
Notes for Dressage Judges

This guide refers to various rules and sections in the EFA Dressage Rules. All Judges should own a copy. The EFA and FEI rule books state how an exercise should be performed.

The FEI *Dressage Handbook – Guidelines for Judging* will assist all judges in discerning the qualities required to award the various marks (0-10) for each exercise.

Judges have a responsibility for the future of the sport of Dressage. Only by constant and consistent education in understanding the principles of Dressage, by attending and participating at seminars and by analysing the results of a competition can this be achieved.

1 Positioning Judges Around the Arena

Bearing in mind the need to fully observe all movements, the placement of judges around the arena should be as close as possible to the guide below:

Judge	Outdoor Arena	Indoor Arena
C	maximum 5m/minimum 3m back	preferably minimum 3m back
M/H	max 5m/min 3m back 2.5m in from long side	preferably min 3m back 2.5m in from long side
B/E	maximum 5m/minimum 3m back	preferably minimum 3m back

- the positioning of judges allows for different aspects of the same movement to be obtained
- when three judges are used one should sit on the long side (see below)
- it is encouraged that judges of D level and above should be positioned at B or E when two or more judges are used
- if judges of a lower level are not yet confident, shadow judging at side positions should be encouraged to gain confidence
- keep in mind the position of the sun when placing judges at E or B
- in keeping with the aforementioned statement the judge on the long side should be allotted their position first

# Judges	Position on Arena
1	• positioned at C (Chief Judge)
2	• second judge may be positioned at B, E, M or H
3	• one judge must be placed at B or E • when a judge is placed at H/M, a judge placed at E/B must be placed diagonally opposite the M/H judge
5	• positioned at C, M, B, E and H

2 Inspection of Arenas

The judge/s must physically inspect the arena to ensure that:

- the arena is of a satisfactory standard and if necessary have it modified
- the arena has a low continuous fence of about 0.3m of materials compliant with the EFA rules
- the marker letters are the correct distance from the outside of the arena (about 0.5m) and in the correct position
- the letter A must be placed at least 10-15 metres back from the entry
- this marker must not be put to one side but must be centred to be in line with C

Once the competition has commenced, the conditions must stay (as far as possible) the same for all.

3 Scale of Marks

Under both FEI and EFA rules, the scale of marks is as follows:

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

'not executed' means that practically nothing has been performed.

4 Execution of Tests

All movements contained in tests must be:

- executed in the order laid down by the test sheet
- carried out at a specified point of the arena

In a movement which must be carried out at a certain point of the arena, it should be done at the moment when the competitor's body is above this point, except in transitions where the horse approaches the letter from a diagonal or perpendicular to the point 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

5 Allocation of Marks and Scoring

- each judge must allot from 10 – 0 marks for each numbered movement
- whole marks are to be used except in the following instances:
 - Freestyle tests - half marks (0.5) may only be awarded for all the artistic marks in all levels including FEI
 - Young Horse – marks to a single decimal point may be used when judging first and second round qualifying competition (eg trot 7.8)
- these marks are then added together and any penalty marks are deducted
- it is essential that all penalty marks are deducted from each individual judge's score before they are totalled
- percentages for each judge must be clearly shown in results lists and on notice boards, together with the total percentage obtained to three decimal places
- a remark is **strongly recommended** for a mark of 5 or below
- a remark for all marks is recommended
- any alterations to marks must be initialled by the judge in ink
- **where there is a difference of 5% or more between individual judges, it is recommended that the Chief Judge shall initiate a brief discussion between the judges preferably with sheets available where possible**

6 Unmarked Movement

- if a mark has not been recorded 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

7 Errors of Course

If the bell is not sounded at an error of course and the test requires the same movement to be repeated and the rider again makes the same error, the rider is only penalised once. The Chief Judge must be aware of the effect of one movement on the next and where mirror images occur in order to be prompt in notifying the competitor.

Every error of the course, whether the bell is sounded or not, must be penalised **except as noted above**.

- the first by 2 marks
- the second by 4 additional marks and
- the third by elimination. However, if time permits and the type of event or competition is appropriate the Chief Judge may invite the rider to continue the test to the end with the marks being awarded in the ordinary way. In such a case it is not necessary for the collective marks to be completed

The use of voice etc referred to in 1.16 above is not an error of course.

It is not always necessary to ring the bell when an error of course is detected. Below are instances that will and will not require the sounding of the bell. However, not all cases can be quoted and it is the Chief Judge who will decide to sound the bell or not. In arriving at the decision not to ring the bell the judge must consider the effect this will have on the next movement.

Some examples of where the Chief Judge may or may not need to ring the bell to signify an error may include:

The Chief Judge will ring the bell when a competitor

- turns right instead of left
- omits a movement
- when a movement is the first of a mirror image and the competitor rides
 - rising trot instead of sitting trot
 - an incorrect size circle
- enters the arena at the incorrect gait

The Chief Judge need not ring the bell

- when the final halt is at X instead of G and vice versa
- at the salute, not taking the reins in one hand
- competitor makes a transition from medium trot to collected walk at V instead of K
- cantering up the centre line from A, makes a pirouette at D instead of at L
- does rising trot instead of sitting trot and vice versa

The competitor is shown by the Chief Judge the point at which they are to re-take the test which could be a movement prior to where the error occurred. Judging will re-commence when the rider reaches the point where the error of course occurred.

In principle a competitor is not allowed to repeat a movement of the test unless the Chief Judge decides on it being an error of course (rings the bell). If, however, the rider has started the execution of a movement and attempts to do the same movement again, the judges must consider only the first movement shown and at the same time penalise for an error of course.

Each judge must have the same number of errors marked on their sheets with a suitable notation explaining where the error was made. The Chief Judge must make the final decision as to the number of errors if there is a discrepancy.

If the Judges have not noted an error, the competitor has the benefit of the doubt.

8 Protocol for Judges Accepting Invitations to Judge

- when accepting invitations to judge, a judge must declare their interest in any person or horse who may enter in accordance with the EFA General Regulations and the EFA Dressage Rules. This enables the OC to allocate judges to competitions in which they have no conflict.
- Even if the rider competes HC, a judge with a conflict of interest is unable to officiate in that competition.
- check details that are important to you and advise organisers of your requirements at the time of first contact
- be definite and clear about your expectations. This does NOT include continually judging at only highest level of accreditation
- ask for a contact name, phone number and e-mail address and request that details be confirmed in writing within the next fortnight
- follow up two weeks prior to the competition if arrangements have not already been confirmed
- let the organisers know of any unavoidable changes to your availability as soon as possible
- your commitment to judge is paramount and should only be broken if circumstances beyond your control intervene
- should such circumstances arise, try to provide organisers with the name of a replacement who is willing to take your place
- arrive at the venue 30 minutes before starting time
- have your rulebook with you
- advise the organisers prior to the day of the competition if you are bringing your own pencil/writer
- advise the organisers if you require a car (if applicable)
- remember the dressage event is a joint effort between organisers, competitors and judges and all deserve to be treated with equal respect and courtesy
 - when accepting a judging commitment make sure you agree on the travelling allowance and honorarium and make the OC aware of the distance you have to travel
 - if more than 2 hours drive to the venue the judge has the right to ask for accommodation the night before. e.g. if starting before 10.30 am, likewise if they are to finish after 6.30 pm the same should apply in reverse
 - adhere to the code of conduct as well as the dress code and at least smart casual and no work jeans as matter of respect for all involved in the competition
 - make yourself available to discuss test papers with individual riders and make it known to the OC when you are available so that they can announce it over the PA
 - discussion about an individual horse/rider test can only take place if the rider has with them their test sheet.
 - apply risk management and safety principles at all times and act accordingly
 - know the EFA Disciplinary By-Laws and know what action to take should it occur. (i.e. rules as per abuse of horse, rider, judge etc.) www.equestrian.org.au
 - insist on the ruling of receiving a draw at the same time as the competitors in order to be aware of any conflicts so that the OC can be advised as quickly as possible. The draw ~~should~~ must indicate the breaks and lunch break as well as comply with the 40 horse rule
 - ask for a mobile number to contact on the day of competition should you be delayed (flat tyre, accident etc) on the way to the venue
 - offer assistance to the OC should it be necessary prior to the competition with regards to rules and regulations re arenas, footing, risk and safety
 - judges will at times be asked to judge lower levels e.g. Preparatory, Preliminary or Novice. This is really where we need our experienced judges in order to make sure that these horses and riders are put on the correct training path. Judges ~~should~~ must therefore be prepared to judge all levels up to an including their accredited level and not only judge at the higher end of their accreditation
 - judge what you see in a fair and unbiased way and avoid any personal comments such as 'have seen him go better'