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eCentaur

RMDS President's Message

I hope we have all come to terms with the fact that the Rocky Mountain Dressage Society's Championships have been canceled. The board did not make this decision lightly, as we have put much time and effort into it. As RMDS Championships will be joining the Region 5 Championships in Santa Fe next year, perhaps some of you will consider making the trek there this year to get a feel of things.

Onto happier news, the Estes Park show is just around the corner!! I know it, like the other shows this side of the mountain, filled quickly! We will need many volunteers for this show. Since most of us are staying there, I hope you will volunteer while you are not riding. Please remember that you can split your time with a friend! Also, we try to have a floater or two so that you may sneak away to tend to your horse(s) during your shift. Lets not forget about our smaller shows! We have the Split Pine Ranch schooling show in Colorado Springs, Centaur Rising in Pine, and Foothills Last Chance show in Golden. Not only are these great opportunities to show, but also get your volunteer hours in.

"One who fears failure limits their activities. Failure is only the opportunity to more intelligently begin again." Henry Ford

Happy Riding,
Dorothy

Volunteer! RMDS events only happen

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**time, talent, and energy. Have you given
back this year?**

Upcoming Deadline Reminders

- USDF National and Regional GMO volunteer nominations, as well as GMO award nominations, are due to the USDF office by August 31.
 - GMOs can submit nominations for [Newsletter Awards](#), [Website Awards](#), and [Photography Awards](#). Don't forget that all nominations are due to the USDF office by **August 31**. No more submitting hard-copy nominations! See the nomination forms for detailed information.
 - Regional GMO Volunteer of the Year nominations can be submitted by any participating member, group member or the Region Director.
 - One deserving group member will receive the [Ruth Arvanette Memorial Fund Grant](#) to attend the 2021 Adequan/USDF Annual Convention in Houston, Texas. The grant includes full convention registration and partial reimbursement for travel expenses.
Applications due by **August 31**
 - GMOs must return their GMO Delegate/Proxy-Authorization form to the USDF office to appoint representation to the Board of Governors meeting at the USDF Annual Convention.
 - [Dressage Foundation Grants](#):
 1. **Cynthia Aspden Youth and Young Adult Development Fund: Due September 1:** provides financial assistance to youth and young adult riders (age 25 and under) to aid in their development in dressage
 2. **Gifted Fund for Adult Amateurs: Due September 15:** The Gifted Fund should be used to give adult amateur riders the opportunity to set aside quality time, in concentrated training, away from the daily pressures of job and family.
 3. **Major Lindgren Instructor Education Grants: Due September 30:** Three \$4,000 grants will be awarded each year to dressage instructors to train in a concentrated amount of time of at least one week.
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REMINDERS: Bylaw changes

Due by Aug 30

Get a score check!

Utilize the new RMDS website & database to check your 2021 scores
on your dashboard

Ashley Simmons offers 5 Ways to Impress the Judges.

Everyone knows that the best way to get a very good score on a movement is to perform that movement very well. But, as we all well know, and have experienced, sometimes that doesn't work out. Maybe our horse was feeling a bit 'off', or there were external distractions or even our error in not preparing for the movement - mistakes happen. There are, however, some simple things you can do to impress the judges that will help you earn that extra half-point even on a movement that isn't quite right.

1. Perfect Your Basics: *"Beginner riders want to work on intermediate movements. Intermediate riders want to work on advanced movements. Advanced riders work on the basics."*

There are two basic elements to every test that riders at all levels can work and improve upon: geometry and transitions.

Geometry is either right or wrong. Don't get suckered into following in the hoof prints of the horse that went before you assuming that they have the correct dimensions for the circle or track you need to do! Instead, use cones at home to map out exactly the size of the circle you need to perform in a test or the line you need to follow for a straight or angled track. Practice approaching these movements until you can do them accurately and with the correct bend and

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been ridden before them.

If you look beyond just the required movement on any given test, you will see a column titled “Directives”. These are the elements the judges are looking for in each movement. More than all the others, you will see repeated over and over “willing, calm transition” at the lower levels and “clear, balanced transition” or “well-defined transition” at the upper levels. As transitions, both between the gaits and within the gaits, are considered the gateway to the half halt, you can never practice enough of them. Set aside time every ride for transitions.

Practice them all over the arena, in all gaits, and on both a straight line and a curved one.

2. Know Your Test: Show nerves are just an annoying aspect of showing that only time and familiarity can diminish. While it is understandable that some people like to have a reader for their test to help them eliminate the fear of forgetting a movement, it is a crutch. While it is allowed, except at the upper levels and in championship classes, and judges can’t penalize you for it, they are obviously aware of it when you have one. While it may not affect the judge’s opinion of your ride one way or another, having your test memorized shows them that you are prepared for and confident about your test.

3. Know Your Limits (And Your Horse’s Too): Everyone wants to move up the levels. It’s a sign you are training your horse correctly and allows you to try more advanced movements. Yet too often there are people who show a certain level one year and then automatically move up to the next level the following year even if they aren’t truly prepared for it.

Many people think that judges relish giving out low scores, but in reality, they are only judging what they see. Most of the judges I have had the pleasure of speaking to lament about the large number of horse and riders moving up a level when they truly haven’t mastered the level they are currently competing at. Don’t move up until you have obtained good, consistent, quality scores with positive comments. Judges appreciate watching a quality ride just as much as we do riding it!

As for your horse’s limits, you should be intimately aware of the physical and mental capabilities of your horse. If he needs a long warmup to relax, great, but if he gets tired easily, don’t warm-up for a long period of time. Judges are savvy horse people and they can see quite quickly a horse that is lame or one that is already exhausted before you even enter the ring. The same thing applies to

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4. Ride the Horse You Came With: It is fairly common knowledge that a horse will perform correctly a certain percentage less at a show than they will at home. Perhaps it is just their way of expressing their own “show nerves”. Whether they suddenly become more spooky of things that normally wouldn’t bother them, or they start being lazy or wanting to run, or they are just plain cranky, it is your job to handle it all with calm and poise. It is obvious to the judge by the expression on your face how your attitude towards your horse is at any given moment. Scowling angrily while jerking on the reins and jabbing your horse with your spurs or smacking them with your whip because they blew off your request for a flying change is not only rude to your horse, it presents a very unprofessional picture to the judge.

If you truly know your horse, you will realize that there are moments in every test where you can calmly correct mistakes and there are moments when you just need to let the mistake go and move on to the next movement. Your horse is not being disobedient out of spite, they simply need more time to understand what is being asked of them and for you to be there to support them.

5. Be Polite to The Judge: Judging is grueling work, in often extreme weather, for very little pay. Scribe for a judge when you can, and you will see what I mean. A little common courtesy goes a long way in showing the judge a lot of respect.

When you are going around the outside of the ring waiting for the signal to enter, make sure to greet each judge (if more than one) with a polite “good morning/afternoon” and give them your show number. After your final salute, make sure to get close enough to thank them verbally for their time. It may seem like a trivial thing to do, but it shows that you appreciate their time.

So you may ask, do these things really impress a judge? Absolutely! Let me relate a personal story to you. I was at the Estes Park, CO show a couple of years ago showing one of my Friesian mares at PSG, trying to get one more score for our silver medal. To say this mare is temperamental is an understatement. As we began to enter the ring, she spooked at some birds. Getting her to halt at X was a feat of pure willpower. What followed was what some people would consider a disaster of a test, but I kept calm, quietly reminding her of all the training we had done together over the years and in-between the crazy moments, there was accuracy and beauty. I have a photo from that test of us in the corner before you turn across the diagonal for the four

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tempi's, 3 of the three tempi's if you must know - though none of them were pretty). I smiled through most of the test and during the final salute.

When I approached the judge to thank her, she beamed a smile back at me. Later, that judge made a point to come up to me and told me how much she enjoyed watching the calm I exhibited during a ride that was obviously difficult. She expressed admiration with how obvious it was that we had a deep understanding of the basics and how well I used them to keep her together as much as I did. Her comments on the test paper were very much in the same vein. I looked to see what our final score was, expecting it to be in 50's at best. So what was it? 62.5%! Enough to secure our silver medal.



Ashley Simmons on her beautiful Friesian--Knocking the Socks off the Judges.

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Upcoming August Events

August 11- Split Pine Ranch Schooling Show, Colorado Springs, CO

August 14 USDF Educational Grant Sponsored Clinic with Jennifer Roth, Montrose, CO

August 14-15 - Millbrook Farms Dressage Show-Fairfield, UT

August 15 Centaur Rising Dressage Show III, Pine, CO

August 20-22 Estes Park Dressage I & II -Estes Park, CO

August 20-22 - Classical Horse Club Annual Equine Extravaganza, Douglas County Fairgrounds, CO

August 28-29 GVDS Summer Schooling Show, Grand Junction, CO

August 29 Foothills Last Chance Show, Golden, CO

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Rocky Mountain Dressage Society presents

Upgrade Your Judging Eye I

with Janet Foy (S) Tuesday, September 7, 2021

[Click here for entry registration](#)

Show Season Is Here!

Are you up to date with USEF Safesport Requirements?



Would you like to write for the eCentaur? Are you a budding author? Please contact slodwyer@gmail.com for more information. Share your passion and love for all things Dressage.

[Reinback: From the eCentaur Archives:](#)

[*Recommendations for Buying a Horse. By*](#)

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Keep a cool head: It's easy to let emotions take over and fall in love when looking at horses.

Be patient: Especially if you are also new to riding.

Be realistic: If you are a beginner, choose a horse that knows more than you do. Recognize your age, physical condition, mental state (fearful, confident), time available for riding each week.

Don't buy a horse for its breed or color alone: Look for temperament to match your style and riding ability and a horse that is trained for your desired discipline. Buy for the mind of the horse, not solely for the flashiness of its appearance.

Never buy a horse solely based upon information from the Internet. See the horse and meet the buyer. Assume the seller is less-than-truthful about your prospective horse's health, potential and performance. It's not that people always lie, they may actually believe what they are telling you!

Get a veterinarian's exam. It may save you from a poor decision. If you decide to proceed, you will have a starting baseline health record.

Buying a horse may be the least amount of the total cost of ownership. Tack, maintenance, and health care add up. Don't forget the cost of the saddle, bridle, riding wear, boots (for you), shoes (for the horse), blankets, sheets, regular shots...the list is long.

Get expert advice. Take an experienced trainer along - one who has ridden, purchased, and sold many horses - to evaluate the horse. He or she can find flaws or omissions in the horse's training, both under saddle and on the ground, that you may not recognize or acknowledge.

Go for the calm horse that can be "revved-up" -- not the one that needs to calm down.

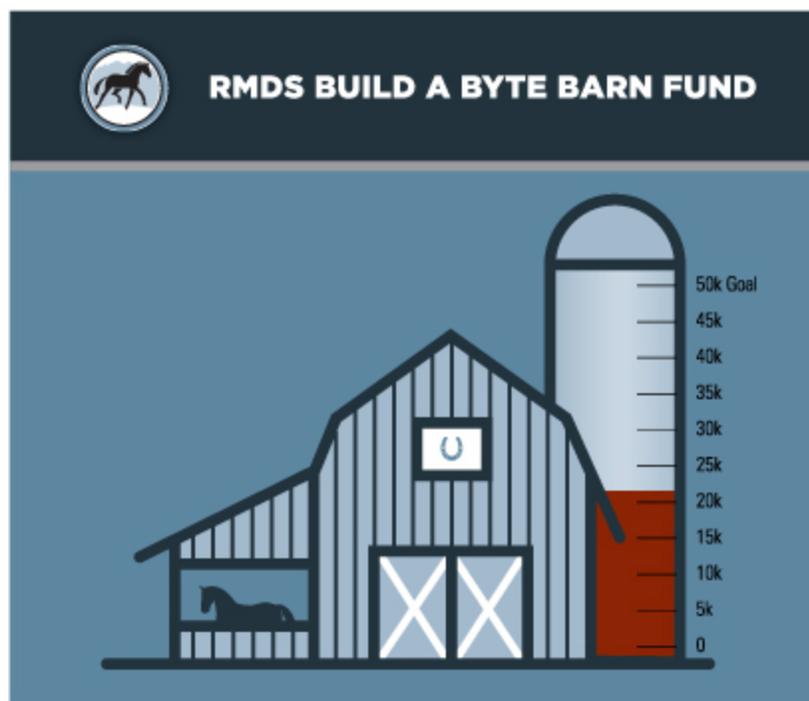
Don't limit yourself to a bargain price - the upkeep is the same on a champion as it is for a nag.

Take lessons. Proper training for you and your horse will make your life together a joy, not a frustration.

Remember to Join RMDS so you don't miss out on fun events and important announcements!

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click join - if you have been a member at any time through the years click log-in.

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**We still have a long way to reach our goal,
please lend us a hand!**

RMDS had a new database built and website designed. Our previous database was over 30 years old and needed to be revamped in order for our organization to move forward. While this would have been a hardship for RMDS alone, it was then followed by the loss of almost all of our events in 2020. Many members did not renew, as there were less opportunities, this has compounded the difficulty for RMDS. Please help us get back in the saddle, and out of the barn!

Make your tax-deductible donation for 2021! RMDS is a 501(c)3.

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\$1000 donation = 1 Terabyte

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