



UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™

USDF Team Competitions Organizer Guidelines

(Revised May 2018)

OVERVIEW OF TEAM COMPETITIONS

- Team Competitions are a unique show format that can be implemented for youth and adults to create a fun atmosphere and to encourage camaraderie. Team competitions can be held by themselves or in conjunction with USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized competitions.
- Team competition can also include extras such as educational programs, team medals and mounted awards ceremonies.
- A team may consist of three (3) or four (4) riders. These teams might be comprised of riders competing at the same level or riders competing at a mix of different levels. Teams can also be divided into youth, adult or a mix depending upon the needs of your area and how many will be participating in the team competition.
- Scores from the individual riders are combined to create a team score.

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZER(S)

These guidelines are meant to provide the organizer and their competition management committee with information that will be helpful in the organization and operation of team competitions. These guidelines do not deal with standard competition management details. For comprehensive information on organizing a dressage competition, please contact the USDF office.

GETTING STARTED

Decide if the competition will be USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized – please read this section thoroughly as it contains important information regarding USEF/USDF rules!

- ***The decision to have this competition USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized is at the discretion of show management.*** While some prefer the formality of a recognized competition, others prefer the laid-back atmosphere of a schooling show.
- If the team competition will be held as a recognized competition, competition management must submit all required competition recognition forms and fees to both USDF and USEF.
- **NOTE: If the competition is USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized, ALL USEF rules and requirements must be followed, including but not limited to unrecognized classes, scheduling, warm up, tack and saddlery, etc. USEF rules take precedence over any recommendations in these guidelines.**
- Check with USEF and USDF regarding all competition related fees for recognized competitions, including membership requirements.

Appoint the Show Committee – Consider including the following:

- Manager
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Awards Coordinator
- Stabling
- Grounds
- Advertising
- Sponsorship
- Program/Publicity
- Hospitality
- Scoring
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Team Coordinator

Set the Date

To get the most out of the competition, plans should be made as far in advance as possible. The host/organizer, date and facility should be planned at least one year in advance. This will allow publicity options to be maximized. A well-publicized event is a well-attended event. It will also allow competitors time to plan their competition schedule.

Financial and Legal Considerations

- The Group Member Organization, or hosting entity is financially and legally responsible for the competition, i.e., stands to gain (or lose) money in the event of a profit (or loss).
- Work with your insurance provider to make sure the competition is adequately covered.
- *If the competition is a USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized event*, be sure to follow proper protocols for insurance certificate submission and approval to USEF and USDF.
- Prepare the budget for the competition and ensure that costs are covered. Each competition's situation will be different regarding fees for judges, facilities, etc. Some fundraising may need to be done to offset additional or unanticipated costs.

Team Competition Rules and Procedures Suggestions

Dividing into Teams

- If creating youth and adult categories, suggested age brackets might be those used by USDF. (A competitor is considered a youth until the end of the calendar year in which they reach the age of 21 and is considered an adult from the beginning of the calendar year in which they reach the age of 22.)
- Competition management, at their discretion, may or may not require qualifying scores to enter a team competition.
- It is suggested that teams consist of three (3) or four (4) riders.
- A team may represent a dressage club, farm, barn, instructor, etc., or may be comprised of a group of individuals.
- Scramble teams can allow show management to place individuals on a team with open spots or combine them into teams of all individuals.
- Determine how you will split your teams by level. Teams of mixed level riders allows for more flexibility than requiring all riders to be at the same level.

Tests

- Determine how many tests will be used per rider to calculate the team score. It is suggested that each competitor ride two tests in their division. Per USEF rules FEI riders are only allowed to ride two tests per day.
- If the team competition is being held as part of another competition, you can choose to designate specific classes riders must enter to have their score(s) count for the team competition.

Calculating Team Scores

- Be sure to have a very clear policy when it comes to calculating team scores. Team score calculations should be posted alongside other scores and should allow the same protest period as the rest of the show.

- In calculating team scores it is best to count the same number of tests for each team, dropping lowest scores when needed.
 - For example, when calculating scores for four-member teams, drop the lowest score, add the remaining three scores together and divide that total by 3 to get your team score.
- Make sure you have a policy for breaking ties.

Awards

- Be sure to order enough awards so that each member of a team will receive an individual award/ribbon.
- Make sure to publish information regarding awards and award ceremonies. You may choose to award only the top 3 or 6 teams or you could choose to add extra awards (best turned out, sportsmanship, team stall decorations etc.) so each team receives something.
- Consider a mounted awards ceremony to further enhance the program.

Other Considerations

- The decision on whether to require USDF or GMO membership is at the discretion of the hosting GMO or hosting entity. Not requiring membership may help reach out to potential members.

Show Personnel and Volunteers

- **Judges** - To make this competition of special importance, it is recommended that two judges per arena be used for all classes, no matter what the level.
- **Technical Delegate, medical personnel, veterinarian, and farrier** - Whether this is a recognized competition or not, it is **STRONGLY** recommended to have appropriate medical personnel, a veterinarian, and a farrier available. *If the competition is USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized, it is required to have these officials available as well as a Technical Delegate.* These people may be willing to donate their services or reduce their fees.
- **Team Coordinator**
 - Keeps team members updated on all activities throughout the show
 - Answers questions – knows the rules and protocol
 - Helps team members tack-up, tie ties, etc., when necessary
 - To perform these duties, the Team Coordinator should walk from trailer to trailer or stall to stall throughout the day to answer questions and help as needed.
 - If the competition has mixed teams, it should be the Team Coordinator's responsibility to introduce the team members to each other and help them feel like a team. Once at the show, a time should be set up for the team members to meet and coordinate schedules, especially if not stabling together.
 - If a pre-competition party is scheduled, the Team Coordinator could present a brief talk about rules, procedures, and the awards ceremony.
- **Awards Coordinator** - An awards coordinator to handle the distribution of awards and organizing the awards ceremony is suggested.
- **Volunteers** - A volunteer coordinator with a large pool of well-trained people is always suggested. The competition will not run without volunteers, so please find an appropriate way to express appreciation to them.

Publicize the Competition

- Start getting the word out about the team competition as soon as the date and location are finalized. Advertise in the region's newsletter, local Group Member Organization newsletters (information is available on the website) and any clubs, stables, and general horse organizations that have a "Calendar of Events." This will allow people to work the competition into their schedule.
- Any promotions should highlight the unique features of the competition and get riders interested in attending.

- Ask local businesses for donations to use as prizes and/or special offers such as reduced rates. In return, highlight the businesses in the competition prize list as a way to promote them to competitors and spectators. It may save participants some money and, if enough business is generated, local merchants will encourage dressage competitors to return to the area regularly.
- Send out updated information as the date of the competition approaches to attract spectators.

Prepare the Prize List

- *If this is to be a USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized competition*, be sure to follow proper protocols for prize list submission and approval.
- Consider adding Dressage Equitation, Musical Freestyle, Pas de Deux, and Quadrille classes. These classes are fun and a wonderful learning experience for horses and riders.
- The prize list should include the following information/rules:
 - **Competition Information**
 - Competition name
 - Date of competition
 - Location
 - Opening and closing entry date information
 - Statement regarding show recognition
 - “The ____ Team Competition is a USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized competition.”
 - OR
 - “The ____ Team Competition is **not** USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized.”
 - Manager and secretary names and their contact information
 - Class list
 - Stabling information
 - Footing in both competition arenas and warm up arenas
 - Entry form
 - Fees
 - Team competition entry, rules, and awards
 - **Team Competition Rules (Suggested)**
 - If the competition is USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized, ALL USEF rules and requirements must be followed, including but not limited to unrecognized classes, scheduling, warm up, tack and saddlery, etc. USEF rules take precedence over any recommendations in these guidelines.
 - Participants in Team Competitions are required to wear protective headgear as defined in the USEF Rule Book under DR120.6 and in compliance with GR801.
 - The hosting entity may require qualifying scores if they desire.
 - **Team Composition**
 - A team can be three (3) or four (4) riders. A team may represent a dressage club, farm, barn, instructor, Pony Club, 4-H club, any riding club, or be a group of individuals.
 - A rider may enter as part of a team or enter as an individual and be put on a scramble team.
 - Any individual or partial team needing team members is encouraged to send in their entry and a mixed team will be formed.
 - **Tests**
 - It is suggested that competitors ride two tests in their division. Riders competing in FEI divisions will only ride one test.
- Other information you may choose to include:
 - Family and friends are encouraged to volunteer during the competition.

- Team names: Encourage your entrants to have fun with this! Some examples are: Pony Power, Wild Things, The Mountsters, The Tempel Terrors. They could use their team names on stall decorations, t-shirts, etc. to show their team spirit.

NEXT STEPS

- **At least SIX MONTHS in advance, the following work/planning should begin:**
Optional educational opportunities - Adding an educational component to your team competition can help to set it apart from other competitions and further develop a sense of community. These programs should aim to increase the number of local riders entering the competition by providing education, which will help prepare riders to attend such a competition. Topics for a program or mini-clinic might be:
 - Competing as a team
 - Showing in a formal competition (rules, etiquette, attire, salutes, braiding, etc.)
 - Riding a dressage test
 - What "questions" are asked by each test
 - How to improve test scores
 - Understanding dressage terminology (e.g. "on, behind, or above the bit," etc.)
 - Nutrition and/or grooming
 - Reviewing educational videos and encouraging a discussion of the content.
 - Having books for loan or sale and an informational center of various programs and activities hosted by dressage clubs
 - Having the competitors work in various aspects of the competition during the show to give them a better understanding of what goes into running a show
 - Having competitors sit with a judge on the sidelines watching and discussing rides in progress
- **Order team competition awards**
 - To ensure that every rider on every team receives an award consider breaking teams into divisions (adult/youth or by level) or possibly adding fun extra awards, such as smallest horse, best turnout, etc.
 - In addition to the team awards, the competition might choose to award some individual awards as well.

At least THREE WEEKS prior to the competition

- **Schedule the Team Test Rides**
 - *If this is to be a USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized competition, current USDF, USEF, and FEI tests must be used.*
 - Determine the best way to schedule rides for your competition. If you are putting on a small schooling show you may be able to schedule rides so that the individuals on a team ride one after another.
 - The riders in each division should ride before the same judge(s), or same combination of judges.
 - The same combination of tests in each division should be judged by the same judges.
- **Prepare The Competition Program**
The competition program should contain the following:
 - The name of the competition
 - Competition staff
 - Officials (judges, TD, farrier, etc.)
 - Class list
 - Ride times

- List of the teams and horse/rider combinations
- Day, time, place and description of the team competition riders' party and/or meeting
- Day, time and place of mounted awards ceremony
- Team scoring guidelines (an explanation of how your team scoring will be calculated)
- Sponsors
- Special thanks to volunteers

At least TWO WEEKS prior to the competition

- **Plan the Team Special Activities**
Consider holding a special rider meeting. If teams are arriving the day before the competition, an evening meeting works great. This is an opportunity for the riders to meet each other before the competition, and to relax after a long day of competition preparation. An evening format allows time to review competition rules and procedures. This also provides an opportunity to discuss ideas and concerns of interest to riders.
- **Special Touches to Consider**
 - Stall assignments grouped by team. Have a stall decoration contest!
 - "Souvenir" t-shirts – perhaps have a silk screen made of a special design.
 - Inspire team camaraderie with a picnic or a pizza party followed by an educational program, such as a Judges Viewpoint seminar.
 - A pre-competition mini-clinic in the immediate area. Encourage dressage clubs around the region to offer clinics, too. The cost should be kept as low as possible.
 - Special awards, for example: best turnout, best sportsmanship, or humorous awards like shortest pony or tallest horse.

During the Competition

- **Decision Making**
 - Because this competition has specific goals in mind, if special circumstances arise that require a decision, competition management is encouraged to keep the following in mind:
 - Find a place on a team for every rider who wants to participate.
 - If the competition is **not** USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized, rules can be modified from USEF rules, with an eye toward fulfilling the purposes of the competition: education and having a positive competition experience.
- **The Announcer**
 - The announcer's result sheet should be made up in advance, by teams. List all teams, rider and horse names, and leave blanks for their total scores and placing. If the program is set up in this way, a copy of it can be used for this purpose.
 - Before the competition, give the announcer a copy of the program and a listing by team name and rider number.
 - Before and after each ride, the rider's name and the team they are riding for should be announced.
 - During the competition, this result sheet can be filled out as the scores are calculated.
 - The announcer will use this information during the awards ceremony.
 - The announcer should be given the necessary information on high point individuals by name and team.

- **Scoring**

Make copies of the “Team Scoring Sheet” (see suggested Scoring Sheet format, Appendix A). This will help in keeping track of the team scores and placings.

- **Calculating Team Scores (Suggestions to Consider)**

- The lowest score will be dropped if it is a four-member team. If only three members are on a team, then all scores will count. Total points from each of the three team members will be added together and divided by three (3) to compute team placings.
- Whether or not to allow mixed level teams should be a decision of competition management. If mixed level teams are allowed, PLEASE NOTE: *Mixed level team scoring should be based on percentages* and not calculated using points as the points are different for different levels.

- **Individual High Score Winners**

- In each division, the individual riders having the highest score, and the second highest score, could be recognized as the individual high score champion and reserve champion. No calculation would be necessary to determine winners as it would be the two highest scores received on any test within a division. You could do this for every division.

- **Posting Scores**

- The team scoreboard can simply be a larger version of the “Team Scoresheet” (See Appendix A)
- Scores should be posted frequently (every couple of rides) throughout the day.
- Scoreboards should list the scores for individuals and then by team as they become finalized. *Although results for USEF and USDF MUST be recorded by class*, scoreboards should also post team cumulative scores.

The Awards Ceremony (Suggested)

- An awards presentation should reflect the special atmosphere and circumstances found at team competitions. The awards might be presented in a formal, mounted ceremony with riders in show attire or unmounted at a specified time and location where all teams can be in attendance.
- Begin the ceremony as early as possible after the last team rides so competitors and spectators don’t have to wait too long. The ceremony can begin as early as 30 minutes from the end of the last ride, if one or two divisions have been scheduled to finish by mid-day. Begin the ceremony with these divisions. Meanwhile, the team placings from the other divisions can be calculated.
- If presenting mounted awards, the person coordinating the ceremony should be notified ahead of time which divisions they can start lining up and the final placing for those divisions. Fifteen to twenty minutes before the start of the awards ceremony, they should arrive in the “holding area” and start getting the competitors lined up by team and division, starting with the first division that will be announced.
- Line the teams up in order of placing, from sixth place to first, preferably some distance away from the arena (make sure all riders are aware of where to line up before the awards ceremony begins). The last division to finish should be lined up last to give the scorers time to finish their calculations.
- The announcer should be given a list showing the order in which teams should be called into the arena. Flag any Champion or Reserve Champion on the announcer’s copy.
- At the designated starting time, the announcer should start the awards ceremony music, and introduce the ceremony and the awards presenter(s). The announcer can then begin calling the teams into the

arena one at a time, starting with the sixth place team. During the presentation of each team, the announcer should turn down the music.

- The team should enter four abreast while the announcer presents the team, rider, and horse names. Have a designated walking path and line up position. The pre-arranged “dignitary” will then present riders with their awards. Any high score awards won by that team’s members should be announced and presented at this time.
- Then, the announcer will ask the riders to leave the arena. The riders should make their victory pass and leave the arena. The announcer should turn up the music for the victory pass, and re-announce the team’s name [“Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the (team name).”]. Then announce the next team.
- An awards ceremony with this procedure goes faster and with less confusion than the whole division in the ring. Also, the competitors feel more honored because they receive their own “moment in the sun.”

AFTER THE COMPETITION

- **Submission of Results**
 - *If this is a USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized competition* – Submit results in compliance with current USEF/USDF requirements.
- **Planning for Next Year**
 - Consider completing the Competition Summary found in Appendix B in order to help your team competition planning committee for next year,

APPENDIX A

Suggested Format for a Summary Scoresheet

Type of Team Competition: *YOUTH* *ADULT*

COMPETITION: _____ DATE: _____

DIVISION: _____ REGION: _____

TEAM NAME: _____ PLACING: _____

	RIDER	HORSE	TEST:		TEST:		TOTAL
			JUDGE 1	JUDGE 2	JUDGE 1	JUDGE 2	
1							
2							
3							
4							

TEAM SCORE

TOTAL TEAM SCORE divided by _____ Riders on team =

TEAM NAME: _____ PLACING: _____

	RIDER	HORSE	TEST:		TEST:		TOTAL
			JUDGE 1	JUDGE 2	JUDGE 1	JUDGE 2	
1							
2							
3							
4							

TEAM SCORE

TOTAL TEAM SCORE divided by _____ Riders on team =

APPENDIX B
A Suggestion
Competition Summary

Type of Team Competition: **YOUTH** **ADULT**

Host organization: _____

Organizer: _____ Phone: _____

Competition date(s): _____

Name of facility: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Name and date of competition you combined with (if any): _____

Was the team competition held as part of a USEF-licensed/USDF-recognized competition?

YES NO

Total number of judges for the team competition: _____

Number of judges used per arena: _____

Number of arenas used: _____

Entry fee charged: _____

Total number of teams attending: _____

Total number of riders: _____

Total number of divisions: _____

States represented at the competition: _____

How many riders were there for each of the levels:

_____ Introductory Level

_____ Second Level

_____ Training Level

_____ Third/Fourth Level

_____ First Level

_____ FEI Level

Was a team meeting/party held? If so, when?

Were any special classes offered? If so, what were they?

Were any educational activities offered? If so, what were they and when were they held?

List any further comments, questions, or suggestions to help next year's show management improve this program: