

DRESSAGE GUIDELINES

Drafted 12.4.2018, recreated 12.10.2022, updated 26.11.2024



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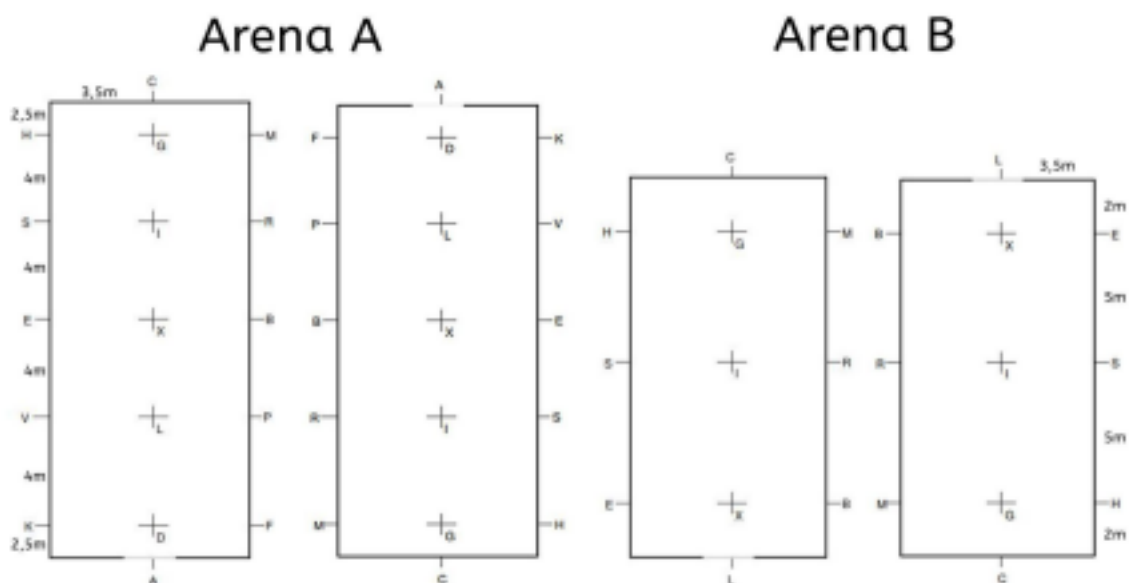
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ABOUT DRESSAGE

In dressage, the goal is to move as effortlessly as possible on the arena. The basic principle is that the rider's upper body is still, while the legs, hypothetically horse's legs, do the work. There are different levels in competitive dressage, and dressage riders can compete in both the traditional programs and the freestyle programs. In traditional class, the competitors are given a ready-made program before competitions which they need to execute as exactly and flawlessly as possible. In the freestyle class, the rider is given a list of required movements and a time limit for the performance well before competitions, and the rider must plan their own course. Freestyle classes that require a use of music during the performance are called **kür**.

Hobbyhorse dressage is originally based on dressage with real horses yet it never has been about imitating real horses. As hobbyhorsing kept developing after its early years, also dressage grew to be even more distant from its origin. Nowadays you can see its roots in dressage sheets, terminology and distantly similar movements, but the approach to stunning movements is by challenging the human physique: how well one can move effortlessly through heavy movements and hard transitions. Dressage takes coordination skills, balance, stamina and throughout body control. Very dedicated riders can ride long programs and perform even hard transitions or tasks flawlessly and on point.

DRESSAGE ARENAS AND LETTERS



There are two different types of dressage arenas: Arena A, commonly used for the hardest levels of dressage, and arena B for easy and advanced levels. The attached picture of arenas shows the distance of the letter markers from the corners and from each other.

Arena A is 7 meters wide and 21 meters long. The most important part is that the length is three times the width. If it is not possible to build a full-scale arena A due to lack of space, it is possible to build arena A **at least** 5 meters wide and 15 meters long. In this exceptional

case the letter markers on long sides close to corners (H, M, K, F) are to be placed 2 meters from corners, and the rest of the letters are placed evenly between.

Letters on the short sides are always in the middle of the side.

Arena B's only recommended size is 7 meters wide and 14 meters long.

The head judge is placed on letter marker C. Other possible judges are on other letter markers, i.e. on the ones in the middle of long sides.

Competitors must enter the arena through the gate, meaning from the middle of the short side, opposite to the head judge. In arena A this is letter marker A, in arena B it is letter marker L.

Letters on the centre line are not visible on the arena and all the letters on the sides of the arena must be outside the arena's borders.

Arena must be visibly marked yet the judge must have good visibility to the whole arena.

Commonly used ways to mark the arena are i.e. poles on the ground or very low fencing.

LEVELS OF DRESSAGE

The level of a program in competitions is determined by its most challenging movements or details. While creating a program, it is important to keep in mind that the program should match the requirements of the level as well as possible.

Easy C – In easy C one must master all three working gaits (walk, trot, canter), changes of tempo, stop and backing up. Simple turns, such as voltes and circles, are involved. A level below easy C is called trot program, which is otherwise very similar but does not include any canter.

Easy B - In addition to easy C, one must also master all three medium gaits, leg yield, transition to canter from walk and transition to trot from backing up.

Easy A - One must be able to perform all three extended gaits, shoulder-in, half-pass and haunches-in in walk, counter-canter, simple changes of leg in canter, turn to the forehand and turn to the haunches.

Advanced B - All the movements already mentioned in easy levels should be performed now very effortlessly. New additions are shoulder-in, haunches-in and half pass in trot and canter, all three collected gaits, flying changes and transition to canter from backing up.

Advanced A - In addition to the movements mentioned in lower levels, one must also be able to perform half pirouette in canter, walk pirouette and tempi-changes at least every third stride. On this level and on all the levels higher than this, there is now mandatory use of two reins. Working gaits are no longer used in programs.

Prix St Georges - The rider can perform tempi-changes on every second stride and a whole canter pirouette.

Intermediaire I & II – Level requires also one-tempi changes (min. 5 in a row), passage, piaffe 7-8 consecutive steps, piaffe pirouette, zigzag half-passes in all three gaits in 2-4-4-2 series, and hard transitions. Programs are now more stamina-forward than before.

Grand Prix – Highest level with technically and endurance-wise challenging programs. In addition to everything else, it is required to be able to perform piaffe for 12-16 consecutive steps, double pirouette in canter, double pirouette in piaffe, one-tempi changes (min. 9 in a row). Zigzag half-pass is now ridden in 3-6-6-6-3 series.

JUDGING AND POINTS

The judge follows the competitor's performance closely from many different aspects: i.e. how precisely the competitor performs the movements at the right places, how good the posture is, and what quality are the movements throughout the performance. Any faults are marked as penalty points that are to be deducted from total points. You can find all faults and reasons for elimination from competitive dressage rules.

Competitor can score up to 10 points from one part of the performance: i.e. one required movement. Some cases, such as in very tough tasks, a coefficient might be used.

Coefficient is always visible in the dressage sheet and it doubles the points the judge has given on that certain task. There rarely are any bigger coefficient numbers than 2.

The judge is obligated to write remarks when they give 5 points or less but it is recommended to write remarks as much as possible despite the points.

POINTS EXPLAINED

- 10** Excellent
- 9** Very good
- 8** Good
- 7** Fair
- 6** Satisfactory
- 5** Accepted
- 4** Weak
- 3** Not good
- 2** Bad
- 1** Very bad
- 0** Not performed

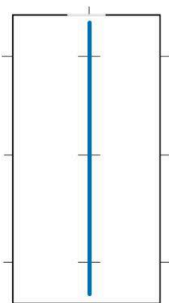
THE ARTISTIC EVALUATION OF FREESTYLE AND KÜR PROGRAMS

- **The difficulty level of freestyle programs**, the choreography and the movements performed within it are evaluated based on how well they are suited for the competitive level.
- In **risk-taking**, the evaluation focuses on how well the competitor invents and dares to try new transitions and challenging/difficult elements and transitions in their routine, and how

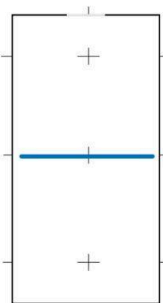
successfully they perform them. A competitor takes a risk when attempting something demanding, without being sure if it can be executed technically in a controlled manner. Movements and sequences requiring endurance also fall under risk-taking.

- **Creative use of the competition arena** refers to the competitor's ability and willingness to creatively use the arena in diverse ways, as well as inventing creative, inventive paths and different rails during their routine
- **Music interpretation and arrangement** are evaluated based on how well the music and its elements fit into the choreography. The elements of the music and its variability can be utilized, for example, in the form of varying transitions and steps. In this evaluation area, the judge may highlight their personal preferences, but must still consider the competitor's artistic skill and creativity. Choreography may also include elements of surprise.
- **The program structure** refers to how the choreography is assembled and organized. The program's structure should be clear and include creative solutions, incorporating movements beyond the required elements. The program may, at the competitor's discretion, include a story or theme.

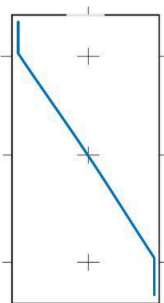
COMMON RAILS



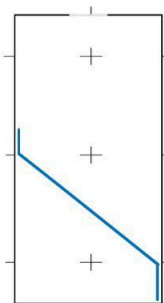
Down the centerline



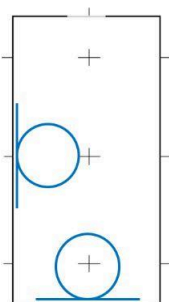
Down the midline



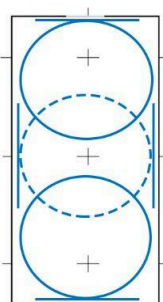
Across the long diagonal



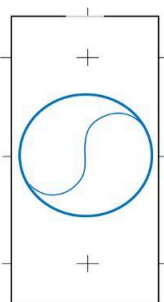
Across the short diagonal



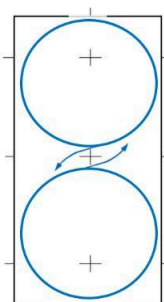
Circles (small)



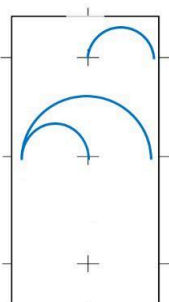
Circles (large)



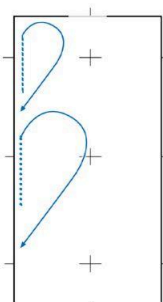
Through a circle



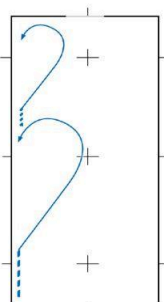
Switching circles (figure eight)



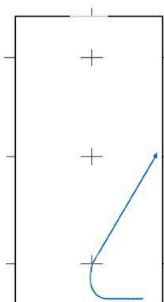
Half-circles



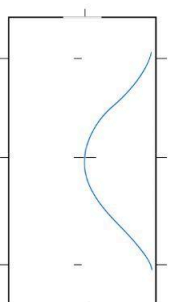
Half-volte to the wall



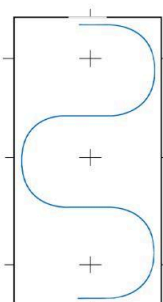
Half-volte to the wall (reverse)



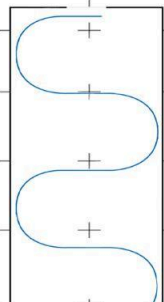
Corner cut



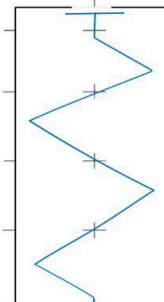
Shallow loop



3-loop serpentine



4-loop serpentine



Zigzag halfpass (3-6-6-6-3)

CLOTHING AND TACK IN COMPETITIONS

CLOTHES

There is no dress code to competitions. However, dressage is a sport so it is recommended and very popular to use clothes suitable for that. Many competitors like to use blazers especially in big competitions. Only using shoes is mandatory. Clothes and equipment used in equine sports (shoes, helmets, breeches...) are not recommended as these may interfere with competitor's performance and even judging.

HOBBYHORSE'S TACK

It is recommended to use only a bridle that matches the level of the class. Also leg wraps and ear bonnets are allowed as long as they fit and thus don't interfere with judging: unfitting pieces may hide subtle positionings of the horse or feet. All auxiliary reins are forbidden. The model of the bridle is free of choice on every level until advanced A. On advanced A and every higher level it is mandatory to use a bridle that has two reins that are attached to different parts of the bit (separate rings) or to completely different bits. Having a good contact with two reins takes more precision and creates an extra challenge. Bridle models with two reins are i.e. double bridle and bitless option, cavemore.

It is recommended to braid long manes.