

Dressage Show Announcer

Functions

The announcer at a dressage show serves multiple functions. The announcer is the audio glue, which holds the show together. The announcer is a central voice which many participants and spectators rely on to know what is coming up next at the show.

Duties

To the show audience the announcer says over the PA system: What rider is in the ring, what horse they are riding and what test they are riding. (This is best done as the rider is warming up for their test.)

Example A:

Announcer would say: “Riding Training Level Test Four is Linda Farmington, entry 56, riding Dancers Tango.”

What rider is in next and who is next after the following rider (this is usually termed On deck - meaning next in line to ride, and In The Hole - meaning second in line)

Example B:

Announcer would say: “On deck is Entry 40 and In the Hole is Entry 11.”

Announcement protocol:

Who sponsored the class if applicable (this can usually be found in the program)

Who the judge(s) and technical delegate(s) are (can be found in the program)

The scores and rankings in the prior classes (furnished by show management)

Who sponsored the show (this can be found in the front of the show program and in the ads in the program)

For show management the announcer says over the PA system:

Makes special requests (move car/truck)

Calls for specific requests (EMC, Farrier, TD, Show Manager)

The announcer communicates with the gate stewards over walkie/talkies:

The gate stewards tell the announcer who is going into the ring. At times the announcer will ask the gate steward who is in the ring

The gate stewards are the eyes for the announcer

In a multiple ring show the announcer must keep track of each ring, usually through the gate steward (the announcer cannot always see all show rings.) At the beginning of each shift for the gate steward, the announcer should let gate people know how they would like to be informed of who is in the ring. The most efficient way is to request that the gate person inform the announcer when the rider goes into the ring only (not going out which causes too much cross talk on the walk-talkie at busy shows.)

Example C:

Gate person speaking “Terrace Arena gate, Rider 34 is entering.”

This message enables the announcer to understand who is warming up to start their test. At this point the announcer should introduce this rider over the PA system (as shown in the first example.

Special style rules for dressage show announcing

A Dressage show is a refined event, which takes an enormous amount of concentration on the part of both horse and rider, therefore it is suggested that the announcer try to not announce when a rider is riding a test. This is not always possible at all shows, but it is preferable when possible.

Speaking Style: Think smooth jazz radio station: quiet, calm and dignified. In keeping with the refined and dignified sport we call dressage the announcer should speak clearly, calmly and in a tone suitable for the most professional occasions.

How many times an announcer announces whom the sponsors/advertisers and the show dignitaries is a judgment call. As a rule of thumb they should be announced once per hour. If the show is large and has many sponsors/advertisers the announcer should rotate the announcements throughout the day. It is a mistake not to acknowledge the sponsors/advertisers, as this is a large part of the reason they sponsored the event: for the advertising!

Announcers and Freestyle Classes

Sometimes the announcer must work with the rider to make sure their music starts on cue and the sound level is correct for their ride. It is the responsibility of show management to communicate this to the rider. It is the responsibility of the rider to make sure the announcer has their music (tape or DVD) and has tested the sound level before the ride.

Depending on the facility the announcer needs to find out how much they have to do to help start and stop the music for the rider.

Half Time Shows and Demonstrations

At some shows there are special demonstrations. These are handled much the same as the Freestyle classes. The demonstration coordinators should get their music and copy to be read to the announcer with clear instructions as well as meet with the announcer to make sure all is understood.

Care of Facility Equipment

The announcer is given audio equipment at the beginning of the shift.

This equipment should be returned to the person taking the next shift or the show/facility manager after use.

Attributes and Skills Needed

The dressage show announcer needs a strong clear speaking voice with good grammar. This position requires someone who is not timid about

speaking in front of a crowd. The announcer must think on their feet, be flexible and resourceful. There is also a great deal of tact and diplomacy needed in this position as sensitive issues sometimes must be communicated over the PA speaker. The announcer helps to set a dignified and serene tone for the show therefore an understanding of voice inflection to create this ambiance is desired.