

WESTERN DRESSAGE UK

Western Dressage is supported by the Western Equestrian Society as an Unaffiliated discipline acceptable at all WES Approved or Affiliated Shows.

Extracts from WES "General Rules & Regulations"

*WDUK - 3 variations highlighted in **bold** text*

Animal Welfare

2.1: Every horse shall at all times be treated humanely and with dignity, respect and compassion. Rules established and enforced by Western Dressage UK demand that horse breeders, owners, trainers and exhibitors are continually responsible for the well being and humane treatment of any animal entrusted to their care. Above all the horse's welfare is paramount to other considerations and the continual development of procedures, which ensure humane treatment of the animal and fair competition, supersedes all other concerns. The standard by which conduct or treatment will be measured is that which a reasonable person, informed and experienced in generally accepted equine training and exhibition procedures or veterinary standards, would determine to be cruel, abusive or inhumane. For the purpose of this rule, a person responsible for the care of a horse is also responsible for and may be disciplined for the inhumane conduct of their trainers, agents, representatives and employees. For violation of this rule, an individual may be disciplined, suspended, denied WDUK privileges, disqualified, expelled from show grounds and/or expelled from WDUK.

2.1.1: For the purpose of this rule, a person responsible for the care of a horse is also responsible for and may be disciplined for the inhumane conduct of their trainers, agents, representatives and employees. For violation of this rule, an individual may be disciplined, suspended, denied WDUK privileges, disqualified, expelled from show grounds and/or expelled from WDUK.

2.2: Inhumane, cruel and abusive treatment of any horse or any other animal on the show grounds is strictly prohibited. Treatment of any horse will be considered inhumane if a person educated or experienced in accepted equine training techniques, would perceive the conduct of an individual to be inhumane.

2.5: Inhumane treatment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Placing an object in the horse's mouth so as to cause undue discomfort or distress.
2. Leaving a bit in a horse's mouth for extended periods of time causing undue discomfort or distress.
3. Tying a horse's head up (above withers), back or around in a stall or anywhere at a WDUK event in any manner as to cause undue discomfort or distress.
4. Tying a horse in a stall without access to food or water for an extended period of time.
5. Lunging or riding a horse in a manner as to cause undue discomfort or distress to the horse.
6. Tying or fastening any foreign object onto a horse, halter, bridle and/or saddle in order to desensitize the horse.
7. Excessive spurring or whipping;
8. Excessive jerking of reins;
9. Excessive fencing.
10. Excessive spinning (defined as no more than eight consecutive turns in either direction).
11. Use of prohibited equipment, including, but not limited to, saw tooth bit; hock hobbles; tack collars or tack hackamores; riding in a curb bit without a curb strap; wire or solid metal curb straps (no matter how padded); wire cavesson; wire or cable tie downs; bumper bits; metal bosals (no matter how padded); martingales with curb bits without rein stops; draw reins attached between or around the front legs, will not be allowed in approved events (including clinics).
12. Use of any item or appliance that restricts movement or circulation of the horse's tail.
13. Exhibiting a horse which appears to be sullen, dull, lethargic, emaciated, drawn or overly tired.
14. Intentional or negligent treatment which results in any bleeding.

15. Excessive pressure on or excessive jerking of a halter lead shank or an allowed lip chain.
16. Any other treatment or conduct deemed by a show official to be inhumane or abusive.

2.7: UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT or any other form of misconduct that is irresponsible, illegal, indecent, profane, intimidating, threatening or abusive is prohibited. Show management may immediately expel individuals exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct from the show grounds and any unused entry fees will be forfeited. Show management shall also file a written report with WDUK concerning the conduct in question.

Equipment & Attire

5.1: Wearing of Western Hats: everyone including competitors, owners, helpers or grooms riding at a WDUK activity must wear an approved hard hat. However, except for youths under the age of 14, competitors at a WDUK approved show can continue to wear a Stetson in both competition and warm up areas subject to providing WDUK with a signed disclaimer which is to be handed to the show secretary on arrival at the show ground. The hats which are currently acceptable are PAS 015:1998 - these have now been superseded by PAS 015:2011 the European standard compliant BS-EN 1384 and the American standard ASTM/SE1. Baseball caps are not permitted at any time whilst mounted. It is recommended that approved hard hats are worn at all times whilst schooling and hacking out. Competitors in Freestyle or themed Charity classes must sign a separate disclaimer if they wish to participate in costumes which do not incorporate either a Stetson or Hard Hat.

5.2: In all classes it is mandatory to wear clean, neat western type attire. The hat must be on the riders head when the exhibitor enters the ring. Judges at their discretion may authorise adjustments to attire due to weather-related conditions. Except for youth competitors it is optional that an exhibitor may wear a British Standard approved hard hat fitted with a three point harness in any class. Youth competitors under the age of 14 **MUST** wear a British Standard approved hard hat fitted with a three point harness at all times when mounted or competing in a showmanship class. Youth riders aged 14-19 **MAY** wear a western hat subject to a disclaimer, signed by a Parent/Guardian, being handed to the secretary of the show prior to the youth's first class.

5.3: Competitors with Disabilities. Western Dressage UK recognises its obligations to cater wherever possible for the needs of competitors with disabilities and will assist all competitors to participate in Society activities. The safety of competitors is paramount and in order to enable WDUK to make provision for such competitors prior knowledge of any specific requirements is essential. Special exception because of religious reasons or physical handicap must be requested by filing a written request to WDUK and obtaining written approval prior to participation.

5.4: Whenever this rule book refers to Hackamore it means the use only of a flexible braided rawhide, leather or rope bosal, the core of which may be either rawhide or flexible cable. Horse hair bosals are prohibited as are so called mechanical hackamores. No ridged material will be under the jaw, regardless of how padded or covered. A hackamore must use a complete mecate rein, which must include a tie rein.

5.5: Whenever this rule book refers to a snaffle bit in western performance classes, it means the use of a smooth snaffle bit with broken mouthpiece, or a one-piece rigid or flexible mouthpiece (conventional O-ring, egg-butt or D-ring with no bit guards) and the ring no larger than 4 inches and no less than 2 inches. The inside circumference of the ring must be free of rein, curb or headstall attachments which would provide leverage. A leather curb strap, attached below the reins, measuring at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " in width is permissible, providing there is room to insert at least two fingers between the strap and the jaw. A Curb chain is not allowed with a snaffle bit. The mouthpiece should be round, oval or egg-shaped, smooth and unwrapped metal. It may be inlaid (but smooth) or latex wrapped. The bars of a broken mouthpiece must be a minimum of $\frac{5}{16}$ " diameter, measured 1" in from the cheek with a gradual decrease to the centre of the snaffle. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three piece connecting ring of $1\frac{1}{4}$ " or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of $\frac{3}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " (measured top to bottom, with a maximum length of 2"), which lies flat in the horses mouth is acceptable. Rigid or flexible mouthpieces must measure no less than $\frac{5}{16}$ " diameter at any point on the bar.

5.6: Whenever this rule book refers to a curb bit it means a bit that has a solid or broken mouthpiece with shanks and acts with leverage. All curb bits must be free of mechanical devices and should be considered a standard Western bit. When a curb bit is used, a curb strap or curb chain is required, but must be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " in width and lie flat against the jaw of the horse.

- A. $8\frac{1}{2}$ inch maximum length shank, overall. Shanks may be fixed or loose.
- B. In regard to mouthpieces, bars must be round, oval or egg shaped, smooth and unwrapped metal of $\frac{5}{16}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter measured 1" from the cheek. They may be inlaid (but smooth), or latex wrapped. Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bar), such as extensions or prongs on solid mouthpieces. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three piece connecting flat bar of $\frac{3}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " (measured top to bottom, with a maximum length of 2"), which lies flat in the horses mouth is permissible.
- C. The port must be no higher than $3\frac{1}{2}$ " inches maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouth pieces, half-breeds and spades are standard.
Note: Exhibitors may be asked to drop the bridle to allow the judge to inspect the condition and legality of the bit at the end of any class.
- D. Slip or gag bits and donut and flat polo mouth pieces are not acceptable.

5.7: Rein carriage in performance classes:

- A. Split reins in curb bit classes, will be carried in one hand, entering through the top of that hand. The remainder of the rein shall hang free on the same side as the reining hand. The index finger only **MUST** be between the reins.
Split reins in snaffle bit classes, reins must be crossed with tails on opposite sides of the neck. **Preferably each rein should be held separately and not bridged but optionally** the reins should form an arch above the horse's neck with the rider's hands around both reins either side of the arch. Only split reins are permissible with a snaffle bit.
- B. Romal reins refer to an extension of braided or round material attached to **CLOSED** reins:
 1. The free hand **MUST** be used to hold the romal and must be held at least 16" (40.5 cm) from the reining hand and in a relaxed position.
 2. The Romal shall not be used forward of the cinch or used to signal or cue the horse in any way. Any infringement of this rule shall be penalised severely by the judge.
 3. Hands should be around reins; coming through the bottom of the hand with the thumb uppermost. No finger between the reins is permitted.

5.8: In all ridden classes, horses are to be shown only in an American style Western stock saddle, ridden astride. **Treeless but NOT hornless** saddles are permitted provided the overall design is consistent with a Western Stock Saddle. Endurance or similar saddles are not permitted.

5.9: Judges, via their stewards, may ask a competitor to leave the arena if they feel that their dress is not to an acceptable standard.

Performance Classes

6.10: The following terminology shall apply in all western classes whenever a specific gait is called for:

- A. The walk is a natural, flat-footed, four-beat gait. The horse must move straight and true at the walk. The walk must be alert with a stride of reasonable length in keeping with the size of the horse. Loss of forward rhythmic movement shall be penalised.
- B. The jog-trot is a smooth, ground-covering, two-beat diagonal gait. The horse works from one pair of diagonals to the other pair. The jog-trot should be square, balanced and with a straight, forward movement of the feet. Horses walking with their back feet and trotting on the front are not considered performing the required gait. When asked to extend the jog, he moves out with the same smooth way of going.

- C. The lope is an easy, rhythmical three-beat gait. Horses moving to the left should lope on the left lead. Horses moving to the right should lope on the right lead. Horses travelling at a four-beat gait are not considered to be performing at a proper lope. The horse should lope with a natural stride and appear relaxed and smooth. He should be ridden at a speed that is a natural way of going.
- D. A simple change of lead is performed by breaking to a walk for one to three strides. Failure to walk will be treated as a break of gait.

The head should be carried at an angle that is natural and suitable to the horse's conformation at all gaits.

6.12: Re-runs will not be allowed in instances of equipment failure.

6.13: In any approved performance class, the judge shall have authority to require the removal or alteration of any piece of equipment or accoutrement which, in their opinion, is unsafe, would tend to give a horse an unfair advantage or which they believe to be inhumane.

- A. Any time a horse's mouth is tied or fastened in a performance class, it shall be disqualified.
- B. Any time a horse's mouth is bleeding in a performance class, it shall be disqualified.

6.14: An exhibitor may enter more than one horse per event, but a horse may not be entered for more than one rider in the same class **unless entered Hors Concours on the second or subsequent occasion.**

6.15: Any horse leaving the arena while being judged, without the consent of the judge, will be disqualified from that class. Where a horse is withdrawn from an event in the case of unfitness on veterinary grounds, a minimum of 50% of the entry fee will be refunded.

6.16: Horses, which in the opinion of the judge, are unfit, lame, out of control, or riders ill treating horses, will be disqualified and asked to leave the ring. In the case of the latter, disciplinary proceedings may follow. In the case of lameness or fitness, only with veterinary clearance at the show will the horse be allowed into other classes, but this shall not affect the result of any previous class.

6.17: LAMENESS

The judge shall examine and check for lameness of all horses brought into any class. The judge has the authority and duty to excuse any horse from the class due to lameness, at any time while being judged. Obvious lameness shall be cause for disqualification. Obvious lameness is:

1. Consistently observable at a trot under all circumstances.
2. Marked nodding, hitching or shortened stride.
3. Minimal weight bearing in motion and/or at rest and inability to move.

6.19: A horse behaving in an unacceptable or unsafe manner will either be brought into the centre of the arena, or excused immediately from the class. It is the responsibility of the judge to ensure the smooth running of a class.

6.20: Stallions must not be handled or ridden by any person under the age of 19.

6.21: A horse or rider falling to the ground is cause for disqualification. A horse is deemed to have fallen when its shoulder and/or hip and/or underline touches the ground. A rider is considered to have fallen when he or she is not astride.