



MIDWEST DRESSAGE ASSOCIATION

THE PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Spring is finally here! And with it the beginning of show season. Finally, we can show off all the hard work we have done over the winter in cold indoor arenas, watching our breath, the horse's breath and the trainers breath come out in clouds. Show ground managers are prepped and ready and at this writing we have already had a couple shows.

An important thing to remember as this season gets rolling, we're in this for the fun of it, at least 99% of us. If we aren't having fun, we're in the wrong sport. Riding our perfect test, a vision we all hope for, doesn't always happen. But leaving the arena with a smile and a pat for our horse who tries his/her hardest for us, and a thank you to the judge, shows the world our positive attitude, that we will come back in the arena and try again. I know I've had moments myself after a not so pretty test that I've been ready to sell my horse for a nickel. But one look at him and I know most of the issues were not his fault. Either it was pilot error or it wasn't a test he

could do at the moment. He tried. And that's what counts. We try to do our best and come back another day to do better.

On behalf of the MDA Board, I want to wish everyone a fun, safe and successful season! I hope to see many of you at the shows. And don't forget, we get to celebrate all our successes in November at the annual award banquet! Good luck everyone! Have fun!!

Susan

IN THIS ISSUE

The President's Paragraphs
 Calling for Any Volunteers
 Attire and Tack for Western Dressage Article
 Want to more about Western Dressage?
 Twister's Tip
 Upcoming Events
 Exercise Take Away
 Qualifications for Recognized Shows Year End
 Awards
 Show calendar
 Barn Directory
 Book Review
 Classifieds



CALLING FOR ANY VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS UPCOMING SEASON, PLEASE
CONTACT: SUSAN ROTH **EMAIL:** ASHLEY@MIDWESTDRESSAGE.ORG

TWISTER'S TIP

Want to bring your riding exercises with you to the barn? Want to quick reference to your riding plans? Here is a nice way to organize your riding plans and be able to ride with them. Using name tag protectors, you can place exercise ideas, warm-up ideas, workouts, etc. in it as a reference to take to the barn and/or ride with them in your pocket.



ATTIRE AND TACK FOR WESTERN DRESSAGE

By Sue Hughes

When you are reading Western Dressage Rule WD 123, you will see that it is very No Nonsense. Very short and simple. Therefore, you can be creative and make the fashion statement of your choice. Here are the details of the rule without quoting it directly.

Part 1

A suitable hat. But no “fashion hats”. Protective headgear is fine but not required. Long sleeved shirts with any type of collar. One-piece long sleeved equitation suits are fine as long as they have a collar. Short sleeves are okay if the judge says so. A vest, jacket, coat and/or sweater may be added. For your lower half, jeans, chaps, shotgun chaps, chinks, armitas or split riding skirts work. No amount of silver on your saddle is going to improve your score. No silver at all is fine, Decorative conches and other touches of enhancements can be used.

So, beyond the requirements, what will you wear? A suggestion is to look at the body style, and color of your horse. You already know what looks good on you. Coordinate those. Some well turned out women are wearing different hues in print shirts. Tailoring is crisp and the fabric looks soft. Bling certainly is OK as always in the Western arenas. Neckties, kerchiefs and bolo ties or pins are nice accessories that are allowed. You simply need to look “put together” but certainly comfort and rideability are premium.

Men in the ring often wear jeans with plaid shirts. They wear ties of some sort, or not. Their shirts too need collars. Often men favor chaps.

A color that often is hard to pull off is bright red. If it fits the rest of your “decor” a splash of it will work. So, the long run, color blending, and coordination with your body style and your horse's color makes spectators and judges know that you studied this part of your performance thoughtfully

Part 2

Spurs are part of your fashion statement as well as an aid for collection for your horse. Here is the rule about spurs that has been adopted for 2022. “Spurs, Western style with or without blunt tines, English dressage style, roller ball, and blunt bumper spurs... are permitted. Rowels must be vertical. Spurs with sharp tines are Not Permitted.” WD 123.1.c Spurs sometimes have engraving worked into them. Some even have a little sparkle inserted. Check the marketplace for your choice.

Your horse can get into your color scheme as well. Polo wraps of white and those that match the horses’ hair coat are allowed in WD 122.3 Spotted and Paint horses might be a challenge! But no ribbons or flowers in the mane or tail’ except in a costumed freestyle, are allowed.

“Fly hoods (ear covers) should be discreet in color and design and should not cover the horse’ eyes”. WD120.8.

Part 3 Saddles

When Western Dressage was a newbie, folks were encouraged to join the new discipline without too many restrictions. The biggest requirement then was that the saddle have fenders and Western style stirrups. Reaching the advanced age of about 7 years, WDAA requirements today are more to the point of actually being ‘Western’. WD 121 Tack 6.a

“A standard Western stock saddle with swells, a seat, cantle, skirt, fenders and Western stirrups are required. A working Western side saddle also is acceptable”. Options include a horn, padding on the seat, bucking rolls, and Tapaderos except in Western Dressage Equitation.

Here is one person’s experience shopping for saddles. Kristin Kill of Michigan, reported that she started with a regular reining saddle. It did not fit the shoulders of her medium sized quarter horse. It also had very long skirts, so was too long for his back. Study led her to a manufacturer who, working to keep up with the different needs of women riding Western dressage, took basically an English seat and put it on a Western tree. Kristin felt that put her in a not desirable “chair seat”. Pressing on she found another maker who compared the difference in width of female seat bones and male seat bones. He found that female seat bones

are one to one and a half inches farther apart and also angled differently for males. The seat he developed allowed her to sit “in” the horse and not “on” it. Kristin says it also keeps her in the middle of the saddle and horse. Additionally, this saddle maker was able to accommodate the wide shoulders of her Andalusian.

Kristin’s saddle is 23 inches from button to button. It weighs 23 pounds. Dr. Erika Erlandden, who won the versatility award in WDAMI last year, says hers weighs only 18 pounds. “A great improvement”, she said, “instead of hefting 40 pound up onto her 17 hand horse”. These riders also have a “slick fork” style which means that the swells are low and sloped down and out. This allows for a suitable hand/forearm height, and makes the horn easy to find and a comfortable size if a hand hold is needed. The slick fork also allows riders’ hands to be closer together for better lateral flexing at the jaw/poll joint. Since the stirrups are attached to the bottom of the fenders, they do not tend to lie parallel to the horse’ sides. This is a proper foot position for Western Dressage. But they can be professionally turned so the rider’s boot slides in directly from back to front. Stirrup styles are plentiful, but a flat tread for the foot to balance evenly weighted from big to little toe is desirable.

Part 4 Hats

WDAA has put together a plethora of pictures of Western hats. Some are considered to uphold the traditions of hats acceptable for competitions. As mentioned earlier, others strictly are for fashion. Cindy Butle, WDAA President, told me “Do not come down the center line in one of those.” She gave a fun presentation on hats at the recent Judges Forum in Denver. For this article she referred me to “South Texas Tack” company’s website. It is well illustrated showing all the parts of a cowboy hat. Further descriptions tell of the history of the crown, its crease down the middle and the dents on either side. There is a line on the picture which points to the “Roll” of the brim which surrounds the crown. The Roll needs to have a very crisp sharp “corner” to make the best impression. The height of the crown should be what looks best on you. Modest head bands around the crown are OK. Straw hats are like other fashion traditions of white shoes and purses from Memorial Day to Labor Day in the US. Felt hats are the best for the rest of the competition year. These can be fairly costly, but with care will last a long, long time. A reminder. Like silver on the saddle, the perfect hat will Not improve your Western Dressage score. Darn.

At a Western Dressage show it truly is interesting and fun to observe what riders choose for the “turn out” of themselves and their horses. Pad designs are endless and should blend into the overall presentation. Enjoy

this part of showing, but remember that the proper “basics” achieved through humane training are what counts. Both you and your horse need to be calm, confident and happy

Are you interested in trying out Western Dressage?

Well this year, Midwest Dressage Association is offering Western Dressage classes and year-end awards along with Classical Dressage.

Where is the best place to begin learning more about Western Dressage?

The [Western Dressage Association of America](#) website gives a lot of wonderful information.

Want to know a little bit more about [Western Dressage](#)?

Where can I find the [tests](#)?

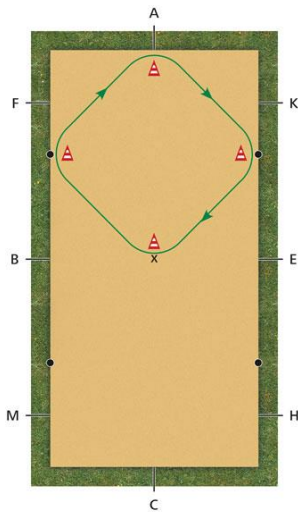
Does Michigan have an affiliate?

Yes, Michigan does. I had the privilege to talk to the WDAMI president, Suzanne Morisse about WDAMI and here is some information she gave me.

A WDAA affiliate is like a GMO in USDF. They offer education events, have a WDAA/WDAMI rider Medals Program and offer year end awards for both online and live shows. If you would like to know more about this affiliate, [Western Dressage Association of Michigan](#). They have a Social Corral on Facebook too.

EXERCISE TAKE AWAY

The square exercise.



"Riding a Diamond inside a Circle"

Equipment:

4 Cones/Flour/ something to mark "the Spots"
A helper with a rake

Organizing your Diamond: Put your markers at the 4 spots where you should touch

Large arena - 20m diamond at the end -

- 20 meter diamond which begins and ends at C
- Remember that the corner letters (M, F, H, K) are only 6 meters from the end of the ring. When riding 20 meter diamonds at A or C, you need to touch the rail 4 meters beyond those letters.
- S-R line for a diamond at C (the V-L line for a diamond at A) and aim to cross the centerline 2 meters beyond that line.



Small Arena - 20m diamond at the end

- 20 meter diamond which begins and ends at C
- Touch the long sides of the arena 4 meters beyond the corner letters. However, in the small arena you cross the centerline exactly at X.

You and your helper rake a double wide line straight from one marker to the next until you have raked a very straight sided "Diamond". Keep your helper with their rake handy. Now mount up.

Day 1: Walk the "Diamond"

- Step 1: When you are done with your warm-up, ride at walk a STRAIGHT line from one marker to the next. At the markers ride a 1/4 pirouette or 1/4 turn on the haunches with stopping. Stop when the diamond is complete and carefully step out of the diamond.
 - Look at the footsteps: Did you ride straight lines? No?
- Step 2: Do it again. Straight, turn, Straight, turn, etc. While moving you are only allowed to look at the markers.
- Step 3: Check second set of footsteps. Better? If no, why not? What do you need to do more of to make a straight line? Are you forgetting your outside leg, outside rein?
- Continue to work at the walk. Have your helper rake out the footsteps after every 4-5 attempts.
- Change direction, ride straight lines to make the diamond on this side.

Day 2: On to a trot "Diamond"

- Now that a walk diamond is MUCH better, try at posting trot. Go the direction that is easiest for you first.
- Riding a perfected diamond? Ride it 4 more times either posting or sitting trot. But NO Looking at the markers. Look straight ahead, between/over your horse's ears.
- Evaluate - How did you do? Keep working until it is perfect.
- Next, change direction; work until a perfect diamond is done more than once.
- Leave this for today. Put the rake away and scruff out the marks in the dirt/ put your cone/markers away.

Day 3: "Diamond" in a different spot

- Move the diamond to either the middle (E or B) or the other end where you have not practiced the diamond yet. Put your markers in the correct spots.
- Repeat Day 1 and 2.
- If you can easily ride perfect diamond at walk, posting and sitting trot, congratulations! Feeling a bit cocky? Wait until tomorrow.

Day 4: Riding Multiple "Diamonds"

- Are you positive that you can ride the three 20 diamonds on first try in the arena? Each diamond MUST be in a different place, A, X, C.
- Repeat Day 1 and 2

Day 5: Canter the "Diamond"

Now you are perfect on 2/3 of the diamonds.

- So you think that the diamond is conquered correct?

- Go back to wherever you thought was the most fun to place your markers.
- Once warmed up, do your diamonds at walk and trot. Perfect?
- Next , try some diamonds at canter. Remember STRAIGHT LINES. And you thought walk and trot were tough.
- This may take more than one riding session. Keep going until you are either exhausted, horse is exhausted, or they are perfect. Take breaks and work on other things then come back to this.

CHECKLIST:

- Is the horse relaxed at all gaits?
- Are you keeping your hips, shoulders, parallel with your horse?
- Is trot rhythmical and active?
- Are you using the correct diagonal?
- Are you guarding the horse's shoulders and hind quarters with your outside aids to prevent him drifting to the outside?
- Are you using half-halts before each marker on you diamond, regardless of the gait?
- Is canter regular, have lightness, and starting to feel uphill?
- Is walk a clear 4-beat gait? Trot a 2-beat gait? Is canter a clear 3-beat gait?
- Are you using half-halts to collect the gait before each pirouette?
- Are you riding "forward" between the collected pirouettes?

When all of these can be answered "Yes" for every diamond you do, you can now turn that diamond into a circle.

- As you do your diamond ask for inside bend with the inside leg. Make sure you are support your horse with the outside leg and rein.
- Check your footsteps. Is the diamond turning into a circle? Adjust the amount of bend as needed.

Think diamond with inside flexion and bend.

Thank you, Valerie Dean, for introducing me to this exercise. And also, The Big Book of Dressage Exercises, for its great illustrations.

Beth Schaub



Qualification Requirements For Recognized Shows and Minimum Scores Eligible for Year End Awards

To qualify for awards at Recognized Show Training Level through Grand Prix, only scores from USDF/USEF recognized shows can be used.

For final tabulations:

- Three scores from the same level will be used
- Scores for Opportunity, Hors Concours, Rider Test, and Breed Classes will NOT be accepted.
- Mandatory for ALL Divisions - Scores must be:
 - a. from three different judges
 - b. from three different shows
 - c. on three different dates
 - d. one (1) of the scores must be from the highest test of the level shown (Training Level Test 3 through Fourth Level, Test 3)
 - e. Training Level through Fourth level tests must have scores of 58.000% or higher.
 - f. Prix St. George through Grand Prix tests must have scores of 58.000% or higher.
 - g. FEI Freestyle scores must be 58.000% or higher.
 - h. Freestyle scores can only be used for Freestyle awards.
 - i. Pony scores will be accepted if they are from shows open to all riders regardless of age and horses/ponies of any breed.
- If the test is judged by two (2) or more people, the average score must be reported. Refer to USEF ruling regarding what constitutes a new judging jury.
- In order to be eligible for a year end award, the three scores must meet the following criteria.



**2022 RECOGNIZED SHOW
SEASON**

June 3-4 -- Dressage at Waterloo,
Spring Classic, Grass Lake MI

June 5 -- Dressage at Waterloo, Spring
Classic II,
Grass Lake, MI

June 17-18 -- Dressage at Waterloo,
June I
Grass Lake, MI

June 19 -- Dressage at Waterloo, June
II,
Grass Lake, MI

July 15-17 -- Dressage at Waterloo, July,
Grass Lake, MI

Aug 5-7 -- Dressage at Waterloo,
August,
Grass Lake, MI

Sept 18-19 -- Dressage at Waterloo,
Summer
Finale I, Grass Lake, MI

Sept 20-21 -- Dressage at Waterloo,
Summer
Finale II, Grass Lake, MI

Go to USDF website for contact info
and registration (click on title above to
get there)

2022 SCHOOLING SHOW SEASON

June 5 -- [Woodbine Farms](#), Chelsea, MI

June 5 -- East Creek Stables, Dressage at
[Hunters Run](#), Metamora, MI

June 12 -- [Wyn Farm](#), Williamston, MI

June 12 -- [Aberdeen Farms](#), South Lyons, MI

June 26 -- [Grosse Pointe Equestrian Center](#),
Grosse Pointe, MI

June 26 -- [Woodbine Farms](#), Chelsea, MI

July 10 -- [Wyn Farm](#), Williamston, MI

July 16 -- [Woodbine Farms](#), Chelsea, MI

July 24 -- [Aberdeen Farm](#), South Lyons, MI

July 31-- East Creek Stables, Dressage at
[Hunters Run](#), Metamora, MI

Aug 7 -- [Aberdeen Farm](#), South Lyons, MI

Aug 14 -- [Wyn Farm](#), Williamston, MI

Aug 14 -- [Aberdeen Farm](#), South Lyons, MI

Aug 14-- [Grosse Pointe Equestrian Center](#),
Grosse Pointe, MI

Aug 21 -- [Woodbine Farms](#), Chelsea, MI

Sept 10--[Morgenstern Farm](#), Metamora, MI

Sept 11 -- [Wyn Farm](#), Williamston, MI

Sept 18 -- East Creek Stables, Dressage at
[Hunters Run](#), Metamora, MI

Sept 25 -- [Grosse Pointe Equestrian Center](#),
Grosse Pointe, M

Sept 25 -- [Aberdeen Farm](#), South Lyons, MI

Click on title to get to MDA website or
Click on the individual hosting farm for
more details

Barn Directory



Aberdeen Farm
3500 7 Mile Road
South Lyon, MI 48178
Contact Donna Donaldson 248-347-4411
www.aberdeenfarm.weebly.com
Lessons and training
Arena rental by the hour indoor and outdoor
MDA and USDF participating schooling shows
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Brek-n-Ridge
Andrew Figures
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Harbor Springs, MI 49740
231-242-0012

Boarding, lessons, Clinics, Rehab, Training

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Oxford Mi 48371
248-326-5885

We are a full care boarding facility for dressage riders. We offer lessons, showing (schooling and recognized) and clinics. Our facility offers rolling green pastures, trails, indoor and outdoor arena and oversized stalls. Stalls cleaned and fresh water daily. Grain twice a day, hay fed 3 times a day.

Find us on Facebook and Freestyle Farm

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4364 S. Mackinaw Rd
Bay City, MI 48706
989-239-9363

Boarding, Training for horse and rider, Hunt seat, Jumping, Dressage, Western

Rivendell Stables
Linda Cooper
11555 W Grand River Avenue
Lowell, MI 49331
(616) 897.8976
<http://www.rivendellstable.com>
Boarding Lessons Training
Dressage, Eventing, and Show Jumping

Barn Directory cont.

Royal K Riding Center,
Kate Westfall
17026 J Drive North,
Marshall, MI 49068
616-706-5049
I offer boarding, lessons and training.

Sue Hughes
8788 Joy Road,
Plymouth, Michigan 48170.
234-604-2439
email prideandjoyfarm@yahoo.com

No Boarding, Trailer in for lessons or will travel to clients. r judge in English Dressage R judge in Western dressage. Enjoys giving clinics from the very beginning through third level English and 5th level Western. Youngster clients 12 year of age. No limit above that.

Equine Insurance, Necessity vs Extravagance

By Nancy Bryant

We all love our horses. We would do whatever they need to keep them warm, dry, and safe but sometimes they have other plans. No one wants that dreaded call that “your horse is hurt, sick, lame”. I got that “Call” one afternoon in late September 2021. “Ritchie is walking on 3 legs”. Your heart drops, the questions start. Is he bleeding, was he kicked, did he step on something, does he have an abscess and on and on. That 20-minute drive to the barn was filled with all those questions and more. My first action was to call his vet to meet me at the barn, I have always been very upfront with the facilities where I board, any issues, you can’t get ahold of me, call the vet.

My next call was to Ritchie’s insurance company to inform them of his injury. I know, insurance can be expensive. I have heard, “it does not pay for itself, I could put that money in an account and pay for any injuries as they happen, I don’t have any extra money, I could use that money for a new bridle, saddle etc.” Well, in this case it has paid for itself many times over. Often you can have insured your horse for less than you paid or feel they are worth for medical and or surgical coverage. For instance, if you pay \$25k for little Susie, you can insure her for \$15K with medical and surgical to keep your expenses low.

Forward 2 days later, stall rest and pain meds had kicked in and the Vet was back to ultrasound and x-ray the leg which now showed swelling to the ankle area. Here comes the bad news Vets never want to give. No fracture but an injury to the outer suspensory branch was seen. We had a lengthy discussion on degree of injury, treatment plan, and the most important; time off to heal, 6-8 months.

In the past I did not have the “extra money” to insure my horses and did the best within my finances to do what I could to pay off my large vet bills. In this instance I had only owned Ritchie for over one year. And I usually only insure my horse for its purchase price for at the first year. When asked just weeks prior to this incident, I was able to say, OK, for \$800 let’s renew his policy. Boy, am I glad I did. In general, with most insurance companies, insuring a “Dressage” horse for mortality is 3% of its Value. That value is initially your purchase price, you may be able to include travel expenses if you are importing and pay for flight and quarantine. If you want to add Surgical and Medical that will be an additional expense. In addition, as your horse progresses through his/her training you can, insure your horse for more, due to training, show results or race records. Many insurance companies also offer a payment program.

In discussions with my vet along with a fellow boarder whose horse was also dealing with an injury, I decided to ship Ritchie to an Equine Rehab facility in Kentucky. This facility is essentially a rehab facility that also houses horses that are being kept “fit for breeding, sales, racing, let down from the show season etc. but mostly the horses are in for rehab or recovery from various surgeries. I can go on and on and if you are interested give me a call and I can give you the ins and outs of the facility. This rehab facility and all its modalities are not covered by any insurance. But to my mind you can not duplicate all they do for your horse at home or boarding facility. The Rehab team made this control freak of an owner feel comfortable leaving my “boy” in their competent hands and gave me back a sound horse. Yes, my friend and I alternated visiting every other week to check on the “boys”.

Ritchie’s insurance has paid for what is outlined in his policy which you need to read carefully and understand. His ultrasounds, shock wave treatments, injections, and examinations were covered and saved me upwards of \$7k and will continue to cover him at home. Will I be renewing his insurance? you betcha! You need to know the therapies at any rehab facility are not covered.

In short, I purchased this horse, with the understanding to the seller, I would be responsible and care for him for his lifetime, I’d do it again in a heartbeat. As we say, all for the love of the horse.

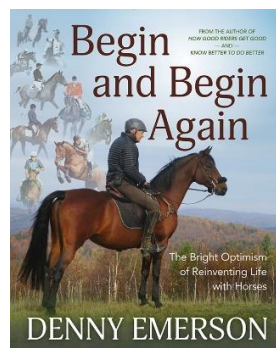
BOOK REVIEW
Book Review by Susan Roth

Begin and Begin Again by Denny Emerson

Mostly everyone knows Denny Emerson, eventer extraordinaire, now retired from the sport. At age 70 he broke his neck and wore a halo for months. In that time, he had to figure out what he was going to do in the sport since eventing was now out of the picture. This book a book filled with the wisdom of “where do I go from here? “Who hasn’t had to start over, or change their plans because of either a personal injury, or age of rider or horse, or just burnout in the same old same old. This is not a training book, but rather a more personal story of starting over after his eventing life, his thoughts on what direction he wanted to go, what type of horse would get him there, and putting a plan together. It was a nice read. One you can pick up, put down and pick again in a week. I recommend it if you’re in that spot of starting over in some way, shape or form. And if you’re not there right now, you the time will come when you will be, and you’ll have all the wisdom from this book to make the move smoother for you and your horse.

CLASSIFIEDS

"Experienced senior dressage rider interested in dressage lessons on a sane, sound and willing dressage horse trained through 2nd/3rd levels. Riding experience through 2nd Level and MDA schooling shows. Short or long term lease a possibility for right fit. Willing to travel up to 50 minutes from West Bloomfield area. Goals: maintain riding shape, continue to learn and grow in dressage and remain connected to equine world. Thanks for this consideration. Jorge Prospero prosperij@comcast.net 248-217-8219"



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