

EQUESTRIAN

Men and women compete on equal terms as rider and horse teams

Boasting a long and colourful Olympic history, the sport of equestrian also features true gender equity. Making its modern Games debut in Paris, 1900, it was originally restricted to commissioned military officers.

That changed at the 1952 Helsinki Games when all civilians, including women, became eligible to compete. Dressage and eventing were added to the jumping program in Stockholm in 1912.

AT THE GAMES

Highly trained horses worth millions of dollars and 200 of the world's best riders will compete in the traditional Olympic disciplines of dressage, show jumping and eventing at Greenwich Park, from July 28 to August 9.

EVENTING

Eventing comprises three elements and is contested over four days, with dressage taking up the first two. Since 2008 the team and individual competitions have been run concurrently. Teams can have up to five athlete/horse combinations, but only the best three results count towards the team's score.

Scores are cumulative across all three phases, with the best total determining the winner. The first jumping round decides the placings in the team event, with the top 25 completing a final round to determine the individual medal placings. The three elements of eventing are:

Dressage

Each horse and rider must perform a series of movements in the dressage arena. Marks achieved are converted into penalty points to which jumping and time penalties from the next two tests are added.

Cross-country

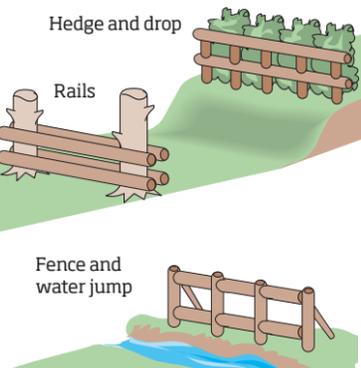
Competing on a tough 5.7km course, riders must negotiate up to 45 obstacles.

Jumping

A series of obstacles must be jumped in order and within a set time limit. Penalty points are incurred for rails knocked down or if the horse refuses the fence.

CROSS-COUNTRY OBSTACLES

Obstacles may be 1.2m high, or 1.4m if made of brush.



EQUIPMENT

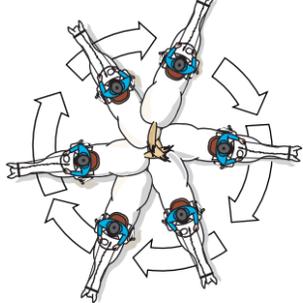
- Riders must wear formal dress, unless they are in a military or police force
- Hard hats are compulsory, except in dressage where top hats can be worn



FACT FILE

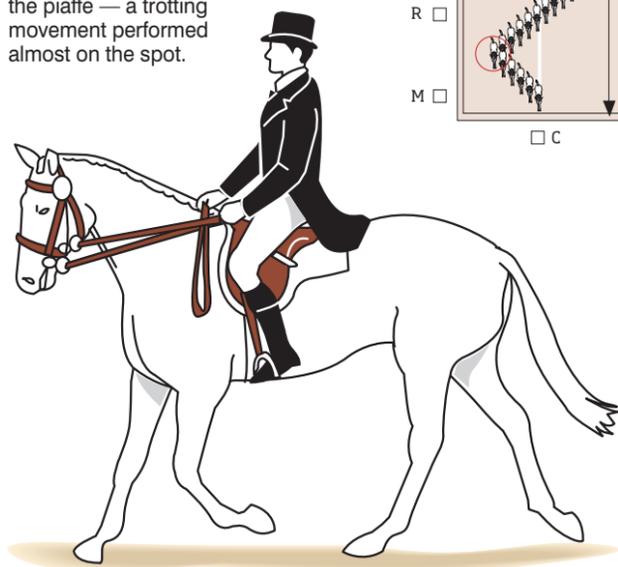
Despite being hugely successful in Olympic three-day eventing (six gold, three silver and two bronze), Australia's equestrian riders are yet to win a medal in show jumping or dressage.

PIROUETTE



DRESSAGE ARENA

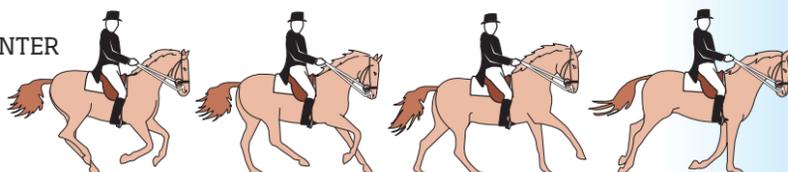
Riders use all parts of the arena during their routines. An example of one movement is the piaffe — a trotting movement performed almost on the spot.



TROT



CANTER



JUMPING

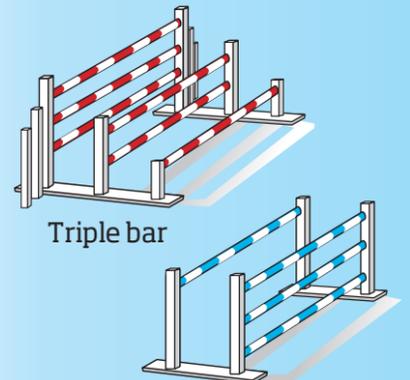
Features between 12-14 obstacles over a course of up to 700m which must be jumped in order and within a set time limit.

There are a total of five rounds in jumping, with all five contributing to the individual event. Two of these rounds are used to determine the placings in the team event.

Style is not considered in judging — the winner is the rider and horse that finishes with the fewest penalties in the fastest time. To avoid knocking down fences, riders must calculate the best possible approach to each obstacle, with turns, paces and strides all coming into play.

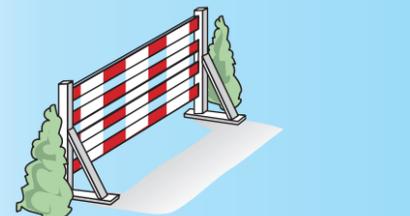
Course

The entire arena — 120m x 80m — is used. No jump is higher than 1.6m and water jumps are no longer than 4.7m. Jumps are divided into five categories: verticals (gates and fences); spreads (triple bars and oxers); combinations (two or three jumps, one or two strides apart); walls and water jumps.

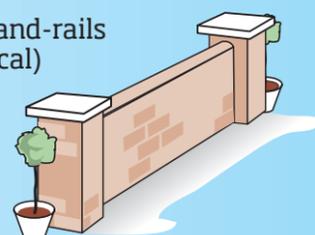


Triple bar

Oxer



Post-and-rails (vertical)



Simulated stone wall



Water jump

DRESSAGE

This elegant discipline relies on having a perfectly trained horse with the ability to respond to the lightest of signals while being graceful and controlled. Horse and rider must move in perfect harmony, and their technical and artistic merit is judged over three rounds by a panel of seven judges.

The team event (three athletes/horses) includes the Grand Prix and Grand Prix Special rounds; while in the individual event, the Grand Prix and the Grand Prix Special are used as qualifiers for the deciding Grand Prix Freestyle round.

Team and individual competitions are conducted simultaneously: a rider's score in a round will be relevant for both events.

Grand Prix: Riders follow a set routine of movements, such as a pirouette, piaffe and passage.

Grand Prix Special: Top 25 individual performers progress to this shorter, more concentrated version of the first round.

Grand Prix Freestyle: The top 18 after Grand Prix and Grand Prix Special progress to this round. Riders perform their own choreographed routine set to music.

ANALYSIS OF A HORSE'S JUMP

1. Shoulders and elbows act as a hinge, enabling hooves to tuck up close to body.
2. Hind legs begin to fold under.
3. Lands on one forefoot.

