



UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™

USDF Show Biz, Chapter 10, Scribes

Attributes of a Good Scribe

- Prompt– Arrives at the competition at least 30 minutes before scheduled work time.
- Prepared– Brings extra pens, gear for cold or wet weather, blanket(s) to pad hard seats, sunscreen, sunglasses.
- Properly Dressed– Avoids shorts and floppy hats. Is comfortable, but always neat.
- Peaceful– Limits conversation with judges to a friendly greeting and small talk during breaks. The scribe does not make any remarks about any horse or rider in the competition. The judge must concentrate, so there must be no chatter during rides or when the judge is writing comments at the bottom of the tests.
- Discreet– must not repeat judges' oral comments.

Duties of the Scribe

- Provide the proper equipment at the judge's stand, including the correct dressage tests, table and chairs, pens, bell or whistle, blankets, stopwatch, water or coffee, bug-spray, etc.
- Before the first ride, discuss with the judge how he/she wants to conduct business. Establish clearly whether comments for a movement will be given before or after the score so that the comments will be written in the proper place.
- At the start of each class, make sure the judge has a copy of the test.
- Check the horse's number as the rider circles the arena. Make sure this number agrees with the number and name written on the test or test label. If there is a mix-up, check the other tests for the correct test and the schedule to make sure the rider is at the correct ring at the proper time. If there is a discrepancy, call the judge's attention to the problem.
- Make sure all tests are properly identified with riders' numbers. Only after verifying that a rider's number is correct does a scribe write that number in the space provided inside all USDF, USEF and on the FEI tests.
- Write the judge's comments exactly as given. Do not rearrange words or edit.
- Use abbreviations as much as possible. You may want to post a list of your abbreviations near the office so competitors can decode them.
- Do not talk to the judge during a ride. If you get lost, quietly ask what movement the next score will be for. Then, after the test, go over anything you may have missed.
- If the judge does not give a score for a movement, politely ask – i.e., “and for #19, the canter depart?” Try not to let the judge go several movements without giving a score. If someone approaches you or the judge during a ride, wave the person politely away.
- Before turning a test over to the runner, check that the test includes all required scores, all errors are clearly marked and that the judge has signed the test. A contrasting color pen (red is best) helps to delineate each error.
- Remember, a scribe does not report anything said in the judge's stand to the world at large. Scribe in ink, not pencil. The judge must initial all score changes.

Scribe Training

- Scribe training programs are highly recommended. The off-season months are a good time for training and a clinic or seminar format seems to be a successful approach. Final training for a scribe should be on-the-job at schooling shows.
- If you can interest 14-16 people to meet for about two and a half hours, you will find most of them enjoy it and are willing to sign up for duty, starting with the first competition of the season.
- Make copies of the [USDF Guide for Scribes](#) and give one to each person to study. Also, some copies of the [USDF Glossary of Judging Terms](#) will come in handy.
- If your competition includes all USEF levels and FEI classes, practice with a couple of rides at each USEF level and two FEI rides. It is fun to have a "live" practice session, if your club has riders, appropriate horses, judges and a facility for an afternoon.
- However, an easier way is to hold the seminar indoors, using rides videotaped in advance, from the judge's viewpoint at C. The judge can then state comments and scores loudly enough for all participants to hear (without fear of embarrassing the riders). An advantage of the videotape is that it can be stopped if there is need for discussion and tests can even be run through a second time. After the participants have scribed several rides, you can then have them score the tests they have just scribed to learn scoring techniques at the same session.
- Have a question and answer period after the practice session and allow time for participants to share their thoughts with one another.