



American Driving Society, Inc.

Combined Driving

The CDE (Combined Driving Event) is modeled after the Three Day Event, which tests the overall condition and versatility of the horse in sport. Major competitions are usually held over three days: day 1) Driven Dressage; day 2) Cross Country Marathon with up to eight special obstacles or hazards; day 3) Cone Driving Competition which equates to the show jumping phase of the ridden event (One or two-day competitions include each of the phases, with a Marathon of a shorter distance). Penalty points are incurred in each of the above phases and the winner is the entry who accumulates the fewest points. Horses and ponies compete separately in these categories: single— one horse/pony; pairs—two horses/ponies side by side; tandem—two horses/ponies, one in front of the other; and Teams—four horses/ponies—two pair, one in front of the other.

Dressage

Often compared to compulsory skating, the dressage test consists of a prescribed sequence of movements judged against a standard of absolute perfection. The test demonstrates the obedience, freedom, regularity of movement, impulsion, and correct position and training of the animals. Multiple hitches are judged collectively.

Cross-Country Marathon

This phase tests the fitness, stamina, and obedience of the horses and the judgment and capability of the driver. Competitions have 3



sections (A, D, E), all having a minimum/maximum time allowance. At the end of section D (Which is a 1 km walk) there is a mandatory 10 minute halt with veterinary check to ensure the horses are not unduly stressed and are fit enough to continue. Competitors can walk the course before the marathon phase and plan their route. They are given a map and the course is marked with numbered flags for guidance, but no horse is allowed on the course before the start. Drivers may choose any path through the obstacles, provided they drive through each gate in the correct alphabetical sequence, and with the red flag on the right and white on the left. The object is to complete each obstacle in the shortest possible time with no penalties. Penalties include time,

groom/driver dismounting, driver putting down whip, error of course, knocking down a collapsible element, and turning the vehicle over.

Cones

Cones can be likened to the stadium jumping phase of eventing. The object is to drive through narrowly spaced pairs of cones cleanly within the time allowed. Each cone has a ball placed on top, and any miscalculation will dislodge the ball, thus incurring a penalty. This phase tests the fitness, agility and obedience of the horse and the accuracy and skill of the driver.



Carriages

Vehicles used in Combined Driving must be safe and well maintained. A two wheeled or four wheeled is allowed. At the upper levels competitors will use a lighter two –wheeled vehicle for dressage then they use a four-wheeled vehicle for the marathon phase. They must go back and use the same two-wheeled vehicle for the cones competition.

Grooms & Navigators

A groom may accompany the driver in the dressage and cones competitions. If you compete with a Very Small Equine (VSE) or a Small Pony (12.2 hands or smaller) you are not required to have a navigator on the marathon to reduce the weight the pony or VSE has to pull. On the marathon, the groom is a vital part of the team to help the driver stay on the correct course, to keep track of time, to hold paper work, and to help direct the route through obstacles. In addition the groom is called on to balance the vehicle by shifting his/her weight around tight turns or on uneven ground. Grooms may not handle the reins, nor the whip, and may give verbal assistance only in the marathon. No verbal communication between the driver and the groom is allowed in the dressage or cones competitions.



*For more information and to see actual video clips of the three phases of a Combined Driving Event, go to <http://www.americandrivingsociety.org/combined.asp>

American Driving Society

PO Box 278, Cross Plains, WI 53528

608-237-7382 e-mail: info@americandrivingsociety.org

www.americandrivingsociety.org