



UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™

Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championship Instructions for Awards Ceremonies For Event Managers, Awards Coordinators and Awards Teams

Primary Goals: Safety, Sponsor Recognition, and Rider Appreciation

A copy of these instructions MUST be given to the Awards Coordinator who will distribute them to the members of their team as appropriate.

It is very important that awards ceremonies be as efficient and professional as possible to allow the public to meet the sponsors, to see the top riders and horses, and so that competitors (may) participate in their victory round in an organized (and) safe setting. **Participation in awards ceremonies is up to the rider and is not mandatory, but the rider should let show management know as soon as possible after the class is pinned if they will not be attending.**

The USEF rule regarding awards ceremonies is as follows:

DR123.13 (USEF Rulebook) states: "Participation in prize-giving (awards) ceremonies by placed rider/horse combinations may be mandatory and failure to participate may result in loss of prizes and prize money at the discretion of Competition Management. Specific requirements and penalties for failure to participate in prize-giving ceremonies must be announced in the prize list. It is recommended that dress and saddlery for ceremonies be the same as in the competition, but that dark or white leg bandages or boots are also allowed. Bell boots are permitted. Rosettes should be placed on the horses' bridles prior to the ceremony. The judge at "C" should be invited to participate in the prize-giving. Competition Management is responsible for the safe conduct of ceremonies and must excuse any horse that threatens the safety of participants. At all times when horses are grouped together, riders and/or grooms are responsible for their actions. Carelessness or irresponsible behavior may result in possible penalties under Federation rules."

Before the Show and Awards Ceremony:

The event manager must select an awards coordinator (AC) whose responsibility is to make all necessary preparations in advance and to efficiently and ceremoniously conduct an appealing recognition of merit. Please be reminded that the awards coordinator cannot be the manager; it must be a separate position. **It is strongly recommended that the competition hold an awards meeting (obligatory for manager, awards coordinator, announcer, safety coordinator, head scorer, technical delegate, and USDF representative if in attendance at the show) to discuss the awards ceremony procedure, protocol and schedule prior to the first awards ceremony. Ideally, a procedure for the successful execution of the award ceremonies is in place prior to the competition. If other awards ceremonies will be held, it is recommended these be held separate from or after the awards ceremonies for the Great American/USDF Regional Championship classes.**

An inventory of prizes and ribbons will be provided in the shipment(s) from USDF and should be confirmed with any discrepancies reported **WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE COMPETITION**. The USDF office is unable to accommodate any requests without more than a week's notice.

The AC must collect and organize all ribbons and awards. The following are helpful approaches:

1. Yard signs could be utilized to identify the area where each class can assemble.
2. Ribbons can be hung on hangers according to class and division, with a large tag on each hanger specifying class and division so riders can find the volunteer holding the appropriate class ribbons.
3. Large plastic bags are also great to use as they protect the ribbons from any rain or mud.
4. As the pinning of ribbons is always a busy time, it is helpful if a 'cheat sheet', which identifies the color of the ribbon and its placing, is on each tag.

5. Encourage ribbons to be picked up prior to the Awards Ceremony. The winners should place their own ribbon on their horse. Instruct the riders how to safely secure the ribbons on their bridle as well as which side they should place the ribbon to be visible for photos.

The provisional awards ceremony schedule must be printed in the competition program and followed as closely as possible during the competition. The official awards ceremony schedule must be posted in the competition secretary's office and the stabling area by noon of the day prior to the beginning of the competition. Management must inform competitors of changes well in advance by frequent announcements and notifications in multiple areas, such as where scores are posted the secretary's office and possibly eblasts or texts. If the changes to the schedule are radical, participants should be *personally* notified. The scheduling of the ceremonies should allow sufficient time for the scorers to complete the class and be able to disseminate the information to all interested parties.

The AC and announcer should check the equipment and sound system for the award ceremonies. (Two-way radios, CD player, PA system, etc.) Discuss using a separate radio channel during the ceremony. Radios **MUST** be used by the announcer, AC and the other portions of the team (whether that is the manager, the scoring office, TD, etc.). Names of all guest presenters must be given to the announcer before the ceremony.

Prior to the ceremonies, the announcer should check that there is adequate sound to all the stabling areas. Frequently remind riders with announcements of the awards ceremony schedule for the day, and where the detailed schedule for awards ceremonies is posted. Repeated announcements should be made so that the participating riders and photographer have an adequate opportunity to make arrangements to get to the awards ceremony and photo opportunity area in a timely manner. More frequent reminders should start at least **ONE HOUR BEFORE** a ceremony is to begin. Remind riders who have conflicts that they may request to make necessary arrangements **if they elect to** participate. Frequently announcing the awards schedule assists competitors riding multiple horses.

A photo opportunity area must be provided for the champion and reserve champion. The sponsors' name and banner must be prominently displayed in an attractive photo opportunity area.

There are several different arrangements that have worked well for previous award ceremonies.

1. One idea is to have a photo area in the arena space so that competitors can each have their photo taken as they ride into the presentation area.
2. Others have a designated spot that the champion and reserve stop at on their way out of the arena after the lap of honor. (This approach is sometimes difficult as the horses are excited and getting them to stand quietly is sometimes difficult.)

Things to consider are:

1. The amount of time it takes for an awards ceremony,
2. Where the remaining horses are being held,
3. Ring maintenance and scheduling of the ceremonies,
4. How many presenters are available,
5. How many photographers are present.

Things to consider for the photographer(s) and photo shoot:

1. **DO NOT** expect that the same person can be in two places at the same time. The photographer cannot be taking picture(s) in a separate photo area without a second photographer in the arena to photograph the presentation.
2. **Pre-arrange the photo shoot location with the photographer so that the Great American/USDF banner is clearly visible, and the horse is angled correctly so that the banner is not obscured by the horse. Should other banners be visible in the awards display, the SmartPak banner should have second prominence after Great American.**
3. Pre-fold the awards props that will be used for the photographs so that the sponsor logo will be clearly visible in the photograph.

In the interest of safety, organizers should avoid scheduling too many classes to be awarded in the same ceremony. Horses should not be encouraged to report for the ceremony earlier than 15 minutes ahead of their scheduled time. It is recommended that smaller groups be gathered so that the number of horses does not overwhelm the area.

In order to limit the number of individuals participating during the ceremony, it is recommended that one or two persons be designated as the presenter(s). The presenter(s) should be selected from the Great American and USDF representatives, other championship class sponsors, the class judge at "C", or the Regional Director and they should be invited to participate in the ceremony and presentations. The AC is to have located and informed the presenter(s), as well as the photographer of the time and location of the awards ceremony. This should be done well in advance of the ceremony. The presenters should be appropriately attired. The photographs of the awards ceremony should include the presenter(s) presenting the awards to the winners with the Great American/USDF banner featured in the background.

The Awards Ceremony:

1. If weather or other calamity prevents mounted awards, unmounted awards may occur in full attire (no spurs), however, at no time can unmounted awards be held off the competition grounds or at a ticketed event. No awards ceremonies may be scheduled after dark unless there is adequate lighting for the staging area, awards area and pathway back to the barns. (The photographer's flash is not adequate lighting).

2. At the conclusion of each championship class, the scoring office must deliver the confirmed final results sheet with correct placings through eighth place immediately to announcer and AC.

3. **In order to pin a regional champion or reserve champion, they must have scored a 57% or better. Regardless of score, all 1st through 8th placed competitors are invited and encouraged to participate in the nonmandatory awards ceremony.**

a. If the 57% is NOT obtained by either the champion and/or consequently the reserve champion, there are no awards issued. First and/or second place will get standard ribbons, third-eighth place will receive the championship ribbons. First and second place should be announced as such.

b. If the champion receives a 57% or higher, AND the reserve champion gets a 56%, the champion will get their neck sash and awards; reserve will get a second place ribbon, no prize money, and no saddle pad. Third through eighth will get their championship ribbons. Reserve would be announced as second place.

c. USDF will have available standard ribbons (not champion and reserve champion neck sashes) for first and second place should they be necessary for a class where the champion and/or reserve do not obtain a 57% or better as required by the rules.

4. For safety reasons, unmounted/in-hand horses are NOT allowed:

a. in staging areas for awards ceremonies

b. nor in the awards ceremonies when mounted horses are being assembled to enter into the awards area in a procession

c. nor during the awards presentations

d. nor when mounted horses are lined up.

5. **Only the official photographer and staff are allowed in the arena during the awards ceremony.**

6. **Only the horse, rider, and presenters may be in the official photo. Arrangements can be made directly with the photographer for additional pictures at a later time.**

7. Photo opportunities will be handled on a case-by-case basis to accommodate unmounted/in-hand ribbon winners. Whenever possible, the awards coordinator and show manager should designate a period of time when the title sponsor representative and show management are available for photographs to be taken in front of the official backdrop. Using a

sign-up sheet for this is highly recommended. **If time permits, this may be done at the conclusion of the mounted awards ceremonies. At no time should in-hand horses be gathered near mounted horses.**

8. The holding area for the awards ceremonies should be kept clear of any pets or children on foot. A maximum of one person can accompany the rider in the holding area if needed.

9. The safety coordinator should ensure that the traffic flow in and out of the arena does not cross paths and provides safe and easy access, and that the approach to the arena is free of spectators, dogs, and other competitors. Also, the entry and exit must be free of congestion at all times.

10. Ensure that there are several volunteers to help organize the class. One AC and one steward are NOT enough personnel to make this happen. It is recommended that one volunteer per class pin the horses in the holding area if the horse is not already pinned, and one over-all person be in charge of getting the class to the gate. Ribbons should be placed on horses (normally on the left side of the bridle with the tail of the ribbon wrapped through the throat latch) before they enter the ring. **Ribbon winners are encouraged to pick up their ribbons ahead of time and at which point instructions should be given on how to safely attach the ribbon to their own horse prior to the awards ceremony.**

11. Horses should be organized in the pinning area by class and with ample room for safety between horses and classes. Should a conflict occur, there is discretion for the AC to “juggle” the order of which class enters the arena first. The AC, safety coordinator, and support stewards should be well versed in equine safety issues and capable of organizing the next class ready to enter the awards ceremony.

12. A substitute horse can be used in the ceremony providing it is appropriately tacked up. However, the owners should understand that the awards photos will show the substitute.

13. There are two suggested ways to conduct the Awards Ceremony. One would be a ‘line-up’ of the winners, and the other would be a ‘ride-through’ of the winners. Both methods are described below. **It is highly recommended that management choose the ‘ride through’ approach as this increases the overall safety of the awards as well as expedites the time needed for the awards.**

A. For the line-up method:

1. when possible, the announcer should play fanfare or march music for riders as they enter. Once they are lined up, the entrance music should be faded out. The announcer would say the name of the class and the sponsor and ask the crowd to hold their applause until the victory round. The announcer would then move on to the presentations, starting with the last placed horse and moving up the ranks to the winner. It is important that the announcer does not get ahead of the presentation, or vice versa.

2. The riders enter at a walk, in placing order and should line up in the designated area facing the crowd or the sponsor’s area. It is imperative that horses should be lined up with enough space in between to allow the presenters room to safely approach each rider to congratulate them. The presenters should approach the lined-up competitors beginning with 8th place.

3. Presenters should approach the rider, position next to them/their horse and offer verbal congratulations. Presenters must wait for the announcements and not get ahead of the announcer. Allow the photographer time to take a photo of each horse. The presenters will end with the champion and stand for the champion photo. Reserve can be photographed with the reserve prize either in line during the verbal congratulations or in the photo area after the Champion.

4. Fractious horses must be separated, and if necessary, excused from the ring. After the individual congratulations, the announcer and/or the AC should announce that for safety reasons, a horse/rider may choose to leave the arena prior to the lap of honor. Precautions must also be taken to ensure safety of participants and spectators as horses prepare to leave the ceremony. Keep these areas clear.

5. After the excused horses have left the arena, the announcer will play the victory round music and encourage the crowd to clap along as the champion leads the way. Everyone else should follow in sequence around the arena (announce their names again if possible). After the first lap, the reserve champion will lead the group out while the champion takes a second lap of honor alone. Acknowledge the winner, and again thank the class sponsor. Victory rounds must be done at a controlled gait.

B. For the ride-through method:

1. the announcer should say the name of the class and the sponsor, and then begin the music. The horses would enter in reverse order and each one would stop in front of the banner for congratulations by presenters. A standing photo is doable with one presenter with a sample award. Only the top three would do a victory round. The announcer would ask for applause to be held until the actual victory round.

13. Sign Out Sheets for champion and reserve champion awards will be provided by USDF and must be returned to the USDF office. All remaining inventory and return inventory sheets must be sent back to the USDF office as *soon as possible but no later than* within two weeks (14 days) after the last day of the competition.