

**Deep South Dressage and Combined Training Association
2024 By-Laws**

(Approved by General Membership, Nov. 2024)

The name of the organization shall be DEEP SOUTH DRESSAGE AND COMBINED TRAINING ASSOCIATION, INC., (DSDCTA) a non-profit organization.

Purpose

The purpose of the Deep South Dressage and Combined Training Association, Inc. shall be to promote dressage, combined training, western dressage and the education of its membership. Dressage is the gradual, harmonious development of the horse's physical and mental condition with the aim to improve its natural gaits and develop a perfect understanding with its rider. Combined training, the complete test of the horse and rider, tests both horse and rider in dressage, cross-country (endurance) and stadium jumping. The cross-country test, originally the measure of the horse as a military courier, follows a prescribed course over natural obstacles within a specified time. To test the horse's ability to continue following previous demands on his endurance, the stadium test requires obedience, accuracy, and frequent changes of direction over a course of show jumping fences. The Western Dressage Association® of America ("WDAA") training discipline is a melding of Classical Dressage training methods and Western Horsemanship. It is the art of riding and training a horse in a manner that develops obedience, flexibility, and balance.

Mission Statement

The program of the association shall be educational and shall be designed primarily to offer a framework in which individuals can progress with the schooling of themselves and their horses. Activities shall be directed towards a better understanding of dressage, western dressage and/or combined training.

Article I – Membership

There shall be five (five) classes of membership: Supporting, Life, Honorary, At – Large and Junior Members. These members shall be classified as follows:

- a. Supporting Members shall consist of all persons actively interested in the purpose of the association as described in this constitution, and who have paid annual dues and assessment. Supporting Members shall receive United States Dressage Federation (USDF) Group Membership and such member benefits as the board members deem necessary from time to time, and are voting members.
- b. Life Members are Supporting Members with full voting rights who at one time contributed \$700 or more to the Association. Such individuals shall be waived dues or assessments after the contribution is made. DSDCTA, a Group Member Organization (GMO) within USDF, will provide the USDF membership fee yearly.
- c. Honorary Members shall consist of all persons whose contributions to the purpose, aims

and goals of dressage and/or combined training are deemed worthy of membership. The names of the prospective honorary members shall be submitted to the Board of Directors. Such designation may be granted by the unanimous vote of the Board of Directors and are not voting members, and are not entitled to USDF, USEF privileges.

- d. At – Large Members (ALM) shall pay dues directly to the association, have full voting rights, receive USDF Group Membership and such other benefits as the Board of Directors deems necessary from time to time.
- e. Junior Members are those 18 years old and younger. These members are eligible for all benefits of a Supporting Membership in DSDCTA, USDF and as the Board of Directors deems necessary from time to time, but are not allowed to vote.

Article II – Annual Dues

Section 1 Dues become payable November 1st of each year and membership will be dropped when dues are not paid by January 1st of the new year.

Section 2 Eligibility to participate in the Association sponsored activities, all dues must be current.

Section 3 If a new member joins the Association after September 1st, dues for the remainder of the year shall be waived and the dues shall apply for the forthcoming year. USDF Membership shall become effective after December 1st of the year to which the dues apply. (Members scores are only eligible after the date your dues are submitted.)

Article III – Voting

Section 1 All Supporting, At-Large, and Life-Time Members in good standing shall be entitled to one vote each.

Section 2 Any and all voting may be either by mail ballot, email ballot, telecom or participation at a Board Meeting, General Membership or Annual Membership Meeting. Method will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors (except as provided in Section 3). Voting by proxy is allowed but must be sent to the DSDCTA Board Secretary.

Section 3 Election of the DSDCTA Board of Directors and voting for proposed changes of the By-Laws, shall be by electronic email ballot, mail ballot or in person at a General Membership or Annual Membership Meeting. To reduce the time and cost, electronic ballot is preferred, however, mail ballots will be sent to any member upon request.

Section 4 Each member of the Board of Directors has one vote as do all Supporting Members (including Life-Time and At-Large) in good standing. Each Chapter Representative has one vote.

Section 5 A quorum for the Annual Membership and General Membership Meetings shall be 50% of the members present plus one (50% + 1).

Section 6 Only DSDCTA members in good standing, who are over 18 years of age, shall be eligible to hold an Officer's position.

Article IV – Officers, Directors and Representatives

Section 1 The Board of Directors of DSDCTA shall consist of four (4) executive officers. The President, Vice President, Secretary (Recording/Corresponding) and Treasurer and should be elected by the General Membership every two years.

Section 2 All Chapter Presidents will be members of the DSDCTA Board of Directors.

Section 3 Two (2) additional Representatives, selected by each Chapter President, will be members of the DSDCTA Board of Directors and each have one (1) vote. These representatives will remain on the DSDCTA Board of Directors until the Chapter President selects new Representatives.

Section 4 In case of a Board of Directors officer's resignation or other vacancy of officers, the Board of Directors will appoint an officer to fill the un-expired term.

Section 5 Disciplinary Action If the conduct of any member shall appear to be in willful violation of these By-Laws or the rules (Policies and Procedures) of DSDCTA or prejudicial to DSDCTA's interests, the DSDCTA Board of Directors may, by affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the entire DSDCTA board, suspend or expel such member. Before taking such action, a written copy of the charges must be served upon the member and an opportunity given to be heard in their defense before the Board. Any member so expelled, and during such suspension, shall be refused admittance to all DSDCTA meetings. At the Board's discretion, expelled or suspended members may petition the Board to be reinstated as a member in good standing. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Board is required to return an expelled or suspended member to the status of a member in good standing.

Section 6 Removal, Suspension and Expulsion of DSDCTA Officer Any member may be removed from Office, suspended or expelled from active participation in DSDCTA for just cause as determined by the prevailing standards and rules of DSDCTA, the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF), the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) and/or the United States Dressage Federation (USDF). Suspension or expulsion of a member will be determined by a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3rds) of the DSDCTA Board of Directors.

Section 7 Removal of DSDCTA Director Any Director may be removed with cause only after reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard before the DSDCTA Board.

Article V – Duties of DSDCTA Officers, Directors, Representatives

Section 1 President:

- a. The President shall be the chief executive officer of DSDCTA and the DSDCTA Board of Directors and shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors, General

Membership meetings, Annual Membership Meeting and any special meetings of the members in accordance with Robert's Rules of Orders latest edition.

- b. The president will be charged with the general supervision and management of the business and affairs of the Association, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.
- c. The President shall be a member ex-officio of all committees except the nominating committee.
- d. The President, with the approval of the Board, will appoint all committees.
- e. The signature of the President shall be registered with the Bank(s) through which the Club's financial accounts are handled.
- f. The President shall be made aware with the Treasurer, on payments of checks that are above \$300 for all functions, activities, invoices, contracts and/or other instruments which the Board of Directors has authorized to be executed.
- g. The President shall call meetings of the Board of Directors as may be necessary to conduct business of the Association.
- h. The President shall call meetings of the Membership as the President or board deem necessary.
- i. The President, except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws, shall have the right to make motions and to vote on any and all Association matters and shall not be precluded from making motions or from voting based merely on his or her position as President.
- j. Any written, electronic, or other communications to be sent out by DSDCTA or under DSDCTA's name shall be approved by the President or his/her designee prior to sending.

Section 2 Vice-President:

- a. The Vice-President in the absence of the President, shall exercise all of the functions and be vested with all of the powers and restriction of the President.
- b. The Vice-President shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the President or by the Board of Directors.

Section 3 The Corresponding/Recording Secretary:

- a. Attend to all correspondence of the Association.
- b. Read orally communications at the meetings of the Board of Directors.
- c. Maintain permanent files of the Association.
- d. Notify all Board Members of meeting dates, lectures, etc.
- e. Attend to other matters pertaining to meeting procedures as directed by the President.
- f. Prepare and mail ballots for election of officers, amendments to the By-Laws and other ballots designated by the Board of Directors.
- g. Receive and secure Proxy votes for Nominating Committee or Board.
- h. Shall take minutes of each meeting of the Association and Board of Directors, to include attendance.

- i. Shall be responsible for furnishing each member of the Board with a draft of the minutes as promptly as practicable after the meeting.

Section 4 The Treasurer:

- a. Handle funds received and disbursed by the Association and Board of Directors.
- b. Issue receipts for monies paid into the Association and keep a record of all receipts and disbursements.
- c. Maintain a complete record of all business transactions.
- d. Be prepared to report on the financial status of the Association at all times.
- e. Keep an accounting book belonging to the Association.
- f. Receive money obtained by the Association
- g. Promptly deposit all monies and other valuable effects in the name of the Association into such depositories as the Board may designate.
- h. Act as a signature authority on all DSDCTA accounts.
- i. Be responsible for presenting an annual financial statement from the previous year and a proposed budget for the upcoming year to the membership at the Annual Membership Meeting.
- j. Obtain budgets from/for DSDCTA horse shows and committees.
- k. Collect 10% of the profits from all DSDCTA Chapters' events, shows, clinics, etc.
- l. Keep the checkbook register up-to-date by entering all deposits and payments, and categorizing all transactions for reports
- m. Maintain a file of invoices paid along with any other backup information submitted with invoice.
- n. Balance the checkbook monthly and email the President and Board a copy of the year-to-date checkbook register, and a breakdown of income/expenditures.
- o. Perform additional duties as assigned by the President or Board of Directors.
- p. After the Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Banquet there will be a review of the financial accounting for the year which will be comprised of three (3) Board Members, appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors, one of the members being the Treasurer.
- q. There shall not be any movement of funds between accounts or financial institutions without the prior approval of the DSDCTA Board of Directors with a quorum. There will be a 48 hour turn around for approval.

Section 5 Each officer, at the expiration of his/her term of office (or in case of resignation, suspension or removal) shall transfer all records to the succeeding officer in a timely fashion of 7 to 10 days.

Section 6 Immediate Past President will have the following duties to advise the current President in order to provide continuity, help as needed with Association activities (banquets, shows, clinics, etc.) and will participate in Board Meetings.

Section 7 Each member of the Board of Directors, which consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, All Chapter Presidents and two (2) Chapter Representatives, are required to attend the Board of Directors Meetings, may serve as the chairman of a committee if and when appointed and shall be sensitive to the thoughts and wishes of the Association membership. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to conduct all business of the Association between meetings of the membership. The Board of Directors shall expend those funds deemed necessary to carry on the activities of the Association. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be called when deemed necessary by the President. Fifty percent plus one of the total number of Board members shall constitute a quorum. The Board of Directors should meet no less than four (4) times a year including the Board Meeting after or before the Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Banquet. Each Board Member may send a written proxy vote to the DSDCTA Secretary containing authorization to vote in the event they are unable to attend a Board of Directors Meeting. The proxy letter must identify the Board Member that will be voting on their behalf. Any Board Member who is absent from all meetings for one (1) calendar year without valid cause will be automatically terminated from the Board. Attendance shall be recorded/noted in the minutes of each Board meeting by the Secretary. Proxy votes shall not be used for the purpose of meeting this requirement.

Article VI – Election of Officers

Section 1 Every two (2) years, prior to the Annual Awards Banquet all officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) shall be elected to the Board of Directors by the General Membership. They shall be elected to serve for a two (2) year term. The installations of new officers shall take place during the Awards Banquet and Annual Membership Meeting.

Section 2 A ballot vote will be sent out to the General Membership in November every two (2) years for election of DSDCTA Officers.

Section 3 In case of a resignation or other vacancy among officers, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Member in good standing, who is over 18 years of age, to fill the vacancy and complete the term of office.

Section 4 Nominating Process

- a. The President shall appoint a nominating committee in May. The nominating committee shall consist of four (4) members, two (2) of which will be Board of Directors members.
- b. The general membership shall have until July 15 to submit to the Board Secretary any suggestions for the new slate of Officers.
- c. The nominating committee shall select a slate of Officers as nominees to fill the four (4) Officer vacancies and they shall be delivered to the Secretary and prepared for email/mail ballot; said ballot to be emailed/mailed by August 15.

- d. The Board Secretary shall prepare a ballot of nominees for election to the Officers. Such ballots shall be presented, by email/mail to all members in good standing no less than fifteen (15) days prior to the last date on which such ballots must be returned (September 15). These ballots shall be the only official campaign material to be recognized by the Association. It will be the individual Chapters' responsibility to determine their members voting preference (i.e. email ballot, mail ballot) and inform the Board Secretary.
- e. A Committee of three (3) Supporting Members in good standing, not connected with the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the President to oversee the ballots cast.
- f. The Board Secretary shall receive the ballots by mail, or email. Ballots shall remain sealed. All email ballots agree to waive privacy.
- g. The day after the closing date of the election or at the Annual Membership Meeting, the committee shall, in the witness of each other, open and count the ballots. The tally of the ballots shall be the official election results.
- h. The paper ballots and printed email ballots shall be sealed in an envelope. The outside of the envelope shall carry the date of the official results of the election, as well as the signatures of the committee members, and witnesses. The envelope shall be returned to the Board Secretary to be filed.
- i. Any ballot received after the closing date shall be discarded.
- j. The four (4) nominees receiving the largest number of votes for their prospective position shall be the newly elected Officers.
- k. In case of a tie there will be a run-off election.

Article VII – Meetings

Section 1 The President shall call the Annual Membership Meeting of the active membership in August of each year, at which time the annual reports from the President, Secretary and Treasurer, and all committees shall be presented. Membership shall be notified at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Membership Meeting by mail, email, or such means as the Board of Directors deems appropriate. Championship Awards shall be presented within the first quarter of the calendar year. The President shall call a General Membership Meeting with prior notification of thirty (30) days.

Section 2 The President may call a business meeting of the Board of Directors with fourteen (14) days' notice or a business meeting of the Association with thirty (30) days' notice. Chapters or Supporting Members may request or be invited to come before the Board to present problems or suggestions to the Board. Chapter Presidents and their Representatives will be notified of the Board Meeting. Board votes on general GMO business requires a quorum of 50% plus 1 of the total number of Board Members, while disciplinary actions require two thirds of the Board.

Article VIII – Committees

Section 1 There shall be such standing and temporary committees as are deemed necessary to carry on the work of the Association.

Section 2 The President shall appoint committee chairman, with approval of the Board.

Section 3 A Committee Chair must be in good standing, over 18 years of age, unless it's a Junior Committee.

Section 4 Committee Chairs may be appointed from the General Membership as long as they are in good standing.

Section 5 Committee Chairs can attend DSDCTA Board of Directors meetings, but do not have voting privileges, unless also Board Members.

Article IX - Local Chapters

Section 1 The purpose of a local chapter is to sponsor or increase dressage and combined training activities in the local areas and to encourage a larger membership both in the chapter and thereby DSDCTA.

Section 2 Each chapter shall have a President who will be elected by the local chapter with a simple majority vote. Duties of the Chapter President shall be to encourage and organize, at the local level, activities which are educational for members interested in improving their riding abilities and their horses. The Chapter President shall also be responsible for reporting to the Association Secretary the details of all chapter activities. The Chapter President shall be a voting member of the DSDCTA Board of Directors.

Section 3 Local chapters shall keep their finances separate from the Association account. The local chapter will have their own officers comprised of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 4 Organizing a Chapter

a. When organizing a chapter of DSDCTA, the interested person(s) must first become Supporting Members of DSDCTA. Subsequently, a written request to organize a chapter shall be sent to the DSDCTA President. The President shall poll the Board Members by mail/email for a positive or negative vote. The President shall welcome the new chapter if the Board response is positive. If negative, a Board Meeting must be called.

b. To comply with the DSDCTA Charter, which is registered with the STATE of Florida, all chapters MUST include DSDCTA in their name and advertising. Example: "Gulf Coast Chapter of DSDCTA" (Not "Gulf Coast Dressage Association"). All advertising, printed material (programs, prize lists), articles for magazines, chapter show lists, etc. MUST have the DSDCTA initials or full name included.

c. Each chapter will strive to carry out the goals of DSDCTA on the local level and to encourage and promote dressage and combined training. Each chapter will have a TEMPO correspondent who will send the chapter's news and articles every three (3) months to the TEMPO editor.

d. For new members joining a Chapter, the treasurer shall receive the DSDCTA dues and chapter dues. Chapter treasurer will send the chapter member's name, address, telephone numbers, email address, as well as DSDCTA dues to the DSDCTA Membership Chairman. Upon receipt of the dues and information to the DSDCTA Membership Chairman, the Chapter's new member's information will be forwarded to USDF and added to the DSDCTA Membership roster.

e. Each Chapter's President shall serve on the DSDCTA Board of Directors as a voting member during their term of office.

f. Each Chapter will have Two (2) Representatives as voting members to the Board. Chapter shall hold at least four (4) meetings, clinics, shows, lectures, learner judges' sessions or any other gathering whereby the promotion of dressage and/or combined training is achieved.

Section 5 Local Chapters, which choose to establish By-Laws, must place on file with the Association a copy of those By-Laws, which must not conflict with the By-Laws of the Association.

Section 6 All chapter members must be DSDCTA members.

Section 7 Any chapter desiring to change their original name must submit the change to the DSDCTA Board of Directors for approval.

Section 8 Termination of a Chapter – If at any time a chapter dissolves, any funds remaining in the chapter treasury shall be returned to the Association treasury for the Board of Directors to distribute to the organization having purpose, goals and aims consistent with the intention of the Association.

Article X – Amendments

Amendments to the By-Laws shall be recommended by the Board of Directors and shall be voted on by mail ballot, email or in person at the Annual Membership Meeting, or/and General Membership Meeting of the Supporting Membership. A simple majority (50% + 1) of the DSDCTA membership is required to pass Amendments.

Article XI – Membership Initiative

Section 1 When ten (10) percent of the Supporting Members indicate by written request to the Board of Directors that any action be taken, or any action being taken be discontinued, the Board of Directors shall submit such request to the Supporting membership by mail ballot or email. Such mail or email ballot shall be mailed no less than fifteen (15) days prior to the last date on which such ballots must be returned.

Section 2 If ballots are returned by at least thirty-five percent (35%) of the Supporting Members, and if a majority of the ballots returned declare approval of such a request, then the Board of Directors shall fulfill the request.

Article XII – Dissolution

If at any time the Association dissolves, any funds remaining in the treasury shall be distributed to such organizations as the Board of Directors shall designate, providing such organizations have purposes, goals and aims consistent with the expressed intention of the Association.

Article XIII – Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order Revised and most recent edition shall govern the Board of Directors meetings and Membership Meetings, when not in conflict with these By-Laws.

Article XIV – Liability

Indemnification - No member, director, officer, employee, or agent of DSDCTA shall be personally liable for the debts or liabilities or expenses (including judgments, fines, penalties and reasonable attorney's fees) provided the Board of Directors determines that such person was acting in good faith within what he/she reasonably believed to be the scope of his/her employment or authority and for a purpose which he/she reasonably believed to be in the best interest of DSDCTA or its members.

Article XV

The Board of Directors has full power and authority to interpret these By-Laws and any Standing Rules (Policy and Procedures) and its decision on all such questions shall be final, binding and conclusive.