



Alberta Dressage Association  
Alberta Youth Dressage Development Program



Administered by the  
Alberta Junior Young Riders



# Alberta Youth Dressage Development Program (AYDDP)

January 2021

Draft

## The Purpose

The purpose of the AYDDP is to encourage youth to participate in dressage throughout their lives by introducing younger riders to dressage, providing dressage educational opportunities for older youth, and by fostering a sense of community. Not all young riders are going to become international athletes but by providing good learning experiences young riders may continue to stay involved in dressage by becoming coaches, officials, volunteers or continuing to ride as adult amateurs.

All Alberta Dressage Association (ADA) chapters have a vested interest in ensuring youth are attracted to dressage; therefore, it is felt that the AYDDP fits best with the ADA. The program will be administered by the Alberta Junior Young Riders (AJYR) on behalf of the ADA.

## The program has 3 components:

- A. Division 1 aimed at youth from 6-13 years.
- B. Division 2 aimed at youth from 14-25-years.
- C. On-line education and social interaction.

This program is based on the EC Long-Term Equine Development (LTED). A summary of the LTED is provided in Appendix 1.

## A. Alberta Youth Dressage Development Program - Division 1

The targeted group of riders for Division 1 is 6 to 13 years of age. Older youth will be considered depending on their experience in equine sports. To stay connected to as many youths as possible, riders will automatically become members of the AJYR.

Division 1 focuses on the following stages of the LTED (a summary of the LTED is contained in Appendix 1):

- FUNDamentals
- Learn to Train
- Train to Train

The goal of Division 1 is to offer youth an opportunity to experience how much fun dressage can be. They will enjoy hands-on camps where they will be introduced to the sport of dressage through a combination of practical experience, theory, and dressage crafts. By providing fun educational opportunities to young riders and their parents we aim to encourage youth to consider dressage as their equine area of specialization as they get older.

### Example Clinic Itinerary

A potential format for the dressage camps could be as follows.

Friday Evening

- Welcome
- Dressage Demonstration (could be video)
- Icebreaker

Saturday for a one-day camp and Saturday and Sunday for a two-day camp

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- The format will either be semi-private or private lessons based on the number of interested participants and the preference of the clinician.
- dressage activities/lunch

The dressage activities would support the skill development outlined in the LTED and be tailored to the participants. Ideas include but limited to:

- What is dressage?
- Where did dressage originate?
- How dressage can improve your jumping.
- How dressage can improve your safety on the trail.
- Crafts for younger youth with an equine/dressage focus.

Note: AHS Covid guidelines may dictate the format that the camps take.

#### Clinicians

Head Instructor: Will change from year to year and camp to camp.

Youth Ambassador(s): A youth member(s) from the local ADA chapter to assist the head instructor.

#### Location of the Pilot

To make the clinic as accessible as possible, Dressage camps would be hosted in different areas of the province. The aim of the Division 1 program is to reach younger riders to expose them to dressage. Therefore, Dressage Camps could be held in dressage barns, jumper barns, barns specializing in riding lessons/camps without any discipline, 4-H Clubs, Pony Clubs, riding programs designed for youth with disabilities, etc.

## **B. Alberta Youth Dressage Development Program – Division 2**

The targeted group of riders for the Alberta Youth Dressage Development Program (AYDDP) is 14 to 25 years of age. Younger riders will be considered if they show a strong interest in dressage. To stay connected to as many youths as possible, riders will automatically become members of the AJYR.

The lower age limit was selected because 14 is the age that the EC LTED program recommends that young riders start to select one equestrian sport to specialize in. It is also the lower end of the FEI Junior category. Up until this age the LTED recommends that equestrian activities focus on general riding/horsemanship skills, having fun and exposure to many of the various equestrian sports. The upper age limit was selected to correspond to the FEI U25 upper age limit.

The AYDDP Division 2 focuses on the following stages of the LTED:

- Learn to Compete
- Train to Compete
- Learn to Win
- Train to Win/Active for Life

The Division 2 program aims to augment the riders regular training program in these stages with specialized training instruction that meets the criteria of the coaching level recommended by the LTED. The goal is to host a spring and fall clinic with a top Canadian clinician. Having two clinics with the same clinician would allow the riders to have follow up on areas identified for advancing the riders ability or strength of the horse. New Canadian clinicians will be considered each year.

Each clinic will also have a lecture component that supports other aspects of the development recommended in the LTED stages.

#### Example Clinic Itinerary

Friday evening – riders are introduced to the clinician. Groups of 2 or 3 ride in front of the clinician so the clinician can assess where they are at prior to the private lessons on Saturday and Sunday. The Friday evening may or may not be possible depending on the funding the pilot receives.

Saturday/Sunday – Each rider receives a 45-minute private lesson. The organizers will strive to have each rider videoed so that they can use the video as a reference.

Saturday evening – Lectures (open to riders, parents, and rider coaches)

- Lecture 1 – Clinician provides a lecture on their training philosophy.
- Lecture 2 – TBD but will generally support the LTED. Ideas include, but are not limited to:
  - how to select a coach,
  - coach certification – why it matters,
  - what is a training plan and why do you need one?
  - off horse physical fitness,
  - mental preparedness for competition
  - conformation of a top equine dressage athlete
  - the judge's perspective

#### Clinicians

New high performance Canadian clinicians will be considered each year.

#### Location

A location will be selected that optimizes the ability of youth from around the province to participate.

### **C. On-line education and social interaction**

Utilize the AJYR website (part of the ADA website), Facebook & Instagram accounts, YouTube, and on-line meeting programs to connect youth in Alberta, provide notice of educational opportunities and deliver educational material that supports the LTED.

Appendix 1

Stage	Active Start	Fundamentals	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Learn to Compete	Train to Compete	Learn to Win	Train to Win	Active for Life
Chronological age Years in Equine Cumulative Years	0-6 years	6-9 years 0-3 years 2+ years	8-12 years 1-4 years 3+ years	11-15 years 2-4 years 4+ years	14-18 years 2-4 years 5+ years	16-21 years 2-4 years 6+ years	19-25 years 4+ years 8+ years	23 years plus 4+ years 10+ years	Enter at any age Ongoing Ongoing
<b>Disciplines</b>									
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Riding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Para-Dressage</li> <li>Dressage</li> <li>Reining</li> <li>Jumping</li> <li>Eventing</li> <li>Endurance</li> </ul> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Vaulting</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Driving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving</li> <li>Para-Driving</li> </ul> </div> </div>									
<b>Equine Sport</b>									
<b>Skill Development</b>									
Develop basic movement skills, with exposure to equine environment. Little to no riding.	Horse familiarization. Horse and barn safety. Introduction to riding, with exposure to English, Western, Vaulting and Driving.	Develop foundation riding skills in multiple disciplines. Introduction to fun, local, competitions. Encourage participation in other sports.	Focus on 2 disciplines (complementary). Develop physical capacity of equestrian. Continued skill improvement, and understanding of horse behaviour.	Select primary discipline and develop competition skills. Greater emphasis on physical and psychological preparation and horse management.	Develop ability to ride multiple horses at competitive level. Greater responsibility for horse preparation for competition. Manage travel and environment.	Ability to ride multiple horses in competition on demand and under pressure. International travel with horses. World class riding skills, readiness and support team.	Ability to peak for major competitions. World leading riding skills, supported by exceptional fitness, psychological readiness and support team.	To meet the personal riding, health, fitness and social needs of the participants.	
<b>Programs</b>									
Horse Day and First Involvement	Rider 1-2, Petit Trot	Rider 3-4	Rider 5-6	Rider 7-8, and P-TSO AD Program	Rider 9-10, and P-TSO AD Program	NSO AD Program. To be developed	NSO AD Program.	All levels of riding/vaulting & driving	
<b>Instruction/Coaching</b>									
Instructor	Instructor		Competition Coach		Competition Specialist		HP 1 Coach	Athlete choice	
<b>Training per week</b>									
30-60 min.	Up to 100 min.	2 guided sessions	3 guided sessions	3-5 guided sessions	3-5 guided sessions	30-90 min/day	30-90 min/day	Athlete choice	
<b>Competition</b>									
InHouse/Fun days	InHouse - P-TSO		P-TSO/NSO	JR, YR/NSO	YR/Start International	PanAM	FEI	Athlete choice	
<b>Training to Competition Ratio</b>									
	90/10%		80/20%	70/30%	60/40%	60/40%	60/40%	Athlete choice	
<b>Equestrian Canada Athletes</b>									
							Long-List Athletes	Short List Athletes	

