



December 2024 WDAA Newsletter - Holiday Edition



Dear Friends,

Please help us show the rest of the equestrian world how great the Western Dressage community and WDAA are!

The U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF) Annual Meeting is an important event for the entire equestrian community that serves several purposes, including:

- **Sharing information**

The meeting provides a forum for sharing the latest insights and information on topics such as social license and horse welfare.

- **Addressing challenges**

The meeting is a place to discuss the current challenges facing equestrian sport and to develop solutions.

- **Honoring members**

The meeting includes award galas that recognize members and their horses.

- **Considering bylaws and rule changes**

The USEF Board of Directors considers bylaws and rule proposals at the meeting, and members are invited to provide feedback during a consultation period.

The 2025 USEF Annual Meeting will take place on January 23-25 at the Hilton in Downtown Lexington, Kentucky and will feature the following events:

- **WDAA Annual Meeting:** Saturday, January 25th 9:30 AM. You must be registered for the USEF Annual meeting to attend. Please RSVP to info@westerndressageassociation.org if you plan to attend.
- **The Pegasus Awards Dinner:** Thursday, January 23rd
- **SmartPak/USEF Horse of the Year Awards Celebration:** On Saturday, January 25th

I encourage you to attend. This is where we share ideas, and we learn. This is where we meet new partners and discover commonalities and differences between equestrian groups. This is where we get input into the direction our industry moves, and we get to find out why decisions are made as well as how those decisions impact us. We get to celebrate our successes and those of our colleagues.

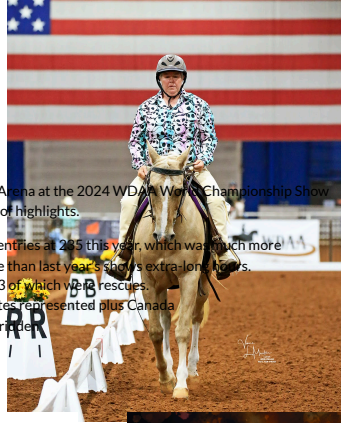
At the WDAA Annual Meeting we share updates on the status of the organization and current projects. We encourage input from you regarding the future of WDAA and look for volunteers to participate in work groups or committees.

For more information and to register, go to: <https://www.usef.org/annual-meeting>

Enjoy the Journey,
Cindy Butler, Your President
Western Dressage Association of America

2024 WDAA World Championship Show





The Markel Main Arena at the 2024 WDA&A World Championship Show hosted a plethora of highlights.

We closed entries at 2:45 this year, which was much more manageable than last year's show's extra long hours. We had 52 breeds, 3 of which were rescues. 31 US States represented plus Canada and 1040 tests ridden.

MARKEL

The show began with a **Welcome Party and Exhibitors Meeting** generously sponsored by Markel Insurance. Mary Phelps, Markel Agent and representative, was on hand to welcome everyone and educate them throughout the week about the importance of equine and farm insurance. The meeting is always well attended, exhibitors enjoyed pizza and meeting new friends while learning vital information about the upcoming show.



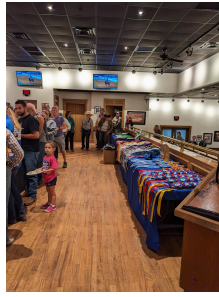
Thursday through Saturday night amazing freestyles entertained the crowd!



Friday Night was the Costume Freestyle, where those at the cocktail party in the Gold Buckle Cantina were treated to some of the most creative rides we have ever witnessed.

Saturday Night was the ever-popular Freestyle Fiesta Exhibitors Party. While enjoying and cheering on the Freestyle entries, exhibitors feasted at a taco/nacho bar and wonderful desserts. 30 lucky names were pulled for the Commemorative Buckle drawing. The WDA&A State Affiliate Silent auction made thousands of dollars for our affiliates, expertly run by Dianne Doll from WDA Illinois.

Sunday night after the show ended everyone gathered for the **Awards Ceremony and Farewell**



22 Division Champion buckles were awarded. Reserve Champions received an embroidered duffel bag and 1-10 all received beautiful World Championship ribbons. Breed High Score, Special and Over all High Score Awards were also presented. For the list of winners please visit [Division, Breed, Special and Overall Award Results - WDAA World Championship Show](https://wdaa.memberclicks.net/wdaa-harmony-award)

Also awarded was the **2024 WDAA Harmony Award**. 139 Entries were qualified for the Harmony Award this year. Our beautiful saddle was donated by The Tack Shack of Swansboro owned by Jennifer Collins. Jennifer even brought her tack shop with her! The final night of the show there were over 60 names in the hat for the saddle drawing. Jennifer drew a name and Barbara Wood of Marthasville MO was the lucky winner! Jennifer even provided a brand-new saddle cover and custom-made saddle rack! What a fun award it is, everyone has a chance to win the harmony award. Just show how in tune you are with your horse by receiving an 8 in harmony at the Online International. Then do it again at the World Show and you are in! For more info visit <https://wdaa.memberclicks.net/wdaa-harmony-award> Know a Saddle Maker? The donation of a saddle includes a great deal of visibility and prestige, contact dini@westerndressageassociation.org.

The other most anticipated presentation is the Lynn Palm Future Stars Awards.

A \$500 award for the highest scoring junior rider at each level from Introductory through Level 5, with the potential to award a total of \$3500. In keeping with the utmost integrity and quality of horses and riders, the qualifications for eligibility are such that each score must be a minimum of 65% with a minimum of 5 riders in each Level.

This year's Lynn Palm Future Stars were:
OLIVER SWAIN of Norman, OK - Intro
MAKENA PORTER of Snohomish, WA - Basic and Level 1

We are the luckiest show around, we have the best volunteers ever!

Many volunteers come to the show for the entire week on their own dime, just to help! We cannot put this show on without these heroes. Kristen and Riley Whittaker swooped in and took on anything we threw at them and got the chance to see the show from the other side.



Aubrey Welch receiving a volunteer certificate.

Kristen said, "We had no idea the enormity of the behind-the-scenes production that goes into making this show happen!", "Riley and I left with a whole new respect for the people who make our World Show a great success to those of us who honor a superior show experience and community combined. It was truly an eye-opening experience." Just a few of our other valuable volunteers were, Donna Foster Copeland, Anna Pappas, Aubrey Welch, Avery Aswad, huge thanks to everyone who made the show happen!

McLaughlin Sportsmanship Awards were presented to:

Youth - Colton Luszczyński of Gibraltar, Michigan
 Adult - MICHELLE FRANK of Cypress, Texas
 These two were the sunshine of the show!



We are excited to announce that WDAA has signed a 6- year contract with Lazy E Arena.



WDAA World Championship Show Dates

2025 - September 16 -20
2026 - September 15 -19
2027 - September 7 -11
2028 - September 5 -9
2029 - September 18 -22
2030 - September 17 -21

After years of exhaustive research of multiple venues, the Lazy E Arena is the best fit for WDAA for many reasons. Show facilities that offer similar conveniences, (all show arenas covered or indoors, restaurant, centrally located) just don't exist or have no availability in September or October. We have the luxury of having 2 sets of side-by-side courts, which only require 1 crew per 2 courts to manage, keeping costs down for exhibitors. Within the next few years, Lazy E will be constructing several new barns and buildings. A brand-new shower house and laundry will be ready for us in 2025. New stalls have been built near the main arena that will also be available. For 2026 a new covered warm-up arena will be available for our use! Riding trails and beautiful RV spots will remain. We are very excited about the future of our show!

For 2025 World Championship Show qualifying requirements please visit - <https://wdaaworldshow.org/>

WDAA is very proud to have the following judges officiate the 2025 WDAA World Championship Show

JOANNE COY
LILLIAN EVANIEW-PHELAN - also rail
CYNTHIA GANEM
ANN JUDGE
and
JOANN WILLIAMS



WHL PAP Dinner The WDAA Horse Lifetime Points and Awards banquet was meticulously planned by Jenny McBurnett Points and Innovations Director

The invitation only dinner was held Wednesday evening after the "rail Classes ended for the day. Over 100 guests enjoyed dinner and then the presentation of 100's of WHLPAP awards, plaques, halters, stall guards, custom bronze plaques and a Supreme Champions buckle. Every attendee that had a horse enrolled in WHLPAP received a special WHLPAP badge.



WDAA has a HUGE gift for ALL WDAA Members as of Jan 1st, 2025. All you need to do is follow the instructions below.

4 Steps to Join the WDAA Year-End High Point Program (YEHP)

Step 1: Join or Renew Your WDAA Membership

- Start your journey by becoming a WDAA member or renewing your membership. Membership ensures eligibility for the YEHP and connects you to the Western Dressage community.

Step 2: Enroll Your Horse

Choose the best option for your horse:

- Free Horse Number: Enables participation in the YEHP program to track Year-End High Point standings.
- WDAA Horse Lifetime Points and Awards Program (WHL PAP): A pay-to-participate program offering lifetime points tracking and additional benefits. While WHLPAP is not required for YEHP, it provides added value for horse owners looking to build a lasting legacy.

Step 3: Show at a WDAA Recognized Show

- Compete at WDAA Recognized Shows to earn qualifying scores and placements for YEHP. Participation in these shows is key to earning Year-End High Points.

Step 4: Place 1st-10th in Your Class

- YEHP points are awarded based on your class placement and the number of entries. Achieve top spots to maximize your Year-End High Point standings.

What Happens After the Show?

The show secretary submits official results data to WDAA. WDAA reviews and processes the results to ensure accuracy. The system calculates YEHP points based on your placing and the number of entries in your class. Celebrate Your YEHP Success!

Track your progress throughout the year and enjoy the recognition your horse deserves. The Year-End High Point Program rewards your dedication and achievements with annual awards.

Congratulations to the December WDAA Youth Scholarship winner - Harper Cadotte of Dunkirk, Maryland!

The Western Dressage Association of America (WDAA) is proud to present a scholarship opportunity funded by the USEF Youth Sportsman's Award Recognized Affiliate Grant. The next deadline is March 15th. Three (3) scholarships of \$500 each are available to youth riders who are looking to enhance their Western Dressage education. Scholarships must be used for Western Dressage educational experiences to include clinics, camps, and/or non-show events. The applicant must be under the age of 18 at the time of application, an active member of WDAA, and a member of USEF.

Applications will be accepted year-round.

Grants will be awarded 3 times per year: April, August and December.

Funds must be used within 12 months of receipt. Deadlines for submission will be March 15th, July 15th and November 15th.

A committee will search for applicants who are pursuant in the Western Dressage discipline and who are committed to increasing their scope of learning. The scholarship is intended to make a significant impact on the horse/rider's level of education, training, personal growth, and level of achievement.

For all information on this great opportunity, please visit <https://wdaa.memberclicks.net/wdaa-youth-educational-scholarship-program>

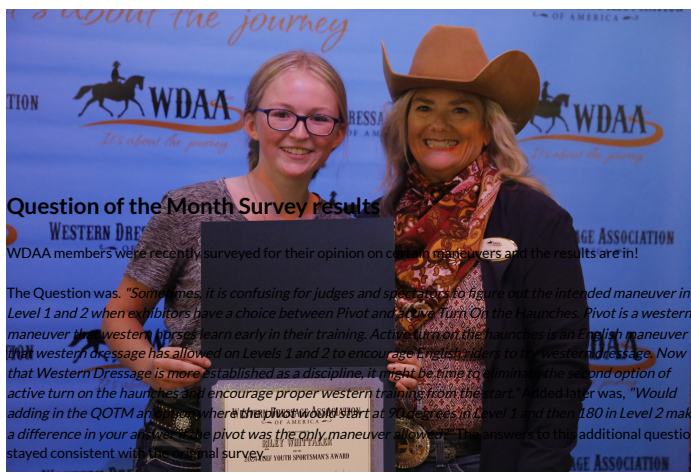


Hello, I am Riley Whittaker, a Western Dressage youth competitor. I earned the first WDAA Youth Educational Scholarship, made available by a grant from US Equestrian.

I used this scholarship to be a participant in the Sean Patrick Horsemanship Clinic at Mountain Lane Farm on October 4th-6th. I brought my 6-year-old Oakley to Temple NH for a long weekend experience. In this clinic we worked on groundwork, softness, haunches in, turn on the forehand, lateral work, leg yields and many other important things to help further my horsemanship.

I improved on slowing down and correctly teaching the basics, along with helping my horse further with new teaching aids. By receiving the chance to participate in this clinic, I was able to create a stronger partnership with my horse and create better teaching aids. This is important as a Western Dressage competitor as I was able to harmonize with my horse better and learn new techniques to further myself and my horses' advancement through the levels.

I want to say thank you to the WDAA Educational Scholarship for this amazing opportunity!
Riley Whittaker - Whit Acres Farm



Question of the Month Survey results

WDA members were recently surveyed for their opinion on certain maneuvers and the results are in!

The Question was, "Sometimes it is confusing for judges and spectators to figure out the intended maneuver in Level 1 and 2 when exhibitors have a choice between Pivot and Active Turn On the Haunches. Pivot is a western maneuver that western dressage riders learn early in their training. Active Turn on the Haunches is an English maneuver that western dressage has allowed on Levels 1 and 2 to encourage English riders to do western dressage. Now that Western Dressage is more established as a discipline, it might be time to eliminate the second option of active turn on the haunches and encourage proper western training from the start." Added later was, "Would adding in the QOTM and allowing where the pivot would start at 90 degrees in Level 1 and then 180 in Level 2 make a difference in your answer? The pivot was the only maneuver allowed in the answers to this additional question stayed consistent with the original survey."

The survey asked the following: **Western Dressage tests should include:**
 The story keeps going for Riley, she was also the 2024 WDAA Nominee for USEF Youth Sportsman's Award. She submitted a very impressive application and earned a free 2025 WDAA membership!
 - Only Pivot: 35%
 - No change, allow pivot or active turn on the haunches in Level 1 and 2: 58%
 - No Opinion: 4%

We thank you all for responding so quickly, NO CHANGES WILL BE MADE.

WDAA Test Revisions to Date

UPDATE

- Level 1 Freestyle: 4/5/2022 Total points correction on cover page only.
- Level 2 Test 2: 3/30/2022 Movement 15 clarification that the collect jog begins at V. Changed sidepass from 4 steps to 4 strides.
- Level 2 Test 2: 5/23/2022 Changed sidepass from # of strides to go to the first quarter line.
- Level 2 Test 4: 2/15/2022 Changed sidepass from 4 steps to 4 strides.
- Level 2 Test 4: 5/23/2022 Changed sidepass from # of strides to go to the first quarter line.
- Level 2 Freestyle: 1/7/2022 Movement 10 has had the verbiage "through the jog" removed. And now states only "Simple change of lead".
- Level 3 Freestyle: 4/26/2022 Total points correction on cover page only.
- Level 4 Freestyle: 4/26/2022 Added L|R to movements 9 & 10. Removed L|R from box 11. Corrected total points on cover page.
- Level 5 Test 1: 12/10/2021 Added "Left Lead" to movement #1 to clarify the lead to take from the halt.
- Level 5 Test 3: 12/10/2021 Added "Left Lead" to movement #1 to clarify the lead to take from the halt.
- 2022 Western Dressage Equitation Tests: 11/30/2022 Tests Retired.
- 2023 Western Dressage Equitation Tests: 12/1/2022 Added using the new Walk-Jog, Intermediate, and Advanced categories.
- 2023 Western Dressage Equitation Patterns: 02/22/2023 Changed the word "test" to "pattern".
- 2024 Western Dressage Equitation patterns: 01/18/2024 Movement #4 Lope to Halt movement changed to "Halt through the Jog."



Join WDAA or renew your membership today so you don't miss out on exclusive member benefits!

[Join WDAA](#)



WDAA has some very exciting events, be sure to check the calendar regularly so you don't miss out!

[Visit the Calendar](#)



Take advantage of this free member benefit! Professional directory to connect potential clients with professionals.

[Visit the Directory](#)



The LMS is a great way to learn more about Western Dressage. Only available to members.

[Visit the LMS](#)



