

Equestrian

ALL-TIME EVENT MEDALS

GERMANY	23	14	14	51
USA	10	19	17	46
SWEDEN	17	9	14	40
RUSSIA	12	12	10	34



The Oregonian

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 20

2008 | 13TH OF 17

TODAY'S TV HIGHLIGHTS

2 a.m.: Men's soccer semifinal; gymnastics: various individual finals; track & field; men's diving (live), Telemundo

8:30 a.m.: Men's soccer semifinal (live), Telemundo

10 a.m.: Women's volleyball: quarterfinal; track & field qualifying; women's water polo semifinal (live), NBC

2 p.m.: Boxing: light flyweight, lightweight and heavyweight quarterfinals (taped), CNBC

6 p.m.: Gymnastics recap; synchronized swimming duet;

equestrian: individual dressage

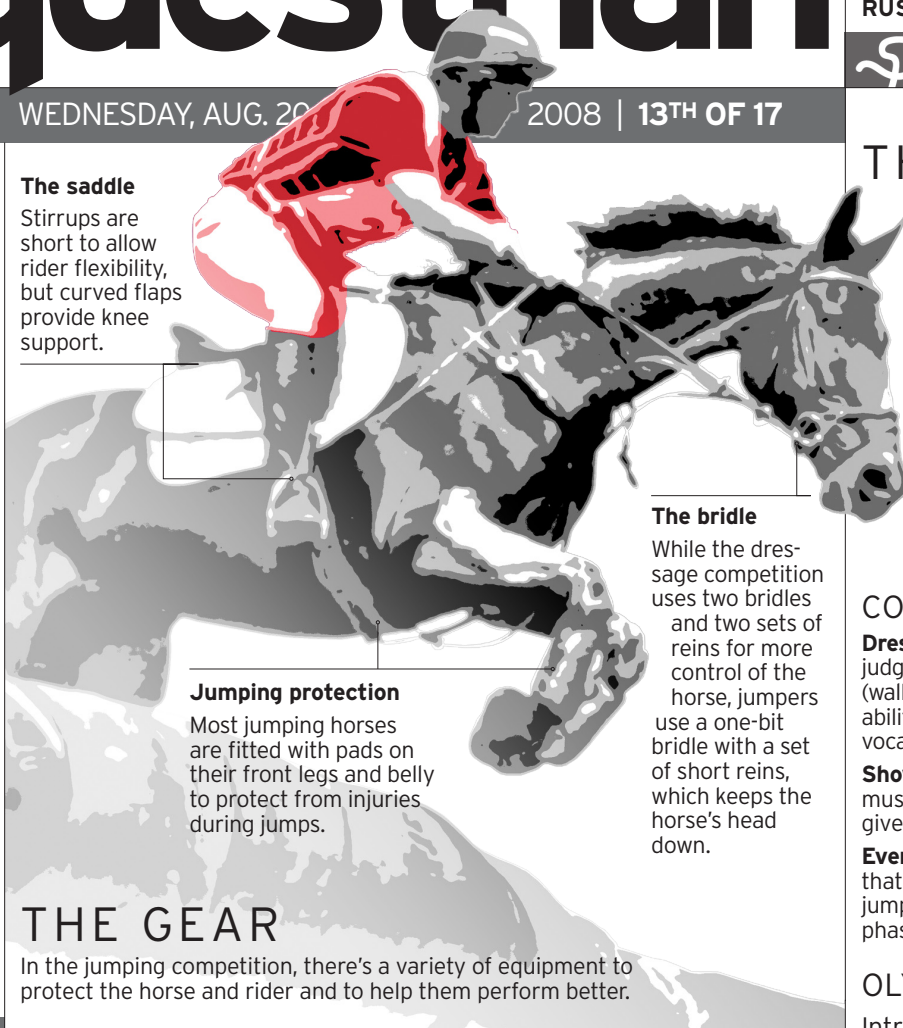
(taped), Oxygen

8 p.m.: Men's beach volleyball semifinals; gymnastics: men's individual parallel bars and high bar finals, women's balance beam final; track & field: men's 1500m final, women's 100m hurdle final; men's 3m diving final (live), NBC

11 p.m.: Men's basketball quarterfinals; flatwater canoe/kayak semifinals; women's open-water swimming gold-medal race; men's water polo semifinals (live), USA Network

The saddle

Stirrups are short to allow rider flexibility, but curved flaps provide knee support.



Jumping protection

Most jumping horses are fitted with pads on their front legs and belly to protect from injuries during jumps.

The bridle

While the dressage competition uses two bridles and two sets of reins for more control of the horse, jumpers use a one-bit bridle with a set of short reins, which keeps the horse's head down.

THE GEAR

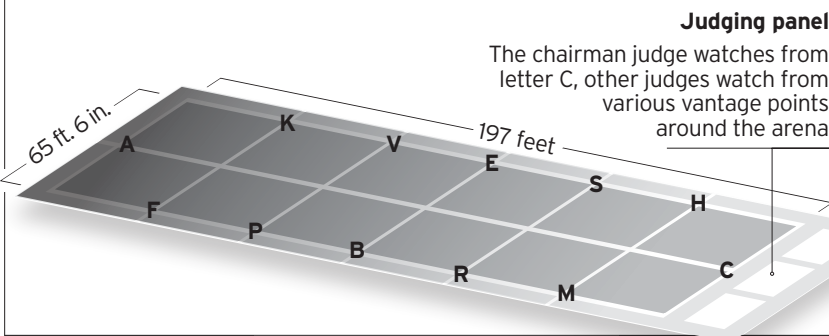
In the jumping competition, there's a variety of equipment to protect the horse and rider and to help them perform better.

THE ARENA

The individual jumping course is between 1,640 and 2,296 feet long and has 12 obstacles for the rider and horse to navigate; fences, water pits and solid-looking walls. Riders average about 15 mph through the course.

The dressage event takes place in a long arena divided into a grid of 10 squares. Letter indicators mark the boundaries of each segment where riders and horses are supposed to perform certain movements.

The origins of the letter markings are unknown.



THE OBJECT

Equestrian is a horse-riding sport in which competitors are judged on showmanship and the horses' athletic ability. There are three competitions – dressage, jumping and eventing – and each has an individual and team event which are held simultaneously.

COMPETITION FORMATS

Dressage: Horses and riders are judged on the animal's natural gaits (walk, trot and canter) and the rider's ability to control the animal without vocal commands

Show jumping: Horses and riders must clear obstacles on a course in a given amount of time

Eventing: A combined competition that includes a dressage phase, a jumping phase and a cross-country phase to test endurance

OLYMPIC DEBUT: 1900

Introduced in Paris at the turn of last century, equestrian is one of the three Olympic sports in which men and women compete together and is the only one to use an animal.

HEADGEAR

In the jumping events, riders are required to wear a helmet with a latched chin strap. But in the detail-oriented dressage competitions, competitors wear formal coats with tails and a top hat.



Dressage top hat



Jumping helmet

ONE TO WATCH

Netherland's **Anky van Grunsven**, six-time medalist in dressage

U.S. HOPEFUL

McLain Ward and **Sapphire**, helped win team show jumping gold in Athens.