



The Use of Dressage Tests at a Dressage Event

by Dressage Queensland, 12 April 2012

The purpose of having 3 or 4 tests per level is to encourage the gymnastic development of the dressage horse, and the skill level of the rider, in a clear ascending pathway from Prelim 1A to Advanced 5C (and therefore on to FEI)

It must be acknowledged that the A and B tests have a somewhat lower degree of difficulty than the C and D tests at each level. Therefore, a combination performing the 1D test should demonstrate their readiness of the Novice level 2A test in the near future. The same goes for the Novice 2 D test, showcasing the highest standard of Novice training, and the ability for the combination to be well prepared for the questions asked in the lower Elementary tests when the time comes.

A combination who is struggling with the A's and B's is often not ready for the C's and D's, and therefore, Dressage QLD does have concerns about the trend of organising committee's in running only the C and D tests at their events. DQ feels that this does not allow for the systematic training and development of the horse and rider, decreases variety, and increases the tension in some horses that comes with over-familiarity of a test due to anticipation of a particular movement.

Limiting the tests to always the higher degree of difficulty can overface riders and their horses, and makes it harder for them to gain qualifying scores for events. For example, it is somewhat easier for a rider to gain 65% in the A than in the D, as the movements and requirements are proportionally easier in the A's for the combination to perform (concurrent with a correct training programs and skill development of the horse and rider).

Therefore, Dressage QLD highly recommends that the higher tests are reserved for Championship competitions, where the best performed and trained combination at each level is sought, and the smaller days encourage participation, good training, and positive competition by allowing a selection of the tests from the A's, B's and C's.