

Working Equitation: Rules

Background:

These rules are essentially based on the 2001 Working Equitation (WE) rules promulgated by the APSL in Lisbon, Portugal. An English translation of those rules was posted to the DVII group on Yahoo.com, through no attribution was given to them or to the translation. Additional input comes from the 2007 International Rules published by the World Association for Working Equitation.

Both sets of rules were written with input from WE committees in several European countries. They are designed to be the specifications and regulations for WE competition at the International level. As such, they could be considered the equivalent in level of difficulty to other disciplines at the FEI level.

The 2001 “International” rules serve as a goal for WE riders in North America. This proposed set of rules is being drafted with the following goals:

- Establish multiple levels of competition and expectations that will allow a rider to progress towards competition at an “International” level
- Be a clear and concise set of specification for the conduct of classes, the evaluation of performances, and the expectations of rider and horse
- Serve as a strong foundation that will encourage and enable more shows to offer WE classes, for more riders to participate, and ultimately to promote the development of national WE teams from North America able to compete in International competitions.

This draft assumes that Working Equitation rules will be applied within the context of a USEF licensed show, and as such include some reference to other USEF rules and procedures. It is hoped that ultimately these rules will be adopted into the USEF rulebook – either as part of an existing division or possibly as its own division of competition.

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15 August 2007

1) Objective:

The objective of Working Equitation is to exhibit the horse in a variety of environments that showcase his ability to be a creature of utility in partnership and harmony with the rider. The horse is shown as he would be seen in a working environment on the ranch or farm. The rider is adorned as he would if he were in the fields with his mount. The emphasis is on the utility of the horse and the skill of the rider, not on their outward appearance.

- 2) A Working Equitation division is comprised of multiple classes (or components) which, taken together, comprise a division. The number of components and their difficulty increase as the horse and rider progress from basic to International level competition.

The components of Working Equitation are:

- A) Ridden Pattern (Dressage)
- B) Maneuver Through Obstacle
- C) Speed Through Obstacle
- D) Working Cattle

Working Equitation is judged by a designated and duly trained official or panel of officials. The subjective evaluation of the judge is not subject to appeal. However, all rights of appeal granted by USEF rules are available to a competitor.

The judge works for the Show Committee, which is ultimately responsible for the operation of the competition, the conduct of the classes, and the administration of these rules and specifications. The composition of the Show Committee will vary from show to show, but will always be comprised of a minimum of the show secretary, the show manager (or other representative of the USEF licensee), and the appointed USEF Show Steward or Technical Delegate.

3) General Rules

- a) An entry which shows visible sign of injury caused by excessive use of riding aids, including but not limited to whip, spurs, and bits, shall immediately be excused from competition. An entry thus excused shall forfeit any placing in any components of the competition they have previously completed, and any awards given in those components shall be immediately returned to the show committee.
- b) No entry less than 4 years of age may be shown.
- c) Classification of entry: entries may be classified as "Debutante" if they have not been shown in a Working Equitation class or competition prior to the current competition year. Classification of youth and amateur entries shall comply with applicable USEF definitions.
- d) Subjective elements shall be scored on a scale of 0 through 10, with 0 being a failure to execute the required movement or negotiate the required obstacle, and 10 being perfection of the movement or obstacle.

- e) Timed elements may employ a manual timer (person with stopwatch, as opposed to electronic timing); when a manual timer is used, the same timer must be used for all entries. Electronic timing, where available, is highly recommended.
- f) A Senior entry shall be defined in conformance with the USEF definition of an adult rider. A Youth entry shall be defined in conformance with the USEF definition of a youth rider. A Debutante entry is one in which the horse has not been shown in Working Equitation prior to the current competition year.

4) Tack and Attire

- a) an entry is to be shown in the traditional tack and attire of the working equestrian in the entries nation. Alternatively, an entry may be shown in the traditional tack and attire of the working equestrian of the nation of origin of the entries horse. For example, it would be appropriate for an entry to show in traditional Spanish vaquero tack and attire for an entry comprising a Spanish or Andalusian horse, no matter what country the entry is competing in. Tack and attire must be consistent – tack from one nation or tradition may not be mixed with attire from another.
- b) EXCEPTION to (a) above: entries comprising a national team and competing or exhibiting as such should be shown in the traditional or contemporary tack and attire of the nation they are representing. For example, an American team should always show in the tack and attire of the American Cowboy.
- c) At no time should an entry exhibit in a mixture of tack or attire from diverse traditions or nations. As an example, it would be improper to show in French tack with American attire, or to show in modern tack with historical attire. Violation is grounds for elimination.
- d) Irregardless of the national tradition of an entries turnout, at no time shall a horse be shown, exhibited, exercised, or otherwise subjected to tack or other artificial devices that are deemed inhumane, cause visible injury obvious to the judge, steward, or show committee, or are otherwise prohibited from general use by USEF.
- e) Tack and attire are important to the overall impression of an entry, but shall comprise a minor component of the entries score. The focus is on the performance of the horse and rider, not on their apparatus.
- f) Generally, tack and attire should be representative of that which is worn by the working equestrian on a daily basis. Idiomatically, acceptable tack is blue jeans, not button down. Despite this, the entry should be presented in a neat, clean, and well groomed fashion that honors both the entry and the judge.
- g) Disputes as to the acceptability of an entries tack or attire may be referred to the show committee prior to the commencement of the competition. Any decision made by the committee shall be final and binding, and not subject to further appeal beyond those outlined elsewhere in USEF Chapter GR.
- h) There shall be no penalty for the use of protective headgear or body armor for the rider in any division.
- i) There shall be no penalty for the use of protective wraps upon the legs of the horse. Such wraps shall be constructed of cloth or leather, and shall have no

weighted devices or other considerations or modifications that could reasonably be expected to influence the movement of the horse.

- j) Bell boots (overreach boots) or similar devices are not allowed
- k) Hoof polish shall not be allowed, nor shall any adornment or decoration of mane or tail, except in competitions where USEF rules would allow otherwise.
- h) a whip or crop may only be used by a youth rider competing as such in a youth division. Youths competing in open or amateur divisions may not use a crop or whip. Use of whips or crops by other riders is prohibited.

5) Ridden Pattern (Dressage) Component

- a) The Dressage Component is conducted within a standard 20x40 or 20x60 meter dressage arena. While a complete arena with chain or block-and-rail construction is recommended, it is not required. When a complete arena is not used, the corners of the arena must still be demarcated. Whenever possible, the letters of the arena should be appropriately marked for the convenience of the judge, spectator, and rider. If the Ridden Pattern component is held in an indoor or covered arena, the enclosure walls may be the same as the arena boundary if they are the correct dimensions.
- b) The judge or judges panel shall be provided a bell or whistle with which to signal the rider to begin their test. The bell or whistle is also used to signal an error to the rider.
- c) The Show Committee shall be responsible for determining the order of entry for the dressage component. Scheduling prejudice may be granted to riders showing on more than one entry.
- d) The Judge will signal his readiness to judge a test by using the bell or whistle. Upon the judges signal, the entry shall have a maximum of two minutes to enter the arena and commence the test.
- e) Evaluation of each entry begins when they enter the arena, and ends when they exit (not when they salute).
- f) Riders are to use only one hand on the reins. The right hand may be used to briefly adjust the length of the reins, but must otherwise be carried on the hip or trunk of the rider. Exception: Debutante horses showing on a snaffle bit may use both hands on the reins.
- g) It is entirely appropriate for traditional or contemporary music to be played during the test. The music, however, should not be obtrusive or distracting, and the test should not be choreographed to the music. The judge may, at his discretion, as for the music to be stopped prior to the competition.
- h) Competitors may be eliminated from the component if: they do not commence the test within two minutes of the judges signal; they enter the arena before the judge as signaled they are ready for the competitor to enter; if the entry leaves the arena during the test; if the horse is visibly wounded, lame, or bleeding; if the rider abuses or mistreats the horse; if the entry takes an inordinate amount of time to achieve the desired movement.

5.1) Ridden Pattern Component – Scoring

- a) Scoring shall be done on a scale of 0 through 10 points. A 0 score represents a failure to execute the required movement; a 10 score represents sublime perfection of the movement.
- b) Certain exercises are valued higher than others, and will be assigned a coefficient. The score for the exercise is arrived at by multiplying the coefficient by the score given by the judge.
- c) The entry with the highest score shall be declared the winner. In the event of a tie, the total marks for overall impression may be used to break the tie. In the event that the overall impression marks are unable to break the tie, the judge shall have the discretion to break the tie.

6) Maneuver through Obstacles

- a) The course shall contain a minimum of 10 obstacles
- b) Each obstacle is worth a maximum of 10 points
- c) Obstacles should always be designed with safety in mind
- d) The course should be posted at least 2 hours prior to the class
- e) Riders are to use only one hand on the reins. The right hand may be used to briefly adjust the length of the reins, but must otherwise be carried on the hip or trunk of the rider. Riders using two hands shall be scored lower. Exception: Debutante horses showing on a snaffle bit may use both hands on the reins.
- f) Riders shall move between obstacles at a working canter. Riders who do not move between obstacles at a working canter shall be scored lower.

6.1) Obstacles – Scoring

Each obstacle shall be judged on a scale of 0-10 points. A zero is awarded for failing to complete an obstacle. After an appropriate amount of time, if an obstacle has not been successfully completed the judge shall signal to the rider to continue to the next obstacle, and award them a zero score.

7) Speed through Obstacles

- a) The timed obstacle course shall contain a minimum of 5 obstacles.

6.1) Speed through Obstacles – Scoring

The best time through the complete course shall be awarded 100 points. Lower times are awarded points proportional to the time differential to the best time. For example, if the best time is 90 seconds, and the second best time is 100 seconds, the second best time is awarded 90 points ($90 \div 100 = 90\% = 90$ points).

A competitor may make a maximum of three attempts at negotiating an obstacle. If the competitor is unable to complete the obstacle in three attempts, they may continue the course with a penalty of 10 seconds. The clock shall continue through all attempts.

8) Division Scoring

Competition management may pin ribbons in each component as if it were an individual class. Collectively, the multiple components make up a Working Equitation Division. The winner of the division is determined as follows

- a) The ridden pattern score, divided by two, is added to
- b) The Maneuver through Obstacles score, and
- c) The Speed through Obstacles score

This total score shall determine the winner of the division. In the event of a tie, the winner shall be determined by the best time on the Speed through Obstacles component. If a tie remains, it shall be broken by the overall impression scores on the Ridden Pattern component. In the event that the overall impression marks are unable to break the tie, the judge shall have the discretion to break the tie.

9) Divisions of Working Equitation

Multiple divisions may share the same Obstacle components. For example, the Basic division and Intermediate division may use the same Obstacle components, and a separate Obstacles component does not need to be run for each. However, each division shall have its own Ridden Pattern component. A rider may elect to ride in multiple divisions, with his Obstacles scores counting in the multiple divisions.