

## LYDF Dressage Test Scribe

It just would not happen without our volunteers!

Please contact Volunteer Coordinator: Amanda Gifford at [atahorse@gmail.com](mailto:atahorse@gmail.com)

Be careful of the bees living in the stone walls. Bee spray is available at the volunteer booth.

If you have never been a **Dressage Test Scribe** before, it is a challenging but rewarding opportunity. For those with Scribe experience, we need you! For those who have never scribed before, but have good note-taking skills and a fair amount of dressage knowledge, we still have scribe positions to be filled. Scribes are needed for every test, from the Musical Freestyle to Leadline, FEI to walk-trot, and don't forget the Prix Caprilli and Dressage Trail!

A Scribe allows the judge to keep his/her eyes on the ride at all times while still giving feedback on every part of the test to the competitor. Judges depend upon the scribe to quickly, accurately, legibly, and quietly record the scores and comments made for each movement. Scribes are needed Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

As a dressage test is like a written riding lesson/training session, scribing is just as educational!

For the best "how to scribe" information, please review the USDF [Guide for Scribes](#).

### **Dressage Test Scribe Volunteer Position**

Information taken from USDF website

#### Attributes of a Good Scribe

- Prompt: arrives at the competition at least 30 minutes before scheduled start of ring.
- Prepared: Brings gear for foul weather, pads for hard seats and a few pens just in case.
- Properly dressed: Avoids shorts and floppy hats. Is comfortable but always neat
- Peaceful: (that is silent) Limits conversation with judge to a friendly greeting and small talk during breaks. The scribe does not make any remarks about a horse or rider in the competition. The judge must concentrate, so there must be no chatter during rides.
- Discreet: Must not repeat the judge's oral or written comments

SCRIBING IS THE ACCURATE RECORDING OF A JUDGE'S COMMENTS AND SCORES ON A COMPETITION RIDER'S TEST SHEET.

Judges depend upon the scribe to quickly, accurately, legibly, and quietly record the scores and comments made for each movement. Judges are grateful for the volunteer help and should be willing to answer any questions a scribe might have with respect to the job of scribing.

#### Before the Show

Familiarize yourself with basic dressage terms and how to spell them. Study the commonly used abbreviations listed. When asked to scribe, the individual should inquire with show management about which tests they will be assigned to scribe and study each of the tests before the show. Never accept a position to scribe for a judge that you will compete in front of later in the competition.

#### At the Show

The scribe should arrive at least one-half hour early and check in with show management. Dress in neat, comfortable sportswear and be prepared for predicted weather conditions. The volunteer coordinator will indicate the arena and judge to which the scribe has been assigned.

Ask the volunteer coordinator about the judging materials for that ring: score sheets, pen, and updated day sheets. You may need to carry these materials out to the arena. These are many times in a plastic box. Also ask about the location of the restrooms.

Once at the judge's box, the scribe should organize the work area and check for all proper materials:

- Several ink pens (including a red pen for noting errors).
- Day sheets to follow the order of go with an updated list of scratches and additions.
- Bell or whistle and a watch set to official show time.
- Stopwatch to time freestyles, entry into the arena, or ongoing resistance.
- The CORRECT packet of tests for the judge and arena assigned.
- Check the order of tests, against the order of go, and make sure any additional horses have been assigned tests. There should be blank tests in the packet available for this purpose. If the tests are not in the order of go, a ride may be scribed on the wrong test and great confusion will result.
- Make sure that the tests in the packet match the tests scheduled in the day sheets.
- Anchor down all loose items (papers, cups, tissue, etc.) with a heavy object (horse shoe) so that nothing blows or rustles in a sudden gust of wind.

When the judge arrives, introduce yourself, and take the time to ask any questions. Some judges will take this opportunity before the first class to give the scribe an idea of how comments and scores will be given. Let the judge know that you have checked the items discussed above. Be sure the judge is allowed time to get settled, look at the program and review the first test to be judged. Ask on which side the judge would prefer you to sit. Some judges may want to be seated exactly at the letter. Others will accommodate where you are seated depending if you are left or right handed.

### The Class Begins

As each horse warms up by working around the arena before the ride begins, the scribe must check the horse's number to ensure it is the same number marked on the test and day sheet. Be sure to write the competition number you see on the bridle tag in the box in the upper right hand corner of the test. This is the only way to assure that the horse competing is the same as the one on the test sheet. The judge will instruct you if you may ask the rider for the competition number if it is not readily visible or the judge is occupied in finishing the previous test.

- If the numbers do not match, alert the judge to the problem and attempt to identify the horse and rider who have presented themselves. Quickly find the right score sheet for that horse, if available.
- Always write the scores and comments in PEN. Pencils may not be used. Use a RED pen when recording errors.
- Judges will tell the scribe how the test is to be scored. Many judges specify that they comment first and then score. Some judges do the opposite. Be certain to clarify which method the judge prefers to use.
- Be certain to write down EXACTLY what the judge says. Scribes may not paraphrase. It is important to convey precisely what the judge's comments are so the rider can understand the scores. Also, ask if the judge will allow abbreviations. Some do not.
- The judge may check to be sure that the correct movement is being scored. If the judge asks "are you on movement # 3?", either respond in the affirmative or tell which movement you are writing. This will allow the judge to adjust and provide the proper comment and score for the movement. Corrections can be made on the spot or addressed at the end of the test.
- If a ride scratches (cancels) or just does not show up, write "scratch" or "no show" on the score sheet (on the label, if there is one) and turn it in to the runner with the other score sheets. This way the scorer will not hold up the posting of class results.

- After the ride is complete, make sure that there is a score in every box and each test is signed by the judge before it is sent to the scorer. Any change of a score on the test should be initialed by the judge.
- Check off each horse on the day sheet as it completes the test. Keep an eye on the scheduled time, and if the judge requests it, inform the judge whenever the show is running behind by more than a few minutes.
- As the day progresses, the scribe should check for scheduled breaks and possible moves from arena to arena. Check the program and the packet of tests to determine if the packet moves with the judge or stays with a particular arena.
- If the runner has not picked up all the tests, the scribe is responsible for delivering the tests to the scorer during a break between classes, at lunch, or at the end of the day. Never leave completed tests in the judge's box unattended.

### Conversations Between Judge and Scribe

It is the judge's responsibility to judge the test. It is not appropriate for the scribe to comment on the judge's decision, nor to question that decision. It is what the judge sees that matters, so if a judge does not see a mistake, do not comment. In addition, any comments (written or verbal) made by the judge while in the judge's box are strictly between the judge and the rider. Never carry these conversations outside the judge's box. Never volunteer information about competitors or their horses, even if asked by the judge.

Wait for the judge to set the tone as to whether conversation will be encouraged between rides or on breaks. Most judges will initiate some small talk, but some need time to review tests or just clear their minds. While it is tempting for the scribe to ask questions about their own riding or a particular horse problem, don't do it!

### Watching the Test

Scribing takes concentration to accurately record the scores and comments. It is not possible for a scribe to watch the test in its entirety while recording the scores and comments.

### The Scoring Process

The scribe must quickly and legibly record only the comments the judge makes, without adding or deleting anything. All judges have their own style for giving comments and scores on a ride. Some judges give so many comments that the scribe may have difficulty keeping up. In this case, the scribe should be sure to record the score as soon as it is given, and then continue with the comments.

A scribe that is new to the job may confirm the movement number occasionally with the judge. Most judges will not mind helping scribes in this way. In the event that a judge omits a score, the scribe can again confirm the movement number with the judge and allow him to deal with the omission at the time or at the end of the test.

### The Scores

The judge's scores will range from 0 to 10, with a 10 being the maximum (best) score that can be awarded for any one movement. To more heavily emphasize a movement, some are "weighted" with a coefficient of two (2). The scribe need not worry about coefficients. All multiplication will be handled later by the scorers.

Remember that the scores are made in half-points. This means that all scores must have a decimal written with either .5 or .0 (eg. 6.5 or 6.0). This is a requirement per USEF Rules.

Scores are written in the first column of boxes on the test sheet. The second column is for coefficients, which are pre-printed on the test, and the third column is for the total points earned on each movement. Totals are left for the scorer to fill out; the scribe is only responsible for one column: POINTS.

FEI tests have two columns for scores. The first box is for the initial score, and the second box is for a corrected score, if it is necessary.

Collective marks at the end of each test and a few more general comments may be dictated to the scribe or written by the judge.

If a score has to be changed, be sure to put a line through the old score and add the new one beside it. Be sure that the judge initials the change.

## Errors

Each time an error is indicated by the judge, write ERROR in LARGE LETTERS in red pen over the typed text on the left. At the end of the test, remind the judge if there are errors on the test so that they may be carried down to the bottom of the test correctly. It is the Judge's responsibility, not the scribe's or the scorer's, to record these errors and total them in the space after "Further Remarks".

## FREESTYLE, YOUNG HORSE AND RIDER TESTS

Test sheets for Freestyle, Young Horses, and Rider Tests differ from standard test sheets. The judge will instruct you on how he/she wants you to record comments and scores.

Freestyle test sheets have marks for the required movements and marks for the artistic impression. For ease of finding the correct boxes, it is a good idea to emphasize the separation between walk movements, trot movements, and canter movements with a line. Some boxes are dotted to distinguish right and left. Mark them accordingly. The required movements may be ridden in any order, and may be repeated. The judge will give a mark each time a required movement is ridden, so the scribe needs to put small numbers in the designated box to allow space for all the numbers. At the completion of the ride, the judge will either dictate or record the final marks and the artistic side of the test sheet.

Young Horse Tests and Rider tests are recorded differently as well. Each individual movement is not judged. Instead there are categories to be judged. The judge may instruct the scribe to put comments under specific boxes, and at the end determine the scores.

## Suggested Abbreviations

A – dressage letter "A"

@- at

ang – angle

L – angle

attn – attention

bal – balance

b/f, b/4 – before

b/h ,beh – behind

bend – bending

btr – better

↑ bit – above bit

betw – between

C – dressage letter "C"

cad – cadence

cant – canter

cntr, c-line – centerline

CL – centerline

O – circle

coll – collected, collection

connect – connection

crkd – crooked

Dpt – depart

diag – diagonal

disob – disobedience

eng – engage, engagement

NRG – energy

Ext – extended

ext -extension

flex – flexed, flexion

f/hand, 4hd – forehand

forw, FW – forward

gd – good

1/2 – pass half pass

hau – haunches

h-in – haunches in

hd tilt – head tilt

h/leg – hindlegs

immob – immobile

impul – impulsion

inattn – inattention

inconsist – inconsistent

ins- inside

irreg – irregular

lks – lacks

lack imp – lacks impulsion

lat – lateral

L – left

l – left

< – less

> – more

ltr – letter

LF – left front  
lg – large  
LH – left hind  
not – not square  
outs – outside  
pir – pirouette  
poll ↓ – poll low  
poll ↑ – poll high  
pos – position  
reg – regular  
res – resistance  
resist – resistance  
R – right  
rhy – rhythm

RH – right hind  
rush – rushed  
satis – satisfactory  
serp – serpentine  
sh/in, sh-in – shoulder in  
sl, slt – slightly  
sm – small  
str – straight  
sq – square  
stead – steady  
stead – steadier  
TO – tongue out  
thru – through  
trans – transition

tr – trot  
tu ha – turn on haunches  
t/o hau – turn on haunches  
tu for – turn on forehand  
t/o fore – turn on forehand  
unstd hd – unsteady head  
vert – vertical  
v – very  
wv – weaving  
w/ – with  
wr – wrong  
tran ↑ – up transition  
tran ↓ – down transition  
X – dressage letter “X”