

Technical Delegates FAQ

Answers to common competitor questions

By the USDF Technical Delegates Committee

Dressage technical delegates (TDs) tend to get plenty of exercise while on the job, especially at large competitions.

Before, during, and after a US Equestrian Federation-licensed/USDF-recognized dressage competition, the show's TD will log more than a few miles attending to the following duties: protecting the interests of competitors,

judges, and competition management; inspecting arenas and footing; investigating rule violations; accepting medications report forms; measuring ponies; accepting protests and charges; issuing warnings; checking entry blanks; making routine inspections of stable and facility areas; filing written reports with the USEF; and more.

A show's TD is a resource for all competitors, and he or she is happy to answer questions. For this column, the members of the USDF TD Committee wanted to answer some of your most frequently asked questions.

Is it legal to carry a whip in Great American/USDF Regional Championship qualifying classes?

This is a common source of confusion because it is permissible to carry a whip in qualifying classes but not in actual Regional Championship classes.

According to USEF Dressage Rule (DR) 120.6, "One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash, may be carried in all classes except USEF/USDF Championships, USEF National Dressage Championships, USEF High Performance Championships, USEF High Performance qualifying and

The Final Authority

As the US national governing body for dressage, the US Equestrian Federation (usef.org) has final authority in all matters of USEF Rule Book interpretation. Contact the USEF directly for guidance in any situation not specifically addressed in the Rule Book.

selection trials, and observation classes. (Exception: Competitors riding sidesaddle may carry a whip no longer than 47.2 inches [120 cm], including lash, in USEF/USDF Championships.) One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash, may be carried in all qualifying classes (including NAYRC and NAJC) unless such use is otherwise prohibited by FEI or Federation rules or selection procedures for the classes. An adjustable-length whip may not be carried by a mounted rider."

Is my saddle pad competition-legal?

Read the language of DR 121.1 carefully in deciding whether your saddle pad complies with USEF rules. This rule states: "Saddle pads are optional, but should be white or of conservative color.... While present in the competition area and during prize-giving ceremonies, and when sponsorship is permitted in accordance with GR [General Rule] 1306, the name and/or logo of the individual's sponsor(s) may appear on a surface area not exceeding 200 cm² on each side of the saddle cloth. Breed logos (for horses registered with that breed), national flags (for citizens of that country), riding club/business/farm names or logos (used with permission of riding club/farm/business owner) and USEF or USDF names or logos (used with permission of USEF or USDF, respectively) are also permitted and must have the same specifications as sponsor logos. No other advertisement or publicity is permitted on saddle cloths or horses."



SERVICE WITH A SMILE: USDF Technical Delegates Committee member Kaye Phaneuf (OR) on the job at a show

Some USEF rules are cross-referenced. In the case of the rules concerning saddle pads, consult GR 1306 (Amateur Status) as well.

Must I wear a jacket in all dressage tests?

It depends. DR 120.7 states: "In extreme heat and/or humidity in all classes, including FEI classes at National Competitions, management can allow competitors to show without jackets. However, competitors must wear a regulation hat and solid- or nearly solid-colored long- or short-sleeved shirt with collar, without neckwear, and without decoration except as described under .12 below. T-shirts are not permitted. Members of the Armed Services or police units may wear summer uniforms."

If show management announces that jackets are optional in competition, riders may choose to compete without jackets and the above rules apply. Note that the rule describes the

shirt color allowed, the requirement of a collar, and the prohibition of neckwear, such as a stock tie or a choker.

Can I use any type of equipment that I wish on a horse that I am bringing to the competition for schooling only?

According to DR 121.15, "The provisions of DR 121 apply to both competing and non-competing dressage horses from the time horses are admitted to the grounds which are designated for the Dressage Competition." In other words, all horses at the competition are subject to the equipment rules, even if they are not being shown.

At Your Service

This article was prepared months in advance of publication, so please check the accuracy of all rule-book citations. Questions? Contact the USDF TD Committee via its USDF staff liaison, Krystina Firth, at kfirth@usdf.org. ▲

Recommended Resources

Start with the US Equestrian Federation Rule Book. The entire book, which includes illustrations as well as the rules text, is online at usef.org/_IFrames/Rule-Book/2011.aspx. The USEF Dressage Attire and Equipment Booklet (usef.org/documents/FormsPubs/DressageEquipmentBooklet.pdf) contains many helpful photos and information, as well.

It can be challenging for competitors, judges, and technical delegates alike to stay abreast of rule changes and ever-changing equipment styles, materials, and designs. Consult the USEF Rule Book frequently to check for rule changes, and be aware of publication dates of resource materials. When in doubt, ask!

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