

# HORSE RIDING CLUBS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC.

(A0002667H)

# DRESSAGE RULES

Effective: 1st January 1993

Includes all rule amendments up to and including those which came into  
effect on January 2015



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## **Section 5 Rules for Dressage Events**

### **PREAMBLE**

The following Rules have been adopted by The Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria Inc. (HRC AV) and must be followed by all bodies running Official Dressage Events.

Every eventuality cannot be provided for in these Rules. In any unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, it is the duty of the Ground Jury or the Organising Committee to make a decision in a sporting spirit whilst adhering as closely as possible to the intention of these Rules, so providing fair conditions for all Competitors.

These Rules have been drawn up in the broadest possible spirit to allow Organising Committees the fullest freedom in the management of their Events and in the preparation of their Programs. The Rules are established so that Competitors may compete against each other under fair and equal conditions.

**These Rules are only complete when read in conjunction with all Rules and Regulations of the HRC AV.**

### **1. OFFICIAL DRESSAGE TESTS**

- 1.1. HRC AV Tests must be used for Official Events. No other Tests shall be used without the approval of the HRC AV.

### **2. COMMANDED TESTS**

- 2.1. Tests may be commanded (called) at Official Dressage Events. Refer Dressage Rule 13.3.

### **3. COPIES OF TESTS**

- 3.1. Copies of the Official HRC AV Tests may be purchased from the HRC AV or downloaded from the association's website..
- 3.2. The Official HRC AV Dressage Tests are changed periodically and it is the responsibility of Competitors, Judges and Organisers to ensure that the current Tests are used.

#### **4. JUDGES**

- 4.1. It is strongly recommended that HRC AV Judges be used to judge at Official HRC AV Events (refer Dressage Rules Appendix 1 for listing of all HRC AV Judges).
- 4.2. It is strongly recommended that two Judges be used for Advanced and Level 1 Competitions.
- 4.3. It is strongly recommended that HRC AV Advanced Judges or Official EFA D and above Judges be used to judge the Advanced Tests.
- 4.4. Judges should be positioned around the arena as follows:
  - C On the short side, five metres out from the arena on the prolongation of the centre line.
  - M On the short side, five metres out from the arena, 2.5 metres in from the prolongation of the long side.
  - H On the short side, five metres out from the arena, 2.5 metres in from the prolongation of the long side.
  - E & B On the long side, 5m out from the arena
- 4.5. The Chief Judge must be placed at C. When two Judges are used, they should be placed at C and either M, H, E or B.
- 4.6. Judges must be provided with a Penciller.
- 4.7. All Pencillers should be provided with a copy of Dressage Rules Appendix 2.
- 4.8. A Judge should not be asked to judge in excess of 32 Competitors on any one day. However, this is at the discretion of the Judge.
- 4.9. Competitors must not compete under a Judge who:
  - a) Is the current owner of the competitor's horse
  - b) Has owned the competitor's horse within the past 12 months;
  - c) Is an immediate relative of the competitor or
  - d) Is a Trainer or Pupil of the competitor.

**NOTE:** A Trainer is defined as a person who regularly (ie. six hours of lessons or more in the previous three months) trains or coaches a horse, rider or Combination (not necessarily for remuneration). Instruction received at Club rallies is not in breach of this Rule

## **5. WARM-UP AREA**

- 5.1. An area must be set aside for Competitors to use for warming-up purposes. If the area is fenced it must be done in a manner which does not pose a hazard to the safety of horse and rider.

## **6. RIDING IN WARM-UP AND TRAINING AREAS**

- 6.1. No horse, either ridden or led, may enter any arena other than the warm-up arena, except when actually competing in a Competition, on penalty of elimination. This Rule applies also when Competition arenas are erected on the days preceding an Event.

## **7. ARENAS**

- 7.1. All Tests are ridden individually within an arena of 60 x 20 metres. A plan of the arena, including required markers, are to be found in Dressage Rules Appendix 4.
- 7.2. Arenas should be set out to the dimensions shown in the diagram in Dressage Rules Appendix 4.
- 7.3. The arena should be level and separated from the public by a distance all round of 10 metres if possible; but a minimum of at least 5 metres is MANDATORY. This includes between arenas.
- 7.4. The arena must be marked by a (continuous) surround not exceeding 0.5 metres high. It may be marked in the following ways:
- a) Portable, prefabricated, arena specific materials such as plastic or timber boards or PVC pipes supported by plastic stands,
  - b) Fixed, rounded edging including timber telegraph poles, heavy dutt, flexible poly pipe (such edging to be a minimum of 25cm diameter) or a low wooden fence,
  - c) Lengths of suspended plastic chain.
  - d) The following requirements must be observed:
    - Materials to be in a contrasting colour to the arena surface,
    - Surrounds to be stable enough to withstand moderately windy conditions,
    - Where the surround is suspended from uprights, it must be clearly off the ground,

- The following materials may not be used in the construction of an arena
  - Electric fencing tape, rope, plasticized cable or other similar, continuous, unbreakable product.
  - Temporary poles placed on the ground.
  - Driven in stakes or steel droppers.

## **8. MARKERS**

- 8.1. The letters outside the enclosure should be placed approximately 0.5 metres from the fence and clearly marked. It is desirable to place a special marker on the fence itself, level with and in addition to the letter concerned.
- 8.2. A gap of one metre each side of the centre line must be left at 'A' to form an entrance and the 'A' marker placed far enough back (10 metres if possible) to allow the Competitors to enter the arena on a straight track.

## **9. INSPECTION OF ARENAS**

- 9.1. It is the responsibility of the Judge to check that the arena is satisfactory and, if necessary, have it modified at their discretion. Once the Competition has commenced, the conditions must stay (as far as possible) the same for the following Competitors.



## 10. SADDLERY AND EQUIPMENT

10.1. Only saddlery and equipment specified within these Rules is permitted in Official Events. It is the Competitor's responsibility to abide by the Rules. Failure to comply will incur elimination.

10.2. Any type of saddle may be used, with or without a saddlecloth. If a single buckle girth is used the saddle must be fitted with a surcingle.

10.2.1. Sidesaddles are not permitted.

### 10.3. Bridles

10.3.1. A snaffle bridle is compulsory for all tests up to and including level 2. A snaffle bridle is an English-type bridle with a single snaffle-type bit and one set of reins. See rule 11 for description of snaffle bits.

10.3.2. Combinations assessed at Advanced and level 1 have the option of using a bridle with a snaffle bit or a double bridle. A double bridle is an English-type bridle with a bridoon (snaffle) bit and a curb bit with curb chain, both fitted with a set of reins.

10.3.3. A Micklem Competition bridle with snaffle bit (pictured) may be used in all levels. The optional bit attachment (bit clip) is not permitted.



10.4. Bit guards and cheekers are not permitted

10.5. Wrapping of bits is not permitted.

10.6. A Pelham bit is not permitted in any dressage test

### 10.7. Nosebands

Permitted nosebands are illustrated on Plate 4.

10.7.1. The following nosebands may be used on a snaffle bridle:

- Cavesson noseband
- Dropped noseband
- Falsh (or Hannoverian) noseband
- Crossed (Grackle or Mexican) noseband

10.7.2. Only a Cavesson noseband shall be used with a double bridle.

10.7.3. Nosebands must never be tightly fixed. Two fingers should be easily inserted under all parts of a noseband on the side of the face under the cheekbone. See diagram. An Official may direct the rider to demonstrate that the noseband is correctly fitted. The Ground Jury shall rule on fit of nosebands in cases where the rider refuses to comply with this rule.



10.7.4. Padding under the noseband is permitted as long as it is securely attached.

10.8. Breastplates and fore-girths are permitted.

10.9. Running martingales correctly fitted with stopper/keepers on the reins and neck strap, may be used in Level 5 Tests only. Running martingales, boots and bandages may be used on horses in warm up arenas and in training areas, but not in Tests.

10.10. Standing martingales, ear muffs, blinkers and hoods are not permitted in warm up or training areas or in Tests under penalty of elimination.

10.11. Side reins may only be used on horses being lunged in warm up and training areas. Bearing, running or balancing reins are not permitted when lunging or riding, under penalty of elimination.

10.12. Saddle covers (such as sheepskin or rain covers) shall not be used in a Test.

10.13. Monkey grips are permitted and neck straps are permitted at all levels.

10.14. Spurs are not allowed for Level 5 assessed Competitors, however are permitted for use by Level 4 and above assessed Competitors. Spurs must be made of metal and there must be a shank pointing directly back or down from the centre of the spur. The arms of the spur must be smooth. If rowels are used, they must be free to rotate and must not be sharpened.

10.15. A whip not exceeding 1.2 metres in its entirety (including the compulsory tassel or flap) may be carried in tests up to and including Advanced level.

10.16. Toe stoppers attached to stirrups are permitted in all levels.

10.17. Ear plugs are not permitted

## 11. SNAFFLE BITS

11.1. Only snaffle bits having combinations of the following features are approved for use in Dressage Tests.

- Metal
- Metal and rubber (bits made only of rubber or rubber and chain not permitted)
- Metal and synthetic material
- Rigid plastic

Snaffle bits and bridoons made only of metal must meet the following criteria:

- All parts of the bit coming into the horse's mouth must be of metal (not necessarily the same metal)
- The minimum diameter of the mouthpiece is 10mm
- Mouthpieces may be the same thickness or tapered towards the centre or central joints
- There shall not be more than two joints in the mouthpiece
- Double jointed mouthpieces may have one 'roller', or rotating middle piece, in the centre section. Multiple rollers are not permitted
- All parts coming into the horse's mouth shall be rounded, smooth and not ridged, sharp or corrugated.
- The rein must be free to move on the bit ring and must not be fixed to any secondary ring or 'hook'
  - Keeping with the definition above, some of the types of bits permitted are described and illustrated in Plates 1 & 2. Also permitted but not illustrated are: Half moon – port mouthed - curved
  - Rubber or synthetic bit – both jointed and unjointed
  - Sweet iron bit
  - Hanging cheek snaffle including Baucher bit

11.2. **Permitted bits. Various Snaffle Bits.** Captions to Plate 1:

1. Ordinary snaffle with double-jointed mouthpiece
2. Ordinary snaffle with double-jointed mouthpiece, known as "French Snaffle" (refer Plate 2)
3. Ordinary snaffle with jointed mouthpiece
4. Racing snaffle
5. Eggbutt snaffle (a) with cheeks (b) without cheeks
6. Other types of snaffle with cheeks
7. Rubber snaffle, unjointed
8. Unjointed snaffle

Plate 1 Snaffle Bits

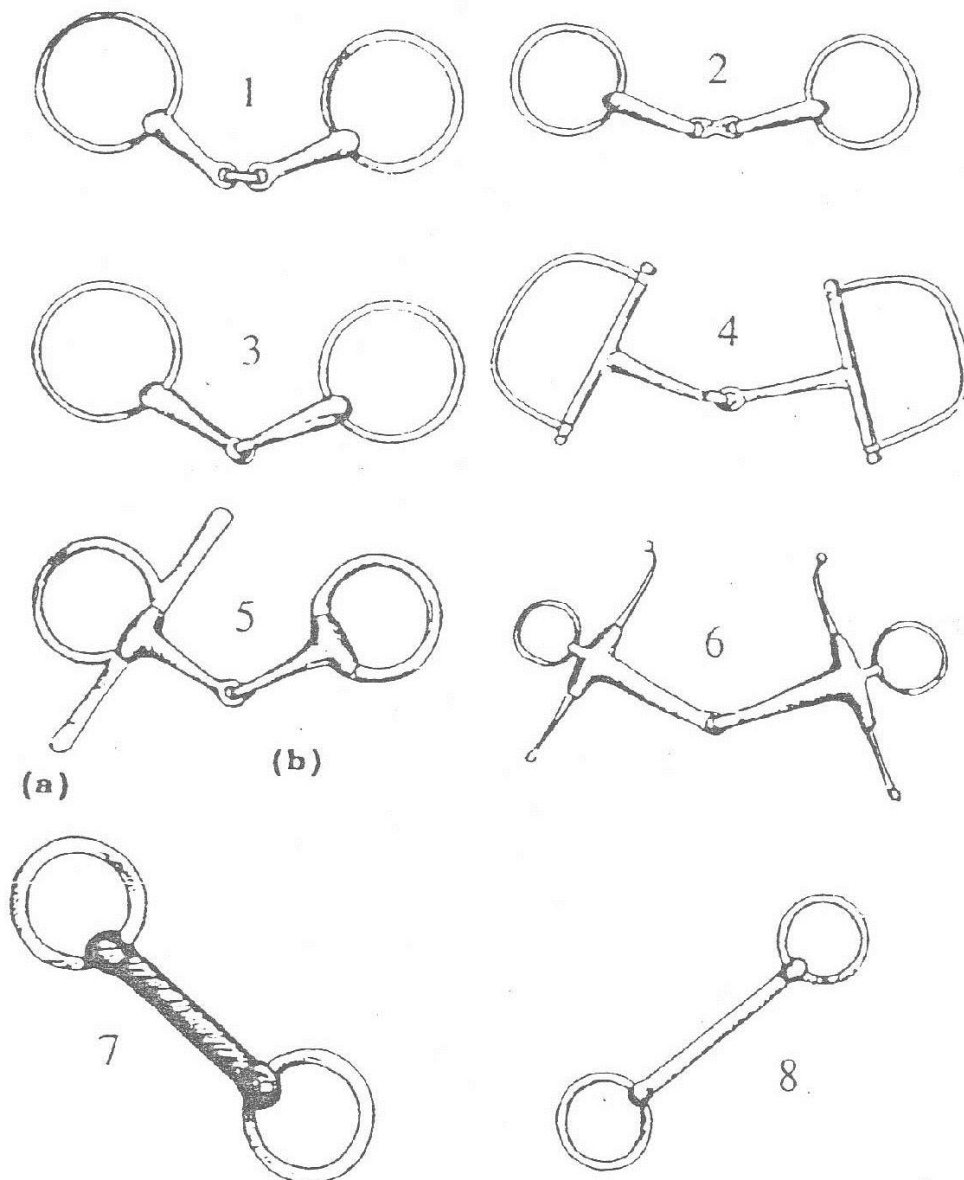
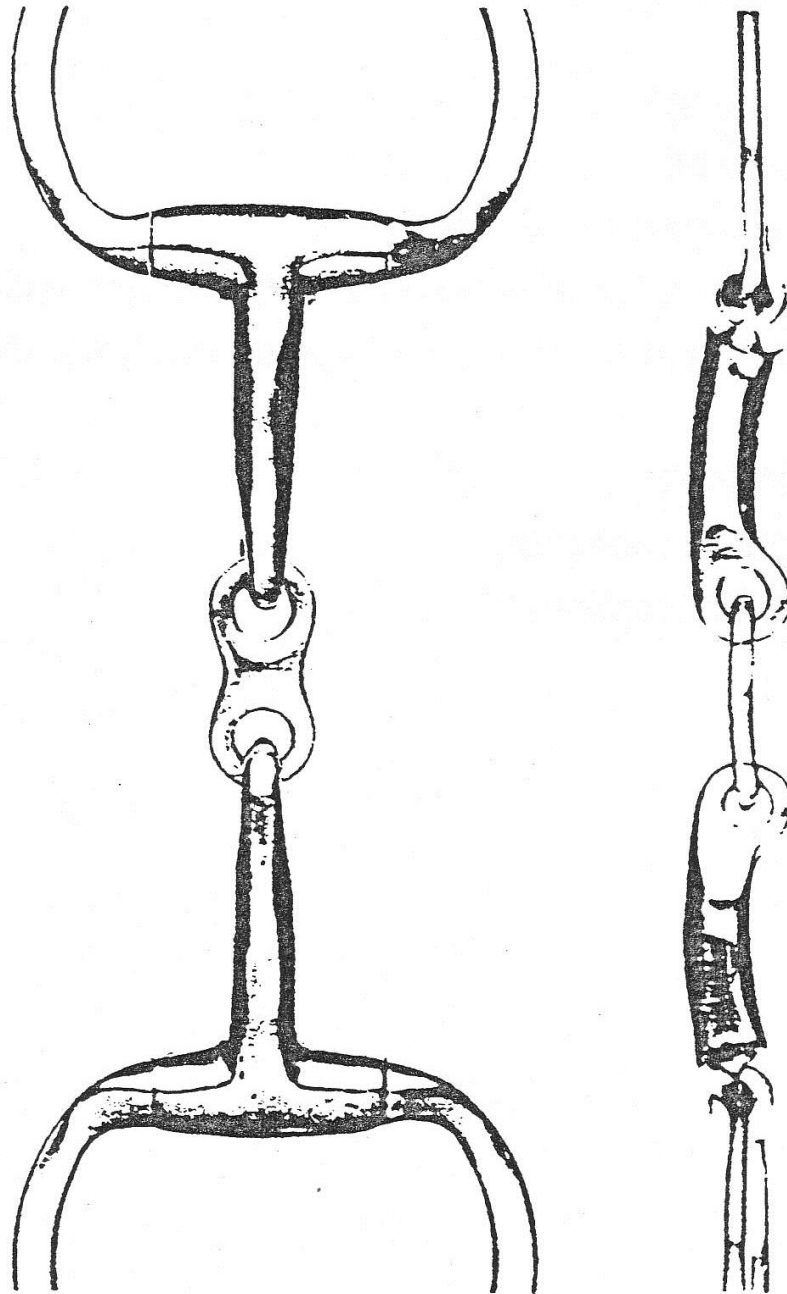


Plate 2 French Snaffle



## 12. DOUBLE BRIDLE

12.1. A Bridoon must comply with the following:

- Must be made of metal or rigid plastic and may be covered with rubber (bits made only of rubber or rubber and chain not permitted).
- If metal bits are used, all parts of the bit coming into the horse's mouth must be of metal (not necessarily the same metal)
- The minimum diameter of the mouthpiece is 10mm
- Double jointed mouthpieces may have one 'roller'. Or rotating middle piece, in the centre section. Multiple rollers are not permitted.

Permitted Bridoon bits – refer Plate 3

12.2. A Curb bit must be of a type as detailed in the illustration on Plate 3. the limits of the dimensions of the curb bits allowable are as follows;

- The curb must be of metal or rigid plastic and may be covered with rubber (bits made only of rubber or rubber and chain not permitted)
- The minimum diameter of the mouthpiece is 14mm
- The level arm of the curb bit below the mouthpiece should not measure more than 10cm when the mouthpiece is at the uppermost position.

12.3Optional items (not compulsory)

- Lip strap
- Leather cover for curb chain
- Rubber cover for curb chain

Captions for plate 3

1. Ordinary Bridoon bit with loose rings and single jointed mouth piece.
2. Bridoon bit with two (2) joints and loose rings.
3. Eggbutt Bridoon bit with a single jointed mouth piece.
4. Bridoon bit with upper cheeks only, and a single jointed mouth piece.
  
5. Half moon curb bit.
6. Curb bit with curved cheeks and port.
7. Curb bit with loops for lip strap on the cheeks and with port.
8. Curb bit with port and sliding mouth piece (Weymouth)
9. Curb chain
10. Lip strap (optional)
11. Curb chain guard (optional)
12. Curb chain guard (optional)

Plate 3 Permitted bits for use with a simple double bridle

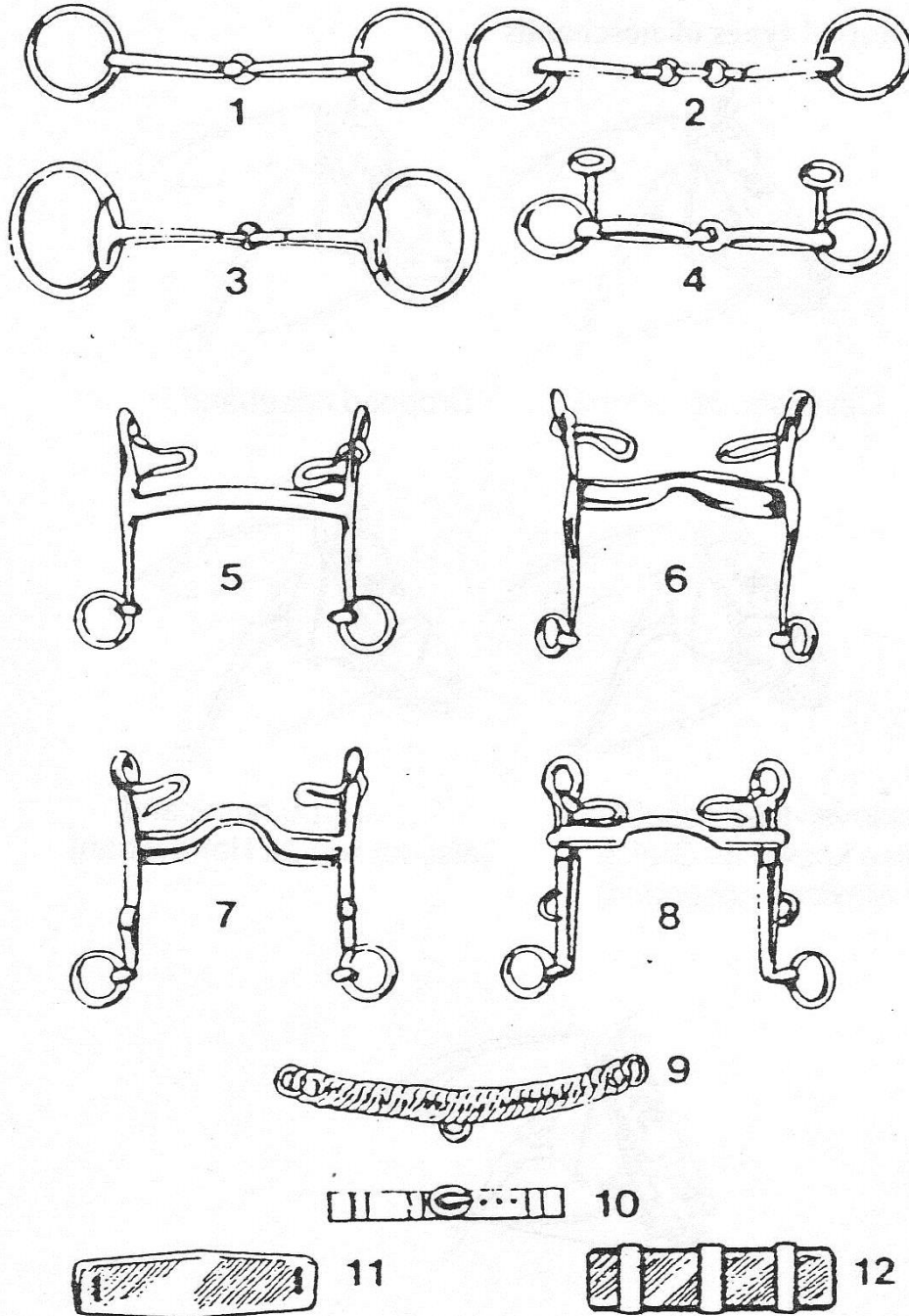
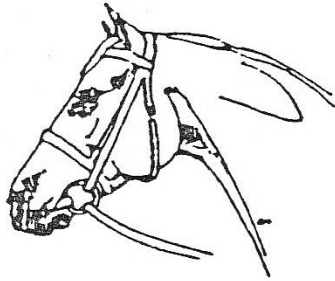


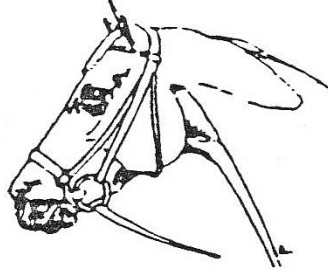


Plate 4 Permitted types of nosebands

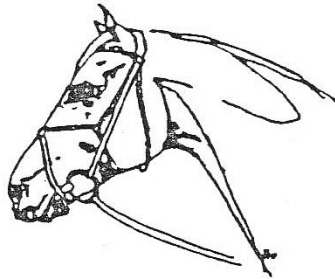
**Permitted types of nosebands**



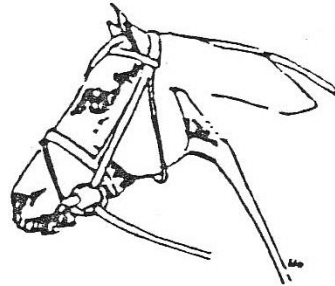
Cavesson noseband



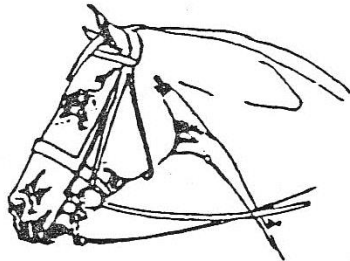
Dropped noseband



Crossover-type noseband  
(also known as Grakle  
or Mexican noseband)



Flash type noseband  
(also known as Hanoverian)



Double bridle with cavesson noseband Bridoon bit and curb with  
curb chain

### **13. EXECUTION OF TESTS**

- 13.1. All movements contained in Tests must be executed in the order laid down in the Test. In a movement, which must be carried out at a certain point of the arena, it is at the moment when a rider's body is above this point that the movement must be executed.
- 13.2. All Tests begin with the entry at A and end after the salute at the end of the Test, as soon as the horse moves forward. Any incidents occurring before the beginning or after the end of the Test have no effect on the marks with the exception of falls and/or resistances which may endanger rider/horse/judge/public, both of which may be penalised by elimination under rules 19.2 and 22.3. The Competitor should leave the arena in the way that is prescribed in the text of the Test.
- 13.3. Any outside intervention by voice, signs etc. is considered as assistance to a rider or horse. A rider or horse receiving assistance must be eliminated. Where Commanders are allowed, it is the responsibility of the Competitor to ensure that only the printed text or extracts therefrom is read out and that no other form of assistance is given. A Commander may read each movement once or twice only. Failure to observe this Rule may incur elimination. Riders are not permitted to wear headphones during a Test.
- 13.4. Members with Disabilities seeking Exemptions - Refer General Rule 13.

### **14. SALUTE**

- 14.1. All riders must take the reins in one hand when saluting. The penalty for not doing so being as for an error of Test. A whip may be held in either hand at the salute.
- 14.2. Members with Disabilities seeking Exemptions - Refer General Rule 13.

## **15. ERRORS AND PENALTIES INVOLVED**

- 15.1. When a Competitor makes an error of the course (takes a wrong turn, omits a movement, etc.) the Judge warns the Competitor by sounding the Bell. The Judge shows the rider, if necessary, the point at which he must take up the Test again and the next movement to be executed, then leaves him to continue by himself. However, in some cases, although the Competitor makes an error of the course, the sounding of the Bell would unnecessarily impede the fluency of the performance, for instance if the Competitor makes a transition from trot to walk at V instead of K or, trotting up the centre line from A, makes a transition to walk at X instead of G - it is up to Judge to decide whether to sound the Bell or not.
- 15.2. When a Competitor makes an error in the Test; (trots rising instead of sitting, at the salute does not take the reins in one hand, etc.) the Competitor must be penalised as for an error of the course. In principle a Competitor is not allowed to repeat a movement of the Test unless the Judge decides on an error of course (rings the Bell). If, however, the Competitor has started the execution of a movement and tries to do the same movement again, the Judge must consider the first movement shown only and at the same time penalise for an error of course. .
- 15.3. Every error of the course, whether the Bell is sounded or not, must be penalised:
- the first time by 2 points
  - the second time by 4 points
  - the third time by 8 points
  - the fourth time the Competitor is eliminated, although he may continue his performance to the end, the marks being awarded in the ordinary way.
- 15.4. If the Judge has not noted an error, the Competitor has the benefit of the doubt.
- 15.5. If a horse enters at the wrong gait and/or prior to the judge ringing the bell, the Judge should direct the Competitor to leave the arena and re-enter when signalled to do so at the correct gait. An error of course must be given.
- 15.6. When more than one judge is used, should there be a difference of opinion as to whether an error of test or error of course occurred, the Chief Judge's opinion shall prevail.

**16. USE OF VOICE**

- 16.1. The use of the voice in any way whatsoever, or clicking the tongue once or repeatedly, is a serious fault, involving the deduction of 2 marks on each occasion, from those that would otherwise have been awarded for the movement where this occurred.

**17. LEAVING THE ARENA**

- 17.1. A horse leaving the arena completely, with all four feet, during a Dressage Competition between the time of entry and the time of exit at A will be eliminated. At the Judges discretion, the Competitor may continue the riding of the Test and the movements should be marked in the normal way. The Test sheet is to be clearly marked "Rider Eliminated".

**18. LAMENESS**

- 18.1. In the case of marked lameness, the Judge informs the rider that he/she is eliminated. There is no appeal against this decision.

**19. DISMOUNTING/FALL OF RIDER**

- 19.1. The rider must be mounted on entering and leaving the arena. If, after the rider has entered the arena, he dismounts without a reason acceptable to the Judge, no marks will be given for the movement.
- 19.2. A fall of horse and/or rider, occurring from the time the judge signals to start the test until departure from the arena at A following completion of the test, will result in elimination from the class. A fall of rider is considered to have occurred if any part of the rider's body makes unintentional contact with the ground or any solid surface. A horse is considered to have fallen when the shoulder and quarters have touched the ground. Participation in subsequent classes is at the discretion of the competitor, however, such a decision may be over ruled by the Ground Jury at any time during the event.
- 19.3. A dropped whip, helmet or spectacles may be handed to the rider without dismounting.
- 19.4. A rider will be eliminated if not mounted when leaving the arena.

## **20. GRINDING OF TEETH AND TAIL SWISHING**

- 20.1. Grinding the teeth and swishing the tail are signs of nervousness, tenseness or resistance on the part of the horse and must be taken into account by the Judge in their marks for the movement concerned, as well as in the collective marks for submission.

## **21. THE POSITION OF THE AIDS OF THE RIDER**

- 21.1. Riding with both hands is obligatory at all Official Dressage Competitions unless otherwise stated in the Test. However, when leaving the arena at a walk after having finished the Test, the rider may, at his own discretion, ride with only one hand.
- 21.2. Members with Disabilities seeking Exemptions - Refer Level Assessment Rule 4.

## **22. TIME PENALTIES AND RESISTANCE**

- 22.1. HRCV Dressage Tests are not timed. Times printed on the Tests are an average and intended to be used as a guide only.
- 22.2. A horse failing to enter the arena within 60 seconds of the bell being sounded shall be eliminated.
- 22.3. Any resistance which prevents the continuation of the Test for a period exceeding 20 seconds during the course of a Test shall be penalised by elimination. Resistance that may endanger rider, horse, judges or public which occurs from the time the judge signals the start of the test until the horse leaves the arena shall be penalised by elimination without delay. There is no appeal against this decision

## **23. JUDGES' SHEETS**

- 23.1. Marking sheets, one per Competitor per Judge, must be provided. Organisers are permitted to photocopy the relevant Tests applicable to the Event.
- 23.2. Judging sheets must be made available to Competitors at the time final interim dressage scores are posted to allow adequate time for lodging of protests provided said distribution does not contravene Dressage Rule 23.3.
- 23.3. Competitors taking part in two Dressage Competitions on the same day, judged by the same Judge, shall not have access to their judging sheets before competing in the second Competition.

23.4. Judges' marking sheets with remarks duly signed by the Judge must be treated as confidential until given to the Competitor when they become his/her private property.

**24. UNMARKED MOVEMENT**

24.1. If a mark has not been recorded on one of the judging sheets and the Judge cannot recall the movement, or cannot be found, the mark allotted should be the average of the collective marks at the end.

**25. SCORING**

25.1. Each Judge may allot from 0 - 10 points for each numbered movement. Half marks from 0.5 to 9.5 may also be used both for the movements and collective marks, at the discretion of the Judge. These points are then added together and any penalty points are deducted to give the Competitor's total score. Dressage is always scored in good (positive) points, therefore, the Competitor with the HIGHEST score has the highest placing.

25.2. Scale Of Marks

10	excellent	5	sufficient
9	very good	4	insufficient
8	good	3	fairly bad
7	fairly good	2	bad
6	satisfactory	1	very bad
		0	not executed

25.3. The marks 10 to 0 must be awarded where the performances warrant their use. It is recommended that all movements be given a comment, especially Levels 3 to 5.

25.4. Judges should state reasons when giving marks of below 5 or above 7.

25.5. "Not executed" means that practically nothing of the required movement has been performed.

## **26. HRC AV DRESSAGE JUDGE ACCREDITATION SCHEME**

The HRC AV has a list of Dressage Judges who have undergone the necessary examinations to judge at Official Events. Accreditation examinations are conducted by the HRC AV at regular intervals, dates of which are advertised in the HRC AV newsletter.

### **26.1. Prerequisites**

- a) Candidates must be financial members of an affiliated HRC AV Club.
- b) Candidates must own a HRC AV Manual which contains the Rules and Regulations of the Association.
- c) Candidates must have been assessed for Dressage at Level 4 or above. Candidates who do not ride must be able to provide qualifications and experience to be exempted from the riding prerequisite.
- d) Candidates must attend a minimum of one Dressage Judges' Training Clinic and
- e) Candidates must 'pencil' at the appropriate levels at an official HRC AV event On at least one occasion (minimum of 5 tests each level) and
- f) Candidates must shadow judge with the presiding judge at the appropriate levels at an official HRC AV event on at least one occasion (not including 26.1.e) for a minimum of 5 tests per level. The Presiding Judge must be accredited to judge Level 3 and above. Requirements listed under d,e & f must be undertaken in the 12 months prior to sitting the judge accreditation exams.
- g) Candidates may only become accredited to judge up to their highest assessed Level for Dressage, either by assessment or pointing up. (This may include higher Levels attained on a different horse, providing HRC AV records of the higher Level/s are held).
- h) A Member may, however, elect to become accredited to judge only certain Levels but these Levels must begin from Level 5 and go upwards, ie. Level 4 and 5 Dressage Judge only.
- i) Candidates who have no valid judging qualifications (HRC AV or EFA) are only eligible to judge up to Level 3 for the first 12 months of their accreditation. Thereafter, Candidates may apply to upgrade their accreditation one level per 12 months period providing prerequisites at 26.3.9 have been satisfied.
- j) Any Member may attend Clinics and Accreditation Examinations to attain knowledge.
- k) Level 5 riders may attend Clinics and Accreditation Examinations to attain knowledge, however, are not eligible to become accredited.
- l) Candidates should be a minimum of 18 years of age.

26.2. First steps to becoming a Dressage Judge

- 26.2.1. A completed Expression of Interest Form (refer General Rules Appendix 14) must be forwarded to the HRC AV.
- 26.2.2. HRC AV Dressage Judges Training Clinics are held periodically and are advertised in the HRC AV's Newsletter. Training Clinics and/or accreditation examinations may be held over 1 - 2 days depending on the number of Candidates or current Dressage Judges refreshing their qualification.

26.3. Dressage Judges Examination

- 26.3.1. Any Member may undertake the accreditation examinations to attain knowledge without seeking accreditation.
- 26.3.2. Candidates must forward a completed Logsheet (see Appendix 6) to the Dressage Sub-Committee prior to undertaking any accreditation examinations.
- 26.3.3. Candidates will be required to sit a theory examination for each Level for which they seek accreditation. A pass mark of at least 80% is required for each theory exam. The exam includes general matters relating to the manner in which Dressage Tests are ridden and the quality of the movements eg. how the Judge would mark a horse with incorrect flexion in a Level 4 Competition, or explain 'submission', describe rhythm, describe the main requirements of a serpentine.
- 26.3.4. Candidates will also be required to sit an open written Rule Book exam. This exam covers all aspects of the HRC AV's General and Event Rules and Regulations including those pertaining to Dressage and a pass mark of 90% is required.
- 26.3.5. Candidates will be required to judge Dressage Tests for each Level of accreditation sought.
- 26.3.6. If a Candidate passes parts of the accreditation criteria, but fails other parts by not more than 10%, the Candidate may re-sit the failed section/s within or by 12 months. If more than 12 months elapses, the Candidate will be required to sit the entire examination phases again and judge all relevant Dressage Tests. If a Candidate fails any part of the examination criteria by more than 10% they may not seek accreditation within 12 months and then must re-sit and pass all accreditation examination phases again.



- 26.3.7. The Dressage Tests judged will be assessed by the Examining Judge. Candidates' marks should be within one mark either side of the Examiner's mark. Examination papers are returned together with copies of Dressage Tests judged showing the Examiner's comments.
- 26.3.8. Upon satisfactory completion of the requirements, the Candidate will be accredited as an Official HRC AV Dressage Judge for the relevant Levels. HRC AV Certificates are issued to the successful Candidates stating the Levels accredited to judge.
- 26.3.9. Before applying to become accredited to judge a higher Level, Candidates must have been assessed or pointed up to that level or higher and have judged at least two Official Competitions at the previous Level. A completed Logsheet must be forwarded to the Dressage Sub-Committee prior to undertaking the accreditation examinations. The Candidate will be required to sit the theory exam for that Level and will be required to judge the ridden Tests of the higher Level.
- 26.3.10. The HRC AV may at its discretion, on written proof of relevant judging and/or coaching qualifications, allow an exemption to the riding requirement only. Therefore EA F Level Judges and Level 1 NCAS Coaches align with HRC AV Level 2 Judges. EA E Level Judges and Level 2 NCAS Coaches align with HRC AV Level 1 Judges and EA D and above Level Judges and Level 3 NCAS Coaches align with HRC AV Advanced Judges.
- 26.3.11. Upon **written proof of judging qualifications**, current EA Dressage Judges may be granted an exemption to the riding, training and theory and practical examination requirements. Subject to a pass mark of 90% in an Open Book examination on HRC AV Rules, they will be granted accreditation to judge the following levels only;
- EA D Level Judges - HRC AV levels 3, 2, 1 and Advanced only
  - EA E Level Judges – HRC AV levels 3, 2 and 1 only
  - EA F Level Judges – HRC AV level 3 only
- 26.3.12. Candidates with considerable relevant experience in the field of Dressage may apply to the Dressage Sub Committee to be considered for fast track accreditation. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis having regard to the following criteria. Applicants will be required to show proof of satisfying at least two of the following criteria:

- Competition experience at Level 1 or EA Elementary (D) and above with scores above 55% on a minimum of 6 occasions in the past 4 years
- Past judging qualifications or experience within the past 5 years
- Current judging qualifications
- Equivalent international qualifications
- Current NCAS Level 1 and above Coaches

Candidates accepted to the fast track program shall be required to attend an HRC AV Dressage Judges Clinic and pass the Open Rule Book exam and the Theory exam/s as per rule 26.3. Successful completion of these requirements shall qualify the candidate to undertake a practical assessment (minimum of 10 riders, not necessarily at one test), at which they must demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to judge Dressage at the level of accreditation sought. Upon satisfactory completion of these requirements, the candidate will be accredited as an official HRC AV Dressage Judge for the relevant Levels.

#### 26.4. Maintaining Official Judging Status.

- 26.4.1. Official Judges must attend refresher clinics to remain on the HRC AV Judges' List. These refresher clinics are advertised in the HRC AV newsletter from time to time and a Judge must attend a refresher course once every two years. Refreshing Judges are not required to sit a theory exam, but are required to pass an Open Rule Book exam and attend all lectures, flip-cards, etc and judge up to and including the Level at which they are currently qualified to judge.
- 26.4.2. When due to attend a refresher course, a reminder letter will be forwarded to the Judge. The Judge must then attend the next available exam/refresher day. If the Judge fails to attend one of the next two consecutive refresher days, they will be advised their names will be deleted from the Official Judges' List. Exceptional circumstances will be considered upon written application to the Dressage Sub-Committee. To be re-instated, Candidates will be required to complete (again) all the exams (theory and Rule Book), and judge the Dressage Tests up to and including their previous judging Level but will not be required to complete again the pencilling and shadow judging prerequisites

- 26.4.3. Judges who are also EA Judges who provide proof of meeting the refreshing requirements of the EA may be exempted from the requirements of 26.4.1 but will be required to complete an Open Rule Book exam every two years. EA judges can only use the EA refresher alternative, every second refresher period. EA judges accredited to judge Level 2 and above only, are exempt from the refresher requirements but must complete an Open Book exam every two years.
- 26.4.4. All Official Judges must remain financial Members of an affiliated HRCVA Club to maintain their judging status.
- 26.4.5. In order to maintain accreditation, a HRCVA Judge must officiate at a minimum number of 4 HRCVA Dressage events per annum (this will include Combined Training and Horse Trial events). However, in the year that a Judge attends a Refresher/Exam day, a minimum of 3 events will suffice. For those judges residing outside the 150km radius of Melbourne GPO, a minimum of 3 Dressage events per annum (including CT and HT events), will be required. However, in the year that a Refresher/Exam day is attended, 2 Dressage events will suffice.
- 26.4.6. A request for Leave of Absence from judging responsibilities may be granted by the Dressage Sub Committee upon written request from the judge. Each request will be considered on its merits, taking into consideration the seniority and activity of the judge in preceding years. To be reinstated, a judge will be required to complete outstanding refresher requirements.

## **27. SENIOR DRESSAGE JUDGES**

27.1. Appointment as a Senior Dressage Judge may be offered to accredited HRC AV Judges satisfying the following criteria:

- Minimum five (5) years service as HRC AV Dressage Judge
- Minimum accreditation of Level 1
- Acknowledged professionalism in the conduct of their duties as a Dressage Judge
- Other significant, relevant experience as a judge, competitor or official.

27.2. Selection Process

- The nominator shall be a current Senior Dressage Judge
- Nominations must be made in writing to the HRC AV Dressage Sub Committee on the form provided (see Appendix 7) and include supporting information / recommendations
- Should the Dressage Sub Committee support the nomination, it shall be referred to the Executive committee for endorsement.

27.3. Role of the Senior Dressage Judge. A Senior Dressage Judge:

- Is permitted to undertake assessments of Dressage Judge candidates and refreshing Judges at their practical judging examination
- May be invited to contribute to the writing and assessment of new candidate and refreshing Dressage Judge examination papers
- May be invited to conduct Dressage Judge training and exam days
- May be invited to contribute to the review of Dressage rules and be called upon to provide feedback to the Dressage Sub-Committee on issues related to dressage from time to time.

27.4. Senior Judges will be required to undertake an open book exam every second year, and participate in a practical refresher, either as facilitator or participant.

27.5. To retain Senior status, the Dressage Judge must maintain accreditation and be willing to undertake the duties listed under rule 27.3. Recommendations to withdraw senior status shall be made by the Dressage Sub Committee and become effective upon endorsement of the recommendation by the Executive Committee. A Senior Dressage Judge may resign from the role by notifying the Dressage Sub Committee in writing.

## NOTES ON DRESSAGE

The HRCVA recognizes the stated FEI object and general principles of Dressage as well as definitions of movements and paces. The HRCVA Notes on Dressage are to be read in conjunction with Articles 401 - 418 of the FEI Dressage Rules

[http://www.fei.org/sites/default/files/GA\\_Annex\\_16%203Dressage%20Rules%202013\\_black%20version.pdf](http://www.fei.org/sites/default/files/GA_Annex_16%203Dressage%20Rules%202013_black%20version.pdf)

### 1. WHAT IS DRESSAGE?

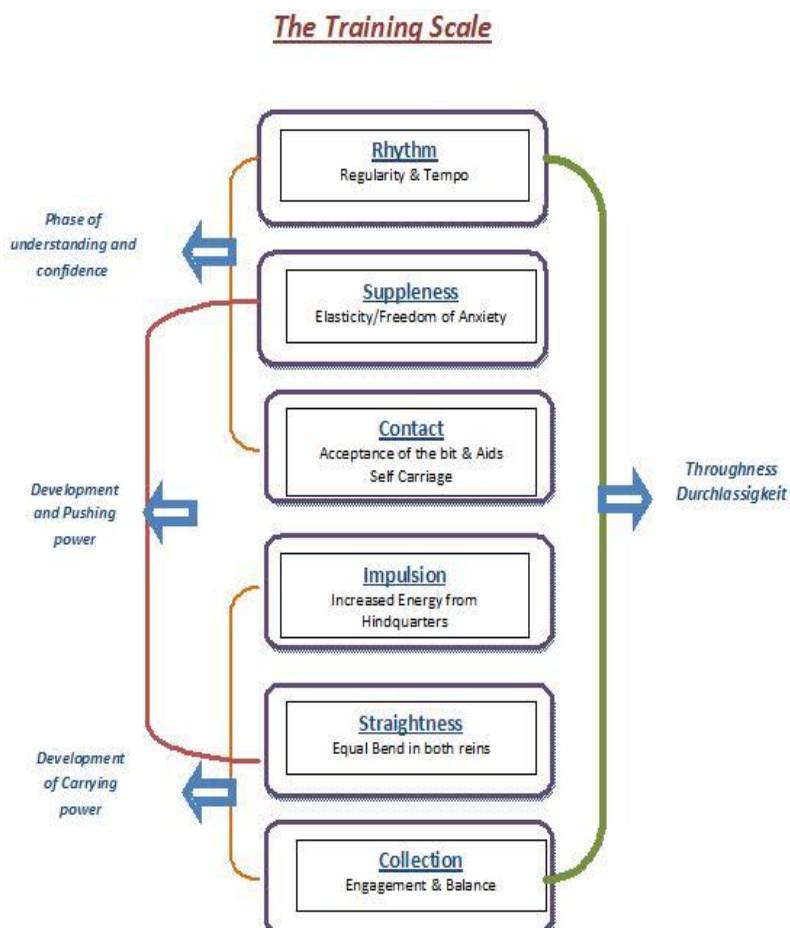
- 1.1. The object of Dressage is the harmonious development of the physique and ability of the horse with a view to making the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with his rider.

### 2. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE HRCVA DRESSAGE TESTS?

- 2.1. The aim of the tests is to evaluate the combination's progress and to encourage the development of the horse into a happy athlete through systematic and harmonious education. HRCVA Dressage Tests range from Level 5 (lowest) to Advanced (highest). Each level has specific requirements and expectations against which the combination is judged.

- 2.2. Horses are expected to show development of the various qualities covered in the Training Scale (see diagram), starting in Levels 4 & 5 where the emphasis is on developing rhythm, relaxation and acceptance of the basic aids. These elements should be more established in Level 3 with the horse showing suppleness, improved balance and acceptance of the bit. By Level 2 the horse is expected to be developing impulsion and improved straightness which will assist their progression to Levels 1 and Advanced where collection is required. .

- 2.3. The Training Scale incorporates six elements representing the qualities



we seek to establish in order to develop the horse's physical and mental aptitude from basic to advanced dressage work. None of the points of the training scale can be considered in isolation and at all times underpinning these elements are the harmony that must exist between rider and horse and the willingness of the horse to respond to the rider's aids. The result is that the horse demonstrates 'throughness' whereby the energy from active hind legs is transferred over a swinging and supple back through to the bit.

2.4. The six elements of the training are as follows:

- **Rhythm** - Refers to the regularity which is the correct sequence of footfalls
- **Suppleness** - Suppleness and relaxation. The complete absence of tension, and is an essential aim of the preliminary training phase. Relaxation in both the mental and physical sense
- **Contact** - Is a soft, steady, connection between the rider's hands and horse's mouth. The horse should go rhythmically forward from the rider's driving aids and "seek" a contact with the rider's hands
- **Impulsion** - The term used to describe the transmission of energy from the hindquarters being transmitted into the athletic movement of the horse
- **Straightness** - A horse is said to be straight when its forehead is in line with its hindquarters, that is, when its longitudinal axis is in line with the straight or curved track it is following
- **Collection** - To enable a horse to be collected correctly, all the former criteria must be fulfilled. The aim is to improve the balance and equilibrium of the horse and to develop and increase the horse's ability to lower and engage the quarters for the benefit of the lightness and mobility of the forehead. If the carrying capacity of the hindquarters is sufficiently developed, the horse is then in a position to move in balance and self carriage in all three paces.

### 3. RIDING THE TESTS

- 3.1. The tests are a series of connected and continuous movements executed in a designated dressage arena. (See diagram). A mark is awarded for each movement with some key movements attracting an additional co-efficient mark. At the conclusion of the test the judge further evaluates the test through the Collective marks. See example of an HRC AV Dressage test at Appendix 8. Riding with both hands is mandatory and the use of the voice or clicking the tongue repeatedly is penalised. .
- 3.2. A rider moving along the outer track continues along it on the same rein, without alteration of pace or manner of riding (eg. sitting or rising) until instructed to do otherwise. If required to leave this track and return to it (eg. when circling), the rider will continue along the track in the same manner of going as he left it and on the same rein, unless instructed to do otherwise.
- 3.3. Where a change of pace is required at a given marker, the horse should make the first step in the new pace as the rider passes the marker. In lower levels, transitions may be made within a stated number of steps either side of the marker.
- 3.4. A stride is a single coordinated movement of the four legs of the horse, completed when the legs return to their initial relative position. A step is one footfall of the horse within the stride. To complete a walk stride, the horse will take four steps (beats), a trot stride will take two steps and a canter stride, 3 steps.

### 4. JUDGING THE TESTS

- 4.1. The dressage marks are as follows:
- 10 Excellent** All the requirements of the Training Scale applicable to the level are fulfilled, and the movements display an excellent quality of paces, accuracy and consistency appropriate for the level
- 9 Very Good** All the applicable requirements of the Training Scale are fulfilled, and the movements are performed with very good accuracy, quality of paces and consistency appropriate for the level
- 8 Good** All the applicable requirements of the Training Scale are demonstrated, the overall quality of the paces is good, and the test is ridden accurately
- 7 Fairly Good** All the applicable requirements of the Training Scale are demonstrated to a fairly good standard, and the overall quality of the paces is fairly good but with some lack of cadence or consistency. Movements and accuracy are fairly good

- 6 Satisfactory** Applicable requirements of the Training Scale are demonstrated to a satisfactory standard and the paces are steady and consistent in rhythm but there is a loss in accuracy and precision with minor mistakes
- 5 Sufficient** Either the movements are performed fairly accurately but there are some weaknesses in the quality of the paces and the requirements of the Training Scale, or there are some serious mistakes in the movements
- 4 Insufficient** Basic paces are evident but there is an overall loss of quality either in the requirements of the Training Scale, or errors in the movements or accuracy in the test
- 3 Fairly Bad** There are serious problems in the applicable requirements of the Training Scale and loss of accuracy
- 2 Bad** There are severe problems in the paces/movement with clear loss of accuracy
- 1 Very Bad** Movements performed are barely recognizable, showing serious resistance throughout
- 0 Not Performed** No element of the movement was performed or recognizable

4.2. **Collective Marks** are awarded for the overall performance in the following areas

#### **LEVEL 5**

- Obedience of the horse: Attentiveness and response to the aids
- Rider's seat and control of the horse

#### **LEVEL 4**

- Paces: Freedom and regularity of paces
- Obedience of the horse: Willingness of horse to travel forward. Responsiveness to rider's aids. Attentiveness
- Rider's seat and control of the horse

#### **LEVEL 3**

- Paces: freedom and regularity
- Impulsion: desire to move forward, elasticity of steps, relaxation of the back
- Submission: attention and confidence; harmony, lightness and ease of movements, acceptance of the bridle
- Rider's position and seat: correctness and effect of the aids

#### **LEVELS 2, 1 & ADVANCED**

- Paces: freedom and regularity
- Impulsion: desire to move forward, elasticity of steps, relaxation of the back and engagement of the hindquarters
- Submission: attention and confidence, harmony, lightness and ease of movements, acceptance of the bridle and lightness of the forehand
- Rider's position and seat correctness and effect of the aids



## 5. **PACES: REFER TO FEI RULES FOR DESCRIPTION OF PACES**

- 5.1. The regularity of the paces is fundamental to dressage. .
- 5.2. In levels 4 & 5 the horse is required to demonstrate the basic paces. As the horse's training progresses, variations of the basic paces are required. The following table indicates the level at which the various paces are introduced

	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Level Adv
Medium walk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free walk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collected walk					✓	✓
Extended walk						✓
Working trot	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lengthened trot			✓	✓	✓	✓
Collected trot					✓	✓
Medium trot					✓	✓
Extended trot						✓
Working canter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lengthened canter			✓	✓	✓	✓
Collected canter					✓	✓
Medium canter					✓	✓
Extended canter						✓

## 6. **IMPULSION**

- 6.1. Impulsion is the term used to describe the transmission of an eager and energetic, yet controlled, propulsive energy generated from the hindquarters into the athletic movement of the horse. Its ultimate expression can be shown only through the horse's soft and swinging back by gentle contact with the rider's hand. .
- 6.2. Speed, of itself, has little to do with impulsion; the result is more often a flattening of the paces. A visible characteristic is a more pronounced articulation of the hind leg, in a continuous rather than staccato action.

The hock, as the hind foot leaves the ground, should first move forward rather than being pulled upwards, but certainly not backwards

- 6.3. A prime ingredient of impulsion is the time the horse spends in the air rather than on the ground. Impulsion is, therefore, seen only in those paces that have a period of suspension
- 6.4. Impulsion is a precondition for a good collection in trot and canter. If there is no impulsion, there is nothing to collect

## **7. SUBMISSION**

- 7.1. Fulfilling the main requirements/movements of a Dressage test is the main criterion for submission. .
- 7.2. Submission does not mean subordination, but an obedience revealing its presence by a constant attention, willingness and confidence in the whole behaviour of the horse as well as by the harmony, lightness and ease he is displaying in the execution of the different movements
- 7.3. The degree of submission is also demonstrated by the way the horse accepts the bit. Resistance to or evasion of the rider's hand being either "above the bit" or "behind the bit" demonstrate lack of submission. The main contact with the horse's mouth must be through the snaffle bit. In levels 4 & 5, the horse is expected to work in a natural frame showing acceptance of a light contact. By level 3 the horse should be establishing acceptance of the bit working into a light and soft contact with a supple poll resulting in a rounder frame.
- 7.4. Putting out the tongue, keeping it above the bit or drawing it up altogether, as well as resistance on the part of the horse and must be taken into account by the judges in their marks for the movement concerned as well as the collective mark for "submission"
- 7.5. The first thought when considering submission is willingness, that the horse understands what is being asked of it and is confident enough in the rider to react to the aids without fear or tension
- 7.6. The horse's straightness, uphill tendency and balance enable it to stay in front of the rider's legs and go forward into an accepting and self-carrying contact with the bit. This is what really produces the picture of harmony and lightness.

**8. MOVEMENTS AND FIGURES**

8.1. Figures and movements for lower level tests are described below.  
**Descriptions of figures and movements in the higher level tests can be referenced in the FEI rules.**

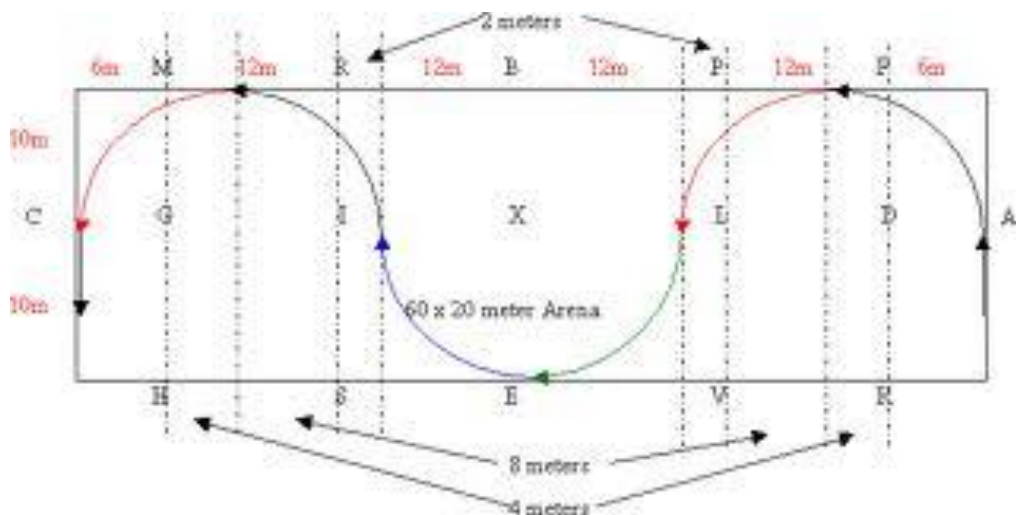
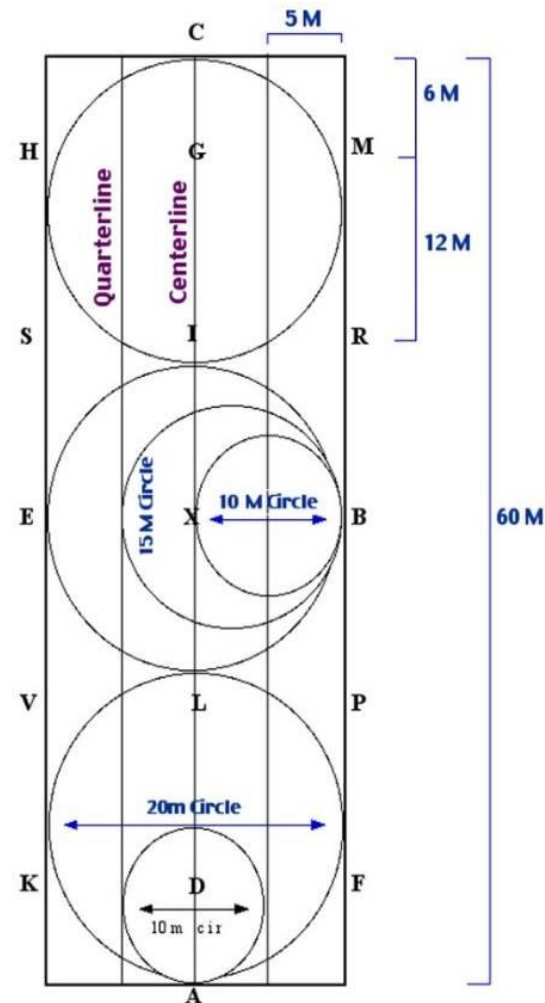
8.2. **CIRCLES:** In levels 4 & 5, 20m circles are required. In level 3, 15m circles are introduced. Circles test the horse's lateral flexibility and engagement of the inside hind leg as well as obedience. The circles and half circles become smaller in diameter in the higher level tests, requiring a greater degree of suppleness, engagement and self carriage. ...

8.3. **CHANGE OF DIRECTION:** during changes of direction the horse should adjust the bend of his body to the curvature of the line it follows, remaining supple and following the indications of the rider without any resistance and maintaining pace, rhythm and tempo. Changes of direction in levels 4 and 5 are executed as follows:

- Short and long diagonals
- Right angled turns across the center

In level 3 half circle and diagonal return to the track are introduced.

8.4. **SERPENTINE:** a 3 loop serpentine is introduced in level 3. The serpentine consists of 3 ½ 20m circles with each loop touching the long side of the arena. The serpentine tests the suppleness and balance of the horse as well as obedience and acceptance of the aids.



- 8.5. **HALT:** In levels 4 & 5, the horse is expected to stand attentive and motionless for the prescribed length of time (when a length of time is not specified, the halt should be maintained for 3 seconds) and be ready to move off at the indication of the rider. As the training progresses the quality of the halt will improve. By level 2, in addition to the above qualities, the horse will stand engaged, square and on the bit with the poll at the highest point and the nose slightly in front of the vertical. The quality of the paces before and after the halt is an integral part of the assessment.
- 8.6. **REIN RELEASE:** the rein release in trot is introduced in level 3 to demonstrate the horse's ability to maintain the same rhythm, balance, straightness and outline without relying on the rider's hands. In accordance with the test directive, the release may be either the inside rein or both reins. The rider pushes one or both hands forward towards the bit maintaining a straight line from elbow to hand to the horse's mouth showing a clear release of the contact. The forward and returning action of the hands is completed over the prescribed number of strides with the actual release resulting in a brief loop of the reins. The action of the hands is smooth and fluent. The horse maintains its outline during the release, demonstrating that he is sufficiently balanced and obedient to carry himself and shows acceptance of the contact as it is returned. .
- 8.7. **STRETCHING ON A LONG REIN:** stretching on a long rein is introduced in level 3. Its purpose is to demonstrate that the horse is completely relaxed and can maintain the same balance, tempo, length of stride and swing through the back whilst the rider allows the horse to take the contact down and forward, stretching his head and neck, maintaining a light contact at the end of the rein. As the next stretches forward and downwards, the mouth should reach more or less to the horizontal line corresponding with the point of the shoulder. The pace must maintain its rhythm, and the horse should remain light in the shoulders with the hind legs engaged. During the retake of reins, the horse must accept the contact without resistance in the mouth or poll. .
- 8.8. **TRANSITIONS:** Transitions should be performed as the rider's body aligns with the prescribed marker except in transitions where the horse approaches the letter from a diagonal or perpendicular to the point on track where the letters are positioned. In this case, the transitions must be done when the horse's nose reaches the track at the letter so that the horse is straight in the transition. The quality of the pace should be maintained up to the moment when the pace or movement is changed. In level 5 the expectation is that transitions will be performed within 3 strides of the marker, in level 4 within 2 strides of the marker and in level 3 within 1 stride of the marker. By level 2 all transitions should be smooth and on the marker. Transitions within the pace must be clearly defined while maintaining the same rhythm and cadence throughout. The horse should remain light in hand, calm and maintain a correct position.

- 8.9. **CORNERS:** correctly executed corners are an indication of the horse's balance, straightness, suppleness and thoroughness. In levels 4 & 5 the horse is not expected to be ridden deeply into corners. By level 3 the corners are to be ridden on a 10m diameter curve. By level 1 and Advanced, the horse is expected to execute corners on an 8m diameter curve. .

## Appendices

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- 2 Dressage Pencillers' Abbreviations
- 3 Dressage Gear Checkers' Guidelines
- 4 Plans of Dressage Arenas
- 5 Diagrams of Correct Application of Movements
- 6 Dressage Judge Accreditation Log Sheet
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