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2015 TESTS CLARIFIED

DRESSAGE COLLEGE: THE 'L' PROGRAM - SESSION B

THE COST OF A CLINIC

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Veronica Holt Tribute

The March Centaur will be publishing a tribute to our dear friend and supporter, Veronica Holt. Please email pictures and your personal stories to the [Centaur](#).

More Colorado Horse Park News!

Click [HERE](#) for complete story from the Denver Post.

Suzie HallÃ© Featured in Dressage Today

Check out the interview in the latest issue.

Happening This Month

7-8	Jessica Wisdom Clinic smacwo@msn.com
7	Mariah Farm Schooling Show 303-660-2456
7	Hillside Equestrian Open House 303-660-2456
12	HP Chapter Horse Treats Baking Class suzie.halle@comcast.net
13-16	Conrad Schumacher Clinic sarah.lindsten@yahoo.com
20-22	Musical Freestyle Clinic with Cynthia Collins 480-586-7103
21	RMDS Show Management/TD Workshop: Laurie Mactavish & Heather Petersen education@rmds.org
28	Intro to New Tests Clinic with Kristi Wysocki slush@drqw.net

Go to [Calendar](#) to see complete list of upcoming USEF/RMDS Show Schedule, clinics, schooling shows and events.

Chapters

RMDS has 12 chapters in the Rocky Mountain Region. Check for changed days/times/places of meetings! If you would like to change your chapter affiliation you must personally notify the central office in [writing](#).

[Click for Chapters](#)

USDF Region 5

Click [HERE](#) for latest report from Heather Petersen, USDF Region 5 Director.

For the latest updates and current Region 5 news. [Click for Region 5](#)

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Happy Valentine's Day!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring is near..... but the cold air and snow make it seem far away. Training our wonderful horses becomes a challenge as weather often makes it difficult to be consistent. This is a great time to read and study the principles of dressage and to take advantage of the educational opportunities provided by RMDS.

The "L" program has provided a way to learn about the judging process. The Freestyle clinic a chance to see the beauty of our sport as presented to music. RMDS Education Chairperson, Jon Haugen is putting together several clinics and symposiums for all our members. Adult Amateur Chairperson, Didi DeKrey is working on something specific for the amateur members and Young Rider Chairperson Julie Burt has some great ideas for her group. Professionals Chairperson Simone Windeler is working closely with Heather Petersen, Sarah Martin and Beth Geier to develop our very first Trainers Symposium.

As we train and condition our horses for the warmer weather, we also begin to set goals for the year. Some of our members have goals that include dressage showing, others use dressage to help with different riding disciplines. RMDS exists for the membership so please if we are missing something that a member has a need for let us know and we will make an effort to review all suggestions.

As I plan my year I look forward to judging, showing, clinics and coaching my students. Dressage for me is a passion that takes most of my time. I work another job to support my passion but it is a small part of my life. Spending time in the barn gives me the feeling of peace and harmony. Working the arena to make the footing good to ride on, cleaning stalls and then finally getting to ride and teach make my day. Horses are my passion, my job and my sport. I know many RMDS members feel the same way. Let us continue to work together to achieve goals in the pursuit of Dressage.

Warmer weather is just around the corner with the promise of longer days and more time to ride.

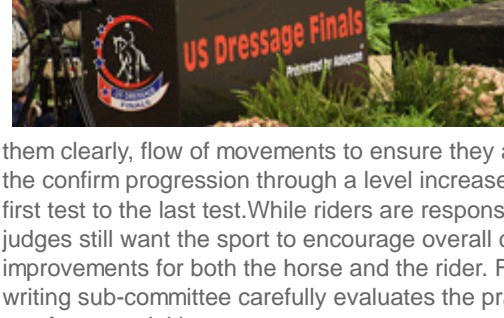
Aloha, Gwen Ka'awala

Clarification of the Changes to the 2015 USEF Dressage Tests

as explained by Kristi Wysocki

By Betsy LaBelle

Betsy is the editor of Dressage Headlines, www.dressageheadlines.com



Every four years, the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Dressage Committee reviews the national level dressage tests to determine if any tests could use improvements. This includes reviewing individual movements to ensure judges can view them clearly, flow of movements to ensure they are logical to the horses, the confirm progression through a level increases consistently from the first test to the last test. While riders are responsible for their techniques, judges still want the sport to encourage overall confidence, success and improvements for both the horse and the rider. For those reasons, the test writing sub-committee carefully evaluates the practicalities of each USEF test for potential improvements.

With five progressive U.S. national levels of competition, horses and riders perform compulsory exercises in front of one or more judges for an overall score and evaluation. The judge(s) adjudicate the same tests many times during over the four years. They begin to see awkward areas in tests, movements that are difficult to see for evaluation or inconsistent progression through the tests. These issues are then addressed during the test revision cycle. The sub-committee updating the USEF dressage tests for 2015 (in effect as of December 1 of 2014) included Gary Rockwell, Jayne Ayers, Lilo Fore, Lois Yukins, Marianne Ludwig, Hilary Clayton, George Williams, and Kristi Wysocki. Kristi Wysocki, an FEI 3* Dressage, FEI 4* Para-Dressage Judge and USEF R' Dressage Sport Horse Judge explained the review process and some of the resulting ideas for the new 2015 tests. She pointed out "These reviews are important to ensure that the highest standard of quality and balance is continually provided to the horses and riders in competition. The renewal schedule provides an opportunity to periodically improve on the previous tests in a time frame that is neither too short nor too long. If tests were changed on a more frequent or random schedule, it would be more difficult for competitors and judges to develop a synergy with the tests. The first time a competitor rides or a judge evaluates a particular test will not likely be their best efforts; it takes time to develop familiarity to then be able to focus more on the quality. Historically, the USEF tests have improved with each cycle of review and provide a higher standard for the sport with time."

A significant new addition to The Purpose at the top of every test reads: "...confirms that the horse demonstrates correct basics.... This has been added to remind riders to focus on basics at all times and all levels. The layout of the 2015 tests has a cleaner look overall than the 2011 tests. With grey headings over the boxes describing each column's function, the tests in general are more reader friendly. Bigger boxes for ease of scribing have also been included.

2015 USEF TRAINING LEVEL TEST 1		
COLLECTIVE MARKS		
GAITS (Freedom and regularity)		1
IMPULSION (Desire to move forward, elasticity of the steps, suppleness of the back, engagement of the hindquarters)		2
SUBMISSION (Willing cooperation, harmony, attention and confidence, acceptance of bit and aids, straightness, lightness of forehand and ease of movements)		2
RIDER'S POSITION AND SEAT (Alignment, posture, stability, weight placement, following mechanics of the gaits)		1
RIDER'S CORRECT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF THE AIDS (Clarity, subtlety, independence, accuracy of test)		1

The Directives are now much clearer regarding the gaits, as well as the willingness of the horse. The Directives for the entry in the First Level Tests, as an example, now include regularity and quality of the trot, willing calm transitions, straight, attentive halt, immobile (min. 3 seconds). The half circle right bend; regularity and quality of trot; shape and size of half circle; direct; balance; straightness. Many transition directives start with the word "willing." The canter circle left 15 m states: Willing, calm transition; regularity and quality of the canter; shape and size of the circle; bend; balance.

[Read more...](#)

New Test Clinic on Feb. 28, 2015

Saturday afternoon, February 28th, Kristi Wysocki will present the new dressage tests for competition year at Lookout Ridge Farm near Longmont, Colorado. Demonstration riders will ride each of the new tests while Kristi walks us through the movements and collective requirements. As a member of the test writing committee, she will be able to help us understand the changes and how they pertain to the training sale. Get a head start on your competition and get to know what the judges will be looking for first hand! The cost for RMDS members is \$40 in advance or \$50 dollars at the door (Non-members pay \$5 more)

[Click HERE for Registration Form](#)

'L' Sessions Produce Learner Judges, More Knowledgeable, Higher-Scoring Riders

By Linda Gaber

Linda Gaber is 2012-2014 Editor of Centaur and RMDS Communications Chair.

This is the second article on the L program's A-C sessions in Colorado. For the article on the A session, click on the December e-Centaur at rmds.org.

The USDF 'L' program gives aspiring judges a foundation in the basics of evaluating dressage performance in competition. It is a generous start on learning the intricacies of dressage, which class instructor USEF 'S' judge Bill Solyntjes said "takes two lifetimes."

In the B session on Jan. 10-11 of the RMDS-sponsored program held in Loveland, 20 participants from Colorado, South Carolina, Texas and Minnesota studied criteria for Training, First and Second Level gaits, paces, movements and figures for two mornings. Then they and the 25 auditors saw good and bad examples of them in videos. Each afternoon, attendees moved to Tomorrow Equestrian Center in Greeley, to see the Levels ridden. Morning and afternoon, instructor Solyntjes called on his students to "judge" what they saw.

Auditors, like I was, sat in the back and passed any questions forward to a judge candidate to ask. We, too, took home an encyclopedia of information, summarized in a six-page outline. Candidate binders with more details were several inches thick.

Here are some highlights from my 10 pages of notes:

On Judging Gaits and Movements

- Judges should purity and clarity of the rhythm, movement, elasticity, suppleness, suspension, scope and reach
- Rhythm is paramount. Know the Pyramid of Training.
- Judge should always try to be as positive, encouraging and helpful as possible
- Try to ignore "a bobble," a momentary loss of balance; score lower for "a break," a loss of gait
- Judge the essence of the movement; then the modifiers
- Movements should be done when rider shoulder or boot are at a letter
- Words should tell you the scores. Judges should make good observations so descriptive words come to mind
- Horses have improved in the past years, and are coming into the sport with more and better natural skills

Introductory and Training Level

- Suppleness in body comes from covering ground; shown with oscillating neck, swing in back, pleasantly moving tail
- Transitions have to be done in forward gaits
- Need to keep horse in some frame
- Correct halt shows control of the horse; stay on same frame, no backing, not even one step. Quality of trot before and after halt is important
- Swinging tail is a good indication of a good free walk
- Balance, rhythm and corners are big windows into training at Training Level
- Balance and prepare the horse before the corners
- "You'll see a lot of wide reins. It's rampant. It's a disease." --Bill Solyntjes

First Level

- At First Level, circle is a collected gait. Ride it more forward. Need to be forward, supple and have "jump" in canter.
- Horse should demonstrate correct basics, developed the thrust to achieve improved balance and thoroughness and to maintain more consistent contact with bit

Second Level

- Horse should accept more weight on hindquarters (collection), is reliably on bit
- If a horse can easily do the movements, it has enough collection.
- Poll is the highest point. You don't want to see braids. With croup lowering, it is a good shoulder in
- In a serpentine, the quality of the walk is part of the score
- There should be a solid connection all the time. This is where dressage gets going
- Counter canter usually improves the quality of the regular canter
- A better-collected trot equals a better medium trot

NOTE: The A program in November focused on judging and horse biomechanics. Session C on March 14-15 completes the Part 1 A-C instruction. Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez's topics are collective marks, equitation, rider biomechanics, basics and freestyle. It is at Iron Horse Farm, 33591 Pine Hills Place, Elizabeth. To attend, click on education@rmds.org on the RMDS website or contact Education Committee Chair Jon Haugen, 417 Promontory Dr., Loveland, CO 80537, 970-217-7820. The entire program's cost is \$1,050 for members to learn and then test in Part 2 to officiate at schooling shows or to apply for the USEF 'r' Judge Training Program. Auditors pay \$70 for each session. Licensed judges and 'L' graduates can attend A-C for continuing education.

The Cost of a Clinic

The next time you see a clinic advertised and why it cost so much you now have a bit more insight.

By Heather Petersen with Lori Mitchell

Heather Petersen is the USDF Region 5 representative. Lori Mitchell is the past president of Foothills chapter.

As the RMDS AA Chairperson for the past three years, the RMDS Education Chair for six years and organizers of many other clinics outside of RMDS, the amount of money a clinic costs to host, sponsor and attend has always been a subject that is brought up by fellow Adult Amateur riders to us. In 2009 Lori did a comprehensive survey of the RMDS membership that asked what types of clinics you wanted, and some issues that you faced the Adult Amateurs. The survey yielded the exact same results in 2010 when Lori asked the RMDS Adult Amateurs again the same questions in an email. Everyone wants to clinic and have educational events with top riders and trainers for a minimal charge. People want to save money on auditing and some felt that there should be no charge at all to audit.

We wanted to make sure that everyone knows the costs involved in putting a clinic on. You might not be aware of how the fees to ride with a clinician or audit are calculated, so we will attempt to explain the process.

Clinicians can charge by the lesson or by the day or weekend. They must leave their own business and clients to travel the day before the clinic and return home usually the day after before getting back to work with their own facility and clients. Therefore, they must make sure that they are not losing money by coming to do the clinic. Clinician costs can range from \$100 a lesson to \$5000 a day (International). The number of lessons a clinician will teach also ranges from 6 riders to more than 10 riders and some will only teach individual lessons while other like to work with groups or individuals.

Once we decide the clinician and the dates that he/she is available the next factor is location. Some locations are better than others and therefore cost more to rent for the day. The facilities at times are donated which is a welcome bonus, but not always the case. We must remember that the facility is basically closing down for the weekend to their boarders or horse activities to accommodate the clinic. Facility costs have ranged from \$200 to \$3500 (National Western Complex). Considerations for facilities are also seating for auditors, bathrooms, places for a lecture or lunch. Sometimes the facility will require the renting of porta-potties, bleachers, sound system or dumpsters for the removal of manure. These are additional costs on top of the facility rental.

[Read more...](#)