

THE DRIVEN DRESSAGE PENCILLER

1. On The Day Of The Event

- a. Meet your judge half an hour (at least) before the start of the competition. You will be given: clipboard, pen, list of competitor's numbers and dressage score sheets.
- b. As a penciller you must be confident you can spell and print neatly and quickly. Do not volunteer to pencil if you cannot fulfil these requirements.
- c. Record the competitor's number at the top of the sheet. The number will be tied to the back of the vehicle (or somewhere!). If by any chance there is no number, write a description of the turnout at the top of the sheet, to enable the competitor to be identified.
- d. Write the judge's comments, which refer to the movement being performed, in the correct column. One to three lines of writing may be required per movement, so be sure to allow enough space to accommodate this.
- e. Ask the judge (before the competition commences) what their likely comments are going to consist of, or their most frequently used words, so that you are happy about spelling those words, such as rhythm, or that you know the accepted abbreviations.
- f. Write neatly so that competitors are able to read the comments.
- g. Ask your judge for a numerical mark when the movement has been completed, if they have failed to give you one.
- h. Do not voice an opinion on a movement, however tempting it may be to do so.
- i. Do not chat. The judge has an exacting job and must not be distracted.
- j. A steward will (generally) collect your sheets in batches. Before parting with them, make sure that:
 - (1) there is a mark against every movement, even if there is no comment;
 - (2) if there are errors of course, there are penalties noted on the sheet in the relevant space;
 - (3) each test has your judge's signature and printed surname on it; and
 - (4) the position your judge is judging from is recorded in the relevant space.
- k. Do not calculate the point score totals for a test yourself. That is the job of the official scorer.
- l. If the last sheets have not been collected, take them to the secretary's office, together with your clipboard, pen and extra score sheets.

2. Score Sheet Comments

- a. Judges are advised to be familiar with the accepted penciller abbreviations. Pencillers should be familiar with these abbreviations also, so they will know, for example, to write "poor O" when "poor circle" is commented on. Judges may have some difficulty at times, making short or precise comments to cover some aspect of a movement or performance, however, there will be times when a sentence is necessary to explain a point.

- b. The following are some suggested comments (these make use of the accepted abbreviations - see Annex A to this chapter):

unsteady halt; halt not sustained; restless at halt; hurried, rushed or tense halt;
halt too abrupt; unbalanced halt
calm, responsive, balanced, square, smooth halt; excellent or rock-like halt; good move-off
crooked RB; supple RB
rushed CT, WT or ET
losing rhythm on O, O awkward shape; O too □; dropping in on O; nice bend on O
head looking out on O
(not straight on O is also correct, but few drivers know the meaning so don't use it)
flexing well to inside of turn; not flexing in O (if you are sure the driver understands)
supple change of rein through X (re figure of eight); good flexion (bend) change at X
fair or some attempt at ET; lengthening insuff; running or no ET;
some lengthening; skipping in ET; broke pace in ET
one hand not sustained; hand on rein at X
late trans; abrupt trans; rough trans; more prep needed prior to trans, change of movement
anticipating trans; good trans; accurate, responsive trans, no definition of paces
insufficient; not enough; heavy on forehand, lacking impulsion, could be lighter in front
coming well from behind; well trained, skilled, educated; tense
resisting through jaw; resisting bit; head unsteady; tipping or tilting head
consistent good head position; steady head
hurried; over-eager; fell into walk; irregular walk; not true walk
early into walk, trot, etc; lost impulsion
overstepping well at walk
not straight up centre, not travelling straight;
wandering or meandering down CL; drifting off CL
straight and regular up CL
outline well maintained, consistent outline
using quarters well; quarters not engaged
cutting corners, falling in, dropping in; loops not equal (especially on serpentine)
little above the bit
attentive; working well as pair/team/tandem; not working as team
sufficient, adequate, dull, abysmal
quality, commendable, accurate, active, enjoy

It can be difficult to write specific comments for collective marks when there is an overall error. Space and time are limited. Some judges write a summary, for example:

“Horse appears to be uncomfortable in the mouth. Would a mullen or French snaffle bit be better? He’s constantly jerking his head forward and back. Because of this he isn’t going forward properly, nor is he relaxed. Work on this problem and his paces will improve.”

Such a summary overlooks driver comments, but a judge cannot cover everything. There is no doubt drivers appreciate constructive comments, as it is so difficult to find driven dressage instructors.