



UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™

USDF

Show Biz, Chapter 5, Dressage Competition Classes

When selecting classes for your competition, remember that the competition is offered primarily for the competitor, secondly for the spectator, and lastly for the management. Offer classes the competitors want to ride in, and the spectators enjoy watching.

- USEF/USDF tests and USDF Freestyle tests can be found on the [USDF website](#).
- FEI tests can be found on the [FEI website](#).
- Para Equestrian tests can also be found on the [FEI website](#).

The specifications for these tests are included in the USEF Rule Book and generally do not have to be repeated in the prize list. The levels and freestyle levels offered should be listed in the prize list.

What tests you offer will depend on the competitors in your area, how many competition arenas you are running, how many days your competition will last and on the ratings of the judges you hired.

Note: Small arena = 20x40m and Standard arena = 20x60m.

Many USEF tests are designed to be ridden only in the standard (20x60 meter) arena, while others may be ridden in either arena at the discretion of management. Publish what size arena you intend to use in your prize list.

With a little advance preparation, it is possible to lengthen or shorten the arena during the show to accommodate all classes. See Arena Section for details.

Additional Classes or Divisions

There are other classes or divisions you may want to offer. Some of these are not USEF rated, and rules governing them must be included in your prize list. They include:

- Junior/Young Rider, USEF Adult Amateur, Maiden, Limit and Novice divisions
- Dressage Sport Horse Under Saddle classes, including Suitability.
- Dressage Sport Horse Breeding Classes ([USEF Subchapter DR-2](#)) and ([USDF Breeders Championship Series Rules](#)).
- Test of Choice classes are a good way to combine several tests or levels which may have fewer entrants into one class (for example, FEI Test of Choice would be one class, and competitors declare which FEI level test they would ride). Remember, no horse may be ridden more than once in a class. ([USEF Subchapter DR-1](#))
- FEI level Three-Day Event dressage tests (available from USEA) and USEA tests
- Combined and Prix Caprilli tests. [USEF Subchapter EV-2](#) describes the combined test. Prix Caprilli is a dressage test with cavaletti, or jumps incorporated. Tests are available from the British Horse Society. These tests may encourage combined training riders in your area to attend because combined tests may

- be recognized by the USEA if their specifications are met and if you apply.
- When considering all the above possibilities, you will generally want to choose classes that will draw the largest number of competitors. However, do not forget the upper levels, even if you live in an area where riders above third level are few and far between. If you do not offer some upper level rides, the few riders in your area who have finally reached those levels will become even fewer by being forced to go elsewhere for competition.
 - The [USDF Regional Adult Amateur Equitation Program](#) recognizes adult amateurs competing in equitation and promotes correct seat, position, and use of the aids in dressage. Adult Amateurs wishing to qualify to compete in an Adult Amateur Equitation Regional Final may qualify to do so by earning a 70%, or higher in any Dressage Seat Equitation class (except walk-trot) or by qualifying for the Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championships (freestyles exempt).

Multiples

Classes which call for more than one horse in the arena can collectively be called "multiples". These generally involve quadrille and pas de deux.

Quadrille: Quadrille team tests with four horses in the standard arena performing flowing patterns, bring laughter, color and music to the dressage arena. Needless to say, they are terrific crowd-pleasers. As with freestyle and pas de deux (dance of two), schedule quadrille classes for optimal audience appreciation. USDF currently publishes quadrille tests for several levels of complexity and for freestyle. [USDF quadrille tests](#) are designed for the standard (20m x 60m) arena. Consult the [USDF Quadrille Rules and Guidelines](#) for requirements.

Music may be used for the compulsory tests, but it is not required. Quadrille freestyles can be offered at all levels. Matching clothing, equipment or costumes can add to the fun of quadrille but check USEF rules for current regulations governing rider dress and allowable equipment. You may avoid the normal USEF dress and saddlery requirements by holding these classes as exhibitions rather than as judged classes.

Senior ("S") and Registered ("R") judges may judge all levels of published quadrille. Recorded ("r") judges may officiate through the second level quadrille tests.

Quadrille freestyles may be offered at higher levels than the levels offered by USDF, but the prize list should specify time limits and judging criteria.

Pas de Deux: Pas de deux classes of two horses performing to music should gain popularity with the growth of freestyle and quadrille. In fact, pas de deux should receive increased entries at shows where quadrilles are performing – each team already has two pairs on the showgrounds!

Pas de deux classes are scheduled for the large arena. One simple score sheet is used for all levels. Classes may be structured as one class, all levels combined or separated by national/international or by levels. Depending on how you offer the class(es), they can be divided or combined as entries warrant. Just publish your intent in the prize list.

The [Pas de Deux Rules and Guidelines](#) document offers more information.

Miscellaneous: Besides the regular "multiples", other types of classes will add some fun to the competition. The following are particularly appropriate for schooling shows and off-season gatherings, as they are not recognized

classes.

- Costume quadrille to “theme” music.
- Costume pas de deux to "theme" music.
- Draw-for-Pairs class – The drawing is done within the levels. Pairs to perform movements, as called. To be judged on best performance. This class can be done with or without a breakable Tie where each pair member holds onto one end of a readily breakable tape. Breaking the tape eliminates the pair.
- Mystery Ride – Coach makes up a ride for a given level and all teams perform it, one after the other. Best performance wins. Entries may not watch the preceding performances.
- Quadrille Elimination – Quadrille members enter as individuals. A large arena can accommodate 12 riders. Quadrille figures are called at random, fairly rapidly. Any mistake is elimination.

Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championship Qualifying Classes

Since requirements for Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championships may change from year to year, please refer to the current regional championship guidelines (links below) for complete information.

- [Competition Licensee’s Guide to Hosting Great American Insurance Group/USDF Qualifying Classes](#)
- [Program Rules](#)

Hosting Qualifying Classes: Great American Insurance Group/USDF qualifying classes may only be offered at competitions that are licensed and classified by the USEF as “Dressage Competitions”. There is no fee assessed to competition management for hosting Great American Insurance Group/USDF qualifying classes. It is best to indicate “Regional Qualifying” on your USDF competition application as your show will then be listed on the USDF competition calendar as a regional championship qualifying competition.

The Great American Insurance Group/USDF qualifying classes must be the highest test of the level. These classes must be clearly indicated in the prize list and in the competition results. Qualifying classes may not be offered in breed-restricted classes or competitions. Eligible competitors – those with the correct memberships and horse registrations – may enter the class as “Great American Insurance Group/USDF Qualifying” for an additional fee. The qualifying ride fee will be sent to USDF from the competition.

During the prize list review process, USDF will notify you if you have flagged a class in error. USDF may also suggest other classes that are eligible should you choose to add the qualifying designation. However, it is the responsibility of the show to read the rules and to provide accurate information to competitors.

Competitions may not accept Great American Insurance Group/USDF qualifying entries or fees for classes that are not designated as such in the prize list.

Qualifying Season: The qualifying season will vary for each region. The season during which qualifying scores may be earned for a particular regional championship is from the day after the closing date of that region's previous year championship, to the closing date of that region's current year championship. The closing date for each regional championship will be the fourth Monday, prior to the start of each regional championship.

Competitions held two weeks prior to the regional championship closing date, in the region where the championship is held, must submit the results, fees, and paperwork so that they are received in the USDF office within seven days following the end of the competition. Competitions held within the week prior to the regional championship closing date, in the region where the championships is held, must submit the results, fees, and paperwork so that they are received in the USDF office within four days following the end of the competition.