



RDA Australia National Dressage Championships 2022 Coaching Guide and Helpful Hints

Dressage tests are attached to this email.

Official Entry Forms will be emailed to States and Affiliated Centres 10 August 2022

Entries Open: 1 September 2022

Entries Close: 5pm AEST 11 November 2022

Results Announced 1 December 2022

1. Introduction

RDA riders have much to gain from taking part in competition. Training for a competition allows a rider to set incremental goals in small steps. The riders experience a sense of achievement as they make progress in a measurable way and they learn increasingly demanding exercises and a greater sense of independence and control of their horse.

Video competition has additional advantages in:

- Reduced travelling for horses, coaches, participants and volunteers
- Cost effective
- Horses often behave better as they are on home territory
- Plenty of opportunities to practice
- It is a celebration of riders' achievements
- It is a good opportunity to promote a family day
- Riders can ride in their usual session times
- The whole Centre can be involved
- Reduced risk of contracting communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and influenza
- Providing an opportunity to riders for reintroduction into RDA competition after COVID-19 disruptions

Please find below some coaching guidance and helpful coaching hints from Mary Longden. Please contact Edwina at coaching@rda.org.au if you have any queries.

2. Competition Arena

Competition arena is described below:

- The border of the arena must be clearly delineated.
- Borders may be no higher than allowed for in the rules (30cm)
- Indoor schools the same size as the arena are not acceptable.
- Correct arena markers must be used and placed as accurately as possible around the arena.
- Markers on the arena need to be clear. Do not forget the A marker.
- Consider the position of the sun when filming.



3. Balance Dressage Coaching Guide

The Balance 1a Test (2013) is designed for riders with functional ability and impairment of such a level that it significantly limits participation in existing RDA events. This includes riders who cannot use a saddle or hold reins. The Balance 1a test may be ridden slightly off the track to allow for side walker.

Riders will be judged on their balance (pelvis staying as close to the neutral position as possible and in upright three-point position).

Thank you to RDA Victoria for sharing this test for this competition.

3.1 Medium Walk

The walk must be a clear, regular and unconstrained walk. The horse walks energetically but calmly, with even and determined steps, the hind feet touching the ground in front of the footprints of the forefeet. The rider may maintain a light, soft and steady contact with the mouth allowing the natural movement of the horse's head and neck. Holding of reins is optional.

3.2 More Active Walk

The walk must be a clear, regular and unconstrained, four beat walk of more lengthening and greater activity. The hind feet touching the ground clearly in front of the footprints.

3.3. Straightness

A horse is said to be straight when its forehand is in line with its hindquarters, that is, when its longitudinal axis is in line with the straight or curved track it is following.

3.4 Halts

Halts in the Balance 1a Test have no time limits to allow the rider to use this time to rebalance themselves if necessary.

3.5 Assistance

Horse should be led with the lead rein, being held in the hand furthest from the horse, allowing the horse and rider as much freedom as safely possible.

Leaders are allowed to influence the horse or rider in The Balance 1a Test if support is required for safety reasons.

Side walkers should be on the inside track if possible, to allow the rider to perform the test as accurately as possible.

There will be a maximum of one leader and two side walkers in the arena during the test.

Golden Lead Rope Award. Awarded in memory of Dawn Hewitt, a long term, dedicated supporter of RDA events and programs.

In each led section, a "Golden Lead Rope" Award will be presented to the horse leader deemed by the judges as working in harmony with the horse and providing the rider with the opportunity to display their riding skills to the best of their ability with rider and horse safety a priority.

4. Definitions

The following are some important definitions:

4.1 Salute

Hats are not removed at the salute and contact must be maintained on the reins. Riders may salute with a nod of the head only. If riders should salute by dropping an arm, the whip must be held in the non-saluting hand. Non-compliance with this rule will impose a penalty of 2 marks.

4.2 Assistance for Riders

Dressage callers may only read the printed text or extracts thereof. No other form of assistance is given. The caller may read each movement once or twice only. Failure to observe this rule may entail elimination.

Riders with vision impairment (in addition to their Commander) may have living markers (callers/beepers) at the letters. Such living markers are classified as special equipment and must be supplied by the rider. One living marker may be inside the arena to call X.

Riders who are deaf or hearing impaired may use sign language or radio communication.

Any outside assistance including coaching may result in elimination at the discretion of the Judge. Helpers may be placed in corners outside the arena for safety reasons. In an emergency, they may give physical assistance. Penalties will be at the discretion of the Judge.

4.3 Leaders/Assisted Classes:

Horse leaders and side walkers must wear enclosed shoes or boots. Leaders are required to keep a slight loop in the lead rope to allow the rider to display riding skills. The lead rein to be held in the hand furthest from the horse. They remain on the inside track and change sides by coming in front of the horse without interfering with the horse's movement. They may not carry a whip or stick. Leaders must request assistance if the safety of the rider is jeopardised.

- In Led/Assisted classes, the use of a leading rein is optional.
- The leader must not influence the horse or rider (unless for rider or horse safety)
- The leader must be on the inner track at all times.
- The leader should change to either the nearside or offside where necessary (i.e., change of rein). This should be done by quietly stepping in front of the horse, without impeding the horse's stride.
- Throughout the test, the leader should stand one pace from the horse and level with the horse's shoulders.
- The leading rein, if used, shall not be attached to the bit. A head collar or ring on the underside of the cavesson noseband is required.
- The lead rein should be held in the hand furthest away from the horse. The hand nearest the horse should not be used (folded behind their back) and there should be no contact with the horse's mouth except for intervention to ensure rider and horse safety.
- If a trot test, the leader must not commence running until the rider has given the aid and the horse has started trotting. The same applies to the transition trot to walk. The leader must not stop running until the rider has brought the horse to a walk. The amount of influence will be reflected in the marks.



RDA National Video Dressage Coaching Guide 2022

A deduction of 1 mark will be made for every incident of undue influence (maximum deduction of 10 marks). These marks are to be deducted from the final score of the judge.

Hints for Uploading Entry Video

Once you've recorded your video, submit it on YouTube using the following steps:

1. Go to www.youtube.com
2. You will need to be logged into a Gmail or YouTube account
3. Click 'Create a video or post' - Camera icon in the top right corner
4. Upload video
5. Select file
6. Set to Unlisted
7. Add title – National Dressage Comp *Your Name* (don't worry about the Description or any Tags)
8. Click Done once video is processed
9. Copy the URL and paste into the Entry Form. Check to ensure successful upload.
10. Delete the video from the recording device if the device does not belong to the rider or their carer.

If you have any issues, give the office a call on (08) 8354 4555.

HELPFUL HINTS for VIDEO COMPETITIONS from Mary Longden

Filming

- At the beginning of the test, before the rider enters, have someone hold up the rider's name, the horse and the class or test.
- Put the device on a tripod. If it jerks the judges will give low marks
- Capture footage from 5 metres behind C.
- Practice and work out when to zoom. No zoom means the judges cannot see the A end.
- Make sure the video shows the whole horse on the C short side. It is easy to lose the horse's feet or the rider's head.
- If the judge cannot see the horse at all times, marks will be lost
- Practice to make sure you are following the horse at all times.
- If the rider goes out of sight on a corner and comes out in a different pace the judge cannot give a mark for the transition.
- Use the best possible quality video setting
- Start when the horse is approaching A
- Finish when the horse has moved off from the final halt and turns away from the judge
- Transfer video footage to a computer or view it on a tablet. Make sure the whole test is visible.
- Upload one video for each completed test to YouTube (see 5. Uploading Your Video)
- **Ensure that all footage is deleted from devices once video is uploaded unless device belongs to rider or parent/carers.**

Volunteer and Coach Attire

- If possible, everyone in the same uniform, e.g., Centre polo shirt.

Horses

- Clean (as for a dressage competition)
- Plaiting optional for dressage. Well plaited horses do give a good impression.

Horse Gear

- Clean and fitted to horse
- Type as per RDAA Competition Rules of Engagement.
- Straps put in with keepers or ones made of black rubber bands
- Use a noseband, if the horse is being led, a ring on the noseband to attach the lead.

Leaders

- Not to influence the horse unduly for the participants. The more you help the less marks the rider will gain.
- Accuracy comes from the rider not the leader.
- The horse will copy the leader so bear this in mind. The horse is unlikely to stop if the leader keeps walking.
- Practice changing from one side to the other as the horse is likely to follow and not stay straight.

Side Walkers

- Side walkers are to provide support to maintain the safety and balance of the rider. Allow as much independence as directed by the coach as possible, whilst maintaining rider safety.

Off Lead but Assisted

- Train the horse so it understands and does not follow the leader
- You might have a person on each corner and the main person in the middle of the arena
- The rider may be independent at the walk but have help at the trot
- May, or may not, trot on the lead

Briefing and Timetabling of the Day

- Send out a briefing to all riders, parents, carers and volunteers
- Brief parents, volunteers and riders
- Allocate jobs
- Have a time-table – an email prior to the day and a whiteboard on the day
- Have a list of who is working with which riders and when
- Have a list of who is preparing each horse and when

Warm Up

- Some horses may be ridden while others are led
- Give riders an organised warm-up
- Work out which riders require longer

Calling the Dressage Test

- The caller and the rider should practice this beforehand
- It is not necessary to call everything. Each movement can be called twice. Except in Special Olympics when it can only be called once
- Know your rider and when the next movement should be called. Some riders will do it as soon as you say it
- The main error is not calling in time
- Never call during a transition. e.g., turning left or right. Say next marker if you think they are going to turn the wrong way at C. e.g., Between C and H canter, E circle 20 m, K trot. Say this on last quarter of the circle

Downloading/Saving the Entries

- Ensure videos are stored on password protected devices by the person authorised to film the test
- Delete the footage once upload is successful if not on rider's or parent's/carer's device

Coaching Riders to Ride Dressage Tests

- First practice the outside track and the corners at all paces
- A corner is a quarter of a circle. Put cones in the corners to go around or put them on the long and short side to indicate where the corner starts and ends
- Accuracy is vital so error free teaching is essential for building up a good base of dressage test riding
- Then teach centre line, the halt and salute
- Then the changes of rein that are in the test
- Free walk
- Shapes such as circles – teach them with cones but also a quarter at a time
- Explain the etiquette and essential rules
- Explain what happens if you go wrong – even in a video competition

Enjoy the process of preparing and participating in the competition!