



# UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™

**USDF**

Show Biz, Chapter 7, Scheduling

## Master Schedule

Every competition has unique scheduling problems. Things to consider are number of rings, size of rings, footing in each ring, number of judges in each ring, judge’s ratings (r, R, S, FEI 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5\*), number of riders, levels offered, number of days and judge’s departure times. The points mentioned in this section generally apply to any competition but may be tempered by your competition’s specific requirements and limitations.

Begin by arranging the master schedule and determining the total time (in minutes) necessary for each class. Multiply the suggested time by the number of entrants in the class (many computer show programs will do this calculation). Any class with over 25 entries must be split. If you are running any of the following: Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Championship classes, USEF High Performance Championships, qualifying and selection trials and observation classes, they cannot be split regardless of number of entries. When you split classes, always divide the class into new, smaller classes on the same day published in the prize list.

Splitting classes has gotten much easier with the advent of the Adult Amateur and Junior/Young Rider divisions. You may want to put these groups into one section and the open riders into another. Many shows are now offering these three divisions as three separate classes. Beware that this option can lead to rider conflicts for the smaller shows that have one rider riding many horses, and possibly many horses in the same small class. It is not necessary, when splitting by rider status, to have each division the same size.

The next thing to do is assign the rings. There are two ways to do this: A) assign your judges to the ring and then assign classes to the ring; B) assign your classes to the ring and then assign the judges. Either works well but remember to take the rating of each judge into consideration as their rating determines the levels that they are allowed to judge. It is also possible that there is a “main” arena where the musical and spectator classes are to be held and that will take priority.

You may find it necessary to move your judges during the day to make the schedule work but try to keep this to a minimum. If you are holding evening classes, schedule the night judges with a late start in the day, so they are not on the grounds too long or too tired from hanging around all day waiting to judge again. You may have to schedule an evening judge to judge early in the day of the evening classes. Do this only if your showgrounds are close to the judge’s hotel, so they can leave the grounds during the day.

There are certain rules that must be followed when scheduling. Judges should only be scheduled to judge for eight hours (excluding all breaks and lunch) and may only be on the showgrounds for 10 hours. ([USEF Subchapter DR-1](#)) They must have at least a 10 minute break after every two hours of judging and at least a 45 minute lunch break. ([USEF Subchapter DR-1](#)) Check the entries to make sure that you have recorded any judge/rider conflicts.

### Judge Position assignments

Number of Judges	Position(s)
1	At C
2	At C and E or B

3	At C, E and M or C, B and H
USEF/FEI Young Horse Tests	Maximum of 3 judges, all at C
5	At C, E, B, M and H

Do not allow a class to continue to the next day. Vary the judge's test assignment, so no judge has only training level, or has all the qualifiers for that level, for example. You do not need to schedule the levels consecutively. You must schedule a class consecutively, start to finish, unless you need to "seed" a rider to give enough time in between rides on different horses. It is also important to offer the riders as many of your judges as possible. But, if a rider is entered in multiple levels on multiple horses, do not panic as it is sometimes impossible to satisfy all situations.

It is recommended that junior/young rider classes be held on Saturday and Sunday only, unless your show falls on a holiday weekend (i.e. Labor Day).

FEI, pas de deux, and freestyle classes are crowd pleasers. Try to schedule them between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., or during your evening session. Freestyle music can be distracting, so if your facility is tightly packed, you may consider putting other arenas on a break during these rides. This will also allow the competitors to watch.

You will not just be scheduling regular dressage classes. Group classes, such as dressage seat equitation and materiale need a block of time without individual ride times. Allow 15 to 30 minutes, or five minutes per horse. Arena maintenance is extremely important, and all facilities differ in the time needed for this. Award ceremonies and any special demonstrations also need to be scheduled.

Complete the master schedule one day at a time, doing each day separately. Refer to this schedule to assure that you do not schedule a level with only one judge.

It is helpful to remember to think in base "60" when scheduling, as your class times are easier to manage in minutes, not hours. It can be helpful to make a small chart on an index card as follows:

30 min = ½ hour	270 min = 4 ½ hours
60 min = 1 hour	300 min = 5 hours
90 min = 1 ½ hours	330 min = 5 ½ hours
120 min = 2 hours	360 min = 6 hours
150 min = 2 ½ hours	390 min = 6 ½ hours
180 min = 3 hours	420 min = 7 hours
210 min = 3 ½ hours	450 min = 7 ½ hours
240min = 4 hours	480 min = 8 hours

### Scheduling Individual Ride Times

First, check the entry forms for special requests, multiple entries, class conflicts and hauling problems. Local competitors hauling in the same day should be given extra time at the start of the day and, if possible, those hauling the farthest distances should be scheduled as early as possible on the last day they are competing. Schedule the problems and special requests first. This is where the computer earns its keep; most programs can re-schedule so fast, that the individual ride time scheduling becomes fun!

Assign ride times with consideration for both competitors and judges. Try not to have the same rider/horse combination show under the same judge for the entire competition. Avoid having the same rider/horse combination start or finish every class they are in (except a rider with multiple horses in the same class who

may need to ride first and last). Remember, it is more important for the rider to have the time to show each horse well. If possible, avoid having the same level start every day of your competition.

You must allow a rider who is competing two different horses at least 50 minutes in between each ride. ([USEF Subchapter DR-1](#)) You must get their permission, in writing, to assign them a closer ride time between two horses. Also try to allow all riders the same amount of time (50 minutes) between their rides. Horses are limited to a maximum of three dressage rides per day at fourth level and below or two rides per day above fourth level. Horses competing at both fourth level and prix st. georges, or their equivalents, are limited to two dressage rides per day. Horses may enter no more than two consecutive levels, freestyle levels included, at any one competition. Dressage seat equitation, quadrille, pas de deux and materiale classes are excluded from the maximum limit of rides per day and horses in these classes may compete at any level for which they are otherwise eligible during the same competition. ([USEF DR Subchapter-1](#)). Any horse scheduled for three rides per day should have the maximum time possible between the rides.

Management cannot know what a competitor wants, so all prize lists should ask competitors to list special requests on the entry blank itself. If you have a question about scheduling a rider, take the time to call or e-mail them in advance. Schedulers should try to comply with all reasonable requests with the goal of helping the rider have a pleasant and hassle-free competition. The majority of competitors understand, if treated fairly and courteously and if management avoids sudden shocks to their already jittery nerves.

After you have worked out the schedule, have someone double-check everything from special requests to the classes entered on each entry blank with each class schedule. Someone should distribute these to your judges and technical delegate. If you are not the secretary, inform them that the ride times are ready for mailing or posting to your website.

Possible overlaps:

- Judge in different rings at same time
- Class scheduled to finish after another one starts
- Horse in different rings at the same time
- Rider in different rings at the same time

### **Recommended Scheduling Times**

Each dressage test has an approximate time printed on the front. Simply add two minutes to that time for tight scheduling and three minutes for a schedule that will allow latitude. Adding one or two minutes every fifth ride helps a tightly scheduled competition stay on time. When you figure your class times, finish the last ride! If your last ride is at 9:40 – the class ends at 9:49 (for a 9-minute test) and you may start your next class any time after about 9:50, to allow your judge and scribe to reorganize. Allow at least three minutes between freestyle rides and test of choice rides. When possible, be generous with freestyle times. These tests are judged differently, and the judge needs time to review the scores before signing after the ride is finished

Tests that can be ridden in the standard or small arena will have two times listed. Be sure to calculate your times for the arena size you intend to use. Please be sure to only use the small arena if your prize list states that it would be used for those specific tests.