

NORTH CAROLINA
4-H HORSE PROGRAM
BASIC DRESSAGE MANUAL

Dressage



Combined Training



The NC 4-H Dressage Division is an invitational division open to any NC 4-H member that possesses a current horse project eligibility card.



Revised 2016

Table of Contents

Objectives	1
The Levels	1
Terminology	2
Procedural Notes	2
Scoring the Dressage Test	3
Attire and Tack	3
Stadium Jumping	
Arena.....	5
The Course.....	5
Scoring the Combined Test	6
Check-In Procedures.....	7
Championship Tie-Breakers and Awards.....	8
Entry Information	8
Appendix	9
Dressage Tack	
• Permitted Bits	
• Permitted Nosebands	
Dressage Arenas	

The North Carolina 4-H Horse Program would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following 4-H volunteers and 4-H Agent for their efforts in revising this manual.

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Introduction

Dressage is often referred to as ballet on horseback. It is the uniting of rider and mount to produce pure movement, balance and harmony. Dressage is multi-discipline and can be as basic as elementary equitation patterns and as complex as working cow horse patterns. Flexibility of body and mind are required of both horse and rider. As the dressage levels progress so do the demands put on the horse and rider. At the introductory levels transitions, accuracy and balance are emphasized. In the higher levels more difficult movements are prescribed that require complete harmony between the horse and rider. The most important things to remember about dressage are 1) it is fun 2) it is multi-discipline. Each ride is evaluated against a standard for each individual test, not against each rider in a division.

Objectives of Dressage

The object of dressage is the development of the horse into a happy athlete through harmonious education. As a result, it makes the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the rider.

The Levels

Introductory Level: Tests consist of Walk-Trot work, transitions from each and the halt. This is a good level to begin at especially for Junior and Short Stirrup riders.

Training Level: Introduces the horse and rider to the basic principle of dressage competition. Transitions are gradual, circles large and only working gaits are required. Training Level requires obedience to the aids of the rider without fight or evasion when ridden on light contact.

First Level: Emphasis is on freedom, relaxation and rhythm. The First Level determines that the correct foundation is being laid for successful training of the riding horse. The horse moves freely forward in a relaxed manner and with rhythm, its spine always parallel to the track of the prescribed movement and it accepts the bit and obeys simple aids of the rider.

Dressage Terminology

- Dressage Test:** A published pattern. A predetermined order of specific movements to be performed by a individual in an allotted time. Movements are required to occur at specific locations in the arena.
- Arena:** Designated area where a dressage test is performed.
- Combined Test:** Consists of two phases, a dressage test and stadium jumping.
- Above the Bit:** A resistance or evasion by the horse accomplished by raising his head to escape the action of the bit.
- Aids:** Natural aids are the hands, legs, weight and voice. Artificial aids are whips and spurs.
- Behind the bit:** An evasion by the horse to avoid the action of the bit by tucking his head behind the vertical.
- Rhythm:** The regularity of footfall at any pace.

Procedural Notes

All tests must be carried out from memory if it is part of the **Combined Test** and all movements must follow in the order laid down in the test. A competitor failing to enter the arena within 45 seconds of the starting signal will be eliminated. A horse leaving the arena completely, with all four feet, between the time of entry and final salute, will be eliminated. If a **Dressage Division** competitor elects to have their test read to them they must furnish their own reader. Only the designated reader is allowed to provide any verbal instruction to the rider. Any unauthorized assistance including but not limited to verbal directions, whistles and hand gestures is not permitted

The arena must be 60 meters long and 20 meters wide (standard Arena) or 40 meters

long and 20 meters wide (Small Arena), depending on the specifications for the test to be used. The measurements are for the interior of the enclosure. The arena should be separated from the public by a distance not less than 15 meters. The enclosure itself should consist of a low fence about 30 cm (12 inches) high when possible. The part of the fence at A should be easy to remove, to allow access or may be left open. The fence should be such to prevent the horse's hooves from becoming entangled in the fence. The letters should be placed outside the enclosure, about 50 cm (20 inches) from the fence. It is desirable to place a special marker on the fence itself, level with and in addition to the letter concerned. If there is only one judge he is placed 5 meters (16 feet) from the end of the arena opposite (at) the letter C.

Scoring the Dressage Test

Each movement is scored using the scale below:

10 excellent	6 satisfactory	2 bad
9 very good	5 sufficient	1 very bad
8 good	4 insufficient	0 not executed
7 fairly good	3 fairly bad	

Errors of the Course- Penalty points

First time - 2 points

Second time - 4 points

Third time - elimination

In the case of marked lameness, the judge will inform the competitor that he/she is eliminated. There is no appeal against a judge's decision.

Attire and Tack

ALL RIDERS MUST WEAR APPROVED PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR.¹

Dressage and Combined Training Division

Attire - Neatness is required. Hunter attire of conservative and dark solid colors are acceptable. Riders must wear proper footwear. Riders must wear approved protective headgear. Hairnets should be worn by riders with long hair. Stock ties may be worn. In extreme heat, coats may be excused at the discretion of the management. Competitors must wear a solid long or short sleeved shirt.

Tack and Equipment - For the **Dressage test**, an English type saddle with stirrups is required. A plain or smooth snaffle bit and a regular leather cavesson, dropped noseband or a figure 8 noseband is required. Twisted or wire bits are prohibited. Snaffles listed in the Appendix are acceptable. Martingales, side reins and running reins of any kind are forbidden. Spurs are optional. Boots, bandages, or blinders are forbidden. A steward may be present to check equipment prior to the horse entering the arena. One whip, no longer than 120 cm (47.2 in) including lash, may be carried when riding on the flat at any time. One whip no longer than 120 cm (47.2 in) may be carried during the Dressage Test.

In the *jumping portion* of the Combined Test, the type of saddlery is optional. Only unrestricted running martingales or Irish martingales are allowed. Gag bits and hackamores are allowed as well as any bit acceptable for the Hunter Division. In the interest of safety, the stirrup iron and stirrup leathers must hang free from the bar of the saddle and outside the flap. Protective Headgear (see requirements in the *NC 4-H Rules and Regulations Manual*) must be worn by the rider as well as boots. Crops, bats and spurs are acceptable. If a whip is carried in the Jumping Test, or while jumping any obstacle before these tests, it must not be weighted at the end or exceed 75cm (30") in length. An adjustable-length whip may not be carried by a mounted rider.

Non-Trotting Dressage Classes

Attire - Neatness is required. Hunter/breed specific³ attire, of conservative and dark solid colors, is acceptable. Riders must wear proper footwear. Riders must wear approved protective headgear. Hairnets should be worn by riders with long hair. Stock ties may be worn. In extreme heat, coats may be excused at the discretion of the management. Competitors must wear a solid long or short sleeved shirt.

Tack and Equipment - For the Dressage test, an English type saddle with stirrups is required. Cut-back saddles are allowed if the horse is exhibited in saddle seat attire. A plain or smooth snaffle bit and a regular leather cavesson, dropped noseband or a figure 8 noseband is required. Twisted or wire bits are prohibited. Snaffles listed in the Appendix are acceptable. Martingales, side reins and running reins of any kind are forbidden. Spurs are optional. Boots, bandages, or blinders are forbidden. A steward may be present to check equipment prior to the horse entering the arena. One whip, no longer than 120 cm (47.2 in) including lash, may be carried when riding on the flat at any time. One whip no longer than 120 cm (47.2 in) may be carried during the Dressage Test.

Western Dressage Classes

Attire- A long-sleeved shirt with any type of collar: short sleeves may be worn at the discretion of the judge; trousers, pants, a one-piece long sleeved equitation suit provided it includes a collar; boots are required. Optional apparel includes: necktie, kerchief, bolo tie or pin; vest, jacket, coat and/or sweater; spurs of western style (with or without blunt tines) or English dressage style; chaps, shotgun chaps or split riding skirt.

Tack and Equipment – A breastplate and/or crupper may be used. Any western type headstall must be used. A western cavesson (pencil bosal, braided or plain) with space for two fingers placed between the cavesson and the jowl of the horse is allowed. **No** metal, studs or any kind of other substance can be used in conjunction with or part of a western leather cavesson². Any snaffle bit may be used on a horse of any age being ridden at any level. Snaffles listed in the Appendix are acceptable. A standard stock saddle, national, working saddle, Aussie, native or western side saddle is to be used but silver equipment will not count over a good working outfit. A horn is not required but western style fenders are required. One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm) including lash, is permitted in all classes/tests. For details regarding reins and illegal equipment see USEF Rule Book, chapter WD 120 and 121.

Tack and Attire Footnotes:

1. See *The NC 4-H Horse Program Rules and Regulations Manual* or more information regarding helmet requirements.
2. See *USEF Rules, Western Dressage* chapter for additional detail on acceptable Bridles.
3. For example, *Saddle Seat Attire*

Combined Training

*The Dressage phase of the combined tests require the same attire, tack and equipment. Please note that **ALL tests must be carried out from memory if it is part of the Combined Test** and all movements must follow in the order laid down in the test.*

Stadium Jumping as Part of a Combined Test

The test is designed to prove the suppleness, obedience and jumping ability of the horse. At the same time, it demonstrates the competitor's knowledge of pace and the use of his horse in the jumping arena. It is not a test of style or endurance.

Competitors must enter the arena when their number is called or during the allotted time period for their specific test. Each competitor must enter and leave the arena mounted, except with the permission of the show committee, or in case accident under penalty of elimination. Competitors are forbidden to jump or attempt to jump an obstacle in the arena before starting the course. Competitors are also forbidden to show the horse an obstacle on the course or risk being eliminated. Once the bell or whistle has been sounded, the competitor has 45 seconds to cross the starting line. A false start or failing to start within the prescribed time limit results in elimination. Crossing the starting line in the wrong direction prior to starting the course is not penalized as long as the competitor crosses the start line in the proper direction within the prescribed time limit. Unless otherwise posted, crossing the start/finish line during the course is not penalized. Riders must cross the start/finish line at the completion of their course. The direction will be indicated on the posted course. Unauthorized assistance or failing to stop at the signal will also result in elimination.

Stadium Jumping Arena

The dimensions of the nature of the arena will be different for each event, however, minimum dimensions of 50 meters by 80 meters or an equivalent is recommended. The arena must be defined and preferably enclosed. The track of the course will be winding with changes of direction, so as to constitute a test of handiness. Red or white boundary flags (or cones) shall be used to mark the start and finish lines, and to define the obstacles. Each obstacle shall be numbered. Combinations shall in addition be lettered (A, B, etc.). The rider's right should be on the same side as the red flag and the rider's left on the side of the white flag. The starting line may not be more than 25

meters nor less than 6 meters from the first obstacle. The finish line may not be more than 25 meters nor less than 15 meters from the last obstacle.

Stadium Jumping Course

The course may consist of 8-12 jumping obstacles. In the Beginner Novice Division, the fence heights are 2' – 2'3" with no more than 1 combination. Fences may be trotted or cantered. The Novice Division fence height will be 2'-3 " to 2'-6" with ***no more than one*** combination. The Training Level Division fence height will be 2'-9" to 3'-0" with at least one combination ***when possible*** and may have one spread. All fences will have a true ground line or a solid base (i.e. a wall or brush box).

The course will be posted prior to the first jumping session and will at that time be open to riders and trainers for inspection. Every effort will be made to allow maximum inspection time for exhibitors. NO HORSES are allowed in the arena prior to actual ride.

Stadium Jumping Flags

Each obstacle will be flagged with a red flag so that when the obstacle is jumped the red flag is on the rider's right. The flag may be a flag attached to the wing of the obstacle or a red cone placed in front of the wing.

Stadium Jumping Numbers

Numbers may be placed on the left side of the obstacle to be jumped. The number will reflect the order the obstacles must be taken for the successful completion of the course.

Unauthorized Assistance

Any assistance including but not limited to verbal directions, whistles and hand gestures is not permitted. Spectators, coaches, parents, trainers and assistants must stand in the area immediately adjacent to the arena. Show staff will monitor the designated area. Providing unauthorized assistance will result in the disqualification of the exhibitor on course at the time of the occurrence.

Scoring the Combined Test

In the combined test, the winner is the horse and rider combination with the fewest accumulated penalty points from the dressage and jumping phases.

Calculation of Scores:

- a. The good marks from 0-10 awarded by each judge to a competitor for each numbered movement of the dressage test together with the collective marks are added together, deducting any error of course or test.
- b. For each the judge the percentage of maximum possible good marks obtainable is then calculated by dividing the total good marks received (minus any error of course or test) by the maximum possible good marks obtainable and then multiplying by 100 and rounding the result to two decimal digits. This value is shown as the individual mark.
- c. In order to convert percentage into penalty points, the percentage must be subtracted from 100. The result is rounded to a one decimal digit and is the score, in penalty points, for the test. Any jumping penalty points are added to the dressage points.

Jumping points are accumulated as follows:

Fault	Penalty Points
First refusal	4 points
Second refusal	8 points
Third refusal	elimination
Knocking down an obstacle	4 points per knockdown
Falling of horse and/or rider	elimination

Jumping obstacle out of order	elimination
Error of course not corrected	eliminated
Any assistance	eliminated

The lowest the combined score is the goal.

Dressage Check in Procedures

- You will receive a ride time/schedule at the State 4 -H Horse Show. Familiarize yourself with your ride time(s) and plan your daily schedule accordingly. Times will also be posted at the Show Office.
- Pick up your entry packet at the show office.
- Familiarize yourself with the dressage and stadium jumping arenas as to location, entry gates and exits.
- The stadium jumping course will be opened to walk prior to the first jumping session. **NO HORSES ALLOWED.**
- You (or a representative) must check in with the Dressage Ring Superintendent at the entry to the appropriate Dressage arena several minutes prior to your scheduled ride time. **Failure to do so will result in the start of a one minute gate call. Failure to meet the gate call will result in elimination.**
- Inform the Show Secretary of any scratches.
- **THERE WILL BE NO SCHOOLING IN THE DRESSAGE ARENA(s) OR STADIUM JUMPING ARENA.** Any exhibitor caught schooling in these areas may/will be eliminated from the Dressage Division of the show.
- Your dressage test score sheets will be available by the conclusion of the Dressage Show. Dressage test score sheets for the Combined Tests will be available shortly after the conclusion of the Stadium Jumping Phase. Penalty Points will be posted Friday after the Thursday Dressage Phase of the Combined Test.

Tie Breakers and Awards

Tie breaker for ties within a dressage class:

- Highest total collective marks
- Highest single collective mark
- Judges decision

Tie breakers will be awarded in the following priority when determining the Dressage Champion and Reserve Champion:

- Combination of all test scores.
- Highest percentage score in a dressage test.

The following **Championships** will be offered:

- Dressage Champion & Reserve Champion
- Combined Training Champion & Reserve Champion

Also the following **High Score Awards** will be presented:

- Introductory Level
- Training Level
- First Level
- Non-Trotting

Entry Information

Copies of the Dressage Tests will be available from the following links:

Combined Training Tests:

<http://useventing.com/competitions/dressage>

Training and First Level dressage division tests:

https://www.usef.org/_IFrames/breedsdisciplines/discipline/alldressage/2015dressageTests.aspx

Introductory Level tests:

<http://www.usdf.org/competitions/competitors/tests.asp>

Non-Trotting tests:

<https://nwha.com/equestrian-school/dressage>

Western Dressage tests:

<https://www.usef.org/IFrames/breedsdisciplines/discipline/allWesternDressage/WesternDressageTests.aspx>

Entering a Combined Test AUTOMATICALLY enters you in the appropriate Dressage Test. You may enter additional, different Dressage Tests at additional cost. You may only compete in two levels that are consecutive.

Example:

Novice & Training Tests BUT NOT Beginner Novice & Training
NOT Walk/Trot and First Level Dressage

Appendix

Dressage Tack

- **Permitted Bits (from USEF's current Dressage Rulebook pages 42-46)**
 - <https://www.usef.org/documents/ruleBook/2015/08-DR.pdf>
- **Permitted Nosebands (from USEF's current Dressage Rulebook pages 47-48)**
 - <https://www.usef.org/documents/ruleBook/2015/08-DR.pdf>
- **Western Dressage equipment (USEF Western Dressage Rulebook)**
 - https://www.usef.org/_IFrames/breedsDisciplines/discipline/allWesternDressage.aspx

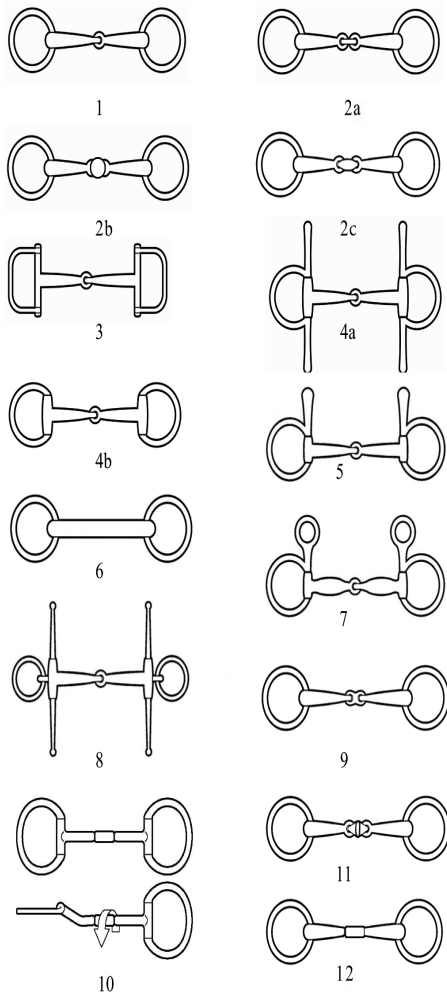
Dressage Arenas

- **Diagram (from USEF's current Dressage rulebook page 65)**
 - <https://www.usef.org/documents/ruleBook/2015/08-DR.pdf>

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A. PERMITTED SNAFFLES*

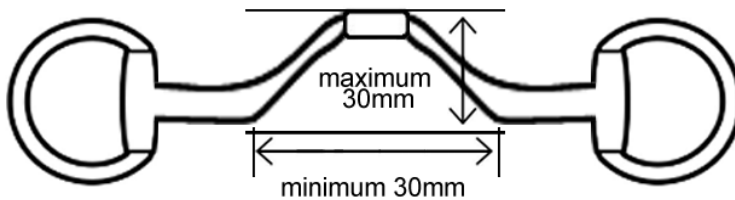
(Bits pictured and described below are required for all tests and classes at Second Level and below and optional in Third and Fourth Level Tests.)



1. Ordinary snaffle with single - jointed mouthpiece.
2. (a, b, c) Double-jointed snaffles.
3. Racing snaffle (D-ring).
4. Snaffle.
 - a) with cheeks, with or without keepers.
 - b) without cheeks (Egg-butt).
5. Snaffle with upper or lower cheeks.
6. Unjointed snaffle (Mullen - mouth).
7. Snaffle with cheeks. (Hanging or drop cheek; Baucher). This may be a D-ring or other ordinary snaffle as pictured in Nos. 1-6.
8. Fulmer.
9. French snaffle.
10. Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece (Myler Level 1 and Level 2).
11. Snaffle with rotating middle piece.
12. Happy Mouth with roller.

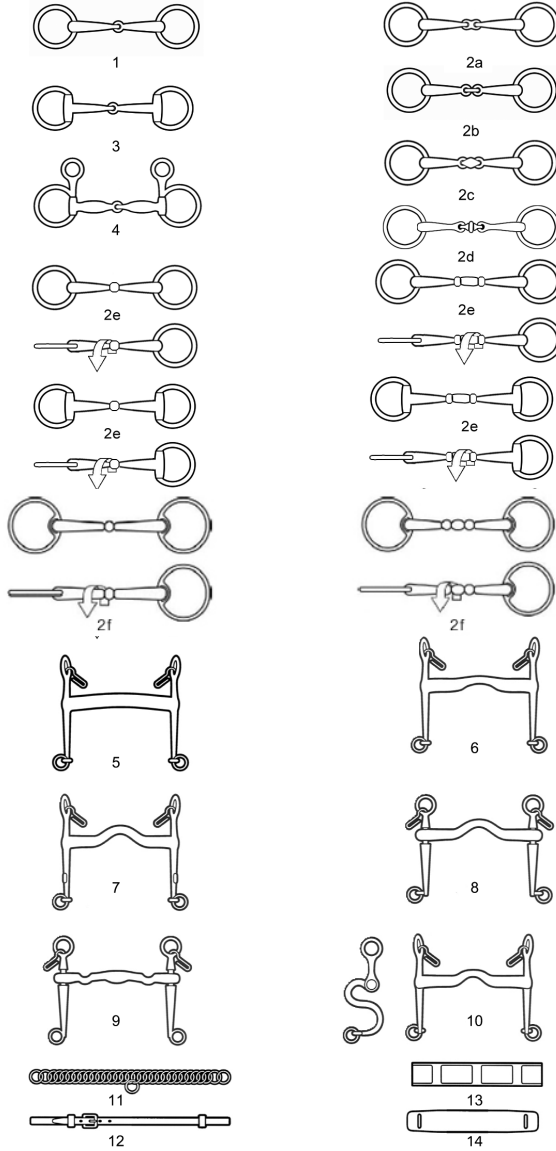
*Snaffle bits must be smooth with a solid surface. Twisted and wire bits are prohibited. A mouthpiece with more than one rolling part is prohibited. Bits may be made with a rubber or plastic covering, but the bit may not be modified by adding latex or other material. Bits with mouthpieces made of synthetic material are permitted, provided that the contours of the bit conform to the contours of one of the bits pictured above. Flexible rubber or synthetic mouthpieces are permitted. A double jointed bit or snaffle with rotating mouthpiece may be shaped to allow tongue relief. The maximum height of the deviation is 30mm from the lower part of tongue side to the highest part of the deviation. The widest part of the deviation must be where the mouthpiece con-

tacts the tongue and must have a minimum width of 30 mm. (See illustration below.) The mouthpiece of a jointed or unjointed snaffle may be shaped in a slight curve within the dimensions specified above, but other ported snaffles are prohibited. The mouthpiece of a snaffle may have up to two joints. A bushing or coupling is permitted as the center link in a double jointed snaffle, however, the surface of the center piece must be solid with no moveable parts, except as pictured above. The center link may be tilted in a different orientation from the mouthpiece but must have rounded edges. The diameter of the snaffle mouthpiece must be minimum 10 mm diameter at rings or cheeks of the mouthpiece (exception: for ponies, the diameter may be less than 10 mm). Any bit combining a mouthpiece with any cheekpiece pictured above is permitted. The type of bit should not vary from those pictured above except where specified, and bits should be attached only as pictured in diagram. A cavesson, dropped, crossed or flash noseband is allowed when a snaffle bridle is used in warmup or competition, except as prohibited for some tests.



B. PERMITTED BRIDOOON, CURB AND SNAFFLE BITS* (Bits pictured and described below (under #1 and 2 below) are required for FEI Tests. Bits pictured and described under #1 below are optional in Third and Fourth Level Tests)

1. Double bridle (Bridoon and Curb) bits



Bridoons:

1. Loose ring bridoon bit.
2. a.b.c.) Bridoon bit with jointed mouthpiece where the middle piece should be rounded. (Note: A Dr. Bristol bit is not permitted.) Eggbutt sides are also allowed.
- d) Bridoon bit with rotating middle piece.
- e) Bridoon Rotary bit with rotating middle piece
- f) Bridoon Rotary bit with rotating middle piece and looped rings
3. Egg-butt bridoon bit.
4. Bridoon bit with hanging cheeks.

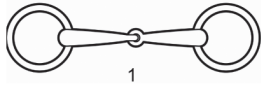
Curbs:

5. Half-moon curb bit.
6. & 7. Curb bit with straight cheeks and port.
8. Curb bit with port & sliding mouthpiece (Weymouth)
- A curb bit with rotating lever arm is also allowed.
9. Variation of bits Nos. 6, 7 & 8.
10. Curb bit with S-curved cheeks.
11. Curb chain (metal or leather or a combination).

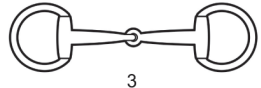
12. Lip strap.
13. Leather cover for curb chain.
14. Rubber cover for curb chain.

* Curb chain hooks can be fixed or not fixed.

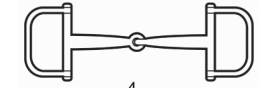
2. Snaffle bridle bits.



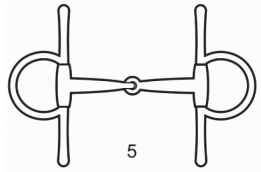
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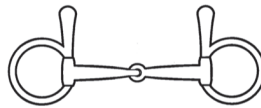
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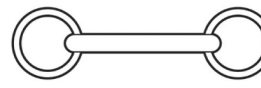
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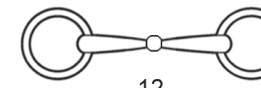
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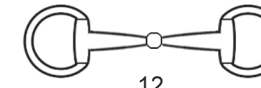
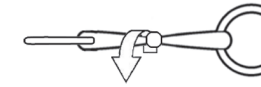
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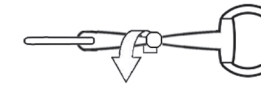
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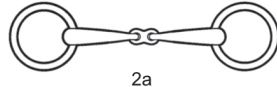
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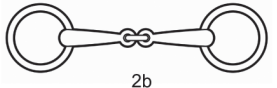
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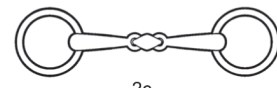
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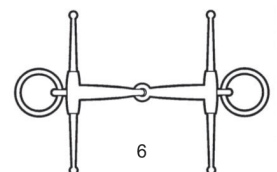
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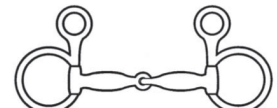
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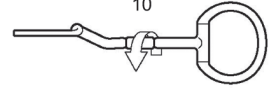
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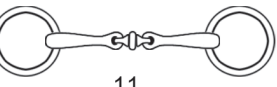
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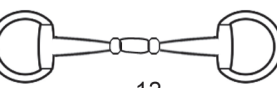
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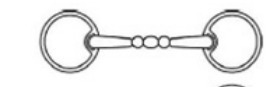
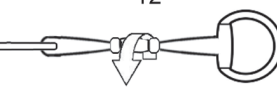
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11



12



13

1. Loose ring snaffle.

2. a.b.c. Snaffle with jointed mouthpiece where middle piece should be rounded.

3. Egg-butt snaffle.

4. Racing snaffle (D-ring).

5. Egg-butt snaffle with cheeks.

6. Loose ring snaffle with cheeks (Fulmer).

7. Snaffle with upper cheeks only.

8. Hanging cheek snaffle.

9. Straight bar snaffle. Permitted also with mullen mouth and with eggbutt rings.

10. Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece.

11. Snaffle with rotating middle piece.

12. Snaffle or bridoon rotary bit with rotating middle piece.

13. Rotary bit with rotating middle piece and looped rings

* Bits pictured under B1 or B2 are required in FEI Tests. Bits must be smooth with a solid surface. A bridoon is defined as a snaffle bit used together with a curb bit to form a double bridle. Bits (including curb and/or bridoon bits of a double bridle) must be made of metal or rigid plastic and may be covered with rubber (in manufactured state); flexible rubber bits are not permitted. The lever arm of the curb bit is limited to ten centimetres (10 cm) (length below the mouth piece). The upper cheek must not be longer than the lower cheek. The snaffle or bridoon mouthpiece must be minimum 10 mm diameter at the rings or cheeks of the mouthpiece. The diameter of the curb mouthpiece must be minimum 12 mm at the cheeks of the mouthpiece. Snaffles used in Young Horse classes must have a minimum diameter of 14 mm. The type of bit should not vary from those pictured below except where specified, and bits should be attached only as pictured in diagram. FEI Level horses may be warmed up only in a double bridle (with both bit and/or bridoon made of metal or rigid plastic) or a metal or rigid plastic snaffle pictured under B. A cavesson, dropped, crossed or flash noseband is allowed when a snaffle bridle is used in warmup or competition, except as prohibited for some tests. Curb chain hooks can be fixed or not fixed.

Note: For FEI tests ridden at national competitions, a plain snaffle bridle or simple double bridle may be used, as described in DR121.2-.3. However, for USEF High Performance qualifying and championship classes, USEF Young Adult qualifying and championship classes, USEF Junior qualifying and championship classes, USEF Young Rider qualifying and championship classes, and NAJYRC qualifying classes, a double bridle is mandatory.

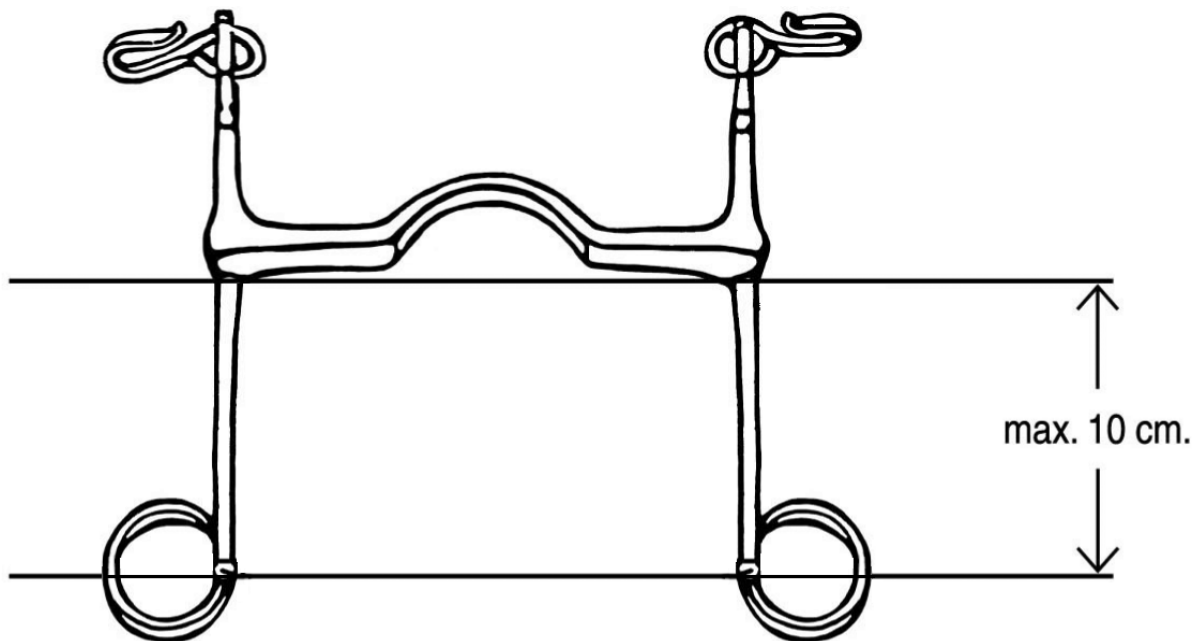


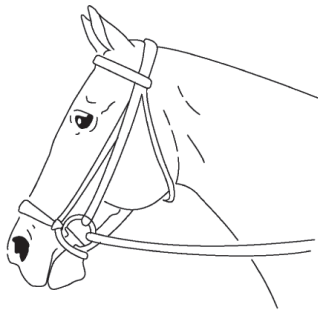
Figure 2. Correct bit measurement. The lever arm of the curb bit must not exceed 10

cm.

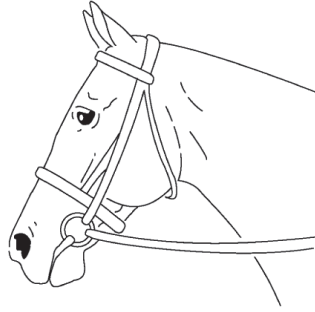
(length below the mouthpiece). If the curb has a sliding mouthpiece, the lever arm of the curb bit below the mouthpiece must not measure more than 10 cm. when the mouthpiece is at the uppermost position.

PERMITTED NOSEBANDS AND BRIDLES

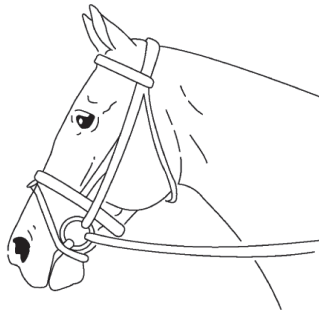
1. Dropped noseband



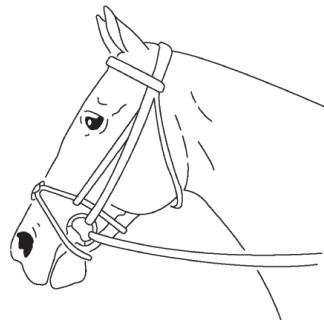
2. Cavesson noseband



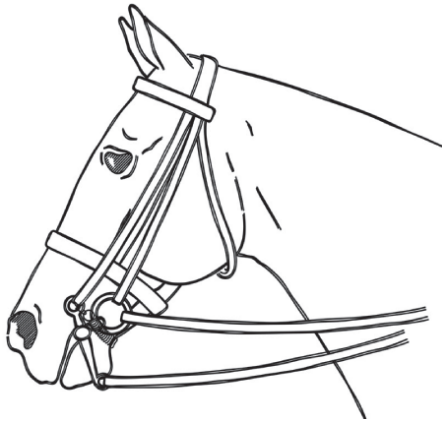
3. Flash noseband



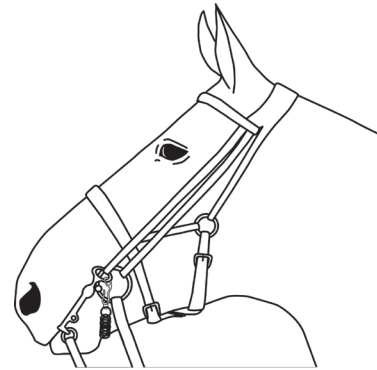
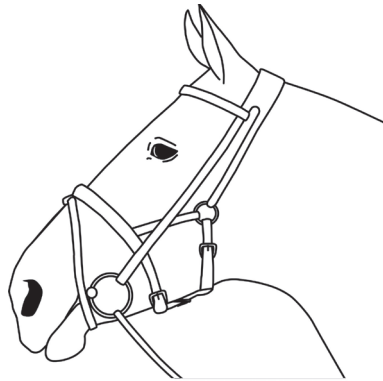
4. Mexican (crossed figure-8) noseband



1, 3 and 4: These nosebands are not permitted when a double bridle is used.



Double bridle with cavesson noseband, bridoon bit and curb with curb chain



5. Combined noseband (no throatlatch). Permitted for use in at any level (including USEF High Performance classes) and in warm-up with either a snaffle or double bridle, as appropriate for the level. When used as a double bridle, the lower strap of the noseband (flash attachment pictured with the snaffle), is not permitted.

6. Micklem Bridle. Permitted for use at any level where snaffles are permitted. Not permitted for use as a double bridle. Bit clips may not be used with this bridle.

Dressage Arena

60 meters by 20 meters
The Dressage Directory
www.dressage.net.au

60m X 20m

5 10 5

