



DRESSAGE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



April 2019

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Twilight Dressage Competition

Dressage WA Newsletter

This month we're pleased to bring you a feature article from the Brett Parbury's Cheat Sheets titled "In Front of the Leg" as well as our regular Rider Profile and Feature Event, the WADYRA Twilight Dressage Competition.

As the weather cools down, the competition season heats up! In May and June this year we have some key dressage and training events for you to pop into your diary including the DWA Development Series featuring FEI 5* Judge Mary Seefried, the DWA Regional Riders Rumble, the DWA 2019 Pony Dressage Showcase the Timber Treaters Bridgetown Henty Autumn Dressage Championships. Entries close soon for these events so don't miss out!



Lateesha Coppin riding Shangrala
Just Sensational at the recent
WADYRA Twilight Dressage
Competition
Photo courtesy of Nicole Lockyer



Dates for the Diary

May

- ❖ 4 May: Perth Dressage Club Dressage Competition [SEC]
- ❖ 11 May: Bunbury Horse and Pony Club Autumn Dressage EA & PC [Southwest Equestrian Park]
- ❖ 25 & 26 May: The Timber Treaters Bridgetown Henty Autumn Dressage Championships
- ❖ **29 May – 1 Jun: DWA Development Series ft. FEI5* Judge Mary Seefried**

June

- ❖ 2 June: DWA Regional Riders Rumble
- ❖ 3 June: DWA 2019 Pony Dressage Showcase
- ❖ 29 June: Bunbury Horse and Pony Club Winter Dressage EA & PC

*Note: not all upcoming events are listed. Please regularly check the EA Events page and other local sources for up to date info.

UPDATE: Equestrian Australia Equipment Annex

Please take note of the following announcement from the Australian Dressage committee regarding the updated equipment annex as per the Equestrian Australia Dressage Rules (Jan 2019).

"In conjunction with Section 5 of the Equestrian Australia Dressage Rules updated in January 2019 (found [here](#)), the Australian Dressage Committee seeks to provide the following information for clarification of permitted equipment for official competition. This document is not intended to imply approval if the target item of equipment is not listed. The Dressage Rules provide clear guidelines as to the equipment permitted. Wherever possible, the EADC is guided by rulings from the EADC and FEI Equipment Committees.

For additional equipment queries, please do not hesitate to fill in the query application form (found [here](#)) or for information please do not hesitate to contact the Equestrian Australia National office."

This document will be updated twice a year and can be found [here](#) or at www.equestrian.org.au.

Quotes of the Month

"A horse that is never asked too much at once and is given time to really learn and understand, is a horse that feels loved by his rider and this subsequently increases his self-confidence."

Silke Rottermann

"We have almost forgotten how strange a thing it is that so huge and powerful and intelligent an animal as a horse should allow another, and far more feeble animal, to ride upon its back."

Peter Gray



FEATURE ARTICLE: In Front of the Leg – Brett Parbery Cheat Sheet

What it is and how to achieve it to unlock effortless riding?



Lazy, unmotivated and unexcited. No, I'm not talking about your husband! One of the most common complaints I hear from riders is that their horse is lethargic, lazy, drops out of the pace, or simply feels lacking in energy and is unwilling to try. You may have received judges' comments such as "horse needs to be more forward" or "needs more activity".

So, what is really going wrong and how can you fix it? In a nutshell, the problem here is that your horse isn't 'in front of your leg'.

WHAT IS 'IN FRONT OF THE LEG' AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

In front of the leg means that when you stop actively riding and just sit quietly, your horse then keeps going by itself. In other words, your horse is self-motivated. You're not having to remind your horse to sustain a level of energy or activity, therefore enabling you to sit quietly and spend more time feeling your horse and keeping them in balance.



Conversely, behind the leg means when you choose to sit quietly, the horse stops or slows down and doesn't keep going by itself.

Having your horse in front of the leg is one of the most important foundation concepts in all horse riding activities and is the key to unlocking your horse's full potential. Teaching your horse to try hard, put in all of their effort and then in turn reward them for it, is one of the most fulfilling feelings in horse training.

On the flip side, not having the horse in front of your leg is not enjoyable. The horse spends most of its time trying to get out of work, complaining about putting in effort and in some cases taking this negative attitude and turning it into behavioural issues.

A horse that is behind the leg is usually created by a rider who is either gripping with their legs, or over-using their legs aids without getting a reaction, therefore numbing or dulling the horse to the expected responses from the leg. The horse gets used to the feeling of the legs bumping on their sides and start to ignore these signals. Teaching your horse to be behind the leg can also come about by accident in your training system, e.g. making downward transitions by going from legs-on to legs-off.

"Teaching your horse to try hard, put in all their effort and then in turn reward them for it, is one of the most fulfilling feelings in horse training."

RUN A SELF-ASSESSMENT

To assess whether or not your horse is truly in front of the leg, you're going to have to do something that most people would rather not do, and that is to be brutally honest with yourself.

If you're trotting around the arena and you take your leg pressure off (or just stop applying a repetitive aid), what happens? If your horse slows or stops, that's telling you that you've inadvertently trained your horse that legs off = slower or downward transition. Horses that have been trained this way are behind the leg and if kept in this system will always require constant motivation to keep going.

Once you've gone ahead and done the self-assessment, what next?

If you've discovered that your horse is behind the leg, don't despair, it's a common problem, and as much as you have trained it INTO your horse, you can also train it OUT of them!

Firstly, you need to assess whether you have the physical capabilities to be effective with your legs i.e. the co-ordination and/or muscle memory to be fair but firm with these aids. If you think you need some work in this area consider doing some all-important work off the horse. Assess what skills you need to improve by standing over a bag of feed on the ground. Stand over it and use your heels on the side of the bag like you're on your horse. You will quickly be made aware if you have the skills or not. If the answer is that you need to do more work, then repeat this exercise daily until you feel coordinated enough to replicate it on your horse.



Another tip in improving effectiveness of your legs, is to ensure you're riding with a relaxed leg that's long and hangs around your horse. Once you first sit on your horse, and if it's safe to do so, let your feet hang out of the stirrups and stretch your legs as long as you can. Do this for about 5 minutes. When you take your stirrups back you will feel that your legs are longer, more relaxed and you are sitting deeper. That's the feeling you have to try and maintain for the entire ride.

HOW TO USE SHADES OF AIDS TO GET YOUR HORSE IN FRONT OF THE LEG

Let's use the example of a horse that's behind the leg in trot. When you're trotting around, repeat that exercise of taking the pressure off your legs and riding quietly without pushing forward. Your horse will slow, and at that moment you need to apply the softest version of your leg aid, as a gesture that you would like a reaction. If there is no reaction and your horse continues to slow or ignore your gesture, swiftly after the first aid – apply a second aid that is firmer, quicker and ongoing until he/she gives you some acknowledgment. If the second response is similar, then this is where you have to be firm (but fair).

"You as the rider, acting in a firm but fair way, need to remain diligent and poised to reward or repeat, all depending on the horses response."

Apply what would be the most annoying irritating aid, with your legs and keep it going until your horse gives you a positive forward thinking 'over' reaction. In this instance, spurs or a whip can be used in an irritating fashion. If you choose a whip, I wouldn't use it on the hind end but on the shoulder. I also don't recommend using spurs or a whip to inflict pain. A horse won't respond in a positive way to an aid that creates pain. It's much more effective to use a softer version of the aid, be persistent and firm enough that the horse will search for a way to remove the annoyance. There will be times that you will need to ride through what is perceived as bad behaviour, but it's simply the horse seeking a way to get rid of the annoyance. You as the rider, acting in a firm but fair way, need to remain diligent and poised to reward or repeat, all depending on the horse's response.

The key to effortless riding is having the discipline to keep your horse in front of your leg, which you can achieve through clear communication, using shades of aids, and having clarity in what you are asking your horse to perform when you apply an aid.

Source: www.theparberyprogram.com



Make sure you get your tickets for the Carl Hester Masterclass this October!

*Dressage Western Australia invites you to an
intimate “Through the Levels” masterclass
with the ultimate Master of Dressage
Carl Hester MBE*



3.00pm Gates open
4.30pm Masterclass starts
6.45-7.45pm Dinner break
9.15pm Autograph signing
10.00pm close



*For one night only...
Don't miss this unique opportunity*

Monday 14 October 2019

State Equestrian Centre, 303 Cathedral Avenue

Brigadoon WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Tickets on sale from TryBooking in April 2019

Balcony VIP event, including 4 course dinner: \$255 pp

General admission: EWA members \$120 , non-EWA members \$135



Rider Profile

Meet Elizabeth Watkins with Cherrymount Rhetorik (Henry) and NEP Dancing Girl (Coco)

1) Tell us about your horse?

I have two horses, Cherrymount Rhetorik (Henry) who is 14 and competing PSG/Inter 1 and NEP Dancing Girl (Coco) who is 4 and just starting out.

I purchased Henry as a yearling sight unseen from VIC – on the recommendation of the breeder Norman Hubble - who was a tall man and thought Henry would only grow to 16.2hh. Which to anyone who has seen Henry is quite funny as he is 17.2hh and rather large.

Henry won the AWA foal of the year in 2005 and I purchased him shortly after. I have trained Henry myself and it has been the most amazing journey. He is a laid back fellow who never shies or spooks but who feels he should be sleeping or eating rather than exercising – except he loves to do flying changes and can even do 5 one tempis.

Coco was purchased from Kate Spencer in October last year and she is black and gorgeous - by Don Dancier out of a Bletchley Park TB mare – I'm pleased to report she is only 16.1hh and very elegant and forward – so hopefully she won't make me work so hard. I hope to have her out competing in the next few months.



2) What has been the key to training your horse?

Sheer perseverance and trying not to blame the horse when things don't go to plan – as the rider we are supposed to train and guide the horse.

Henry has really taught me to ride and as he never really offers anything (except changes) without encouragement - I have had to dig deep and get back up/on when things don't go as hoped. He was quite challenging as a young horse due to his size – like steering a Mack truck. I've been incredibly lucky to have the support of my regular coach Rachel Brennen and also help from Nadine Merewether and Lone Jorgensen over the past 10 years. To improve my riding and give back to the sport I became a dressage judge. I can now judge Advanced and feel it has really helped me to understand the theory behind dressage and riding in general. I also watch a lot of dressage and try to pick the brains of everyone I meet! I have been very fortunate to have Kim Thomas as a mentor for my judging and through Kim I have met many top judges and 5* international judges – whose brains I have also picked...



3) What are your riding goals?

My goal for Henry when I bought him was to train him to PSG which we achieved with our first competition at this level in June 2017. Although I still feel in competition at PSG and Inter 1 it's all a bit hit and miss, at home we are working well. On a personal level I would like to improve my seat and ride quieter with smaller aids. My goal for Coco is to get to Grand Prix.

4) How did you start out riding and dressage?

I rode intermittently as a child at riding schools and bought my first horse – an OTTB at 21 for \$500. I began with eventing and made it up to 3foot (95cm now) and it scared the life out of me! I loved the dressage and jumping but was not so keen on the XC phase. I had bought another OTTB from Marj Radford who had saved her from the knackers. We put her straight in foal to BBD Fortune before I began eventing her. The foal grew to 17.1hh and was enormous - she was too spooky to event so I began with dressage. Grace was so accommodating (when she wasn't performing airs above the ground) and we competed up to Medium. It was a very steep learning curve. She was retired at 13 due to injury. At that time Henry was only 3 so it was slowly slowly with him until he was 5.



Dressage is definitely my passion, although I like all disciplines including camp drafting. Good horsemanship and riding can be seen across all sports – as can bad.

5) Who is your greatest influence?

My long time coach and friend Rachel Brennen and my husband Bruce who is an amazing rider and has broken in and retrained thousands of horses over the past 50 years. Although he doesn't ride mine very often, when he does he comes out with gems like: More leg and less hand and the other day he said, hmmm this horse doesn't keep going forward when you ask it to steady – (sounds a bit like a half halt issue LOL).



6) How can dressage in WA be improved?

I'm an eternal optimist so I believe it's all going along ok. I think there are a lot more quality competitions and surfaces around now – thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers. There are also a lot of quality horses coming up through the ranks and the riders are improving and we have access to top coaches from here, over east and over seas. Riders are supporting each other and working together which can only improve the standard in the long term.





FEATURE EVENT: WADYRA Twilight Dressage Competition

This year the WA Dressage Young Rider Association (WADYRA) held their annual competition as an Open and Young Rider Twilight event at Karinya Park, Orange Grove. Riders and organisers alike braved the drizzle and humid conditions throughout the day without an umbrella in sight – but there were plenty of smiles that brightened up the day. Two tests at each level to FEI were on offer as well as beginner club tests. The “main” arena was on the oval in front of the clubhouse which certainly gave a spectacular vantage point to watch the higher level tests under the lights at dusk.

The other highlight of this annual competition was the Hamag Teams Competition. This year we had a record of 9 teams with three/four riders each – 3 from WADYRA, 2 each from Gidge Pony Club & Perth College and 1 each from Transitions and Perth Dressage Club. The competition was closely contested with the WADYRA team of Maddi Georgiades, Chloe Moon, Alivia Coppin & Abbey Robson taking out the winning spot. Second place was achieved by another of the WADYRA teams and third place went to Transitions.



Alivia Coppin and Bordershow Buccaneer in the NRG Team Competitive Pony 2A

Photo courtesy of Nicole Lockyer Photography

A big thank you to our sponsors:

- Maxisoy+
- Johnson's Natural Formula
- Horseland Kelmscott
- Nags to Riches
- Pimp My Pony
- the NRG Team
- Woodleigh Horse Wear
- Giddyup
- Lyngarie Equestrian
- Equine Pure Delights
- Equifeast
- ASPR
- Jojubi Saddlery
- Petstock Biojohn
- FeedXL
- Anitone
- Rider's Diary

Overall 112 tests were ridden over the four arenas from 2.30pm to 7.00pm with riders having the opportunity

to ride under WA's most experienced and high level judges. Supporters and spectators also enjoyed the catering from Blue Cow and the sponsor trade stands on display. Behind the scenes WADYRA members had worked hard to secure some wonderful sponsors for the event with each class covered by a sponsor so riders went home with some fantastic products.

It was wonderful to see the event well supported by youth riders in both the Competitive and participant classes and most of the WADYRA members managed to ride tests and help run the event during the day. Being early in the year a lot of riders took advantage of bringing new horses out or to step up to a new level. Highest percentage for a young rider in the competitor classes was taken out by club member Chloe Moon and her young horse GP First Edition with 75.3% in the Horseland Kelmscott Competitive Prelim. Highest percentage for a young rider in the participant classes was taken out by Tazmin Smith with Renway Prince Meric in the Nags to Riches Participant Novice



with 72.3%. An award for the highest % for a rider over 50 was generously sponsored by Zoe Harrison and this was won by Liz Tollarzo with her lovely horse Wandeira Rhumba with a 70.1% in the Nags to Riches Competitive Novice.

WADYRA is a club open to riders 25 years and under and its aim is to foster and train young riders in dressage in an educational and supportive environment. Our chief coach is Steph Spencer – all of our riders (from the very young to our 'oldies' in their twenties) have gained so much from her and really appreciate Steph's friendly and supportive attitude.

Rallies include paired lessons with Steph and protocol tests with official judges or gymnastic pole class and guest lecturers. If you would like more info on becoming a member of WADYRA, please see our facebook page:
facebook.com/WAdressageyoungridersassoc



A full list of results from the twilight competition can be found at wadyra.org

Annalyce Page and Watchwood Druid in the Maxisoy+ Participant Prep C.
 Photo courtesy of Nicole Lockyer Photography



Tazmin Smith and Renway Prince Meric in the Nags to Riches Participant 2A, also won the highest Participant Young Rider Score of the day (sponsored by Penrose Park Garlands) with 75.3%.
 Photo courtesy of Eric Lloyd Photography



Danika Harrison and Alesha in the FeedXL Competitive 5B.
 Photo courtesy of Eric Lloyd Photography



TO ALL DRESSAGE EVENT ORGANISERS – HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT INCLUDING PARA EQUESTRIAN TESTS AT YOUR EVENTS?

Thank you to the clubs who currently offer Para Equestrian (PE) tests at their fixtures. Dressage WA and the Para Equestrian riders appreciate your willingness to give them this opportunity.

For clubs who are unfamiliar with requirements for running PE tests, in a nut shell, there are very few PE Riders, and they are encouraged to contact clubs to request that they include a specific PE Test on their programme. Clubs are not expected to hold these tests if they have not had a request from a PE rider.

Grades I - III riders ride in a 40x20 arena. This is probably the most trouble to arrange, but the riders are aware that they should bring a helper to help with any arena changes. Grades IV and V riders ride in a 60x20 arena, requiring no arena changes and can ride before or at the completion of any Able Bodied tests.

Although it is ideal to have a PE Judge, riders are happy to have the opportunity to compete and most judges will officiate, if you check with them, when they are invited. You may already have already invited a PE judge, as they are all accredited EA Dressage Judges.

Para Equestrian Accredited Judges include Wendy Barker, Lisa Baker, Hazel Hilkins, Kim Thomas, Elaine Greene, Nadine Herbert, Virginia Longley, Tracey Hockley and Chris Hope.

Like all Dressage riders, Para Dressage riders need to compete to hone their skills. We have some very talented Para riders who have competed and are aiming to compete in the Eastern States. Some have some have done this very successfully and have a goal to represent Australia.



Thank you to all of our contributors for April 2019. If you have any ideas or anything you'd like to read in the DWA Newsletter, please get in touch with us by going to the link below:

<https://www.dressagewa.org/contact-us.html>

Dressage Western Australia Committee Members

Chair – Suzanne Simons
Vice Chair – Val Mayger
Treasurer – Natalie Sakich

Finance/Treasury – Natalie Sakich/Suzanne Simons

DWA budget management, DDF accounts, purchase orders and payments

Issue of Information – Steph Munro
Website and Facebook

Correspondence – Suzanne Simons/committee

Minutes, Agendas, incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Business/Strategic Planning - Committee

Events – Working Parties

Club Liaison – Leanne Pitcher

Pony Representative – Leanne Pitcher

Participant Representative – Melissa Sullivan

Official Liaison – Val Mayger

Judges, Stewards, liaising with other disciplines, national issues.

High Performance – Tracy Spackman

EA/EWA – Val Mayger

liaising with EWA Board and CEO, ADC etc.

Riders Representative – Jamie Bawden.

Includes downgrading applications, Rider's forum etc.

Performance Trophies/Awards – Val Mayger

Para Equestrian – Val Mayger

Young and Junior Rider Rep – Natalie

Sakich/Steph Munro

General Committee Member – Linley Crackel

This Dressage Western Australia Newsletter was compiled by Jamie Bawden and Tracey Strommer

