

Dressage Judging Guidelines



This document serves as a supplement to the information provided in the iEA rulebook, and contains excerpts from the 2022-2023 IEA Rules and Regulations and the Dressage Addendum. Please make a special note of the following and contact show management with any questions.

As an Interscholastic Equestrian Association judge, we ask that you take into consideration the uniqueness of interscholastic horse shows. Riders will compete on an unfamiliar horse, and in the DSE classes they will not have the opportunity to ride their mounts before they enter the arena to be judged. The show horses will be warmed-up by non-competing riders and the IEA members will not have been on any other horse before they ride that day. The only exception would be Open - level riders who may be warming up horses provided by their own team.

- The key to judging IEA competition is to look for the rider who is the most effective and the most capable, regardless of their mount. For example, a rider who draws a difficult horse, but is an outstanding rider and shows remarkable ability, should place higher than a mediocre rider who does very little on an extremely nice horse.
- All tack and artificial aids presented in the ring have been deemed acceptable by the show steward and have been checked for safety.
- All horse assignments (draws) are RANDOM. Riders have no control over which mount they are given. Please talk with the stewards and/or show management if you think a horse is inappropriate.
- Riders should not be penalized due to horse height issues (i.e. small rider on big horse or tall rider on short horse)
- The show steward may stop a class and remove a horse that is acting inappropriate or unsound, or a rider who is using inappropriate artificial aids. The show steward will provide next steps in these cases.
- If a horse performs so poorly that you cannot judge the ability of the rider, the steward may grant a “re-ride”. The request for a re-ride may come from the judge or the coach of the rider, but the show steward is the person who ultimately decides if a re-ride will be granted. While you cannot grant a re-ride, if you feel that you need to see a rider on a different horse, then you can “test” the rider by having them switch with another rider in the ring (See *Dressage Rider Tests* - page 6 of the Dressage Addendum).
- If a re-ride is granted in a Dressage Test class, then the rider with the new horse will test after the final scheduled horse. If a re-ride is granted in a DSE class, you may pick up where you left off, or you may start the class from the beginning.

Judging Requirements

taken from the 2022-2023 IEA Rules and Regulations Page 86



- A. In dressage seat equitation classes, only the rider is being judged, therefore, no penalty should be assessed because of the horse's conformation, color or way of going.
- B. Judges should not feel it necessary to test
- C. Riders will be judged on seat, hands, ability to control and show horse.
- D. Results as shown by performance of the horse are NOT necessarily to be considered more important than the method used by the rider in obtaining them.
- E. A rider must be prepared to perform the tests appropriate for the class in which the rider is participating.

F. Dressage Discipline – Hands and Seat

1. The rider should be well-balanced, elastic, sitting deep in the center of the saddle, smoothly absorbing the movement of the horse with his loins and hips, supple thighs with the legs steady and stretched well down.

2. The heels should be the lowest point.

3. The upper part of the body should be tall and supple. The contact should be independent from the rider's seat. The hands should be carried steadily close together, with the thumb as the highest point and a straight line from the supple elbow through the hand to the horse's mouth. The elbows should be close to the body.

G. Dressage Class Routine

1. Dressage Test

- a. Rider may enter the arena upon the final salute of the previous competitor.
- b. Rider may warm up for a minimum of one minute or upon the bell for their round.
- c. Rider enters center line at A, halting at X to begin test.
- d. At final salute, rider will walk up center line towards C and may stop and talk with the judge.

2. Dressage Seat Equitation

- a. Riders must enter the ring collectively on the rail and show collectively at all required gaits in both directions prior to any individual testing.
- b. Riders must be judged at the medium walk, working trot (sitting and rising), and working canter in both directions (except for W/T classes).
- c. A judge may, but is not required, to choose to request that all riders perform movements listed below on the rail as a group:
 - i. Free walk
 - ii. Transitions from one gait to the next in both direction
 - iii. Transitions from walk to halt and vice versa
 - iv. Change of direction across the diagonal, down the centerline, across the arena, and/or by making a half circle.
 - v. Half-circle at the walk or trot

3. Following required rail work, a judge may, **but is not required**, to also choose to do additional testing to be ridden in small groups or independently using the appropriate tests listed in Rule 3.N: Dressage Seat Equitation Rider Tests.

2022-2023 USEF DSE Rider Work out Tests are available on the website

Judging Requirements

taken from the 2022-2023 IEA Rules and Regulations Page 83



L. Dressage Rider Tests for DSE Classes and Class Placement

A rider must be prepared to perform the tests appropriate for the Dressage Seat Equitation class in which the rider is participating. Riders may be requested to perform the following tests collectively or individually during a show or competition. A dressage judge **may** choose from the following list, using tests 1-5 for the Beginner Walk/Trot classes, 1-6 for the Beginner Walk/Trot/Canter classes, 1-7 for the Novice classes, 1-9 for the Intermediate classes and 1-12 for the Open classes.

1. Ask an appropriate horsemanship question that is tailored to the ability level.
2. Halt
3. Transitions using the walk, rising trot and canter
4. 20m circles
5. Change horses
~~~~~
6. Figure eight or serpentine at the trot demonstrating change of diagonals at the trot  
~~~~~
7. Figure eight at the canter demonstrating changes of lead through the trot
~~~~~
8. Sitting trot
9. Lengthening at the trot  
~~~~~
10. Lengthening at the canter
11. 10m circles at the trot
12. 15m circles at the canter

Optional DSE group or individual testing cheat sheet

- Class 2. Varsity Open Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-12**
- Class 4. Varsity Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-9**
- Class 6. JV Novice Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-7**
- Class 7 (7X). JV Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-6**
- Class 8 (8X). JV Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-5**
- Class 10. Future Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-9**
- Class 12. Future Novice Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-7**
- Class 13 (13X). Future Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-6**
- Class 14 (14X). Future Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation: 1-5**

Class Descriptions for Upper School Classes

taken from the 2022-2023 IEA Rules and Regulations Page 80



Class Descriptions Dressage Upper School Class Descriptions-Varsity and Junior

Varsity

Class 1. Varsity Open Dressage Test Test: IEA Open Rider Test Open to riders in grades 9-12 who are not other eligible for the Varsity Intermediate, or lower, divisions. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-12 . To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points and participated in a minimum of two (2) Open Dressage Seat Equitation Classes. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Open Test classes and two (2) Open Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 2. Varsity Open Dressage Seat Equitation: Open to riders in grades 9-12. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-12 . To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Open Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 3. Varsity Intermediate Dressage Test Test: IEA Intermediate Rider Test Open to riders in grades 9-12. This division is open to all riders who have not competed in a recognized or schooling dressage competition at Second level or higher. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. Riders may not have competed in the FEI 5 year old test or above. Riders may not have been rated B or higher by the United States Pony Clubs, Inc. Riders who have won 10 or more blue ribbons in jumping events at 3'3" (0.99 meters) or higher are not eligible for Intermediate Classes. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-9 . To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points and participated in a minimum of two (2) Intermediate or Open Dressage Seat Equitation Classes. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Intermediate Test classes and two (2) Intermediate or Open Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 4. Varsity Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation: Open to riders in grades 9-12. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-9 . To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class Descriptions for Upper School Classes

taken from the 2022-2023 IEA Rules and Regulations Page 80



Class 5. JV Novice Dressage Test Test: IEA Novice Rider Test Open to riders in grades 9-12. This division is open to all riders who have not competed in 6 or more first level tests or competed at a level higher than first level in any recognized or schooling dressage competition guidelines on equivalent FEI and foreign federation tests. Riders may not have competed in the FEI 4 year old test or above. Riders may not have been rated C+, C-3 or higher by the United States Pony Clubs, Inc. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-7. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points and participated in a minimum of two (2) Novice or Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation Classes. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Novice Test classes and two (2) Novice or Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 6. JV Novice Dressage Seat Equitation: Open to riders in grades 9-12. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-7. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Novice Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 7. JV Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation - Walk/Trot/Canter Open to riders in grades 9-12. This division is open to any rider that has not competed in 6 training level test or competed at a level higher than training, in any recognized or schooling dressage competition; including those recognized by USDF, USEF or USEA. Riders may not have been rated C-2 or above by the United States Pony Clubs, Inc. Riders must be experienced enough to canter on an unfamiliar animal in a group. To be eligible for Class 7, a rider must have had at least one year continuous professional instruction, must demonstrate proficiency at the trot and canter, and be capable of competing on a variety of unfamiliar horses. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-6. Riders may not crossenter into Class 8 Walk/Trot. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation Walk/Trot/Canter classes during the regular season. CLASS 7x/8x. Junior Varsity Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation Walk/Trot Warm-up Optional offering that can combine with Future Class 13x/14x. Open to riders competing in Class 7 and Class 8. No individual or team points will be awarded.

Class 8. JV Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation - Walk/Trot Open to riders in grades 9-12 who meet the criteria for Class 7 but are not yet ready to compete on an unfamiliar horse at the canter. To be eligible for Class 8, riders must have at least six months continuous professional instruction, must demonstrate proficiency at a trot, and must be capable of competing on a variety of unfamiliar horses. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-5. Individual points will be tracked in Class 8 Walk/Trot for post season qualification. No team points will be awarded in Class 8 Walk/Trot during regular or post season shows. Riders may not cross-enter Class 7 Walk/Trot/Canter. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points.

Class Descriptions for Future Classes

taken from the 2022-2023 IEA Rules and Regulations Page 80



Dressage Futures (Grades 4-8) Class Descriptions

Class 9. Future Intermediate Dressage Test Test: IEA Intermediate Rider Test Open to riders in grades 4-8 who meet the criteria for Dressage Class 1 or 3. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-9 . To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points and participated in a minimum of two (2) Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation Classes. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Intermediate Test classes and two (2) Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 10. Future Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation: Open to riders in grades 4 - 8. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-9 . To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 11 - Future Novice Dressage Test Test: IEA Novice Rider Test Open to riders in grades 4 - 8. This division is open to all riders who have not competed in 6 or more first level tests or competed at a level higher than first level in any recognized or schooling dressage competition (guidelines on equivalent FEI and foreign federation tests are in the appendix of the rules). Riders may not have competed in the FEI 4 year old test or above. Riders may not have been rated C+, C-3 or higher by the United States Pony Clubs, Inc. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-7. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points and participated in a minimum of two (2) Novice or Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation Classes. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Novice Test classes and two (2) Novice or Intermediate Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 12. Future Novice Dressage Seat Equitation: Open to riders in grades 4 - 8. Riders must be able to walk, trot, canter & halt in a group class. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-7. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Novice Dressage Seat Equitation classes during the regular season.

Class 13. Future Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation - Walk/Trot/Canter Open to riders in grades 4 - 8 who meet the eligibility requirements for Class 7. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-6. Riders may not cross enter into Class 14 Walk/Trot. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points. To be eligible for post season competition in team classes riders must have participated in a minimum of two (2) Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation Walk/Trot/Canter classes during the regular season.

Class Descriptions for Upper School Classes

taken from the 2022-2023 IEA Rules and Regulations Page 80



Class 14. Future Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation: Walk/Trot Open to riders in grades 4 - 8 who meet the criteria for Class 8. To be eligible for Class 14, riders must have at least six months continuous professional instruction, must demonstrate proficiency at a trot, and must be capable of competing on a variety of unfamiliar horses. These riders should be capable of performing Dressage Seat Equitation Tests 1-5. Individual points will be tracked in Class 14 Walk/Trot for post season qualification. No team points will be awarded in Class 14 Walk/Trot during regular or post season shows. Riders may not cross-enter Class 13 Walk/Trot/Canter. To be eligible for post season competition in Individual classes riders must have accumulated the required points.

CLASS 13x/14x. Future Beginner Dressage Seat Equitation Walk/Trot Warm-up: Optional offering that can combine with Junior Varsity

Class 7x/8x. Open to riders competing in Class 13 and Class 14. No individual or team points will be awarded.