

DRESSAGE SHOWING FROM A TO X

(Almost) everything you need to know before you
compete (or volunteer!) at a “recognized” show

BY KIM F. MILLER

WILL THIS BE YOUR YEAR? *For many dressage riders,
competing in a recognized show is an attainable goal*

JUNE 15-16, 2019



Virginia Summer Dressage

HITS Commonwealth Park, Culpeper, VA

"Official Qualifying Competition for the 2019 Adequan FEI North American Youth Championships presented by Gotham North; the 2019 Children Dressage National Championship; the 2019 USEF Pony Rider Dressage National Championship; 2019 USEF Junior and Young Rider Dressage National Championships; and the 2019 USEF Young Adult 'Brentline Cup' Dressage National Championship presented by Dressage Today. Official Qualifying Competition for the 2019 Markel/USEF Young and Developing Horse Dressage Championships. Official Qualifying Competition for the 2019 FEI World Breeding Championships for Young Horses in Dressage (Five, Six, and Seven Year Olds)."

Qualifying Event for 2019 USDF Breeders Championship East Coast Series

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 Rosinburg Events, LLC, Janine Malone, Pres.

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 Sandy Osborn (GA) "S"
 Elizabeth Lewis (VA) "S"
 Anne Moss (PA) "r" & DSHB "r"
 Robin Birk (PA) "r"
 Others TBA

TECHNICAL DELEGATE

Camille Kopcik (NY) "R"

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Keswick Equine Clinic 540-832-5360

FARRIER ON CALL:

TBA

EMT: On Grounds; Dan Prescott, EMT

NIGHTWATCH: Kat Parkinson 336-432-1234

SATURDAY, June 15, 2019

10. *Opportunity USDF Introductory Test A

11. *Opportunity USDF Introductory Test B

12. *USDF Introductory Test C

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***RIDER/HANDLER (mandatory)** Signature: _____
***OWNER / AGENT (mandatory)** Signature: _____
***TRAINER (mandatory)** Signature (must be 18 or older): _____
COACH (if applicable) Signature: _____
PARENT/GUARDIAN (Required if rider/handler is a minor, i.e. under 18) Signature: _____
(Home/Parent) Emergency Contact Phone #: _____
Is RIDER a U.S. citizen? (mandatory) YES ☐ NO ☐

* No entry is valid without original signatures from the above individuals; Photocopied signatures or writing "same" are NOT acceptable.

STABLING / CAMPER HOOK-UP (Refer to Prize List for Specifications) ☐ **ENTRY PREPARATION CHECKLIST** ☐

SIGN HERE: All recognized-show entries must bear signatures of the rider/handler, the owner/agent, and the trainer, even if all three are the same person. Add signatures for the coach if applicable and for a parent or guardian if the competitor is under 18.

US Equestrian and USDF databases, and the peace of mind knowing that the entry was received immediately.

Even if you're entering online, read the prompts carefully and take your time, to help avoid such goofs as entering the wrong class or division, failing to ensure that your score will count as a qualifier for a championship or other goal, or over- or underpaying.

Signatures. Entry-form signatures are a critical yet often misunderstood step. US Equestrian requires three separate signatures—from the rider, the horse owner, and the trainer—even if all three are the same person. “Trainer” means the adult responsible for the horse while it’s on the show grounds. If the exhibitor is a minor, then the trainer must be a parent or other adult. A fourth signature blank, for “coach,” is only required if that person is paid to instruct you at the show.

Tip: Don't procrastinate! Popular shows can fill well before the closing date, so enter early.

MEMBERSHIPS AND HORSE REGISTRATIONS

With the exception of certain no-memberships-required classes, all dressage-show entries require proof of your membership in whatever organizations, and at whatever categories, are required for the classes you're entering. At the 2019 California Dressage Society Annual Meeting in January, an entire education session was devoted to a discussion of memberships and registrations—and most of the attentive attendees were not dressage-show newbies. CDS executive secretary Paula Langan lamented the number of disappointed veterans who didn't have the year-end qualifications they expected because all was not in order with their show entries.

Read on for an overview of what's required for the lower levels of recognized dressage competition. Be aware that, as you progress toward regional and national goals or have a horse pursuing certain breed distinctions, these requirements get more complex. Find the complete membership-requirement rundown in the *USDF Member Guide* and on usdf.org.

Tip: Check your USDF and US Equestrian memberships and horse registrations at eqverification.org, where you can print a “master verification” card listing all the memberships to include with your entry or supply if the show office requests.

Before you send in your membership dollars, “my number-one tip is for the rider to identify their goals,” says Mallory. “Are you just looking for the experience [of showing], or do you want to try to qualify for a year-end competition or award? Otherwise, you can spend more money than needed or get a great score that won't count for the right thing.”

Membership choices for humans: To compete in a US Equestrian-licensed/USDF-recognized dressage competition, you'll need either to be a member of both US Equestrian and the USDF, or to pay the per-show nonmember fees (\$45 and \$35, respectively). Unless you plan to be a one-show wonder, it's cheaper to join the organizations.

US Equestrian membership is pretty straightforward. In order to participate in US Equestrian activities, both the competitor and the horse owner (if not the same person) need a “competing” membership of the appropriate age group, senior or junior.

USDF membership is trickier because there are multiple membership categories. Pick one or more to suit your competitive objectives.

If your goals are limited to participating in recognized dressage competition and to earn USDF rider awards, group membership (membership in a USDF-affiliated dressage club, known as a group-member organization or GMO) is sufficient. But if you want to be eligible for Adequan®/USDF year-end awards or to qualify for Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championships, you'll need to join the USDF directly—what's known as participating membership. Many USDF members hold both group and participating memberships, to avail themselves of GMO offerings as well as to strive for USDF year-end awards and other recognition.

Safe Sport Requirement

New “Safe Sport” rules effective January 1, 2019, add a new layer of mandatory compliance. All amateur sports organizations are required by law to comply with US Olympic Committee Safe Sport regulations, developed to safeguard participants—especially minors—from sexual, mental, and physical abuse. All US Equestrian adult members with “competing” memberships must complete Safe Sport training in order to be eligible to participate in US Equestrian activities. Learn more at usef.org.

Membership (registration) choices for horses: For many types of dressage classes, horses are not required to be registered (“recorded”) with US Equestrian. However, to qualify for Great American/USDF Regional Championships or to participate in many US Equestrian dressage programs, horses must have US Equestrian annual or lifetime recording.

USDF does require a form of horse registration. The entry-level option is the USDF Horse Identification Number, or HID, with which scores will count toward USDF rider awards (including rider medals). If you want your scores to count toward year-end awards and championships, spring for USDF lifetime horse registration.

Tip: If your horse is USDF lifetime-registered, he doesn’t need a USDF Horse Identification Number (HID).

HOW TO MEMORIZE YOUR DRESSAGE TESTS

Even Olympians have been known to struggle to remember their tests, but first-timer nerves can make it especially hard. Happily, there are plenty of tools and tricks; it’s just a matter of finding the ones that work best for you.

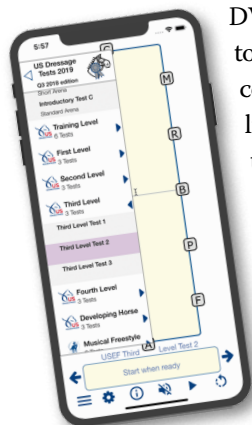
The tech option. The USDF’s Dressage TestPro app debuted last fall and is available for iOS devices now, with Android compatibility expected this summer. The app gives users access to the 2019 USDF and US Equestrian dressage tests (Introductory to Fourth Level), even without wi-fi or cellular service. You can listen to an audio transcription of each test movement, review step-by-step movement diagrams, or draw the test pattern yourself, with corrections from the app as needed.

Visualize your ride. Some riders learn best by visualizing riding the test as if they were watching themselves on video. Or watch actual video: Look for videos of well-ridden, high-scoring tests on YouTube. USDF’s new *On the Levels* series of

DVDs or streaming videos shows how to ride the tests, complete with expert commentary and training tips. Others like to trace the pattern on paper or in the air with a finger. Still others “ride” the test on foot in a marked-out “arena” in a back yard or a parking lot.

Take comfort in knowing that most competitors ride off course at one time or another. If it happens to you, try to shake it off and focus on riding the rest of the test well,

advises New Jersey-based trainer and FEI-level competitor Amy Howard.



IDRESSAGE: With the USDF Dressage TestPro app, you can study the tests on your mobile device



RIDER'S HELPER: In some cases, having your test read can soothe show nerves

“Don’t ruin the whole test by dwelling on one mistake,” she says.

If a student is clearly nervous in the warm-up or struggling to manage an unruly horse, Howard may advise having someone read or “call” the test. A reader is permitted at recognized shows with the exception of championship classes (check the prize list).

“If you’re having to focus on something else, like a spook, it can be really hard to remember the test,” says Howard, who adds that competitors still should endeavor to memorize their tests. Using a reader “should never become a crutch,” she says.

YOUR SHOW PACKING LIST

Dr. Susanne “Suzi” Lanini says that it took her about two years of regular showing to arrive at the right list of what she needed when hauling her 19-year-old Arabian, Just in Kayce, to a dressage competition. The small-animal veterinarian from Rancho Cucamonga, California, who hopes to move “Justin” up to Prix St. Georges this year, shared her list with *USDF Connection*. Use “Dr. Suzi’s” list as a starting point for creating your own packing list, which you may wish to modify depending on your needs and the weather. Your veterinarian may be able to suggest additional items to pack in a portable equine first-aid kit.

- Hose and large water bucket
- Smaller bucket for water at trailer if hauling in
- Hay net and grain bucket or grain pan
- Mounting hardware, double-ended snaps, bucket hooks, etc., if stabling overnight
- “Ugly” halter and lead to leave on the stall door (nice ones may “walk away”)
- Step stool



HOPE I BROUGHT EVERYTHING: *Showing takes careful planning, packing, and time management to ensure the best possible trip down center line*

- Emergency contact info for horse and rider. If stabling, bring something that can be taped to the stall door.
- Duct tape
- Grooming supplies: brushes, clippers, hoof oil, fly spray, fly roll-on for ears
- Show saddle pad, extra pads
- Leather conditioner
- Saddle, bridle, and girth
- Portable saddle rack
- Show clothing (with spares if available); scrubs, skirt, or apron to keep show clothes clean
- Helmet, white gloves, riding boots, spurs, and whip
- Copies of dressage tests, including large-print versions for test callers
- Proof of vaccinations for horses and any dogs traveling to the show
- Copy of horse registration papers and all membership cards.

HOW TO PLAN THE RIDE-TIME COUNTDOWN

No competitor likes to feel rushed in the crucial minutes just before riding down center line. Lanini calculates how much time she'll need for each show-prep step, then works backward from her ride time to determine when she needs to pull in to the show grounds for a one-day show out of her trailer. She allots time for the following steps (modify as needed if you're stabling overnight):

- Check in at the show office; get competitor packet and number
- Unload horse
- Groom
- Braid
- Change into show clothes with cover-up on top
- Tack up horse
- Shed cover-up, mount, walk to warm-up, and check in with ring steward
- Warm up
- Walk from warm-up to on-deck area just prior to ride time.



CARDIO OPTION: *Test runners don't actually run, but you'll probably meet your 10,000-step goal with little difficulty*

VOLUNTEERING 101

If you'd like to experience a recognized dressage show but you're not ready or able to compete, volunteering may be just the ticket. There are opportunities for enthusiasts of all experience levels—even non-horsey friends or family members looking to keep busy between their loved ones' rides. You'll learn a lot about what it takes to compete in dressage, and you'll meet other like-minded people, as well. Volunteers frequently receive perks ranging from complimentary meals, t-shirts, and "swag bags" to credits from GMOs that count toward awards eligibility or admission to other shows or club events.

Shows depend on volunteers to help keep a lid on costs, says Carol Tice. The current USDF Region 7 director, Tice, of Temecula, California, is also the volunteer coordinator for the Del Mar National Horse Show and for the Great American/USDF Region 7 Championships and California Dressage Society Championship Show.

"If we have to start hiring these positions, the costs will go up," Tice says.

We asked Tice to explain the most common dressage-show volunteer positions, from least to most experience required.

Setup and tear-down. No experience required; just bring your muscles to help set up and take down the dressage arena, and to place and remove the letter markers and any decorative elements.

Runner. No experience required. This volunteer runs (briskly walks, actually) completed test sheets from the judge's booth to the show office. Runners also relay infor-



SOUGHT-AFTER POSITION: Scribes (center) and e-scribes (left) get to sit with the judge—but notice that the only person watching the test is judge Hilda Gurney

mation and requests among judges, scribes, management, and the show's volunteer coordinator; and may deliver coffee, water, and snacks to judges and scribes. The amount of walking involved depends on the size and layout of the show grounds. At some large venues, golf carts are provided.

Awards. These volunteers work in the show office and may also help out during awards presentations in the arena. Awards volunteers distribute competitors' test sheets, ribbons, and prizes. Those who assist with awards presentations need to know safe practices around sometimes-antsy equines.

Ring steward. Stationed at the warm-up entrance with show schedule in hand, the ring steward keeps track of competitors and provides riders with schedule updates and "you're on deck" notifications, to help keep the show running smoothly and on time. Usually equipped with a walkie-talkie, the ring steward communicates as needed with the show office or the technical delegate in the event of competitor scratches, no-shows, rules-related issues, or accidents.

Although ring stewards don't need extensive dressage knowledge, many enthusiasts enjoy this volunteer position because of the opportunity afforded to watch horses and riders at all levels warming up. In southern California, Tice says, it's common to see Olympians Steffen Peters, Guenter Seidel, and others.

Scorer. Mad math skills are not required for the job of tallying individual movement scores on the test sheet to calculate the final percentage. But it helps to be quick on a 10-key calculator, as "you don't want to be hunting and pecking," according to Tice. Larger shows may use two scorers to help ensure accuracy, pairing experienced volunteers with first-timers to teach the rudimentary rules knowledge required, such as ensuring that every box on the test sheet contains a mark and how to account for errors.

Scribe. "Eighty percent of new volunteers I get want to scribe," says Tice, "on the premise that they get to watch the

ride and hear words of wisdom from the judge." But some new scribes are disappointed when they discover that their front-row seats don't afford extensive spectating. "Often, you only lift your head up from the test sheet to check that the exhibitor's number matches the one on the test sheet."

Scribing is neither an opportunity to befriend the judge—"you only chat when the judge wants to chat," says Tice—nor a "sit with the judge" education session. "You are not there to learn; you are the judge's secretary for the day," she explains. Nevertheless, it's virtually impossible not to learn *something* about what judges seek after spending several hours in the judge's booth.

Traditional scribes write the judge's marks and comments in the designated boxes on the test sheet. Neat handwriting and familiarity with common scribing abbreviations are musts (if you don't abbreviate, you may not be able to keep up with the dictation). Some larger shows also use e-scribes, who enter numeric scores in the show's electronic scoring system.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Whether your goal is to ride down center line in a recognized show or to help out from the sidelines, you'll find plenty of information on the USDF website (usdf.org). The *USDF Member Guide* contains the most popular current USDF, US Equestrian, and FEI dressage tests as well as membership guidelines and awards- and championship-program rules. The online USDF Guide for Scribes is an encyclopedia of procedures, tips, and standard abbreviations.

The US Equestrian website (usef.org) houses all of the rules that apply to USEF-licensed dressage competitions. Besides the extensive descriptions of gaits and movements, the dressage section (DR) contains the latest lists of permitted bits, bridles, and other equipment, along with illustrations and photos.

Every recognized dressage competition has a rules expert known as a technical delegate on the grounds. See "Mythbusters, TD Edition" (March) to learn more about the TD's role.

If you are a member of a USDF GMO, check to see if your club offers benefits and awards for volunteering. Many GMOs offer periodic training sessions for scribes and other skilled volunteers. To learn more about volunteering, contact your GMO or the show's volunteer coordinator.

Enjoy the show! ▲

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