

Whatcom County Dressage and Eventing Association

General Meetings

The Board meets regularly and you're invited! We have general membership meetings about every other month so stay tuned for dates and locations.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, February 22nd
Dinner at 6:30,
Meeting at 7:00

Round Table Pizza
Clubhouse 1145 E Sunset
Dr, Unit 135, Bellingham

Come for dinner too or just the meeting!

Who is WCDEA?

This dressage and eventing (& working equitation) club is an all-volunteer group of local horse enthusiasts committed to furthering our knowledge of our disciplines and providing equestrian-related educational and competitive opportunities in the local area.

Welcome to Almost Spring, everyone!

We had a very well-attended General Membership Meeting (22 people) a few weeks ago at Round Table Pizza and we were delighted to meet new faces! The Club added 6 new members to our ranks! The enthusiasm for our mission is growing and we are excited for the upcoming season.

Speaking of the upcoming season, we're hosting the **Salish Schooling Show Series**. There will be both dressage tests of all kinds (western, USDF and eventing) and Ease of Handling for Intro and Novice levels. You can just ride dressage if you'd like, or you can compete in the working equitation classes. These relaxed, fun and informal shows will be held at Sunset Farm Park in Blaine, so mark the dates and plan to join us. No worries if you don't plan to ride — we need lots of volunteers to make this series a success. No knowledge necessary since we're happy to train you!

Mark your calendars: June 18, July 16, August 27 and a make-up date for September 24 if necessary.

Since we're on the topic of training, are you interested in furthering your equestrian education but could use some financial help? Lucky for you, as a member of WCDEA you're eligible for an **educational scholarship!**

The Club has \$1000 in grant money waiting for applicants. We have decided to offer \$50 grants to each member who wishes to advance his/her education by attending a clinic, riding in or auditing a lesson, joining in a seminar or workshop, or most any other horse-related educational opportunity.



To apply email President Viki with information about your intended educational opportunity and why you'd like to attend. We just ask that you be willing to either write up a little something about what you learned when it's all said and done, or even better, speak about it at one of our membership meetings.

We are limiting the total grant amount to \$1000 this year so don't delay!

WORKING EQUITATION - anyone can do it!

Objectives of the Levels

Level 1:

To introduce the horse and rider to the sport of Working Equitation. Rider should demonstrate a balanced position with independent, steady hands that encourage an elastic contact to the bridle while maintaining a steady, active tempo. Attention to accuracy and geometry is important. Horse should be attentive, show correct bend for the line of travel, and a willingness to work with his rider without resistance. Transitions to and from halt may include walk steps. All trot work may be ridden rising or sitting.

Level 2:

In addition to the requirements of Level 1, to confirm that the horse demonstrates improved suppleness, bending and balance while accepting an elastic contact with the bridle. Consistent, active tempo to be demonstrated throughout while maintaining relaxation and harmony. Transitions to and from halt may include walk steps. All trot work may be ridden rising or sitting.

Level 3:

In addition to the requirements of Level 2, to confirm that the horse is developing more engagement and the ability to perform lateral movements and clear, prompt transitions with balance and a more consistent contact with the bridle. Horse should show adjustability within the gaits. Transition from canter to walk may include trot steps. All trot work may be ridden rising or sitting.

Level 4:

In addition to the requirements of Level 3, to confirm that the horse has achieved a moderate level of engagement (accepts more weight on the hindquarters), moves with an uphill tendency and increased power especially in the medium gaits, and is reliably on the bridle without resistance. Expectation of straightness, bending, balance, suppleness, and self-carriage is higher than that required in Level 3. Canter-walk transitions and simple changes should not include trot steps. All trot work must be ridden sitting.

Level 5:

In addition to the requirements of Level 4, to confirm that the horse demonstrates correct basics and increased engagement, elasticity, balance, bending, suppleness, and self-carriage. Transitions between collected and medium gaits should be well defined.

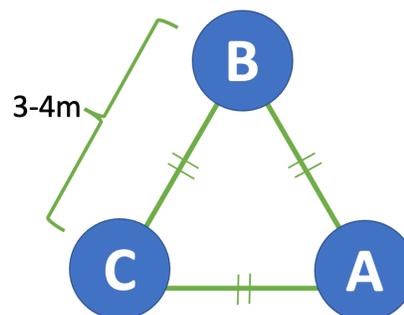
Level 6:

In addition to the requirements of Level 5, to confirm that the horse has developed sufficient engagement, elasticity, and balance to perform advanced movements. The horse must be ridden with one hand. Transitions between collected, medium, and extended gaits should be well defined. The horse demonstrates clear uphill balance and lightness, and greater straightness and energy than at Level 5.

From USA Working Equitation, November 2021

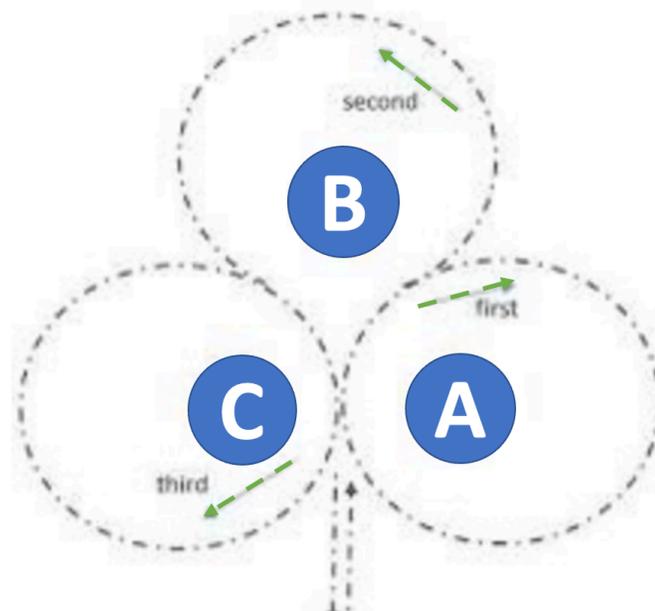
Working Equitation Obstacle Highlight: 3 Drums

This obstacle consists of three drums positioned on the points of an equilateral triangle where the center of the drums are set at 3 to 4 meters (10 to 13 feet) apart. Any horse safe object can stand in for the drums when practicing. Some suggestions include water buckets, jump standards, cones, planter boxes, etc. However, it is beneficial to school with an object that is taller in height so you are not forced to look down when working on transitions and geometry, but use what you have. A build idea could be as simple as a bucket with a bit of sand in the bottom and a 1-2" piece of PVC pole 4-6' in length.

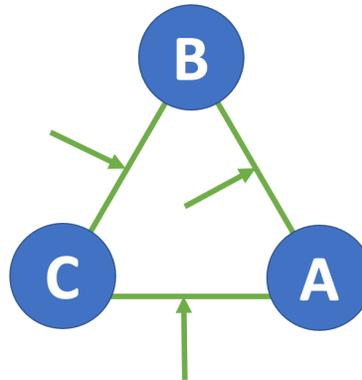


The obstacle pattern is always ridden the same (although can be ridden in reverse if course map states). Starting with drum A, rider enters between drum C and A (riding toward drum B) and makes a full circle to the right around drum A. Then, when passing between drum B and A the second time, the rider makes a change of bend and lead, if applicable and makes a partial circle around drum B with the drum on the rider's left side. When passing between drum B and C, for the first time, the rider again makes a change of bend and lead, if applicable.

Lastly, a full circle to the right is made around drum C (passing a second time between drum B and C) with the pair exiting out of the obstacle with drum C on the right and drum A on the left- opposite of how they entered.



The obstacle can be ridden in reverse starting with a left circle around drum C, upon passing between drum C and B the second time, a change of bend/lead is made. A partial circle to the right is made around drum B. Upon passing between drum B and A, a change of bend/lead is made to make a full circle to the left around drum A. After the second pass between drum C and A is made the rider and horse have completed the obstacle exiting the opposite direction they entered.



What to think about as you practice:

- Geometry!! If your first circle is 15m, your other circles need to be the same size. Note, it is a common error for them to gradually get bigger and bigger. Also, when passing between drums, aim to be perpendicular to the imaginary line connecting the two drums at your left and right.
- The drum does not need to be in the center of the circle, it is just a “marker” to help with transitions and geometry. Think of them a bit like a letter in a dressage arena.
- When schooling the pattern, it’s OK to deviate from it for training purposes. Don’t hesitate to round a drum a second time if you need to improve your bend or geometry, etc before continuing on.
- Work toward prompt transitions, if applicable, as you pass between drums. This also means your change of bend should happen as you pass between/over the imaginary line between to drums.

- When introducing this obstacle, begin at the walk. Make sure you know the pattern, when to change the bend and practice riding with 10, 15 and 20 meter circles. Once that is comfortable, begin at the trot focusing on the same items as you did at the walk in addition to maintaining a good tempo, soft changes of bend, and try riding it at both sitting and posting trot.
- Ready to step it up? Try it at the canter with transitions through the trot (aim for 3-5 steps of trot), simple changes and/or flying changes. Be sure to continue to focus on your geometry and symmetry!
- Lastly, you can really challenge yourself and ride the obstacle one-handed focusing on all the concepts listed above.



What is the judge looking for?



- * *Shape and Symmetry in the size of circles*
- * *Clear transitions and/or change of bend*
- * *Tempo*
- * *Fluidity*
- * *Correct lead, bend, posting diagonal*
- * *Correctly executed pattern*
- * *Accuracy of lead change and/or change in bend*

For more information be sure to check out usawe.org, the WE rulebook (particularly Appendix B) and feel free to reach out to me with questions, help, or clarification deirdra.d@gmail.com

Club Happenings!

- ☀️ Mark your calendar for the upcoming **General Membership Meeting: Wednesday, February 22nd**. Dinner at 6:30pm and meeting from 7:00–8:00pm. Round Table Pizza in Bellingham's Sunset Square Plaza. Come for both or just the meeting!

- ☀️ **Want to learn how to make your saddle fit better**? Lucky for you we have master saddle fitter Hannah Knaebel at Topline Saddles coming up to do a clinic for us on **Saturday, May 20th**. Time TBA. For more info on what Hannah will teach us about fitting BOTH western and English saddles, check out her Topline Saddles website.

- ☀️ We have our **schooling show dates! June 18, July 16 and August 27th** with a a make-up date for September if needed. We will offer dressage tests of all disciplines and working equitation Intro and Novice classes.

- ☀️ **Are you good with computers? Do you love to create and update websites?** You might be just the volunteer we need! Our Club's website could use some TLC so if you're familiar with WYSIWYG PLEASE let one of the board members know! The time commitment is less than 1 hour a month and we'd be so happy to put your mad skillz to use!



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Our club was recently contacted by a member of the B.C. Morgan Club who graciously offered us a large stash of unused ribbons, glass wear and other goodies. We will be able to put them to good use while saving money on costs for our shows. WCDEA will need plenty of volunteers for these shows and as we get closer to the show dates we will send out a list of volunteer jobs.

There was much talk at the meeting about a camp. I am currently working on some ideas. We will send out a poll to see what everyone thinks once we get some details lined out.

I was VERY happy to see some youth attending the meeting and if this continues I would love to organize youth activities for them.

I hope to see you all at this month's meeting.

Best regards, Viki Schimke, President

Sunset Farm Park

Do you know that Whatcom County has an extensive horse park? It's an all-volunteer effort provided by [Friends of Sunset Farm](#).

- All-weather outdoor arena
 - Miles of wooded trails
 - Water element and bank jump
 - Seasonal cross-country course with obstacles from Grasshopper to Training Level
- The park is at 7981 Blaine Road, Blaine, 98230

The Friends of Sunset Farm, a non-profit organization, was formed for the purpose of providing assistance to the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department in order to support, maintain and fundraise for the Whatcom County public equestrian park known as "Sunset Farm Park." WCDEA hosts regular clinics and schooling shows at the Park. Keep an eye on the Park's [FaceBook](#) page and [Website](#) for updates!

