



The American Driving Society, Inc.

Types of ADS Driving Activities & Competitions

The ADS supports many different types of driving activities, both competitive and non-competitive.

Recreational Driving includes a drive in your pasture, on a back-country road, or on a trail. Long-distance driving has a competitive component but without the “horse show” structure. The ADS sponsors annual drives at lovely venues such as the Kentucky Horse Park and offers the Hours to Drive Awards Program which requires nothing more than recording your hours on the box seat!

Pleasure Driving includes scored drives on trails and roads or in a plethora of classes held in a show ring. Classes can be divided by horse size, driver or horse experience and skill, and vehicle type. Each type of class has specific evaluation criteria and rules such as overall impression, performance, way of going, manners and neatness and correctness of turnout. Obstacle classes and dressage competitions may also be included. Include your favorite dog in the carriage with you for the ever-popular carriage dog class.

A **Combined Driving Event (CDE)** is competitive driving based on the three-day ridden event, with three different driving competitions including dressage, marathon (equitable to roads and tracks and including obstacles), and cones driving. A cumulative score determines the winners. A CDE may encompass three days of competition but shorter forms of the same type of competition are available as the Driving Trial (1-2 days), Arena Trial (1 day), Combined Test (one day, including 2 of the 3 phases of a CDE). DTs can be held all in one day or as many as three. The marathon consists of only one section -- Section B -- that has the obstacles. The expectation of obstacle quality is somewhat less and can require fewer volunteers and licensed officials. ATs are a condensed version, formatted to fit in a small arena. There are reduced-size Dressage tests available and two or more portable marathon-type obstacles are used to create a marathon experience. A reduced number of cones is used to allow proper flow and speed in the available space.

Driving Derbies are gaining in popularity and most similar to World Cup Driving popular in Europe, with a course of marathon-type obstacles combined with cones and driven at speed. Whatever type of driving you enjoy, the ADS has a structured way for you to enjoy it and share your passion for driving with others. Volunteering at an ADS driving event is a great way to learn about the different types of ADS events available, meet experienced folks who could act as mentors or just become friends to drive with.