



2026 OVERVIEW OF EVENTING RULES FOR DRESSAGE JUDGES



Below are some, but not all, variations to the USEF Dressage rules that you may encounter while judging Eventing dressage at national Horse Trials. Please refer to *USEF Rulebook* for further details (ELOC update 12/1/2025).

USEA 2026

EQUIPMENT

Neck Straps made primarily of leather | Permitted.
(Subchapter EV-10.2k)

Saddle Pad Logos | Permitted; sponsor logos must be 200 sq. cm or less (FEI Article 541.2).

May be any single color, contrast trim and piping permitted. Striped or multi-colored pads prohibited. (EV Subchapter 10.2L)

Spurs | Optional for all levels. Must be smooth metal, no tines, max length of shank 4cm from boot to end of spur and pointed toward rear. (Subchapter EV-9.4C)

Noseband tightness | Rule wording: "may never be so tight as to harm the horse." (Subchapter EV-10.2b(1))

Wavy bits (i.e., Happy Mouth with bumps) | Permitted (FEI Tack and Equipment Requirements doc)

French Link snaffle | Permitted. (FEI Tack App)

Dr. Bristol | Permitted at National levels, not permitted for FEI.

ATTIRE

Half Chaps | Permitted for all levels; black or brown, full grain smooth leather with matching boots. (Subchapter EV-9.5f)

Jackets | Optional through Preliminary. Required for Intermediate and Advanced unless waived due to extreme heat, or if all three phases run over 1 day. (Subchapter EV-9.5b)

Gloves | Only required for Intermediate and Advanced. Optional for Preliminary and below, but must be dark, tan, beige or white. (Subchapter EV-9.5d)

Helmets | Any color, discreet accents permitted, including national flags. (Subchapter EV-9.5a)

Breeches and Jodphurs | White or light colored only for eventing dressage. (Subchapter EV-9.5e)

EXECUTION OF TEST

Fall of rider

Not eliminated, but penalized by effect on movement, and in collective mark. If horse leaves ring: Eliminated. (EV119.3 and EV 118.9)

Boots or bandages in ring or around outside, whips when not allowed, or discrepancy in dress

Two (2) points in "other errors" column, not cumulative. Must stop and correct, may have assistance. (EV119.2)

Entry before bell, or late entry 45–90 seconds

Two (2) points "other errors", not cumulative. (Late entry over 90 seconds = TE, or at discretion of judge.) (EV119.2b)

Learning wrong test

After initial error, ask rider to stay in ring and try to ride correct test. Most riders know both tests of their level. If they have 3 errors, they are scored as a "TE" for Technical Elimination. They are not permitted to leave ring, learn test, and return. (EV104.8 and EV117.4b)