



A Strong Start to the New Year with WDAA



Dear Friends,

A Western Dressage horse was just named United States Equestrian Federation, National Horse of the Year!!!! This happened because all of you supported Athenian Lady by voting for her and convincing others to vote for her. This happened because Amanda Delgado took a chance on a neglected horse, standing in a field amongst the skeletons of those she outlasted. I like to think Athena's wins are dedicated to those horses she watched wither and fall before her. Her wins certainly didn't come easily, and Amanda did an amazing job gaining Athena's trust and her heart.

Athena's new title, USEF National Horse of the Year, is a big deal. A Western Dressage horse prevailed in a primarily English-leaning organization. This happened because of your votes. Western Dressage has only a fraction of members compared to most of the other USEF National Breeds and Disciplines. Yet, our horse won!!!

Athena's Cinderella story brings tears to anyone's eyes. More people will learn about Western Dressage because they heard about Athena. Athena and Amanda are outstanding ambassadors for WDAA because Amanda used Western Dressage to do what it was created for. Our leveled training system and emphasis on harmony as well as our inclusivity of all types and breeds gave Amanda the perfect avenue for Athena to travel.

I know many of you have stories just as heartwarming as Athena and Amanda's. All of us reap the rewards from happy, well-trained horses who may not have started out that way. Thank you for choosing to use Western Dressage and to share Western Dressage with the world. It is awesome to be part of an organization where members are proud of what we do and support each other for the benefit of horses everywhere.

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

USEF News



Athenian Lady Earns USEF National Horse of the Year Title



NATIONAL HORSE OF THE YEAR *Athenian Lady*

The Western Dressage Association of America is pleased to announce that **Athenian Lady** has been named the **USEF National Horse of the Year**, a distinguished national honor recognizing exceptional achievement and performance.

Owned by **Amanda Delgado**, Athenian Lady's selection reflects not only her consistent excellence in competition, but also the extraordinary journey that brought her there. Once a fearful, feral rescue mare found in a pasture scattered with horse skeletons, Athena's transformation is a testament to Amanda's patience, compassion, and belief in her potential.

Through years of dedication, Amanda helped Athena heal both **physically** from barbed wire scars, emaciation, and a deep digital flexor tendon injury that two veterinarians advised euthanasia for and **emotionally** building a partnership rooted in trust.

It was at the Pinto World Show that Amanda and Athena discovered western dressage, Amanda recognizing it as the discipline where Athena truly belonged. In the western dressage arena, Amanda felt welcomed, and Athena was appreciated for who she was. Rescue horses are not only welcomed in western dressage, they are valued, alongside horses of all breeds.

This achievement is a significant honor for the Western Dressage community, and WDAA extends its congratulations to Amanda Delgado and all those who have been part of Athenian Lady's journey.

[Watch Amanda's Speech Here](#)

[Read The Chronicle of The Horse's Article](#)



2025 Pegasus Medal of Honor - Cindy Butler

President of WDAA, Cindy Butler, was selected as a recipient of the 2025 Pegasus Medal of Honor, which was presented during the US Equestrian Pegasus Awards. The Pegasus Medal of Honor recognizes individuals whose

dedication, leadership, and lifelong service have shaped the landscape of equestrian sport—honoring those who elevate our community, our athletes, and our future.

WDAA is eternally grateful for Cindy Butler's leadership and true passion for Western Dressage, we wouldn't be where we are today without her.

Watch Cindy receive the Pegasus Medal of Honor below!

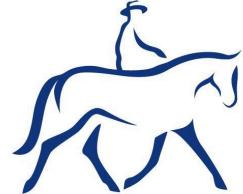


WDAA Year-End Wrap-Up During the USEF Annual Meeting

WDAA hosted our Year-End Wrap-Up during the USEF Annual Meeting. We had an incredible turnout of **35 attendees**, including members and guests curious about how WDAA continues to grow and thrive. We shared highlights from 2025, reflected on key successes, and discussed our plans for the future. The PowerPoint from WDAA Year-End Wrap-Up during the USEF Annual Meeting is now available on the LMS for WDAA members.



USEF WD Seat Medal Finals



USEF WESTERN DRESSAGE SEAT
MEDAL FINAL

An exciting new program to help celebrate Western Dressage riders!

Born into existence in 2025, this USEF program spotlights the growing discipline of Western Dressage and celebrates the correct training and equitation that goes into a successful partnership. **USEF member riders** may qualify in either a Western Dressage Seat On The Rail class or a Western Dressage Horsemanship class at a **USEF licensed show**. The final will be conducted in the format of a Combined Equitation class, with both an On The Rail section and a Horsemanship pattern, each of which totals 50% of the rider's final score.

2026 Date & Location: 2026 WDAA World Championship Show Guthrie, OK at the Lazy E Arena, September 15 last class of the day.

- The qualifying period for the 2026 Final begins on October 1st, 2025, and runs through August 31st, 2026.
- The Qualified Riders list will be published by **USEF** after the beginning of the Qualifying Period.

WDAA Membership News

Your WDAA membership does so much more than grant access to the membership portal: it supports innovation, education, and the future of Western Dressage.

Our tests are thoughtfully designed to serve as a clear roadmap for training, helping riders and horses progress with purpose. Best of all, these tests are included with your membership at no additional cost.

To put it in perspective: the cost of an average lesson is around \$55, which is comparable to a full year of WDAA membership, an investment that supports the entire community.

Renew today and help us continue providing valuable resources, advancing the sport, and supporting riders at every level!



[Renew Here](#)

📢 2026 WDAA World Show Judges Announced 📢

2026 WDAA WORLD SHOW JUDGES

Lazy E Arena in
Guthrie, Oklahoma

September 15-19, 2026

Lynn Palm, Lowell, FL –
Rail and 4 days

Michell Combs, Peoria, AZ

Marie Maloney, Wichita, KS

Carol Bishop, Gastonia, NC

Karen Winn, Lexington, KY



📣 2026 WDAA Online International Show Dates Announced 📣



Judges: To be announced soon 2026
Prize List: To be posted by March 15, 2026

WDAA Online International Show Timeline

Phase 1 – Entries Accepted May 18 – June 1, 2026

Phase 2 – Video Submissions Accepted (Once entry is accepted) – June 16, 2026

Phase 3 – Judging & Scoreboard June 18 – July 1, 2026

Online Awards Ceremony July 5, 2026

[For More Information Click Here](#)

UPDATED WDAA Equipment & Attire Guide

Our UPDATED WDAA Equipment & Attire Guide is officially live and it's a HUGE upgrade from the previous version.

If you've ever had questions about tack, this guide has the answers you're looking for.

Find it on our website under **Tests & Resources → Rules & Guidelines.**



2026 Equipment & Attire Guide

The purpose of this WDAA Equipment and Attire Guide is to provide explanations, additional information and visual guides regarding the appointments (attire and tack) allowed and not allowed under the USEF Western Dressage Division.

In the case of conflicting verbiage, the current USEF WD Rule Book will supersede this document.

"At Federation Licensed Competitions, the C2 Steward or the person who is under the direction of the Steward and appointed by the competition management will be responsible for overseeing the checking of the horse, tack, and attire. A horse must be eliminated from the test just completed if the horse or any tack and/or attire are in violation of the rules and/or the tongue has been tied. C2 Stewards or Equipment Inspectors are only required to inspect bits and other appointments on a minimum of one-third of the horses in a class." (See WD124)

At a non-USEF WDAA competition or a USEF Competition Lite, a designated individual must assume the responsibility of overseeing the checking of horses, tack, bits, and attire.

See separate WDAA document entitled Western Dressage Equipment Check Protocol for proper equipment check procedures in place at shows.

Horses with prohibited equipment in the warm-up ring will be eliminated from the next class they are entering unless the equipment can be corrected before the scheduled ride time for that entry. Knowing or repeated use of prohibited equipment in warmup may subject the competitor to elimination, a Warning Card or citation of a Rule Violation. See WD 128 – Elimination and GR 1037 – Recorded Warning and Yellow Cards. Horses with prohibited equipment in the performance ring will be eliminated by the judge or through the steward and show management if prohibited equipment is found during the equipment check after the ride.



COPYRIGHT © 2025 WESTERN DRESSAGE ASSOCIATION® OF AMERICA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

Check Out the Guide Here

2026 WDAA Rule Changes

**RULE CHANGES EFFECTIVE
12/1/2025 FOR THE 2026
SHOW SEASON**



📢 2026 Show Season Rule Changes are Here! 📢

Effective 12/1/2025, the new Western Dressage rules for the 2026 show season are live!

Make sure to review all updates so you're ready for the next season in the ring.

Stay informed, ride confidently, and let's make 2026 our best season yet!

[Check Out the Rule Book Here](#)

Alliance News

2025 TWHBEA Pleasure Horse Ambassador of the Year - Tami Steinbrecher



This year, long time TWHBEA, USEF and WDAA member Tami Steinbrecher was recognized as the 2025 TWHBEA Pleasure Horse Ambassador of the Year! Tami has spent more than 20 years excelling with Tennessee Walking Horses in rail and versatility classes and nearly a decade showcasing their success in Western Dressage. She has successfully shown five Tennessee Walking Horses, each earning multiple WDAA World Championship titles.

Congratulations to Tami on this well-deserved honor!

[Read Tami's Article](#)

The 2026 Ellen DiBella Western Dressage Scholarship Recipient: Angela Michaelson



Angela Michaelson of Minnesota has been chosen to receive the 2026 Ellen DiBella Western Dressage Scholarship from The Morgan Horse Foundation, Inc. (MHF).

Angela was in the saddle at three months of age and has been loving and riding Morgans for 44 years now. ChandlerCreek TakebyStorm GCH (aka Rain) was an unstarted 3-year-old when she came into Angela's life;

their partnership quickly blossomed. From attending their first Morgan show in May 2019 to earning their AMHA GCH title in 2024, they have come a long way. In 2025, this team was awarded the WDAA Register of Merit Achievement (for the second time) and won the Level 3 Western Dressage Championship at the Grand National. Angela is proud to be an amateur owner/trainer, having a wonderful time with her mare, and showing others that it can be done. Read more about them below.

[Read More](#)

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](#)





KILLIAN
The Original Western Dressage Association
OF AMERICA

