

A GUIDE TO PRESENTATION DRESS FOR DRIVER AND GROOM:

PLEASE NOTE: From 2022 it is compulsory for both driver and groom to wear a securely fastened hard hat for the cones phase. At Club events, where you will go straight to cones from dressage, it is more practical to also wear your hard hats for the dressage phase too, to save time between the two. You will **NOT** be marked down for wearing a hard hat in the dressage phase.

The NEDTL has elected to follow national guidelines regarding standing presentation. Introductory and novice drivers will now have a harness safety check before their dressage and be given a presentation mark on the move incorporated with their dressage mark.

Judges will be encouraged to use the full range of marks available to them from 1 to 10 when marking presentation, so it will still be very important – if not more so – that care is taken to achieve the best possible mark available. If your nearest rival achieves a 10 for presentation and you only achieve a 3, this could put you at a great disadvantage in the first phase of the event!

Jill Holah, who can be considered an expert on this phase, had this to say:

"Presentation will always be a difficult issue and the dress of the driver is very subjective. However, it's important to remember that the turnout is judged **AS A WHOLE** and everything should be appropriate for the level of the vehicle. Therefore, a 'flashy' hat with a marathon vehicle will certainly not gain any extra marks and may indeed spoil the overall uniform appearance of the turnout. Grooms need to be dressed to blend in with the turnout and drivers should remember that often the more 'mature' groom can look very smart in beige trousers and tweed jacket ('stable dress'). I feel that a shirt and tie, rather than a stock, is better for a groom with a single and pair. Hair should always be neatly contained beneath a hat for both groom and driver. Button holes should not be worn and jewellery should be subtle to the point of being almost invisible!"

To plait or not to plait? As a general rule of thumb, if your horse is a native type with feather, you do not need to plait but manes should be neat and tidy and lay flat. A plaited mane is normally seen with heels that are clipped or trimmed, however, a neatly pulled mane is acceptable. Tails are not plaited for driving.

Harness must be clean, polished where possible and correctly fitting.

So, this pictorial guide is intended to give some examples of suitable dress for driver and groom in the dressage and cones phase of the competition.

Black and Red:



(Above) This is a presentation carriage, being used at a National event. The points to notice here are that there is a fine red coach line in the paintwork, which is picked up by the driver's apron, hat and neckwear, and echoed by the groom's tie. If you chose an all over dark colour, it's a good idea to highlight it with something bright. This pulls the whole turnout together giving a very smart appearance. You do not need lamps on your vehicle at a club event or as a novice at a National event and will not be marked down without them. Apron, gloves and whip are required however and gloves – for driver and groom - should be brown.



Country Colours:

This is a lovely outfit, where the short fitted jacket is worn outside and over the top of the apron. You can just see that the groom's hat matches the velvet collar of the jacket and picks up the green shade in the check. The hat has a small brim (small brims are advisable, particularly on a windy day!) and the feather detailing matches the rustic colours of the outfit. The jacket fastens quite high up and the neck is covered with a smart and stylish stock – a gaping jacket and an open neck are not considered desirable



This gentleman driver is wearing a smart camel-coloured jacket and matching hat, which is slightly less formal than a suit and bowler. The jacket is tucked inside the apron. (His is driving a small pony with no groom on board)



Muted colours, bright highlights:

This is another very smart outfit, in subtle colours, picked out with a vibrant green, echoed in the apron, hat and neckwear. A very modern hat with an asymmetric crown and again a small brim. The driver is using a three phase vehicle. The groom (not in shot here) will wear a matching green tie with a suit, white shirt and bowler hat.

Hard hats:



This is very workmanlike and tidy dress, perfectly suitable for a three phase or marathon carriage. A light coloured apron lifts the otherwise dark outfit and a hard hat is quite acceptable, provided it is clean and tidy (not something dragged out of the tackroom with a cover of faded velvet and out of which you've had to evict a family of mice!)

Remember, hard hats are compulsory for driver and groom in the cones phase at all events.

Wet weather gear.

Don't forget that there may come a time when it's raining for dressage and cones (!) You will still be awarded a presentation mark so try to find some smart, matching, waterproof clothes for this occasion. For lady drivers, you can get some very smart waterproof hats (waxed) as a wet weather alternative so as not to spoil your best presentation hat.





This is another black and red ensemble, where the theme is all tied together with the use of red highlights. The driver's tie and apron and the grooms collar all match. Gentlemen drivers need to make sure that if their jacket doesn't fasten quite high enough up, they must secure their ties, so that there is no danger of them flapping in the breeze. The same applies to gentlemen grooms wearing a suit and bowler.

If your groom is wearing riding gear, long boots are a must – not jodhpur boots, unless your groom is a junior.

Some pitfalls:

Big brimmed hats can be a real problem, especially in windy weather. Try to avoid hats which look more appropriate to wedding wear and big feathers and veils are to be avoided. Be careful with brims which turn down, as these can obscure your view. Also, try to avoid a hat with a brim which either flops down or folds back as you trot along. Make sure your footwear is clean – it's no good having everything else ultra-smart and then driver and groom having grubby boots. Heels should be minimal. Avoid wrinkles where possible – not easy when living out of a horsebox – by hanging everything up. Try to avoid a big gap between the bottom of your trousers and your footwear – lots of flesh on show or lurid coloured socks will spoil the overall impression! Flounces and frills at the cuffs should be avoided.

Here are some other examples of smart dress for dressage and cones.



