-K)  
 10m Loop from the long side to X (H-X-K)  
 3 Loops quarter-line to quarter-line (A-C)  
 Changes of direction occur 20m from the short sides (- - -)

Right:  
 Circles (20m, 15m, 10m) at B

3 Loop Serpentine from A to C is formed by 3 half 20m circles with change of direction on the centre line

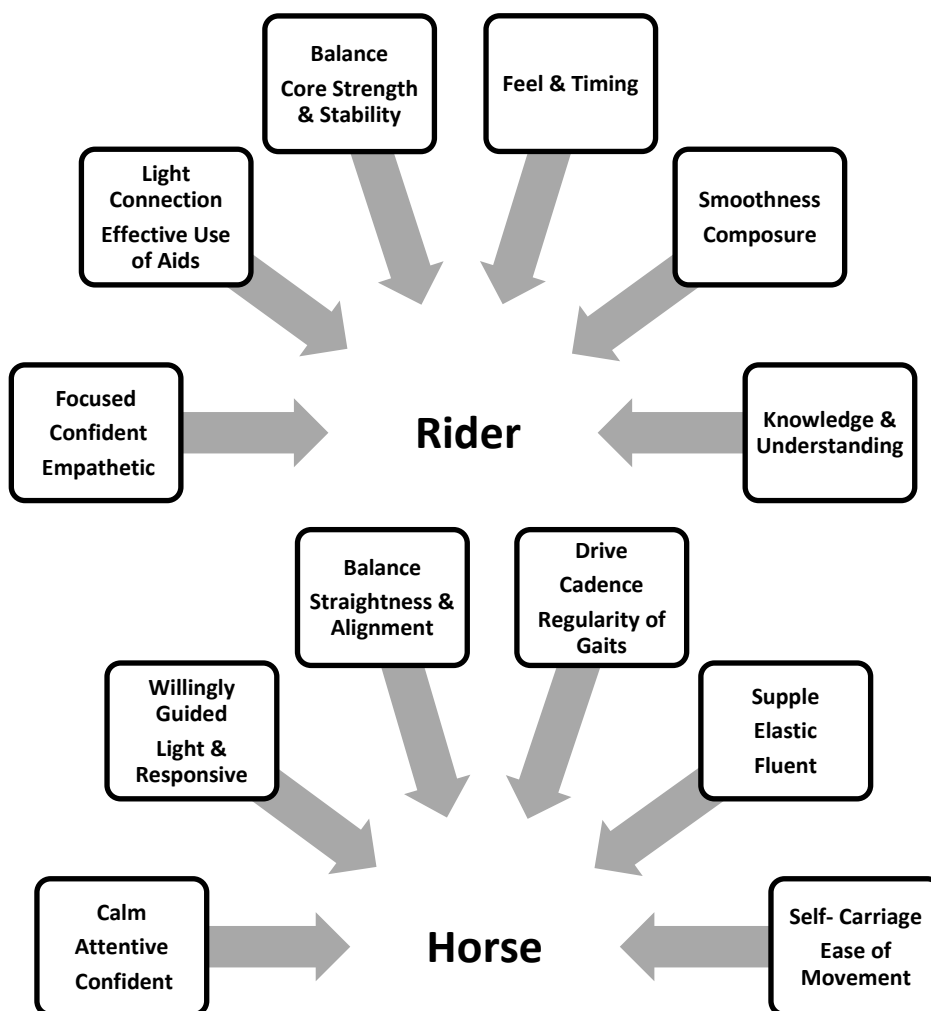
Below:  
 Western Dressage Test Arena





*Western Dressage Competition – Key Elements*

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*Western Dressage Training - Key Elements*

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