

# British Dressage Judges' Quick Reference Guide.

## Introduction

**British Dressage (BD)**, the body responsible for the development and regulation of the sport of dressage in the UK, has provided this quick reference guide for use by all levels of judges. It may also be interesting for others who are interested in the sport of dressage.

It contains the basic information that all judges need to enable them to judge a dressage test competently and for experienced judges and it provides the reminders that are sometimes needed. There are also current FEI guidelines in the Appendices that will be particularly useful for senior level judges.

BD also produces the official BD Members' Handbook. The latest version can be used to provide additional information when required. Relevant sections are provided in this guide for ease of reference.



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## Section 1 Being a judge – basics every judge must know

### 1.1 What is dressage?

The word dressage comes from a French term meaning 'training'. This is described in the Federation Equestrian International (FEI) Handbook under the heading 'Object and General Principles of Dressage', (by kind permission of the FEI). The FEI Handbook provides the most detailed and comprehensive descriptions and explanations of all aspects relating to dressage and is a recommended guide for all judges.

*"The object of dressage is the development of the horse into a happy athlete through harmonious education. As a result, it makes the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the athlete."*

### 1.2 The judges' role and responsibilities

- To ensure the welfare of the horse at all times
- To judge every movement of every combination with equal attention and to the best of one's ability, allowing the final order to emerge from this process
- To reward correct training according to the Scales of Training – rhythm, suppleness, contact, impulsion, straightness, collection
- To always be respectful of the time, effort and commitment of every competitor, remembering that the judge's role is to assess their training and to suggest what needs further development to improve their performance and results
- To communicate the reasons for the marks given to the rider in as clear, succinct and encouraging way as possible
- To manage the class in accordance with the rules and competition timetable
- To behave in a responsible and open-minded way, upholding the values of British Dressage and the Judges' Code of Conduct to maintain respect for the role of the judge and for the sport of dressage.

### 1.3 The Judges' Code of Conduct and BD Social Media Policy

**Every Judge should make sure that they are familiar with the Judges' Code of Conduct.** It's copied here in full but also can be found in the 2020 BD Members' Handbook, Section 4, page 181.

#### Judges' Code of Conduct

Judges exercise exceptional authority, which in turn requires them to assume exceptional responsibilities. Their overall effectiveness depends, not only on their technical competence and knowledge of the rules, but also on their maturity of judgment, self-control, flexibility and basic fairness and integrity. Beyond this, all judges must be scrupulously careful to guard against any appearance or actuality of conflict of interest. In all questionable cases, it's always wiser to acknowledge a possible source of a conflict and stand aside rather than permit suspicions to gain strength.

This code of conduct applies to British Dressage judges at all times when attending or judging at competitions. It should be considered in conjunction with the current British Dressage rules.

1. Judges should act with integrity and always put the sport and the horse's welfare first.
2. Judges should be: (i) honest and open, (ii) respectful to riders at all times, (iii) objective, fair and unbiased and (iv) supportive and encouraging.
3. Judges should always conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner when acting in any official capacity.
4. When at a show or acting in any official capacity, judges should be considerate and respectful to other Judges, competitors and show officials.
5. A Judge should not conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the character of and/or which may be prejudicial to the interests of British Dressage.
6. While officiating at, or attending any British Dressage event it is inappropriate to drink alcohol or be under the influence of any medication or substance which may affect judgment or conduct.
7. Judges should not solicit organisers for invitations.
8. Opinion and comments on any of the combinations judged should be heard only by the writer and / or any person invited to sit-in i.e. someone who is shadow-judging, and shared only with the competitor in question. Care should be taken not to discuss particular tests with anyone else.
9. Judges should not disclose or discuss any details of any combinations judged on social media sites such as forums, Facebook, Twitter, or other websites.
10. Judges should be discreet and loyal to fellow Judges at all times.
11. Judges must observe the Judging Conflict of Interest rule - BD Handbook 2020, Section 4, page 177.
12. Conflicts of interest are not permitted at Regional/Winter/Summer Championships unless an exemption is granted in an exceptional circumstance.
13. Judges should be aware of the BD Safeguarding Policy and should not engage with individuals under the age of 18 years without an appropriate adult present. BD Handbook 2020, page 41.

**British Dressage Social Media Policy** Every Judge should make sure that they are familiar with this policy - BD Handbook 2020, page 46

## 1.4 How to become a BD judge

British Dressage operates a comprehensive training and assessment scheme which enables judges to progress up the levels, from Preliminary to Grand Prix.

Coaches and riders use the knowledge they have built up to progress into a judging career. It has been said that becoming a judge helps with test riding and coaching skills as well as the general understanding of the way of going of the horse. British Dressage currently has nearly 900 judges and approximately 750 trainees.

Please note that the testing system is being completely revised during 2020, including all prerequisites and criteria. To see details of the system please [click here](#).

For more information or to talk to someone about your specific requirements, please contact the Training and Education Department on 02476 698831.

### Further info: Appendix 1

FEI objectives and principles of dressage – 2020 BD Members' Handbook page 17

## Section 2 Key judging principles - *which every judge must understand*

The Scales of Training is used as a fundamental check on the way of going for the rider when doing a movement, for the judge when marking a movement and for the trainer or spectator when looking at a movement. When there is rhythm, suppleness, contact, impulsion, straightness and in the more advanced tests collection, the way of going is good. For a detailed description, see BD Members' Handbook 2020 page 15.

### 2.1 The Scales of Training

The Scales of Training assists judges by providing a vital framework for them to assess the horse's way of going as a key element in the judging process.

The most tried and tested way of understanding and assessing the horse's way of going is the German Scales of Training. This is what the riders in the most successful dressage nation in the world learn in their early years of riding and it's what leading international judges and trainers focus on in their training and at seminars.

The Scales of Training is comprised of the following steps:

- rhythm
- suppleness
- contact
- impulsion
- straightness
- and eventually, collection

As a rule, the above steps are approached in this order but there are times when one is skipped over to work on another. In practice, no step works in isolation and the long term development of the horse requires the subtle interaction of a number of these steps with the emphasis being placed at the level at which the horse is training. Put simply, until the horse works with rhythm, it will be difficult to make him supple, and until supple, contact will be spasmodic and until the contact is consistent, impulsion will be illusive.

Also, the quality of the steps should improve and be of a higher standard as the training becomes more advanced. This means that the degree of suppleness accepted in a young, novice horse as sufficient to start working more on the contact and impulsion, will be much less than the degree of suppleness required in a horse that is advanced enough to learn flying changes.

Each step explained:

**Rhythm** in all paces should be:

- Regular i.e. correct for each pace. **Walk** - four hoof beats in a marching time. **Trot** - two hoof beats with legs moving in diagonal pairs plus a moment of suspension when all legs are off the ground. **Canter** -three hoof beats with only one diagonal pair move together and there's a moment of suspension.
- The same tempo (speed of the rhythm) and this should have a pronounced beat to it. The horse should not speed up or slow down whether he is going around a corner or on a straight line, whether he is lengthening his strides or shortening them.

**Suppleness**

- The aim is that the horse's muscles have tone and be free from resistance, joints loose and not tightening against the rider's aids. The most important muscles are those over the top line from the hind legs over the quarters, loins, in front of the wither and up to the poll. The test of whether a horse is supple and working 'through' the back and neck is that when the rein contact is eased (as in a free walk) the horse wants to stretch forward and down and not try to hollow and lift his head.
- The horse also needs to be mentally relaxed and confident. Attentive but calm and without anxiety, demonstrating trust in its partnership with the rider.

**Contact**

- The ideal contact is a light, even, elastic feel in both reins, achieved by aids from the legs and seat, not the hands. The legs are applied as a driving aid, the horse steps under more and works 'through' those muscles along his top line – over the back, neck, through the poll and the rider feels the energy thus created in the reins. When the contact is established in this way the outline and steps will be 'round' not hollow, and in the trot and canter springy not flat.
- The horse's hindquarters and forehead are connected by that band of muscles over the top line and the rider can feel this in his hands as there will be a lively forward tendency in the reins. The horse is then said to be 'connected'.

## Impulsion

- This is the contained power of the horse. It is created in the hindquarters by getting him to take more energetic steps, placing his hind legs further under his body, and it is contained by the rein contact that stops him from using up this extra energy to simply go faster. Any resistance, tightening of muscles, ligaments and joints, will block this energy getting through so he must be supple and connected to be able to build up real impulsion.
- Riders aim to create enough impulsion to develop the horse's ability and to demonstrate his athleticism but not so much that it cannot be controlled. The skill of the rider is to create as much energy as can be contained without the horse starting to pull and speed up.

## Straightness

- Horses, like humans, are born one sided and will tend to move forward with their bodies slightly curved. This crookedness can worsen if a rider sits to one side and/or keeps a stronger contact in one rein than the other. When a horse is crooked it will be more difficult for him to stay balanced and develop impulsion.
- The aim is for the hind legs to step into the tracks of the forelegs both on a straight line and on a circle, and that the rider has an even feel in his reins.

## Collection

- Dressage makes the horse a better ride, more maneuverable, more powerful and easier to control. To achieve this, his balance has to be changed as he has to adjust to carry the weight of the rider in the most efficient way. When he is first ridden he will carry most of the rider's weight on his forehead. This is cumbersome; he will tend to run faster when asked to lengthen his strides, find it difficult to stop quickly and will often lean on the rider's hands to keep his balance. Through training, the necessary muscles are built up and he is taught how to carry more and more weight on his hindquarters. This lightens his forehead, gives more freedom to move his shoulders and he becomes an easier and more athletic ride.
- Over time, the horse is asked for more and more collection so his hind legs step further forward under his body and as he does this, the weight will be transferred backwards as he will be developing the carrying power of the hindquarters.
- In Grand Prix, this collection is such a high level that the horse can trot on the spot in piaffe or turn around almost on the spot in the canter pirouette. In Pony Club and Novice tests, no collection is asked for but there are movements that start to develop the collection. These include when the horse comes into a halt or changes from lengthened strides to a working trot. As he stops or shortens his steps, he should step more under his body with his hind legs and transfer a little more of his weight onto his hindquarters, this is the beginning of collection.

## 2.2 Assessing the movements and deciding the marks

Judges have to decide on a mark and usually a comment for every movement. Concentration and quick reactions are essential. Experience and a good understanding of the scales of training and the specific requirements of each movement at the relevant level, help all judges to do this efficiently and effectively. The judge needs to be able to assess these variables in seconds, almost automatically, a real skill that requires practice.

The two main components of each mark are:

- i) **The quality of the way of going** according to the Scales of Training. Was the trot regular, the horse supple and relaxed, the contact confident and elastic, whether there was enough energy, sufficient straightness and an appropriate balance and all relevant and appropriate for the level being performed.
- ii) **The actual performance of the movement.** Was the circle correctly positioned at the right place, the right size, the correct shape.

## 2.2 Using the range of marks

The judge needs to have a clear picture in their mind as to what each mark 'looks like', this together with saying the corresponding words for a mark e.g. very good (9), fairly bad (3), sufficient (5), etc. helps the judge to use the scale consistently. Key indicators as to what each mark means according to the Scales of Training have been provided by Stephen Clarke:

**10 excellent** - given when all of the requirements of the training scales are fulfilled to their utmost. The partnership between horse and rider will be absolutely harmonious, with the exercise being performed with full Impulsion, energy, lightness and expression, to the point where one cannot imagine that the movement could have been done better.

*"It is however something very special to give a 10, and if given too lightly will lose its significance."*

- Stephen Clarke

**9 very good** - given when all of the requirements of the training scale are fulfilled, with most of the exercise being considered as 'excellent' but perhaps lacking 100% consistency.

**8 good** - given when all of the requirements of the training scale are regarded as 'good'. Movements are performed accurately showing good Impulsion and clear harmony between horse and rider.

**7 - fairly good** - given when the basic qualities are correct, even though everything needs a little more impulsion, suppleness, expression and/or cadence. The basic qualities are clear and show a degree of harmony, ease and fluency within the movement itself. When awarding a mark of 7, it is helpful to tell the rider why there is a 30% deduction.

**Comments should be given when awarding a mark of 6.5 or below. The remarks must state clearly why the movement did not receive a higher mark.**



**6 satisfactory** - given when the movement is basically correct lacks in one or more of the following qualities e.g. needs more suppleness, more engagement, contact maybe inconsistent . It can also be given for a higher quality movement which has a small mistake or inaccuracy. Straightness issues often result in a 6, providing the rest of the exercise is regarded as fairly good.

**5 sufficient** - given If the horse has 'achieved the movement'. The movement may be somewhat restricted, earthbound, lacking suppleness or impulsion, but if the regularity is clear and the figure is fairly accurate it can still receive a 5. It may also be appropriate when a fairly serious mistake has been made within an otherwise 'fairly good' exercise.

**4 insufficient** - given when the movement clearly appears insufficient performed. For example, if the horse loses regularity throughout a movement, such as half-pass, through stiffness or resistance (rather than unsoundness) then it is a 4 or even a 3. Serious mistakes like breaking pace, dropping out of canter, jogging through part of a walk movement, not walking in a simple change are examples of when a 4 or less would be appropriate.

**3 fairly bad** – given when clear resistance is shown or if there are several mistakes within the movement.

**2 bad** - given for inaccurately performed movements with severe problems within the training scale.

**1 - very bad** - given for movements performed but are barely recognizable. They may show severe resistance throughout, e.g. rearing, running backwards, etc. If the resistance exceeds 20 seconds the competitor must be eliminated.

**0 – not performed** - given when no fragment of the movement has been performed. However, there is usually some part of the movement performed. For example, if the horse trotted through a flying change there may still be some canter to mark.

#### **Further info: Appendix 2 p36**

1. Katrina Wuest extended notes on Scales of Training from the BD Convention 2015 (See page 38 for section on tongues)
2. BD Tests Requirements Overview
3. BD -The performance of the movements from Preliminary to Advanced
4. FEI Guidelines for marking fundamental mistakes 2017

## **Section 3 The judging process – which every judge must learn**

### **3.1 On arrival at the venue**

- Judges should be tidily and appropriately dressed out of respect for their position, the venue and for the competitors who must adhere to a strict code of turn out.
- Judges should arrive at the venue in good time to report to the organiser/secretary, meet and brief the writer if required and to check and settle at the arena.
- The judge should check with the organiser whether the riders will need access to the arena before the test starts because of space restrictions around the arena. If there is a warm up arena steward, they also need to be informed.
- Judges must know the test thoroughly, noting where each movement begins and ends so that if a mistake occurs in the test an adjustment to the marks is made against the correct movement. Tests are not always written so that all of every movement is covered and sometimes there appears to be a gap between movements. In this case, the previous movements is taken to continue until the next movement clearly starts.
- Before the competition starts, the judge should check with the organiser if there are any restrictions around the test arena that will require special instructions to the competitors about how they will have to prepare to enter the arena. The organiser should decide which system is used and if not then the judge should decide but it must be the same for every competitor.

### **3.2 Briefing your writer**

- The writer is an important part of the judging process so the judge should check their experience and brief them accordingly to ensure that the writer is confident in their role before they start.
- An experienced writer requires little briefing. Most important is for the judge to confirm their method of judging; mark then comment or comment then mark.
- Even an experienced writer may be unfamiliar with high level test sheets so this should be checked with them if necessary. There are four columns; the mark goes in the first column and if there is a change to a mark, then the first mark is crossed out must score and the corrected mark is written in the second column.
- If judging a music class, it's especially important to go through these details with the writer, as they are different from a normal class.

#### **Briefing a writer with little or no experience**

- The judge should have spare pens in case the writer does not have one. They must only write in ink.

- The judge should explain that sheets should be headed up in full including venue, date, name of competitor/ horse and judge position (C, H, M, B or E), rider section (Bronze, Silver or Gold).
- There should be two bridle/saddle cloth numbers, one each side. If not, there must be a deduction of two marks. The writer must check the number to make sure it corresponds with the running order.
- The judge should explain how they work - comment then mark or mark then comment. If necessary, they must identify the boxes/columns to be used. The judge should aim to be consistent in their technique.
- The judge should go quickly through the test with the writer to warn them of any tricky movements where the marks come up quickly.
- The writer should be informed of abbreviations that they may wish to use e.g.  $\frac{1}{4}$ s,  $\frac{1}{4}$ hand, O, H/P, Imp, etc.
- Comments should be given in full. The writer decides whether to abbreviate.
- The judge should reassure and explain to the writer that if they get behind it's not a problem as the gap can be filled in at the end. It's better to leave a gap in order to keep up with the test than get further behind or to guess what the mark may have been.
- If the writer is uncertain about which comment may belong to which movement the Judge should clarify by stating that they will refer to a movement by its description e.g. 20m circle in trot, medium trot, free walk, etc. or by the number of the movement. This can sometimes confuse an already confused writer.
- Describing a movement is also a useful check during the test.
- The Judge should explain the following procedures:
  - i) If an error occurs, an asterisk (\*) should be marked in in the relevant box and the box at the bottom of the score sheet should be ticked (✓).
  - ii) That they may award a half mark which should be written as 6.5. Any mark that does not finish with .5, must instead be finished with .0 to prevent alterations being made afterwards.
- The judge should ask the writer to keep a note of the collective marks on the running order sheet
- The judge should check that there are enough score sheets for the number of competitors and that all the sheets are of the same test.

### 3.3 Managing the Test

- When the first rider arrives at the arena they should be allowed to go round the arena at least once before the bell is rung for them to start. If there's room, they will ride round outside the arena until the bell is rung. Then they must enter the arena within 45 seconds or else two points are deducted from the final score. If the space around the arena is limited, they will be informed by the organiser/judge where they may warm up inside/outside the arena. If there is no space on the outside of the arena, they'll be allowed ride anywhere inside the arena.
- Ideally exactly on time, the judge rings the bell for the rider to start. The judge either makes a comment and then gives a mark after each movement, or the other way round, until the test is finished after the final salute. The rider leaves the arena where appropriate.
- A judge should always make a comment to explain a mark of 6.5 or below although comments about higher marks and potential for improvement are always welcomed by riders if time permits.
- They must underline relevant directives in the collectives for added emphasis.
- The judge must remember that the marks and remarks for each movement should support each other as should those for collective marks and comments. If the comment in a Novice test for instance is 'no medium strides shown' for a particular movement the mark must be below 5.0 because it could not be sufficient. Similarly, if a movement is described as 'good' then the mark must be at least 8.0. The collective marks and remarks should be based on the movement marks and remarks.
- The judge may need to get out of the car or judges' box during a test to speak to the competitor for several reasons:
  - i) the competitor has gone wrong and needs to be clearly reminded of the direction of the test. In this case, the judge should make every effort to be sure the rider really has understood so they don't immediately make another mistake
  - ii) they need to eliminate a horse for resistance of more than 20 seconds or for dangerous behaviour
  - iii) they consider the rider to be abusing the horse and want to ask them to leave the arena
  - iv) if a rider falls off and needs assistance
  - v) to check whether there is blood on the horse
  - vi) they think a horse is unlevel and they want to ask the rider to leave the arena. This should only be done if the marks given are 4.0s or some 5.0s to indicate significant unlevelness. If the marks given are 5.5 or 6.0 it is acceptable to comment on some unlevelness but they cannot be used to justify elimination.

### 3.4 Completing the sheet – the collectives

- The collective comments should convey the essence of the test and indicate where the judge wants to see further development for higher marks in future. The judge's task is to assess the training of the horse and performance of the movements and prioritise the issues that they're identifying, but not give a riding lesson. They should also be succinct and as encouraging as possible with their comments especially at the lower levels.
- At the end of the test, the judge usually takes the sheet from the writer to complete the collective marks and comments. Also to check the sheet for any missed marks, to initial changed marks and to check movement marks and remarks if needed. Although it is possible for the judge to ask the writer to write in the collective marks and comments for them. Once completed the judge signs the sheet. At the same time, the writer prepares the next sheet. The judge may ask the writer to make a note of the collective marks for each test ridden.

### 3.5 Errors of course and errors of test - penalty marks

Refer to 2020 BD Members' Handbook page 122

#### Errors of course

- When a rider makes an error of course (takes the wrong turn, omits a movement etc.), the judge at C rings the bell. If necessary, the judge explains the point at which the rider must start the test again and the next movement to be executed.
- The judge should also ring the bell when a movement is executed at the wrong marker or if there is the possibility of a similar mistake if the movement is repeated on the other rein.
- In some cases, when ringing the bell would unnecessarily impede the fluency of the performance, or if the competition is at one of the lower levels of experience, the judge should consider whether the movement before or after is affected by being one marker out. If it has no effect on the test, the judge can decide not to ring the bell but to just note the error and give a -2 on the sheet for error of course. For example, if the competitor makes a transition from medium trot to collected walk at V instead of K or, cantering up the centre line from A, makes a pirouette at D instead of at L marker out in which case the bell should be rung.
- If the judge doesn't notice until the competitor has left the arena that one or more movements has been omitted they must adjust as necessary, the position of their marks and comments on the sheet to accord with the movements actually performed.
- Give to each of the movements not executed a mark equal to the average of the collective marks entered at the bottom of the sheet (averaged to the nearest half).
- Record the penalty for error of course.

#### Penalties

Every error of the course, whether the bell is sounded or not, must be noted and penalized.

- The first time by two points.
- The second time by four points.
- The third time the competitor is eliminated, but they may continue their performance to the end, marks being awarded in the normal way.
- The writer puts a star against the relevant movement and marks an error at the bottom of the sheet.
- Competitors may not repeat a movement or put in an extra circle or loop, unless the judge decides that an error of course has been made and has rung the bell.
- If a rider repeats a movement, then the judge must penalise for an error of course and must only judge the first attempt, the rider's second attempt is not to be considered in the mark (this includes anything from after the point they rode it to on the first attempt).

The penalty points are deducted on each judge's sheet from the total points given to the competitor.

### **Errors of the test penalty marks**

When a competitor makes an error of the test such as rising in trot instead of sitting, they should be penalised in accordance with the 'Penalties for contravening the rules' table. Although these penalties are cumulative, they do not result in elimination during the test. Judges should note them at the bottom of the test sheet and deduct them from the final mark.

### **3.6 Lameness and blood on horse**

Refer to 2020 BD Members' Handbook – Horse Welfare page 13

In the case of marked lameness or blood on the horse, the senior officiating judge informs the rider that he is eliminated. There is no appeal against the decision. If there are any doubts as to a horse's soundness, the competitor will be allowed to complete the test and any unevenness of pace severely penalised.

### **3.7 At the end of the competition**

- The judge should check that all sheets have been handed in to the scorers.
- The judge should wait until the results are up to check that they appear as expected.
- During this time, an invoice for judging fees and travel expenses can be prepared and submitted to the Secretary. Payment may be by cheque, cash or bank transfer.
- Judges should always be discrete in discussing a class they've judged after the class and particularly while studying the scoreboard where competitors may overhear comments.
- Discussions about a particular combination should only be in private with the relevant rider.

**Consideration of the welfare of the horse is paramount and is covered extensively in the 2020 BD Members' Handbook, page 10.**

All judges should be familiar with this topic and should update themselves on it annually.

During the course of a whole class or individual test, it's likely that other situations occur that have to be dealt with quickly and correctly by the judge within the spirit and rules of competition. A number are listed here there may be other problems that occur that are not listed that still require the judge to operate competently within the spirit and rules of the competition.

- **Outside assistance** - the judge must eliminate a rider who receives any outside assistance that aims to help improve their performance during their test. This rule applies as soon as the judge's bell has rung to signal the start of the test.
- **Entering the arena before the signal to start** - riders may not enter or ride around any competition arena during a break or whilst the judge is not present on penalty of elimination. Riders must only enter the competition arena after the judge has signaled that they may start (e.g. bell, buzzer) unless there is limited space – see below.
- **Special Instructions when space is limited** - where the construction of the arena makes it impossible for the competitor to ride outside the arena boards/markers before the judge's signal to enter is sounded, they may ride inside the arena. Where a 40m x 20m arena has been created within a 60m x 20m arena, the competitor is permitted to ride in the entire arena. Depending on the circumstances, riders have the option of entering at A from inside or outside the arena. The venue organiser will clarify this with the judge before the start.
- **Leaving the arena during the test –**
  - i. The rider is eliminated if the surround is continuous and 2 cm (9 inches) high or more. When the surround is less than 23cms (9 inches), no marks are to be given for that movement.
  - ii. The rider is eliminated if their horse leaves the arena during the test out of control.
  - iii. Where a line or intermittent boards mark the arena and the horse places all four feet outside the arena, it's at the judge's discretion as to the marks deducted. The test begins when the horse enters at A and finishes when it moves off from the final salute.
  - iv. Riders must leave the arena (after the final salute) at walk on a long rein at an appropriate place.
- **Dismounting and/or fall of rider/horse** - if, after the rider has entered the arena, they dismount without a reason acceptable to the judge, no marks will be given for the movement. In the case of a fall of horse and/or rider, the combination will be retired immediately from that test but may ride in further tests if the rider declares they are fit to continue.

- **Voice** - the use of the rider's voice is prohibited and is to be penalised by the loss of two marks from the score that would have been awarded for each movement in which it occurred.
- **Riding the wrong test** - a rider who starts the wrong test for the class may be allowed to restart the test (at the judge's discretion) as long as they can do so immediately. They will be penalised for a first error of course.
- **Resistance** –
  - i. Any horse failing to enter the arena within 45 seconds of the signal to start will have a two mark penalty awarded by each judge.
  - ii. Failure to enter after 90 seconds of the signal to start will result in elimination.
  - iii. Any horse refusing to continue the test for a period of 20 consecutive seconds during a test will be eliminated
- **Grinding teeth and tail swishing** - teeth grinding and tail swishing may be signs of nervousness, tenseness or resistance and can be taken into account by the judges in their marks for the movements concerned as well as in the appropriate collective mark at the end.
- **Extreme weather or other extreme situations** (e.g. loose dog or horse enters the arena) - the judge at C rings the bell to interrupt the test. The rider will then return to complete their test when conditions permit. The rider decides whether to restart the test from the beginning but the judge only marks from where the test was stopped.
- **Freestyle to music and technical failures** - refer to page 243, Judging freestyle to music.

Glossary of terms: FEI Handbook page 247

## **Section 4 Judging Para-equestrian Dressage – *it's what you can do that counts***

Dressage is the only para-equestrian sport included in the Paralympics and has five sport categories or 'grades' that are numbered I – V, with athletes being placed in one of these grades by a process of physical assessment called 'classification'. The purpose of the classification system is to promote participation in sport for people with eligible impairments by minimising the impact of the impairment on the outcome of competition. A medical doctor or physiotherapist assesses the competitor's mobility, strength and coordination in order to establish their 'classification profile' and people with similar functional ability profiles (which are given as Roman numerals) are grouped into competition grades with Grade I for the most severely impaired, to Grade V for the least impaired.

The principles that apply to the judging of able bodied dressage are exactly the same for para dressage. Wherever possible the para-equestrian rider should follow the object and general principles of dressage. However, as athletes with impairments do not have the use of the



entire body, many riders will have the use of or approved compensating aids, which is tack or equipment that allows them to influence the horse (see Tack for para equestrian competition on page 62 of the BD Members' Handbook 2019). The competition within each grade can therefore be judged on **the skill of the individual competitor on their horse, regardless of the competitor's impairment.**

The FEI Classification Manual defines the types of impairment within the Grades I – V as follows:

**Grade I** - profiles: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12a, 13 (formerly Grade Ia)

Mainly wheelchair users with Impairment of all four limbs, may be able to walk with an unsteady gait, however trunk and balance are severely impaired.

This test is ridden only in walk. The judge will look for rhythm/regularity, tempo, relaxation, activity, straightness and contact.

The movements in walk include medium walk and stretching on a longer rein, eight and ten metre voltes, serpentine and transitions.

**Grade II** - profiles: 4, 6, 9, 10a, 11a, 12b, 31a (formerly Grade Ib)

Mainly wheelchair users with poor trunk balance and or impairment of function in all four limbs, or no trunk balance and good upper limb function, or moderate trunk balance with severe impairment of all four limbs.

This test is ridden in walk and trot and the way of going is comparable to Novice level in able bodied dressage.

The judge will look for rhythm/regularity, tempo, and length of step and elasticity of the contact.

The movements required include medium walk, leg yield in walk, walk stretching on a longer rein, working trot, lengthened steps in trot and transitions.

**Grade III** - profiles: 8, 10b, 11b, 14, 17a, 18a, 27, 31b, 32 (formerly Grade II)

Mainly wheelchair users or those with severe movement and mobility impairment involving the trunk and with good to mild upper limb function, those with severe arm Impairment and slight leg Impairment or severe unilateral impairment.

This test is ridden in walk and trot, with a greater degree of difficulty than in the Grade II tests. The way of going is comparable to Novice level in able bodied dressage and the judge will look for rhythm/regularity, tempo, activity, suppleness, balance, contact and straightness.

The movements required include medium walk, turn on the haunches, stretching on a longer rein in walk, rein back, transitions, working trot, leg yield in trot, medium trot, eight and ten metre voltes and serpentine.

**Grade IV** - profiles: 15, 17b, 18b, 19a, 21, 25, 26a, 28, 36 (formerly Grade III)

Usually able to walk without support. Moderate unilateral impairment or moderate impairment in four limbs or severe arm impairment. Athlete may need a wheelchair for longer distances or due to lack of stamina. Total loss of sight in both eyes.

This test is ridden in walk, trot and canter and the way of going is comparable to Elementary/Medium level in able bodied dressage. The judge will look for rhythm/regularity, suppleness, balance, contact, activity and straightness.

The movements required include medium walk, turn on the haunches, extended walk, collected and medium trot, shoulder-in, collected and medium canter, serpentine, rein back and transitions.

**Grade V** - profiles: 16, 19b, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26b, 37a (formerly Grade IV)

Impairment in one or two limbs or some visual impairment.

This test is ridden in walk, trot and canter and the way of going is comparable to Medium level in able bodied dressage. The judge will look for rhythm/regularity, suppleness, contact, engagement and self-carriage.

The movements required include collected and extended walk, half pirouettes, collected/medium/extended trot, shoulder-in, collected/medium/extended/canter, half-pass in trot, transitions and rein-back.

The requirements for the freestyle to music tests are different.

Other points for Judges to note:

### **Tack for para-equestrian competition**

Please also refer to the British Dressage Members' Handbook 2019, p62.

- Permitted tack is in accordance with FEI para – equestrian rules, adapted/modified tack or equipment must be approved on the riders FEI/RDA classification letter. These are referred to as compensatory aids.
- All riders can carry one whip, even at a Championship. A rider can only carry two whips when it's listed on their classification.
- All grades may use double bridles and neck straps are permitted in all para-equestrian competitions.

### **Visually Impaired riders**

- Visually impaired riders are given an additional classification of B1 and B2 according to their level of impairment.

- All visually impaired riders must wear a white arm band when warming up for their test.
- Where background music is being played and the rider requires a caller, it's permitted for the music to be turned off so that the rider may clearly hear the caller.

### **B1 – Grade IV**

i) Before beginning the test, blind riders should be provided with the opportunity by the judge to ride a circuit of the arena on both reins, including one change of rein. If the bell for the start has not rung, the rider may halt or continue at any pace inside the arena. When the signal to start the test is given the rider may start the test from inside or outside the arena.

ii) Callers are permitted for riders who are classified as B1 Grade IV.

iii) Riders may have up to nine callers, with the senior caller communicating with the judge at C. Only one caller is allowed inside the arena; others must stand outside and must make sure they do not restrict the vision of the judges. The rider is also allowed a commander in addition to callers if stated on their classification card. All riders who use callers may be requested to compete at the beginning or end of a class to avoid disruption to other competitors.

### **B2 – Grade V**

Those riders who are visually impaired and classified as Grade V may use their own large letters if they wish but will be required to compete at the start or the end of the class. Riders wishing to do this must inform the organiser and are responsible for providing their own large or taller markers. Riders with a B2 profile may also have a caller inside the arena or use callers at letter markers in accordance with FEI rules.

### **Warming up of horses for riders in Grades I – III for Para – Equestrian competitions**

- Horses competed by Grade I, II and III riders may be ridden by a designated rider other than the competitor for up to 30 minutes on the day of the competition, but may only be ridden by the competitor in the 15 minutes preceding the test.
- Any person riding the horse other than the competitor must be identifiable with a tabard or armband.

### **British Dressage Para-equestrian Judge Panel**

All BD Judges on List 3 or above are eligible to Judge Silver and Gold competition level Para-equestrian classes. Judges on List 4 are eligible to Judge Bronze competition level Para-equestrian classes. Details on training and testing requirements can be obtained by contacting Natasha Pearce at British Dressage.

## Section 5 Judging dressage to music

This content was originally compiled by Linda Whetstone and edited by Stephen Clarke in March 2010 and subsequently updated by Jo Graham and P Watt in November 2016. We'd like to thank Jane Kidd for material from her booklet *Dressage to Music*, published by BD. Also to Ken Barnsley who largely wrote the section on music and interpretation. Plus for the FEI *Dressage Handbook – Guidelines for Judging* and notes by FEI International Judge Katrina Wuest and others who gave their time, expertise and advice in creating these guidelines.

### Judging a freestyle

Judging a freestyle is considerably more challenging than judging a standard test. Not only does the judge have to mark the movements, which are not in a set order, but they also have to assess the artistic nature of the test.

This requires considerable concentration and the ability to simultaneously assess the variety of factors included in the music, choreography, degree of difficulty, gymnastic ability and the harmony. The judge has to be aware of the general impression and not get too focused on one particular aspect. Just to study the beat, how it relates to the hoof beats, movements and transitions is pretty demanding but the technical aspects, the choreography and so on mustn't be neglected.

Of the artistic marks those for rhythm, energy and elasticity relate closely to the paces and impulsion mark in a standard test while the 'harmony between horse and rider' relates to the submission and rider mark. They're very dependent on the technical marks as is the 'degree of difficulty' mark. The 'choreography' and 'music' marks are more independent from the technical marks although there is still an important relationship between them.

More than 70% of the marks in a freestyle are influenced by technical performance.

Nevertheless, results in freestyles tend to be slightly higher than those in standard tests. This is because riders have the opportunity to emphasise their horse's strong points and, to a certain extent, reduce emphasis on any weaknesses. Precision isn't as important as in standard tests and riders can sometimes perform again a movement that went wrong at the first attempt.

Also the choreography and music marks, which are not as closely linked to the technical marks, often warrant higher marks.

The one aspect of the music that the judges must not assess is whether they like the music. The factors they're looking at are:

- how well it harmonises with the paces and movements
- the transitions
- whether the music is interpreted by the competitor
- whether there is a theme to it
- how well it blends from one piece to the next
- if it suits the particular horse and rider.

Personal tastes do not come into it and this can be tough. Judges can find it pretty difficult not to be affected by music they do not like or understand.

All freestyle tests ridden at national BD shows will be ridden under BD rules. Those ridden at shows under FEI rules in the UK will be ridden under FEI rules.

## **Judging techniques**

### **Recording scores**

Whereas technical marks are given in relation to a clearly held image of what is a 'good' working trot or a 'good' piaffe, the artistic marks are also relative to other combinations on the day. Therefore, it's important to keep a record of the artistic marks as they're given after each test. Most judges keep a piece of paper for themselves on which they can put down the artistic marks alongside the relevant competitor. Alternatively, they can use the artistic marks form at the end of these notes. This means that when they're marking the third rider, they can look at the choreography mark for the first rider to check that they're giving a relatively fair mark for the third rider.

### **Taking notes**

With all that has to be assessed, some judges keep pen and paper handy so that they can jot down symbols to indicate what needs to be taken into account in the artistic marks or they can use the artistic marks form where there is a space for this. However, they have to be able to do this without missing anything that's going on in the arena.

### **Writer**

Judges have to be very clear which movement they're marking. So, unlike the set test when they just give the comments and mark, in the freestyle they have to name clearly the movement they are assessing, the pace and sometimes whether the movement is to the left or right. They should brief the writer that marks given for movements during the test all go in the 'mark' column and after the test a fair average is decided upon for the final mark.

### **Comments**

The most important factor is to get the marks right and there is rarely the time to give much justification by comments. If there's time, a general point can be made at the end but usually with spectators watching the emphasis is on getting the next horse started.

### **Marks**

Half marks can be used such as 6.5, 7.5, etc. A mark should be given each time a rider performs one of the compulsory movements, even if it's the same mark as on the previous occasion. It helps to know how many times they've done a movement when deciding on artistic marks and to reach a fair average for the final mark if the marks do differ.

Occasionally riders inadvertently omit one or more of the compulsory movements. If a judge is not sure whether all of the compulsory movements have been performed, they can confer with the other judges on the panel, with the judge at C making the final decision. If they're judging alone, they have to make a judgment based on their own best assessment.

If a compulsory movement is poorly performed, the judge may not be sure whether or not it is being attempted. In this case, a dot may be put in the appropriate box and if, at the end of the test, there is no mark for that movement it may be assumed that it was performed, but poorly, and an appropriate mark given.

## **Final marks**

Different judges have different ways of dealing with the final movement marks and the collective marks at the end of a test.

Some judges take the results sheet from the writer as soon as the test is finished and fill in the final movement mark and the artistic marks. The artistic marks then need to be copied onto a piece of paper or the artistic marks form. Technical marks need to be taken into account but do not determine all the artistic marks.

Other judges:

1. Ask the writer to write in the final movement marks where no choice has to be made, either because they are all sevens or a majority are the same mark.
2. At the same time the judge puts the artistic marks directly onto the artistic marks form but ensuring they take appropriate account of the technical marks.
3. They then transfer the artistic marks to the results sheet and put in the final movement marks while the writer heads up the next sheet.

## **Technical marks**

### **Compulsory movements**

Technical marks are given for the compulsory movements which are different at each level of dressage competition and are set out on the respective score sheets.

### **Transitions**

When the compulsory movement being assessed is extended/medium canter or trot, the transitions at the beginning and end of it should be taken into account, except in those tests where there is a separate technical mark for transitions (e.g. Elementary). Assessment of the fluency and throughness of transitions generally would be considered in the mark for harmony between horse and rider.

### **Standards**

Whatever the level, the marks are given in the same way as in standard tests (out of 10) and half marks can be used). The points are associated with the corresponding descriptive word; 10 for excellent, 9 for very good, 8 for good, 7 for fairly good, 6 for satisfactory, 5 for sufficient, 4 for insufficient, 3 for fairly bad, 2 for bad, 1 for very bad and O for not performed. More often than in a standard test do Freestyle judges have to give O as riders quite often leave out a movement or do movements both in the same direction i.e. two left pirouettes and none to the right.

### **Artistic marks**

Artistic marks can be scored in half marks, i.e. 6.5 etc.

### **Rhythm, energy and elasticity**

This is the mark that focuses on the gymnastic ability of the horse and corresponds with the two first collective marks from the straight tests, the paces (freedom and regularity), and the impulsion (desire to move forward, elasticity of steps, suppleness of the back and engagement of the hind legs).

The mark reflects:

- the consistency of the rhythm and absolute regularity in all three paces
- the correctness of the tempo of every pace
- freedom of the paces
- elasticity and cadence of the paces
- liveliness of the impulsion, activity and engagement of the hind legs
- suppleness and the swinging back
- fluency of the movements.

### **Harmony between horse and rider**

Harmony is the essence of the Freestyle for this is what turns it into an artistic performance. This mark corresponds with the third and fourth collective marks from the standard tests - the submission (attention and confidence, harmony, lightness and ease of movements, acceptance of the bridle, lightness of the forehand) and the rider's position and seat (correctness and effect of the aids).

The mark reflects:

- relaxation and confidence of the horse
- a willingly attentive and submissive horse
- the quality of the contact
- the lightness and ease of the movements
- the fluency of the transitions
- suppleness and balance of the rider
- rider's subtle and effective influence.

### **Choreography**

This is one of the true artistic marks and is less dependent on the technical performance although strong resistances and mistakes will reduce the marks. The choreography of a freestyle can be innovative and surprising but it must be in accordance with classical training and also the level of the training of the horse

Key points to take into account for higher marks:

- use of the whole arena
- symmetrical nature of the movements
- originality and creativity
- a flowing pattern
- a limited number of changes of pace
- movements easily recognizable
- clearly recognizable and harmonious changes within the paces
- well combined exercises
- movements are not shown excessively but provide highlights
- a good balance between straight lines and curves, extensions and collections, highlights and quieter moments
- the choreography should be designed and focused to the short side at C with movements away from C on the diagonal or down the long sides

- dramatic moments combined with quieter phases and an impressive finish.

### **Marking of prohibitive movements**

In tests under BD and FEI rules, if a competitor deliberately attempts a more difficult version of a permitted movement than is allowed at the level, zero should be awarded for the movement and the scores for choreography and degree of difficulty should be no higher than 5.5.

For example:

- Pony Freestyle - more than half pirouettes in walk
- Junior Freestyle - more than half-pirouettes in walk, one, two, three or four tempi changes, more than one counter change of hand in canter
- Young Rider Freestyle - more than half pirouettes in walk or canter, one or two tempi changes
- Intermediate Freestyles - more than single pirouettes in canter and single tempi changes
- Grand Prix Freestyle - more than double pirouettes in canter.

In tests under BD rules, if a prohibited movement is deliberately attempted it will receive two penalty points off the total score in national competition and the scores for choreography and degree of difficulty should not be more than 5.5.

In tests under FEI rules, if a prohibited movement is deliberately attempted it only affects the scores for choreography and degree of difficulty and these should not be more than 5.5.

For example:

- Pony Freestyle - flying changes, canter pirouettes, piaffe and passage
- Junior Freestyle - canter pirouettes, piaffe and passage
- Young Rider Freestyle - piaffe and passage
- Intermediate Freestyle - piaffe and passage
- Grand Prix Freestyle - airs above the ground, cantering backwards etc.

This won't be the case where a combination perhaps lost balance in a half pirouette and turned more than 180° or, due to lack of control, made some tempi changes that weren't permitted. In this instance, the mark for harmony would be reduced accordingly.

Piaffe pirouettes may be performed, but for the piaffe to score more than 5, the minimum number of steps must be performed straight as well. Passage may be performed in half pass but will score no more than 5 unless performed straight as well.

### **If a compulsory movement is omitted**

If a compulsory movement is omitted, zero is given. This will also be reflected in the choreography and degree of difficulty marks which cannot be higher than 5.5 if only one compulsory movement is omitted, and 5 if more than one is omitted.

If a compulsory movement is only executed below the requirement, i.e. too few changes in a series or too few piaffe steps, the movement should be marked as technically insufficient providing that no other form of that particular exercise had been executed correctly. The



degree of difficulty mark would also be adversely affected and probably shouldn't be higher than 5.

### Guidelines for the choreography mark

- Marks of 5.5 or below should be given when a compulsory movement is not included, there is poor use of the arena, movements are difficult to identify, there's excessive use of one pace or one movement and depending on the number of these occurrences. If more than one compulsory movement is omitted, the mark should not be higher than 5.
- Marks of 6 and 6.5 are appropriate when the movements are performed as set out in the standard tests at the level although in a different order.
- Marks of 7 and 7.5 are warranted when the movements are performed in innovative places or performed in innovative combinations.
- Marks of 8 plus are warranted when the design of the pattern is balanced and the combination of movements and transitions are particularly innovative.

### Non-compulsory permitted and prohibitive movements

The examples set out below are **for guidance only and may not be exclusive**.

- In the case of a rider failing to halt at the beginning of the test, we advise you to ring the bell and get them to start again, giving the relevant error. Omissions of any other movement will not permit a restart.
- Permitted movements that are non-compulsory may be used to enhance the choreography.
- Walk should be shown 20m consecutively on a straight or curved line. Walk pirouettes may be embedded into the collected walk.
- Passage must be a minimum of 15m (previously 20m).

Non-compulsory permitted movements	Prohibited movements
<b>Grand Prix</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Counter canter</li> <li>• Medium walk</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Travers</li> <li>• Renvers</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in trot</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in canter</li> <li>• Reins in one hand for maximum of four movements</li> <li>• Canter pirouettes performed from and into walk or halt will only be considered in the harmony and choreography sections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than double pirouettes in canter</li> <li>• Airs above ground</li> </ul>

Non-compulsory permitted movements	Prohibited movements
<b>Intermediate I</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counter canter</li> <li>• Medium walk</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Travers</li> <li>• Renvers</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in trot</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in canter</li> <li>• Reins in one hand for maximum of four movements</li> <li>• Canter pirouettes performed from and into walk or halt will only be considered in the harmony and choreography sections</li> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than double pirouettes in canter</li> <li>• Airs above the ground</li> <li>• Sequence changes every stride</li> <li>• Double pirouettes</li> </ul>
<b>Young Rider Freestyle/Prix St Georges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Counter canter</li> <li>• Medium walk</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Travers</li> <li>• Renvers</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in trot</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in canter</li> <li>• Reins in one hand for maximum of four movements</li> <li>• Half canter pirouettes performed from and into walk or halt will only be considered in the harmony and choreography sections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sequence changes every stride</li> <li>• Double pirouettes in canter</li> <li>• Piaffe</li> <li>• Passage</li> <li>• Sequence changes of one times and two times</li> <li>• Full pirouettes in canter</li> </ul>
<b>Advanced Medium</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Counter canter</li> <li>• Medium walk</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Extended canter</li> <li>• Travers</li> <li>• Renvers</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in trot</li> <li>• Counter change of hand in canter (single change of direction each time shown).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sequence changes of four times or fewer</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes of more than 180°</li> <li>• Canter pirouettes / half pirouettes</li> <li>• Piaffe</li> <li>• Passage</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reins in one hand for maximum of four movements</li> </ul>	
<b>Non-compulsory permitted movements</b>	<b>Prohibited movements</b>
<b>Medium</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Walk half pirouettes</li> <li>• Medium walk</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Extended trot and canter</li> <li>• Give and retake the reins</li> <li>• Leg yield</li> <li>• Travers</li> <li>• Renvers</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in trot</li> <li>• Counter canter</li> <li>• Reins in one hand for maximum four movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flying changes</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes of more than 180°</li> <li>• Canter pirouettes / half pirouettes</li> <li>• Piaffe</li> <li>• Passage</li> </ul>
<b>Elementary</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Counter canter in any form</li> <li>• Give and retake the reins</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Stretching in trot and canter</li> <li>• Large half walk pirouettes</li> <li>• Counter changes of hand in leg yield</li> <li>• Canter to halt</li> <li>• Shoulder in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All lateral work other than leg yield and shoulder in</li> <li>• Reins in one hand</li> <li>• Flying changes</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes more than 180°</li> <li>• Canter pirouettes / half pirouettes</li> <li>• Piaffe</li> <li>• Passage</li> </ul>
<b>Novice</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Give and retake the reins</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Change of leg through trot</li> <li>• Counter canter in any form</li> <li>• Stretching in trot</li> <li>• More than a few strides of medium trot or canter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lateral work of any sort</li> <li>• Simple changes</li> <li>• Canter to halt</li> <li>• Reins in one hand</li> <li>• Flying changes</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes / half pirouettes</li> <li>• Piaffe</li> <li>• Passage</li> </ul>

Non-compulsory permitted movements	Prohibited movements
<b>Prelim</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Give and retake rein</li> <li>• Change of leg through trot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium and extended trot and canter</li> <li>• Counter canter</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Reins in one hand</li> <li>• Lateral work of any sort</li> <li>• Simple changes</li> <li>• Canter to halt</li> <li>• Flying changes</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes / half pirouettes</li> <li>• Passage</li> <li>• Piaffe</li> </ul>
<b>Intro</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circles and half circles of any size</li> <li>• Give and re-take of the reins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canter</li> <li>• Medium and extended trot</li> <li>• Rein back</li> <li>• Lateral work of any sort</li> <li>• Reins in one hand</li> <li>• Walk pirouettes / half pirouettes</li> <li>• Piaffe</li> <li>• Passage</li> </ul>

### Degree of difficulty

There are no degree of difficulty marks at levels below Medium so there is no benefit from making things particularly difficult unless it adds to the choreography.

The degree of difficulty and well calculated risk mark is closely related to the technical performance.

The primary requirement is that the combination has adhered to the principles of classical dressage. Within this limitation, higher marks will be earned by doing either the more difficult movements more frequently or movements in a more difficult sequence, or both.

It's a challenge for the rider to try more difficult things but he should know that a failure, if the horse does not adhere to the classical principles, is very expensive. They will lose marks in more than one section.

The technical mark will be low because they did not perform the movement well, the degree of difficulty mark will be lower because they lost the classical principles and so will the harmony mark be lower, as the horse and rider did not work together successfully.

The overall rewards will be higher for a well-performed easy test, than a poorly performed

difficult test. The rider has to find a balance between risk and capabilities. The judge looks for a fluent test that is neither abrupt nor has obvious tension. If it seems the test is difficult then the rider is asking too much and the degree of difficulty mark has to be lower. The classical principles aren't being maintained. Conversely, to get a high degree of difficulty mark it must look easy.

If a compulsory movement is left out or only executed below the requirement, i.e. too few changes in a series or too few piaffe steps, the movement should be marked as technically insufficient providing that no other form of that particular exercise had been executed correctly. The degree of difficulty mark would also be adversely affected and probably should not be higher than 5.

#### **Key points to take into account for higher marks:**

- Performing more difficult required movements, such as those carrying a coefficient more often, but not excessively
- Showing more than the required minimum, e.g. changes or piaffe steps
- Executing movements on lines not supported by the boards
- Demanding transitions
- Movements with reins in one hand, limited to four
- Well-presented combinations of difficult movements.

#### **Guidelines for the degree of difficulty mark depending on the quality of the performance**

Marks of 5.5 and below would be warranted if one or more of the following occurred:

- the compulsory minimum number of steps or changes were not shown e.g. in piaffe or changes
- compulsory movements were left out
- movements were shown above the standard allowed
- the horse was over faced.

Marks of 6 and 6.5 would be warranted if the compulsory movements were performed according to the minimum requirements of the freestyle test for that level, as would higher risk performances but with some technical mistake(s). The technical marks would have to be in the satisfactory range.

Marks of 7 and 7.5 would be appropriate if the compulsory movements were performed in more difficult ways than asked in the tests at that level and/or when the more difficult movements are performed more often. The technical marks would have to be in the fairly good range.

Marks in the range of 8 and upwards would be appropriate when compulsory movements were performed in more difficult ways than asked for in the tests at that standard and/or more often, or combinations of demanding exercises performed with ease. The technical marks would at least have to be in the good range.

#### **Examples of degree of difficulty at the different levels**

The examples of degrees of difficulty at the relevant levels set out below are not considered exhaustive but are intended to enable judges to be somewhat consistent in assessing degree of difficulty. The degree of difficult and well calculated risk mark does not occur below Medium level.

## **Grand Prix**

- Appropriate repetition of more difficult movements
- A greater number of sequence changes or piaffe steps than the compulsory minimum
- Sequence changes not on a straight line
- Double pirouettes
- Steep angled half passes with counter changes of hand performed equally well in both directions
- Canter-passage-canter
- Extended canter into pirouettes
- Two-time changes into one-time changes
- Extended trot to piaffe
- Half passes in trot followed by half passes in passage
- Up to 4 difficult movements and transitions performed with the reins in one hand
- Piaffe pirouettes
- Passage half passes.

## **Intermediate I/Prix St Georges**

- Appropriate repetition of more difficult movements
- A greater number of sequence changes than the compulsory minimum
- Sequence changes not on straight lines
- A steep angle in the half pass combined with counter changes of hand performed identically well in both directions in either trot or canter
- Movements on lines away from the rails such as shoulder in on centre or quarter lines
- Extended canter followed by a half pirouette (Prix St Georges) or pirouette (Intermediate I)
- Difficult transitions
- Counter canter on a tight turn
- Up to four movements with the reins in one hand.

## **Advanced Medium**

- Shoulder in off the track, on  $\frac{3}{4}$  or centre line
- Changing shoulder in from left to right (or vice versa) on continuous line
- Half pass at a more acute angle than in the tests at the level
- Single counter changes of hand in canter
- Extended trot into shoulder in or half pass
- Extended trot on two consecutive short diagonals
- Counter canter on a tight turn
- Extended canter into counter canter
- Flying change into counter canter
- Repeated flying changes on a circle or curve (five strides between or more)
- Up to four difficult movements with the reins in one hand.

## Medium

- Shoulder in off the track, on  $\frac{3}{4}$  or centre line
- Changing shoulder in from left to right (or vice versa) on continuous line
- Half passes more acute or for longer distance than in the test
- Counter change of hand in trot
- Medium trot into shoulder in or half pass
- Medium trot on two consecutive short diagonals
- Counter canter on circle of less than 20m diameter
- Medium canter into counter canter
- Simple change on line away from track, straight lines or centre line
- Simple change into counter canter
- Up to four difficult movements with the reins in one hand.

## Music and interpretation of the music

### Musical style and genre

The personal musical taste of the judge is not relevant. It's not for the judge to comment on, or be influenced by, the style and genre of the music chosen by the competitor. The judge should only assess the suitability of the music for the horse and rider and whether it enhances or distracts from the performance.

### Is the musical style enhancing what you are seeing?

The judge should evaluate whether or not the music is enhancing the overall image of the horse and rider combination. For example, a 17.2hh heavyweight horse could carry a strong musical style, like rock music with a powerful beat; a 16.1hh lightweight probably couldn't. The use of novelty elements within the music can also show a high level of creativity. If performed well, it can further enhance the test.

The musical style used should not overpower the horse and rider and should not be too much in the background either. One common trend at the moment is to use the music from 'Pirates of the Caribbean' by Hans Zimmer. This is extremely powerful music in terms of its style, strength of beat and full-on sound. As such, the horse and rider does risk being swamped by the music destroying the harmony of the overall picture. Conversely, let's call it 'twinkly music,' would do little if anything to enhance a large 17.2hh heavyweight, but could work well for a lightweight.

If the competitor has created a theme, or chosen a particular musical style that runs throughout their test, then this should be positively recognised in their score compared to those who use disparate pieces and mixed genres. The music should give the impression of being a complete performance in itself and, as such, have a clear beginning, middle and end. The very best music can stand on its own as a musical performance in its own right.

It's the competitor's responsibility to choose the right balance of music for their horse and its way of going and the judge should comment if this is not the case and reflect this in the score.

### **Does the beat, rhythm and tempo of the music match the horse's paces?**

This may sound simple to identify, but care needs to be taken to recognise the difference between rhythm, beat and tempo. The combination of the beat, rhythm and tempo is usually called the music's time signature. For example, rock music and swing jazz most commonly have a time signature of a four beat rhythm (4/4 or four beats to the bar), a waltz has a three beat rhythm (3/4 or three beats to the bar). However, they can both actually have the same tempo. It is only the downbeat, or emphasised beat, that defines the musical rhythm as 4/4 or 3/4.

Assuming the beat and rhythm of the music is constant for a given piece, **it's the tempo of the music that defines if it is synchronised with the horse.** The tempo is simply the speed of the beat and or rhythm. Therefore, even a waltz can fit a trot or canter perfectly if the music's tempo is synchronized with the horse. Ask yourself, are the horse's hooves hitting the ground in exact time with the downbeat of the music?

Certain music, like some classical and orchestral pieces, don't have a distinctive beat at all but there will be a rhythm and tempo. If not we can look at this as simply background music and as such disparate from the horse and really only suitable for use with a walk section. For work in trot or canter, piaffe, passage etc., the music should have a clear beat, or rhythm and a synchronous tempo. Focusing on the tempo of the music is the only true way to judge the synchronization to be correct or not.

### **Does the music reflect the choreography of the ground pattern?**

For example, in trot or canter if the horse makes transitions from collected to extended, or to half-pass, the music should reflect these transitions. Most music contains highs and lows, or phrasing, within the same piece. The competitor has done very well if they configure their ground pattern and ride their test such that their movements are matched to the different emphases within the music. This isn't an easy task and should be recognised and reflected in the score as a true musical choreography.

### **Are the musical transitions natural and smooth?**

With today's technology, even the most basic of home computers offer the ability to edit music competently. It should not matter if the music pieces have been edited together professionally or by amateurs. Ideally, each musical piece used in the floorplan should have a natural musical edit point. The transitions between different musical pieces should also be smooth, in musical time and pleasing to the ear. At the very least the music should fade smoothly between one piece and the next. Silent gaps, thumps, or abrupt cuts between two different pieces of music should be highlighted as being sub-standard and marked accordingly.

### **The use of vocals within the music**

There's no specific rule that prohibits the use of vocals within the music. However, it's considered unacceptable if the amount of vocals used diminishes the integrity of the music itself and detracts from the harmony of what the judge is seeing.



Vocals should be considered to be sung words (in any language). A musical piece that uses vocals as an instrument, i.e. not specific words, but harmonic vocal sounds, should be seen as acceptable.

If a piece of music only has vocals during the chorus, or only on certain key phrases, it's at the judge's discretion to determine if this is acceptable. A simple guide should be - if vocals are used they should be with discretion and not focus the attention on the words of the song.

### **Interpretation of the music**

The way in which the rider is able to ride to the music is an important part of this mark. Are they keeping the horse in a consistent tempo and to the beat of the music? Are the changes in paces fluently with the music and in what seems to be the right place in the choreography? Are the movements well matched to the different emphases in the music? For instance, is the ending well timed?

Although the music mark is not as closely related to the technical marks as is the rhythm, energy and elasticity mark, the harmony mark and the degree of difficulty mark the quality of the way of going does affect the fluency with which the horse is able to work with the music and cannot be totally ignored. Also, disobedience and disturbances should be taken into account in this mark as in all the others.

### **Key Points**

#### **As the judge, ask yourself:**

- Was the tempo of the music synchronised with the horse's paces, neither hurrying them nor making them labored?
- Was the music chosen suited to the horse and rider?
- Did the music reflect the character of the pace?
- Was there a musical theme or common style running through the test?
- Did the musical emphasis enhance the choreography of the test?
- Was the rider able to repeat a movement made in a precise phrase of the movement on both reins, i.e. canter pirouette?
- Did the music have smooth and natural transitions between the pieces?
- Was the performance free of resistance, disobedience and disturbance?
- How well did the rider interpret the music, making transitions at the same time as the music, timing the movements to coincide with the emphasis of the music and finishing as the music finished?
- Is there a suitable start and clearly defined end to the music which is compatible with the test?

As always, judging is not clear-cut. It is a balancing act. Therefore, it is very important that the above are taken as a foundation from which judges can use their own initiative and according to diverse circumstances.

### **Guidelines for the music and interpretation of the music mark**

#### **Marks of 5.5 and below would be warranted if some of the following were evident:**

- two or three of the paces were a poor fit for the beat of the music
- the music was inappropriate for the type of horse

- the music was purely background and not related to the performance
- there were notable interruptions and disturbances of the performance
- changes of pace were very poorly synchronized with changes in the music
- there's a mixture of different types of music or the recording of the music was very poor.

**Marks of 6 and 6.5 would be warranted if some of the following were evident:**

- the music is a poor fit for one of the paces
- it's inappropriate for the type of horse
- the technical performance is satisfactory but there is no artistic interpretation
- some changes of pace are poorly synchronized with the changes in the music or there's a mixture of different types of music.

**Marks of 7 and 7.5 would be warranted if:**

- the music is suitable for each pace and fits the type of horse
- there's a fairly good general impression of the performance and interpretation of the music
- there's one genre of music
- the transitions are well timed and the phrasing of the music mostly fits the character of the movements.

**Marks in the range of 8 and upwards would be warranted when:**

- the music fits the paces, type of horse and movements well
- there's a good general impression of the performance and interpretation of the music
- there is one genre of music
- the transitions are well timed with the music and the phrasing of the music fits the character of the movements.

**General directives**

- The judge at C is ultimately responsible for arriving at a decision if there's disagreement on an issue.
- If there's a tie, the combination with the highest artistic mark will be the winner. If the artistic marks are the same, the combination with the highest mark for harmony will be the winner and if these are the same, there will be a tie.
- Timing - entry within 20 seconds after music starts, if not a warning from the judge. The test is timed from the move off after the first salute to the final salute. If the timing is significantly longer or shorter than the time allowed, two marks will be deducted from the artistic scores.
- The entrance and halts - a halt is required at the beginning and end of the test. It must be on the centre line facing the judge. If the horse is not immobile then this is deducted in the halt mark, an attempt to halt must be made otherwise a zero is given for the movement and the choreography mark cannot be higher than 5.5 if it was the only movement missing, or more than 5 if more than one is missing. The entrance will be taken account of under the halt movement and to a certain extent under the degree of difficulty and choreography mark, whether or not it's mentioned on the sheet.

- Removal of hat - only in halt can the hat be removed deliberately, otherwise two mark penalty.
- Reins in one hand – in all FEI tests, whether run under BD rules or at FEI events, reins can be in one hand for no more than four movements. If more, this is deducted under degree of difficulty and choreography marks in the artistic section.
- Music stops - in the case of a technical failure that will interfere with the competition, the judge at C will ring the bell. In the case of the rider's music failing, skipping or jumping during a test, the rider may make one request to restart or the judge can suggest that they restart. When possible the restart should be immediate, but if not the rider should return to complete or restart their test during a scheduled break or at the end of the competition. If the music continues to fail after the restart, they'll be eliminated. During extreme weather conditions or other extreme situations, the judge at C may ring the bell for interruption of the test. The rider should return to complete their test when conditions permit. It's up to the rider whether to restart the test from the beginning or to commence from the point the music failed. In either case, the marks already given to the point at which the music failed will not be changed.
- Tests will be timed from the move off after the first salute until the halt before the final salute. Halts must be shown at the beginning and the end of all freestyle tests and these must be on the centre line facing the judge. Two penalty points will be deducted from the final total if a test exceeds the maximum time allowed or is more than 30 seconds shorter than the minimum stated time.

For further info, see the BD Members' Handbook 2020, page 121.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### FEI Objectives and General Principles of Dressage, by kind permission of the FEI

The object of dressage is the development of the horse into a happy athlete through harmonious education. As a result, it makes the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the athlete.

1. These qualities are demonstrated by:

- The freedom and regularity of the paces
- The harmony, lightness and ease of the movements
- The lightness of the forehand and the engagement of the hindquarters, originating from a lively impulsion
- The acceptance of the bit, with submissiveness/thoroughness (durchlässigkeit) without any tension or resistance

2. The horse thus gives the impression of doing, of its own accord, what's required. Confident and attentive, submitting generously to the control of the athlete, remaining absolutely straight in any movement on a straight line and bending accordingly when moving on curved lines.

3. The walk is regular, free and unconstrained. The trot is free, supple, regular and active. The canter is united, light and balanced. The hindquarters are never inactive or sluggish. The horse responds to the slightest indication of the athlete and thereby gives life and spirit to all the rest of its body.

4. By virtue of lively impulsion and the suppleness of the joints, free from the paralysing effects of resistance, the horse obeys willingly and without hesitation and responds to the various aids calmly and with precision, displaying a natural and harmonious balance both physically and mentally.

5. In all the work, even at the halt, the horse must be 'on the bit'. A horse is said to be 'on the bit' when the neck is more or less raised and arched according to the stage of training and the extension or collection of the pace, accepting the bridle with a light and consistent soft submissive contact. The head should remain in a steady position, as a rule slightly in front of the vertical, with a supple poll as the highest point of the neck and no resistance should be offered to the athlete.

6. Cadence is shown in trot and canter and is the result of the proper harmony that a horse shows when it moves with well-marked regularity, impulsion and balance. Cadence must be maintained in all the different trot or canter exercises and in all the variations of these paces.

7. The regularity of the paces is fundamental to dressage.

## APPENDIX 2

### 1. The Scales of Training by Kattrina Wuest at BD Judges Convention 2015.

Developed by FEI judges : Uwe Mechlem / Dr. Dieter Schüle / Katrina Wüst

Dressage judges have two main functions:

- To decide the ranking of a class by giving marks (in combination with helpful comments and explanations).
- To check, influence and secure the correct training and presentation of a dressage horse, following the Rules of the FEI and the prescriptions in the FEI Handbook, especially of the 'Scales of Training'.

A judge has to immediately recognise whether the Scales of Training have been fulfilled correctly but, in addition to the Scales of Training, other criteria have to be considered, such as:

- technical mistakes of any kind
- the general submissiveness of the horse
- the correctness of the lines/ markers
- the overall picture.

### Rhythm - clear beat and regularity in the three basic paces of the horse

**Walk** - four-beat rhythm, the horse's feet following one another, 'v-position' of lateral pairs of legs must be clearly recognisable.

**Mistakes:** Loss of rhythm, one lateral pair of legs shifts more and more into parallelism until getting almost ambling. Between a correct four-beat and an almost lateral two-beat many graduations are possible.

#### Guidance for scoring walk

- If the walk is clearly lateral or short/ long over a *considerable* distance, it can never get a sufficient mark (less than five).
- Also, the collective mark for regularity of paces must be diminished, especially if the walk is incorrect in all tempi.
- If the walk loses its rhythm only *slightly* or *temporarily* - e.g. in corners or after transitions, the judge has to slightly diminish the mark for this walk as well as the collective mark for the regularity of paces.
- If there's hardly any walk shown due to tension, both collectives, for paces and submission must be reduced.
- Loss of rhythm in a movement, e.g. in a walk pirouette or in a simple change of leg, leads to a lower mark for the movement itself and, maybe for submission, but not for regularity of paces.
- In addition, a good walk must show activity, suppleness of back, freedom of shoulders and a difference between the walks required.

**Trot** - two beat-rhythm, each diagonal pair of legs moves simultaneously with a moment of suspension in between.

**Mistakes:** loss of rhythm, lameness, unevenness, short loss of balance, being overridden, stumbling and lacking suppleness.

#### **Guidance for scoring trot**

- Clear lameness is immediate elimination for the welfare of the horse.
- If showing unevenness, the mark for each movement that shows continuously uneven steps cannot be higher than five.
- In addition, the collective mark for the regularity of paces has to be diminished. Short loss of balance *within a movement*, e.g. in a half pass, leads to a lower mark for the movement concerned. No reduction of the collective mark for regularity of paces.
- In addition, the judge has to look for impulsion, engagement, suppleness of back, elasticity of steps, cadence, balance, self-carriage, uphill tendency, difference of the length of steps depending on the degree of collection.

**Canter** - a jumping pace in a clear three-beat rhythm with a moment of suspension after the three beats.

**Mistakes:** Loss of rhythm, 'rolling' canter with no moment of suspension, the foreleg touches the ground before the diagonal hind leg in the diagonal phase, the horse shows a wrong four beat rhythm which often leads to a downhill tendency and/ or to crookedness or canter to one side different to that on the other side.

#### **Guidance for scoring canter**

- Insufficiently regular, not in three-beat *for most of the part*, no satisfactory mark for the canter movement(s) is possible (less than six). Collective mark for regularity of paces must be diminished.
- Wrong four-beat only shown *within a movement*, e.g. counter canter or half pass, mark for the movement itself must be diminished; no reduction of the collective mark for regularity of paces. However, a lower mark for submission (for loss of balance).
- In addition, the judge has to look for impulsion, engagement, suppleness of back, elasticity of strides, cadence, balance, maintenance of tempo, self-carriage, uphill tendency, straightness, equality on both reins, difference of the length of strides depending on the degree of collection.

**The regularity of the paces is the main criterion on all levels and must be the first to be checked.**

**Suppleness - the horse must move in all three basic paces without any kind of tension.**

How to check suppleness:

*Physical suppleness -*

- Poll/ neck: elastic, flexible to both sides.
- Back: elastic, swinging, rider can sit comfortably.

- Tail: swinging, not being carried too high or too low, not swishing, not crooked.
- Joints: supple, smooth steps, free from tension, one hardly hears the horse move.

#### *Mental suppleness -*

- Soft rhythmical breathing
- Ears, eyes, face: does the horse look a happy athlete, free from anxiety?

**Mistakes:** horse is clearly nervous, tense, disobedient. Stiffness in poll, neck, topline. Back not swinging, stiff. Angry tail swishing. Ears always back, very unhappy face of the horse. Permanently grinding teeth

#### **Guidance for scoring suppleness**

- A significant lack of suppleness must considerably reduce the marks for the movements concerned.
- If these mistakes are shown *repeatedly* also the collective mark for submission has to be diminished.

**Contact** - correct contact is a steady but light connection between the rider's hand and the mouth of the horse, which can only be achieved if the horse is fully relaxed and supple.

How to check correct contact:

- The horse must accept the bit and chew confidentially
- He must always follow the rider's hands
- Supple poll; nose line should never be consistently behind the vertical
- The contact should be steady but nevertheless light

**Mistakes:** Open or dead mouth, no acceptance of the bit. Tongue above the bit, drawn up, slightly visible. Tongue clearly hanging out on one side. Horse is not accepting the bit, is behind/ on/ above, against the bit. Nose line consistently behind the vertical, neck over bent (tight and/ or deep), tilted neck. Unsteady head, tossing up and down

#### **Guidance for scoring contact**

- If the horse does accept the bit at all, is above, against, or heavily on the bit, shows strong resistance against the rider's hands no sufficient mark for the technical movements concerned is possible (less than five).
- Tongues - the FEI guidance is that if the tongue is out to the side of the mouth the mark is five and this needs to be followed. You must still consider other aspects and only finally mark when you actually see it out. Consider at the lower levels, with longer movements being allocated to a mark, that there is a good chance you may only see half the movement with the tongue out, so it may not need to be so seriously penalised. Also, is it showing with no other problems or is it showing with evasion and thus having a detrimental effect? Consider how much out, how far out

and how long it's seen out. Is it out with an otherwise quiet mouth and showing qualities? Every situation may be different and judges are there to make a judgement to the best of their ability. It is impossible to have a completely set mark for varied situations.

- If the horse stays clearly behind the vertical, the technical mark for the movement cannot be satisfactory (less than six). If the horse is behind the vertical only *for a short moment*, e.g. in a transition, without being blocked in the hind legs and without resistance against the rider's hands, the technical mark for this movement and the collective mark for submission will not be seriously affected.
- If one of those mistakes is *repeatedly* or *permanently* shown, also the collective mark for submission must be significantly diminished.

**Impulsion** - the transmission of the energy, generated from the hind legs, through an elastic and swinging back, into an athletic powerful movement with a clear uphill tendency.

Impulsion is only possible in trot- and canter movements.

#### **How to check impulsion:**

- The horse moves willingly forward with energy and engagement of the hindquarters and actively bent hocks, gaining expression in his pace
- The hind legs must work forward under the body
- Swinging, elastic back
- The groundcover in extensions is increased, no change of tempo
- Increase of elasticity of steps/ strides, moment of suspension in collection is more pronounced
- Leads to lightness of forehand

**Mistakes:** Dragging hind legs, lack of activity, nearly slow motion, incorrect "passage-like" steps. Hocks only work upward, not forward. Stiff in the back, flat or hurried extensions, limited groundcover without elasticity and uphill tendency. Change or loss of cadence.

#### **Guidance for scoring impulsion**

- If extensions are shown as *flat* and/ or *hurried* paces without any elasticity and uphill tendency, the mark for the technical movements must be clearly diminished.
- If collection lacks energy and engagement from behind but is misunderstood as '*slow motion*' or as a '*passage-like*' movement, the mark for the technical movements must be clearly diminished.
- If the horse is tense in the back the mark for the technical movements must be clearly diminished.
- In these cases, the collective mark for impulsion must also be reduced.

#### **For high marks in extensions**

- The difference between medium and extended tempo must be clearly recognizable.
- The transitions must be clearly defined, active, well balanced, keeping rhythm and uphill tendency



**Straightness and bend** -straightening a horse means keeping him healthy by working on his natural crookedness

#### How to check straightness:

- The horse is able to move on both reins on one track, on straight and on curved lines.
- The horse is able to bend equally on both reins.
- The horse uses his hind legs equally.
- The contact is even and steady on both reins.

**Mistakes:** The horse cannot be kept straight. The horse remains stiff on one side, does not bend on curved lines / in corners, leading to escaping quarters. The horse cannot bend in lateral work

#### Guidance for scoring of straightness/ bend:

- If a horse doesn't bend on curved lines/ in corners and if his hind legs do not follow the track of the forelegs.
- If a horse is not clearly bent in lateral movements (shoulder in, half passes, travers or renvers) or pirouettes.
- If a horse moves on two tracks the mark for the movements concerned must be significantly reduced.
- Also, the collective mark for submission must be diminished.
- To get a satisfactory/ good mark for zig-zag-half passes the horse must, in addition, be equally and symmetrically be bent to both sides.

**Collection** -the aim of collection is to develop and improve the balance of the horse.

Pushing power is more and more transferred into carrying power → the centre of gravity is shifted further backwards → uphill tendency, lightness of the forehand.

The highest degree of collection is needed in piaffe, passage, and canter pirouettes. For correct collection, all preceding criteria of the "Scale of Training" must be fulfilled.

#### How to check collection:

- The hind legs are intensively bent and carry more weight.
- Increased self-carriage and balance.
- The neck is raised and arched, related to the degree of collection. The poll is the highest point.
- The horse gives the impression of moving uphill.
- The steps/ strides become shorter but activity and impulsion is sustained.
- The quality of the paces gets improved.

**Mistakes:** Hind legs do not carry, the croup remains high. Lack of self-carriage and balance. The top line is long and flat, the horse tries to keep his balance with the neck. The horse leans on the bit. Downhill tendency, steps and strides are not elevated but short and stiff. If the hind legs crawl too much under, the horse shortens the base of support thereby impeding the movement- e.g. in a piaffe with narrow base.

## Guidance for scoring collection

- If a horse doesn't show any of the criteria requested in a collected movement, no sufficient mark for the movement concerned is possible.
- If the horse lacks collection *repeatedly* or *continuously*, also the collective mark for submission must be significantly reduced.
- To be able to give high marks, the judge must have the impression that all movements are executed without any effort.
- The horse shouldn't need visible support of the rider; all aids should appear absolutely invisible. Even the most difficult movements have to give the impression of supreme ease.

All elements of the training scale are reflected in the collective marks. Before the judge gives the collective marks, he always has to check whether the presentation showed a well-trained and ridden horse.

A dressage judge's greatest duty and responsibility is to assess whether a horse has been trained in the correct way and to distinguish major from minor mistakes.

## 2. BD test requirements explained

A judge must constantly assess both the quality of the way of going of the horse and their success in performing each required movement as they happen in order to find the mark for that movement.

A previous section covered the scales of training, or way of going considerations, and while this section covers aspects of quality, it also describes what is required in each movement.

### Definitions of Movements

**Please see the BD Members Handbook 2020, p16** for technical definitions of movements, which need to be studied and understood, to assess how well they are performed and any shortcomings there may be in their execution. Also included are technical definitions of the paces and some further very descriptive discussion of quality of way-of-going, which covers some of the same ground as the sections on Scales of Training in this handbook, is essential reading as it provides good visual diagrams.

A few short excerpts are copied here because they cover the very important collective marks which have not yet been specifically covered in this way in these guidelines but for further amplification see the section in the Members' Handbook.

### Impulsion and Submission

1. **Impulsion** is the term used to describe the transmission of an eager and energetic, yet controlled, propulsive energy generated from the hind quarters into the athletic movement of the horse. Its ultimate expression can be shown only through the horse's soft and swinging back guided by gentle contact with the athlete's hand.

2. **Submission** does not mean subordination, but an obedience revealing its presence by a constant attention, willingness and confidence in the whole behaviour of the horse as well as

by the harmony, lightness and ease it is displaying in the execution of the different movements.

### **The position and aids of the athlete**

1. All the movements should be obtained with imperceptible aids and without apparent effort of the athlete. The athlete should be well balanced, elastic, sitting deep in the centre of the saddle, smoothly absorbing the movement of the horse with his loins and hips, supple thighs with the legs steady and stretched well down. The heels should be the lowest point. The upper part of the body should be tall and supple. The contact should be independent from the athlete's seat. The hands should be carried steadily close together, with the thumb as the highest point and a straight line from the supple elbow through the hand to the horse's mouth. The elbows should be close to the body. All of these criteria enable the athlete to follow the movements of the horse smoothly and freely.

2. The effectiveness of the athlete's aids determines the precise fulfilment of the required movements of the tests. There shall always be the impression of a harmonious cooperation between horse and athlete.

### **The collective comments**

- The comments made at the end of a dressage test should reflect the overall performance. They should highlight strengths and identify key areas for development that will enable the partnership to gain higher marks in the future, based on the scales of training.
- The collective remarks should not prescribe specific training methods or riding techniques, nor should they serve as a 'lesson', but should clearly indicate to the rider the reasons behind the marks awarded both throughout the test and in the collective marks.
- Summaries should be concise and pertinent to each horse.
- Collective comments are always more acceptable to riders if they start with a positive comment, highlighting a specific area of quality or competence but this isn't essential, particularly at the higher levels.
- It's good practice to underline significant areas of concern in the printed text shown in the collective boxes to help reinforce your summaries and it's also acceptable to similarly underline significant points in the movement directives.
- In identifying areas for development, the judge should draw the rider's attention to the causes of problems rather than their symptoms, to encourage the rider to work on correct training rather than try to mask the issues raised by the judge.
- The sum of the collective marks should reflect the sum of the marks given in the test.
- If the walk is incorrect in rhythm in both walks (a 4.0 or below is given for the movement, for the reason that the rhythm is incorrect), then a mark of 5.5 would be the most that can be given for the paces. If only one of the walks is incorrect then a 6.5 is possible depending on the quality of the trot and canter.

### 3. The performance of movements at Preliminary to Advanced

It's important to understand the expectations and requirements of each level of test because the balance required of a novice horse is significantly different from that required of a horse in an FEI test, as is the ground cover expected in a medium trot at medium level from that at Prix St Georges, etc.

For the principles of the FEI tests, refer the 'FEI Dressage Handbook: guidelines for Judging', available from British Dressage's online shop.

#### **Introductory tests A/B/Freestyle**

**20m x 40m arena**

This level shows that horse and rider are beginning their training on correct lines. They're establishing the first of the Scales of Training with the emphasis on rhythm, suppleness and contact.

#### **The rider**

- has a balanced upright position
- is supple and able to follow the movement of the horse
- maintains a light elastic contact with the horse's mouth
- applies clear aids effectively without unnecessary movement.

#### **The horse**

- has regular, pure unhurried paces
- shows rideability and is obedient to the aids of the rider
- accepts a contact with the bit without resistance and tension
- moves willingly forward with active hindquarters
- remains reasonably straight so that his body is aligned along the curve of a circle or turn, or on a straight line. Momentary losses of straightness are not serious faults at this early stage
- transitions are smooth and although best if executed at the marker more weight is given to their correctness than to their accuracy.

#### **The movements**

- halt
- free walk on long rein
- medium walk
- working trot to include 20 metre circles
- give and retake the reins in walk
- transitions that may be progressive so that when coming to a halt from the trot a few steps of walk may be shown
- trot may be ridden sitting or rising. The bend of his body to the curvature of the line he follows, remaining supple and following the indications of the rider, without any resistance or change of pace, rhythm or speed (tempo)
- smaller circles are allowed in Freestyle.

## **Preliminary tests**

**20m x 40m and 20m x 60m arenas**

Tests at this level show that horse and rider are beginning their training on correct lines. They're establishing the first Scales of Training of rhythm, suppleness and contact

### **The rider**

- has a balanced upright position
- has sufficient suppleness to follow the movement of the horse
- maintains a light, elastic contact with the horse's mouth
- applies clear aids effectively without unnecessary movement

### **The horse**

- regular, pure and unhurried paces
- shows rideability and obedience to the rider's aids
- accepts the contact without resistance and tension
- moves willingly forward with active hindquarters
- remains reasonably straight and aligned to curves and turns
- smooth transitions and correct execution more important than accuracy at this level.

### **The movements**

- free and Medium walk
- working trot including circles to 15m and serpentines
- working canter including circles to 20m
- stretching in trot
- trot may be ridden sitting or rising
- give and retake and change of leg through trot allowed in Freestyle.

## **Novice tests**

**20m x 40m and 20m x 60m arenas**

Tests at this level demonstrate that horse and rider are beginning their training on correct lines. The Scales of Training should be becoming more established; the rhythm, suppleness, contact, impulsion, straightness and the start of collection in the downward transitions.

### **The rider**

- balanced upright position
- loins and hips supple
- thighs and legs steady and well stretched downwards
- upper party of the body easy, free and erect
- hands low and close together without touching each other or the horse with the thumbs as the highest point
- elbows and arms close to the body
- follows the movement of the horse smoothly and freely
- applies aids imperceptibly and effectively.

## **The horse**

- has regular, pure unhurried paces
- shows ride ability and is obedient to the aids of the rider
- accepts a contact with the bit without resistance and tension
- moves willingly forward with active hindquarters
- is straight on straight lines and bends accordingly on curved lines but occasional losses of straightness are not serious at this stage
- transitions are smooth and although correctness is more important than absolute accuracy increasing value is attached to them being achieved at the required marker.

## **The movements**

- medium and free walk
- working trot including circles and half circles to 10m and serpentines
- some medium trot strides to be smoothly shown without any change in tempo
- the quality of the medium strides and the transitions into and out of the working trot are the priorities rather than how many are shown
- working canter including circles and half circles to 15m
- some medium canter strides
- counter canter
- rein back
- give and retake the reins
- stretching in trot whilst maintaining the rhythm and the horse seeking the contact forward and down without snatching
- loops of 10m in from the track
- progressive transitions from walk to canter when a few strides of trot may be shown
- change of leg through trot when a few steps of trot should be clearly shown
- trot may be ridden sitting or rising.

## **Elementary tests**

**20m x 40m and 20m x 60m arenas**

This level shows that horse and rider are progressing their training along correct lines and they're establishing the Scales of Training: rhythm, suppleness, contact, impulsion, straightness and collection.

Please note: in the Elementary tests, the collection is at the early stages and is that which has sufficient engagement of the hindquarters to carry out the required movements with ease and balance.

## **The rider**

- As for Novice standard

## **The horse**

- In addition to the qualities of the Novice standard have acquired greater muscular development, suppleness and impulsion to enable execution with ease of the more demanding movements of the test
- As a result of the increased engagement of the hind legs is now able to show a slightly more uphill tendency than at Novice levels.

## The movements

- medium, free and extended walk
- working, medium and collected trot to include 10m circles
- working, medium and collected canter to include 10m circles and half circles
- leg yield in trot to left and right
- counter canter including 5m loop off the track where the bend should remain to the leading leg
- stretching in canter
- simple change of leg. The downward transition may be progressive. There's a difference between falling through trot to walk compared to the one that takes a step or two of trot to maintain the engagement but from walk to canter should be direct. The walk steps must be clearly shown
- rein back for a specified number of steps
- allowed in Freestyle: change of hand in trot leg yield/stretch in trot and canter/large half walk pirouettes/canter to halt

## Medium tests

20m x 40m and 20m x 60m arenas

To prove the development of a higher degree the classical principles and the Scales of Training.

## The rider

- As for Novice standard

## The horse

- develops the suppleness, elasticity and impulsion to be able to collect and extend its paces as soon as the aids are given to do so
- attains a marked degree of self-carriage, lightness and cadence
- able to perform direct transitions smoothly and with precision
- the quality of the paces continues to improve
- balance becomes more and more secure

## The movements

- medium, collected and extended walk
- medium, collected and extended trot
- medium, collected and extended canter
- shoulder in
- half pass in trot and canter
- travers
- half walk pirouettes
- simple change – direct transitions canter/walk/canter
- counter canter
- rein back
- allowed in Freestyle: circles and half circles of any size/medium walk/give and retake of the reins/leg yield/renvers/counter changes of hand in trot/reins in one hand for a maximum of four movements.

### **Advanced Medium tests**

**20m x 40m and 20m x 60m arenas**

Including FEI Junior Tests when ridden BD Advanced Medium. Tests at this level prove further development of the Classical Principles and the Scales of Training, with increasing emphasis on collection.

#### **The rider**

- As above
- rider's influence with his legs, seat and hands reaches a higher level
- the co-ordination of the aids particularly affects the horse's position, the tempo (speed of the rhythm), use of the horse's back and the movements.

#### **The horse**

- similar to Medium with the added requirement for flying changes necessitating more 'throughness', collection, balance and straightness.

#### **The movements**

- As for lower standards but being performed with a higher degree of difficulty, i.e. half passes at steeper angles, transitions more frequent and more demanding
- counter change of hand in trot
- single flying changes
- eight metre circles in collected trot
- allowed in Freestyle: circles and half circles of any size/rein back/travers and renvers/single counter change of hand in canter/reins in one hand for a maximum of four movements

### **Advanced tests - preparation for Prix St Georges 20m x 60m arenas**

The horse should have reached a higher degree of athletic development. This will help it to show greater collection and extension, balance, self-carriage and lightness so that it can meet the demands of classical equitation as embodied in the FEI tests.

#### **The rider**

- As previous.

#### **The horse**

- As previous but with a higher degree of achievement, i.e. more pronounced rhythm, greater suppleness and relaxation, unwavering contact, greater impulsion, consistent straightness, more collection and throughness.

#### **The movements**

- as above but with a higher degree of difficulty
- four-time and three-time flying changes
- three four time changes in sequence
- three three time changes in sequence
- 5m half circle in canter with quarters in (preparation for half pirouettes)



**FEI tests -see BD Members' Handbook 2019, p127**

- Prix St Georges (2009 – update 2016)
- Intermediate I     "     "     "
- Intermediate A and B (2015 – update 2016)
- Intermediate II (2014 – update 2016)
- Grand Prix (2009 – revision 2014 – update 2016)
- Grand Prix Special (2009 – revision 2014 – update 2016) U25   Grand Prix 16 – 25 (2009 – update 2016)
- Young Rider Preliminary, Team, Individual   (2009 – update 2016)
- Junior Preliminary, Team, Individual       (2009 – update 2016)
- Pony Preliminary, Team, Individual

**4 FEI Guidelines 2017 – Marking of fundamental mistakes  
(according to the FEI Dressage Handbook and following proposals of the 5\* Judges' Seminar 2017)**

Since these guidelines were produced, collectives have been removed from FEI tests. However, as the information provided here offers very useful insight relating to the awarding of collectives as a result of the effect of various problems they've been included in this appendix.

**Walk** - description as FEI Handbook p. 24.

<b>Problems with the rhythm:</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Virtually unrecognisable: extremely uneven/very clear pacing or disobedience, extremely tense, jobbing, passaging  Walk is unrecognizable in both (all) tempi: - collective mark for paces below 5 - collective mark for submission below 6, if very disobedient	1, 2 or 3 (depending on severity)	Below 6 in case uneven/ clear pacing or disobedience
Virtually pacing/mainly uneven or several jog steps	Below 5	
Not always clear regularity of four beat/somewhat uneven or hurried steps, moment of tension, 1-2 jog steps	Below 6	
Ambling for a few steps after a transition	Not automatically 5, depending on entity of movement	
Artificially raising the front legs	Below 7, however, differentiate between 'mild' and extreme form.	

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**Generally important in walk:** well-marked four time beat, full relaxation and suppleness throughout the body, activity, consistency of tempo.

**Collected walk:** steps shortened and heightened, engagement of hindlegs, good hock action. Neck raised and arched, poll highest point. Steady contact. Change of outline when coming from extended walk.

**Resistance against the bit** in the transitions, e.g. from extended to collected walk, reduces the mark, mostly for the collected walk. Depending on where and why (shortening the reins to collect the horse) it happens. No influence on collective mark for paces, possibly under submission.

**Slight overtrack in collected walk** is acceptable when the horse shows true collection, especially after a huge extended walk. However, it's not acceptable for a 7 or higher if the rider cannot collect his horse and just lets him go.

**Medium walk:** moderate lengthening of steps with overtrack, neck stretching slightly forward/downward, nose line slightly more in front of the vertical than in collected walk.

**Extended walk:** freedom of the shoulders and clear overtrack (groundcover). Stretching of the neck **to the bit** without losing contact.

**Not accepting the bit/remaining clearly overbent** in the neck - deduction of 1 or 1.5 for the extended walk. No influence on collective mark for paces, possibly under submission.

Take care to observe that the rider shows the walk exactly to the letter prescribed (not anticipating the transition into the next movement) - otherwise a deduction should be made in either the walk and/or in the transition (in both if more than 5m before/ after) HB p. 101

**Trot** - description as FEI Handbook p. 43

<b>Problem with the rhythm:</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Very uneven <b>throughout</b>	Elimination	
If this horse is not eliminated by the judge at C, the collective mark for paces should be below 5	Below five, or lower depending on severity	
Not always regular, several uneven steps. Tension evident. Break of rhythm in transitions or extension.	Maximum 5	Appropriate deduction depending on reason; either in paces or in submission.
Short stumble, momentary loss of regularity, one leg higher for only a few steps.	Below 7	

<b>Problems due to lack of balance:</b>		
Clearly irregular steps in half pass, shoulder in etc. cause by a lack of balance, or a short disobedience, e.g. breaking into canter for some strides.	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
A few irregular steps in half pass, shoulder in etc. caused by a lack of balance	Deduction of 1 or 1.5, however a maximum of 6	
Extended trot: very tight in neck/back, no overtrack, however clear rhythm	Below 7	

**Important:** in addition to the description in the Handbook for the transitions from/to the trot extensions -

- Watch **both** transitions, into and out of the medium/extended trot including the precision of both corners.
- Don't give the mark immediately at the end of the diagonal! The short side is still part of the movement.
- In the case of a separate transition mark, the short side - new in all tests since 01.01.2017 - is also part of this mark.
- React when the rider rushes through the transition without even trying to collect. If there's no separate mark for the transition, reduce the mark within extension - collective by 0.5 - 1 point.
- Perhaps also reduce the mark for the rider.
- Think also of 'rewarding' a rider with a higher mark for the transition when he very precisely bends his horse in the corners/ executes the transitions correctly.

**Canter** - description as FEI Handbook p. 68

<b>Problems:</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Proceeding in canter, showing resistance or some disunited canter strides	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Proceeding in canter through several trot steps	Below 6, depending on quality of canter	
Proceeding in canter, <b>one</b> disunited canter stride, immediately corrected	Maximum of 8, depending on quality of canter	
The mark must be reduced when the canter comes from a jogging or pacing walk (unclear transition). Think of rewarding a well performed proceed into canter: precise, uphill, high quality of canter.		
Unintentional break of pace (losing canter)	Deduction of 2 marks, however a maximum of 6	
Unintentional flying change between two movements		
Short changing behind		

Check in all cases above in which movement this error belongs, a change of the previous mark might be necessary.

Flying change after extension not on diagonal, too late, not straight	Deduction of 0.5 – 1 mark	
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### Extended canter, transition and change

Judges are often not in agreement when problems in the extended canter occur because it happens very fast and one must decide very quickly.

	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
<b>Problem 1: correct extension, broken flying change</b>		
One mark for extension, transition and change (if performed as one exercise)	Below 6, lower for hurried extension or resistance in transition/change	Appropriate deduction
Two separate marks for extension and transition/change	Mark for extension, depending on the quality. Mark for transition and change, below 5 but lower when with resistance	

	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
<b>Problem 2: horse changes in the extension, is corrected, then transition and correct change is shown</b>		
One mark for extension, transition and change (if performed as one exercise)	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Two separate marks for extension and transition/change	Mark for extension, below 5. Mark for transition/change, depending on the quality. If the transition cannot be executed from extended canter, the mark for the transition and change has to be below 7	

	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
<b>Problem 3: the horse changes by itself before the aid and far enough from the marker for the rider to correct (clearly more than 5m, FEI Handbook p.101) but hasn't been corrected</b>		
One mark for extension, transition and change (if performed as one exercise)	Below 5 and lower, depending on whether the change was correct or not	Appropriate deduction
Two separate marks for extension and transition/change	Mark for extension is reduced (not over full distance). Mark for transition and change, below 5;	

	lower when the change was broken, transition with resistance, etc.	
No zero when the line and pace is maintained. Both marks must be reduced because both movements have been affected. This is often not accurately represented.		

	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
<b>Problem 4: the horse changes at the end of the extension into disunited canter or falls into trot, no transitions, no clear flying change</b>		
One mark for extension, transition and change (if performed as one exercise)	Below 4	Below 7, exceptions depending on general quality of the test.
Two separate marks for extension and transition/change	Mark for extension depends on quality. Mark for transition and change (not correctly shown), below 3	
Zero only when no canter strides are shown throughout the entire movement.		

**Important:** in addition to the description in the Handbook -

- The flying change should be the last stride on the diagonal to see whether the horse remains straight. A change shown in the corner (too late, not straight) must affect the mark for the extended canter or - in the case of a separate mark - the mark for the transition and the change (deduction of 0.5 or 1 point).
- In GP and GPS, the transition from passage to canter mark shouldn't be given until the short side has been completed because the judge also has to assess the quality of the canter.
- The transition after a weak extension has to be marked below 7 (not coming from a real extension).

**Halt** - technical execution according to Handbook p. 18

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
No immobility, resistance in halt or through transitions	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Losing canter for some steps/breaking into canter for some strides instead of trotting out of the halt	Below 5	
Resting one leg in halt	Below 6	
Stepping clearly back	Maximum of 5 depending on quality of paces and immobility after	
Stepping slightly back (to keep balance after transition)	Maximum of 7 depending on	

	quality of paces and transitions	
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- Watch also the self-carriage, the steadiness of the contact and the poll remaining the highest point (!), not coming too low or above the bit and deduct accordingly 0.5 or 1 marks.
- Athletes not taking the reins in one hand at the salute will be penalised with the deduction of 2 marks from the total. (Art. 430, 2. FEI Dressage Rules)

**Half walk pirouette/turn on the haunches** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 160

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Stuck behind for some steps	Below 5	Appropriate deduction – below 7 if it happens in both pirouettes
Stuck behind for 1 step	Below 6	
Clearly not in four beat throughout	Below 5	
Lost four beat in second part	Below 6	
Clear outside flexion	Below 6	

- Watch also the activity, correct bend and flexion, uphill tendency, forward tendency, size and that the horse does not escape with the hind legs to either the inside or the outside.
- Make sure that the rider executes the walk pirouette out of collected walk and finishes in clear collected walk. Then proceeds in canter directly out of the walk pirouette (junior test) or a walk pirouette without some clear walk steps before/after the pirouette (e.g. in a Freestyle) has to lead to a mark below 6.

**Simple change of leg** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 95

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Horse changes in counter canter (and then changes from left to left, so no change)	Below 5 or even lower, depends on severity of problem (e.g. resistance)	Appropriate deduction - below 7 if the mistake happen more than once
Horse takes the incorrect lead (so no change)	Below 5 or even lower, depends on severity of problem (e.g. resistance)	
Both transitions with trot steps into and out of the walk	Below 5	
One transition out of/into canter shows some trot steps	Below 6	
Walk sequence not in four beat, pacing, jogging	Maximum 5	

Only one step of walk	Maximum 5	
Too many steps of walk (equalling a change of difficulty)	Deduction of 2 marks, maximum 6	

**Volte/circle/serpentine** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 108

**Important:** in addition to the description in the Handbook -

**Volte (8 or 10 m)** - the accuracy: correct size in required place, shape. Deduct 0.5 - 1 point for imprecise riding. A volte in counter canter in a freestyle cannot replace the compulsory movement volte in true canter.

**Half Volte (10 m)** - the accuracy of 10 m half volte (the radius is only 5 m), the straightness on the centre line and the correct change of bend and flexion. Deduct 0.5 - 1 point for imprecise riding.

**Circle (20 m)** - the accuracy of the circle line and the 10 m radius in half circles (often too flat). Deduct 0.5 - 1 point for imprecise riding.

**Serpentine** - the accuracy: starting/ending at the middle of the short side, cutting first and last corner, equality and positioning of the loops, correct change of bend and flexion. Deduct 0.5 - 1 point for imprecise riding.

**Rein back** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 115

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Clear resistance, out of control	Below 4	Appropriate deduction
Multiple mistakes; very hurried, no clear immobility, steps not clearly diagonal and clearly incorrect number	Below 5	
No immobility at all in halt	Below 5	
Unclear transitions, breaking into canter instead of trot	Below 5	
Halt short, not established	Deduction of up to 2 marks depending on quality of rein back, maximum 6	
Stepping forward after halt		
Rein back clearly not diagonal throughout	Below 5	
Rein back not fully diagonal	Maximum 6, depending on severity of problem	
Horse dropping poll, nose behind vertical or slightly above bit	Deduction of up to 2 marks, however maximum 6	

**Lateral movements** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 121

Leg yielding, shoulder in, travers, renvers, half pass

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Breaking the pace (some walk or canter during movement), not immediately corrected	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Clearly uneven throughout the whole movement	Below 5	
Some loss of rhythm, a few irregular steps caused by lack of balance	Deduction of 1 – 1.5 marks. Maximum of 6	

When irregularities occur within the lateral exercises, the collective mark for submission will be diminished.

The collective mark for paces, however, won't be affected providing the horse remains regular on circles and straight lines and corners.

**Important:** in addition to the description in the HB -

**Shoulder in** - the rider should straighten his horse before the corner. However, not before a volte or a diagonal line.

**Half-pass** (trot and canter) - watch that the half pass begins and ends at the markers prescribed and deduct 1 - 1.5 points for inaccurate start/finish which often makes the execution of the movement itself or of the following movement easier. Too early an arrival (more than 5 m) changes the degree of difficulty of the movement as it:

- is a wrong execution (too steep, avoiding to ride forward - sideways), e.g. in PSG or YRs tests, trot half passes clearly arriving before G
- gives more time to prepare the next movement, e.g. in PSG the canter half pass right arriving at R or shortly after R (instead of one stride before M) which allows some additional strides to prepare the change. Also, too early beginning of the trot half passes in the GPS or the canter half passes in Inter II/ u25GP.

**Canter zig zag** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 153

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Two or more counting mistakes	Below 5	Below 7
Two or more broken flying changes	Below 5	
Clear loss of canter (FEI Handbook p157)	Below 5	
Two changes short behind (FEI Handbook p.157) or one broken change	Below 6	



One counting mistake	Below 6, depending on quality of zig zags	Appropriate deduction
Zig zags not symmetrical, not from/to quarterline	Deduction of 0.5 – 1.0 mark	

- Trot zig-zags generally have to be shown 5m sideways to both sides. Watch whether the rider performs the zig-zags to both quarter lines and deduct 0.5 - 1.0 mark for imprecise riding if not.
- The last change in a canter zig-zag has to be at G, even if the zig-zags have been finished earlier. However, the judge should diminish the mark if the zig-zags are generally badly placed, not equidistant from the centre line, too steep or hardly sideways. Also if the riders changes the flexion too early, sometimes two strides before he changes the direction.

#### **Flying change of leg** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 174

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Not shown, zero is the only possible if the horse does not show any canter before/after the change	1 or 0	Below 6
Late behind/in front (disunited) for several strides	Below 3	Appropriate deduction
Late behind/in front for one stride	Below 5	
Change visibility not on the aids	Deduction of minimum 1 mark, depends on promptness	

Watch the execution of the flying change at the marker prescribed and deduct 0.5 - 1 mark for imprecise riding if the rider executes the change on purpose clearly too early/ too late.

#### **Flying changes in sequences** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 180

Make a difference between:

- slight deficiencies (one croup high, one change shorter, 1 x hind legs parallel)
- mistakes (late behind/in front for...strides, break within the changes, break of pace). Deficiencies must diminish the mark, with regard to the general quality of the changes.

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Two and more mistakes (faulty change and/or in numbers)	Below 5	Below 7 if it occurs in both sequences
One counting mistake or one change short behind	Maximum six, depending on quality and number of changes	Appropriate deduction
One disunited change or two and more changes short behind/hind legs jumping together (worse if the faulty changes are all to the same side)	Below 6, depending on quality and number of changes	
Clear loss of canter within the sequence	Below 5	
Short break before/after the sequence of changes	Below 6, depending on quality	
<b>Problem in numbers</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	
One tempi changes: two or more than required (very high quality) Several more than required	Maximum 6 Below 5	Appropriate deduction
One tempi changes: Two less than required (very high quality) Two less than required (limited quality)	Below 6 Below 5	

Think about:

- Who made the mistake? Did the rider miscount or did the horse not react on the aids - which is worse
- The relation of the missing changes to the required number. Missing two out of three is clearly worse than missing two out of 15.

**Canter pirouette** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 167

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Horse changes, remaining disunited for some strides, trots out	Below 3	Appropriate deduction
Horse changes into, during, out of pirouette	Below 5	
Horse breaks canter rhythm/falls momentarily into trot/walk	Below 5	
Loss of control, full pirouette in three to four strides	Below 5	
Describing small circle/turning around the centre	Below 5, or lower depending on size	

Hindlegs clearly jumping together throughout	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Hindlegs clearly jumping together several times	Below 6	
Horse changes shortly before pirouette when being collected or shortly afterward but is immediately corrected (balance problem)	Below 6, depending on quality of the pirouette	
Horse clearly flexed/bent in the wrong direction	Below 6, depending on how wrong the flexion is	

**Piaffe** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 194

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
<b>With the rhythm</b>		
Severe resistance (badly rearing, out of control)	Below 3	Below 5
Horse breaks piaffe after a few steps, canters or falls into walk	Maximum 3	Below 6 if shown more than once
Short break of rhythm, steps clearly not diagonal	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Momentary loss of rhythm, steps not always diagonal	Below 7, depending on severity of problem	
<b>Too much forward</b>		
Advancing for more than 4 – 5m, showing half steps	Below 5, lower if travelling even more	Appropriate deduction
Travelling approximately 3 – 4m	Below 6	
Travelling approximately 2m	Deduction of 1 -2 marks	
<b>Number of steps</b>		
Only showing very few piaffe steps (only slightly indicated)	Below 3	Below 6 if shown more than once
Showing clearly not enough steps	Below 5	
Not quite enough piaffe steps (less than 10 if 12 – 15 are required)	Below 7, depending on quality	Appropriate deduction
<b>Problems with balance</b>		
Some clear steps backwards, clear backward tendency	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Extreme balancing from side to side, very crooked, drifting sideways or extreme crossing of the front or hind legs	Below 6, depending on severity of problem	
Momentary loss of forward tendency, one step back	Below 7, depending on quality of piaffe	

**Piaffe in Inter A, B and Inter II** - see Guidelines for the evaluation of piaffe in Inter A/B, Stephen Clarke 2014

Regular, highly expressive piaffe steps that travel forwards one metre (Inter II) or two metres (Inter A/B) can be rewarded with a (very) high mark as it's allowed to advance for up to one or two metres.

However, if the piaffe is shown 'more or less in place' as in the GP, and is performed in an 'excellent' way, judges should be prepared to give the maximum score as the Guidelines only state that it's allowed to advance or up to two metres, not state that the piaffe 'must' advance two metres.

### **Piaffe pirouette**

A piaffe pirouette is judged as piaffe. It can be shown in many ways; from 90° - 360° or as a fan with changes of direction. A piaffe pirouette which is not correctly executed should not be regarded as a difficulty.

More than 360° in one direction is not recommended in a well-balanced choreography.

Correct execution:

- As for piaffe
- The horse turns around the inside hind leg, radius as small as possible, not more than half a metre
- Maintenance of same level of activity and elasticity of back and steps
- Very slight flexion/bend to the direction of the movement required
- If possible, a quarter or half piaffe pirouette should be shown to both sides to prove the horse is well trained

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Refer to mistakes in the piaffe, but in addition, given that the piaffe is technically correct:		
Turning around the middle, escaping quarters, stepping clearly sideways, backwards or too much forward, too large	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Outside flexion, lacking bend	Below 6, depending on severity of problem	

**Passage** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 188

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Technical mark</b>	<b>Coll mark submission</b>
Completely irregular throughout	Below 4	
Insufficiently regular, clearly uneven steps	Below 5	

behind or in front		Appropriate deduction
Trot like, lacking cadence throughout	Below 5	
Some steps with double beat, slightly uneven steps behind/in front	Below 6	
Almost walking behind	Below 6	
Badly crossing front or hind legs/badly swaying	Below 6, depending on the severity of problem	

When irregularities occur within piaffe/passage, the collective mark for **submission** will be diminished. The collective mark for paces, however, will not be affected.

### Passage half pass

A half pass in passage is judged as passage. It can be shown as single half passes in one direction or as a 'zig-zag'. It should be executed at least five metres sideways to make it recognisable. A passage half pass which is not correctly executed shouldn't be regarded as a difficulty.

Correct execution:

- As for passage
- Slight but uniform flexion/ bend, slightly crossing legs
- If possible, a half pass in passage should be shown to both sides

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Refer to mistakes in the piaffe, but in addition, given that the piaffe is technically correct:		
Loss/change of flexion/bend, tilted head, quarters leading	Below 7, depending on severity of problem	Appropriate deduction
Not crossing at all, not far enough sideways	Below 6, depending on severity of problem	

**Passage-piaffe-passage transitions** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 200

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Severe resistance, jumping out of piaffe (take care to observe whether or not the subsequent passage starts from the marker described and deduct accordingly)	Below 4	Appropriate deduction
Both transitions into and/or out of piaffe fail	Below 4	

Totally under defined, leading to/coming from a 'half steps piaffe'	Below 5	
Some loss of rhythm/regularity in one transition	Below 6	

Watch the passage/piaffe/passage transitions in connection with piaffe or passage-

- If a piaffe is really travelling, the transition isn't clearly defined and cannot be more than maximum one point higher than the piaffe
- Imprecise riding of transitions can lead to multiple deductions of points, e.g. the piaffe is clearly not shown at the marker prescribed (deduction of marks), the subsequent passage is clearly too short (deduction of marks)
- If the horse loses the last passage on the centre line, the mark for the halt has to be affected as there is no transition passage - halt.

**Other transitions from/to passage** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 205

Problem	Technical mark	Coll mark submission
Transition to passage from clearly lateral walk	Below 6	Appropriate deduction
Transition to passage from tense collected walk	Below 6	
Transition to passage from jogging walk (diagonal footfall)	Below 5	
Transition passage to extended trot to passage, one transition fails completely (e.g. horse breaks into canter)	Below 5	
Transition passage to canter – strike off into some disunited canter strides	Below 5	
Transition passage to canter – strike off to one disunited canter stride, immediately corrected	Maximum 6, depending on quality of canter	

**Give and retake the reins** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 223

In the 'give and retake of the reins', a clear release of the contact must be shown, otherwise it has to be marked below 5.

**Let the horse stretch on a long rein** - technical execution according to FEI Handbook p. 223

If there is no visible lengthening and stretching of the frame in a forward-downwards direction the score must be below 5. Take care to observe whether the rider retakes the reins smoothly and without any resistance from the horse.

**Generally important**

It must be noted that the rider is only allowed to have one attempt at any of the movements, i.e. circling away in a case of resistance in order to make a second attempt, isn't allowed and will be penalised by giving an error of course. **Only the score for the first attempt will count.**

Transitions out of a second attempt movement, e.g. a piaffe, cannot be considered. Even if the 1st transition has been shown correctly, the overall mark for the transitions has to be very low.

## APPENDIX 3

### Useful judging terms

Above the bit:	A head position in which the horse avoids acceptance of the contact by putting its head forward and upward.
Activity	Energy, vigour, liveliness particularly of the hindquarters.
Against the hand	The horse pushes against the contact by becoming rigid or unyielding in the neck and poll and / or jaw, although the head carriage may appear superficially correct.
Balance	Relative distribution of the weight of horse and rider upon the fore and hind legs (longitudinal balance) and the left and right legs (lateral balance). The horse is in good balance when the weight is distributed evenly left and right and, depending on the stage of training, sufficiently towards the hind legs so that it can work with light and mobile shoulders.
Behind the bit	An evasion when the horse draws back from the bit and will not allow a contact. The nose usually comes behind the vertical.
Behind the leg	Not willingly forwards from the seat and leg aids.
Behind the vertical	The line of the nose comes behind the vertical
Bend	The horse's body appears to form a uniform curve from head to tail. Faulty bend is when the bend is only in the neck or is in the wrong direction.
Blocked	Stiffness and rigidity in the horse's body, which stops the creation of a forward elastic connection to the bit.
Broke	When the horse changes paces against the aids of the rider i.e. jogs while walking or falls out of canter.
Broken neckline	The neckline no longer forms a smooth arc because of excessive flexion between some vertebrae.
Poll low	The poll is no longer the highest point of the neck.

Cadence	A well-marked rhythm and appropriate tempo enhanced by a high level of impulsion creating a longer moment of suspension in trot and canter.
Canter flat	The canter lacks energy and height to each step.
Closed	A halt is said to be closed when the hind legs are underneath the horse and the weight evenly balanced over all four legs.
Collection	Collection is the increased activity of supple hind legs stepping forwards and under the horse's body for better engagement.
Confidence	The self-assurance with which a horse performs, demonstrating trust in its rider.
Connection	See throughness.
Contact	The elastic connection from the rider's hands to the horse's mouth.
Crookedness	Forefeet are not aligned with the hind feet on curved or straight lines. Falling out through the shoulder or bringing the hind quarters in to avoid engagement.
Croup high	The croup of the horse is high relative to the forehand.
Disobedience	Willful determination to avoid what is asked or to do what is not asked.
Disunited	The horse canters on one lead in front and another behind.
Earthbound	The horse does not pick his feet off the ground enough.
Elasticity	The ability of muscles to stretch and contract smoothly giving the impression of suppleness and spring.
Elevation	Heightening of the steps and/or raising of the forehand.
Engagement	Increased flexion of the joints of the hind quarters during their weight bearing phase allowing the hind legs to step further under the horse's body, thus taking more weight behind and lightening the forehand.
Expression	Increased impulsion with harmony, balance and lightness.
Falling in or out	Lateral deviation of the shoulders.
Flexion	Commonly refers to the articulation of the poll joint to left or right.
Frame	The outline of the horse.
Freedom	The reach and scope of the horse.
Fluency	The flow or smoothness of a movement or transition.
Half halt	Aids that increase the attention and balance of the horse.
Hollow	Means that the top line of the horse from the nose to the tail is concave as opposed to convex.
Hurried	Means that the tempo of the pace is too fast.
Immobility	The halt is completely still for as long as required by the rider.



Impulsion	Impulsion is the transmission of contained energy, generated from the hind legs, through an elastic and swinging back, into a powerful forwards movement with a clear uphill tendency.
Inattentive	Means that a horse isn't listening to the aids of the rider and his focus is elsewhere.
Irregular	Refers to the stride of the horse when one or more strides are in a different rhythm, or are shorter or longer than the others.
Jumping together Behind	There's insufficient or no separation of the hind legs in canter. Usually in flying changes, canter pirouettes or half passes.
Laboured	Usually referred to canter strides when rather slow and inactive and appearing as if very hard work.
Late behind	Refers to flying changes when the hind legs change a stride after the fore legs.
Lengthening	When the stride and outline of the horse become longer.
Lightness	Can refer to lightness of the forehand or lightness of the contact.
Not through	Refers to a break in the elastic connection from hind legs over the back to a forwards elastic connection.
On the aids	Willing confident and immediate reaction to the rider's aids.
On the bit	Supple and quiet acceptance of the bit with lateral and longitudinal flexion as required.
On the forehand	Poor balance with too much weight on the forehand.
Outline	The profile or silhouette of the horse.
Overbent	There's an over-rounding of head and neck and the horse's nose is significantly behind the vertical.
Overtrack	The hind footsteps in front of the print of the forefoot.
Overtuned	Turned more than 180° in half pirouette or more than 360° in full pirouette.
Pacing	The lateral pair of legs move in unison in walk.
Pivoting	Used in reference to pirouettes, turns on the forehand or haunches when a horse turns around on a grounded or stuck foot rather than picking them up in rhythm.
Poll low	The poll is no longer the highest point of the horse.
Pushing power	The energy from the horse's hind quarters that pushes it forwards.
Quarters swinging	The quarters not under control and swinging one way or the other.
Reach	Refers to the forward extension of the fore limbs, hind limbs and/or neck.

Relaxation	Refers to the horse's calm mental state and also to the horse's physical state when there is no muscular tension beyond that needed for carriage, range and fluency. Often the two go together.
Resistance	An action by the horse against the rider, which can be momentary or more extensive.
Restricted	Held together, forcefully shortened or physically tight.
Roundness	This refers to the outline of the horse when the back is swinging upwards towards its rider as opposed to hollowing. Or the circular rather than linear action of the horses limbs.
Scope	Freedom, reach and roundness of a horse's movement.
Self-carriage	The horse carries itself in a balanced way without supporting itself on the rider's hand.
Shoulders falling out	The rider has lost control of the forehand and is allowing the horses shoulders to break, or fall out of, the true line of the curve.
Stiff	An inability, rather than an unwillingness, to flex the joints, bend around curves etc.
Suppleness	The ability to bend and flex the joints, muscles etc.
Tempo	The speed of the rhythm.
Tension	Can either refer to a mental state of anxiety and nervousness or to a physical state of tightness in certain muscles.
Tilting	When the horses head is tipped one way with one ear higher than the other.
Throughness	The supple, elastic state of the horses muscular system that allows the aids/influence of the rider to connect an unrestricted flow of energy from back to front and front to back, i.e. from the hind legs through to the riders hands and back to the hind legs.
Tracking up	The hind legs step into the print of the fore leg.
Trailing	This can either refer to the lateral work when the horse's hind legs are not sufficiently parallel to the long side or to a situation when the horse's hind legs do not step sufficiently under the horse.
Unlevel	Refers to the unequal height of steps or bearing of weight or length of stride.
Uphill	Refers to the horses balance with the forehand being higher than the croup.
Wide behind	The horses hind feet are wider than the forefeet most often in seen in piaffe, lengthening of stride in trot and in halt

## APPENDIX 4

### Frequently asked questions

**Q. What is the difference between balance, self-carriage, collection and engagement and when is it appropriate to use each of these terms?**

A. These descriptions are taken from the FEI Judges Handbook:

Balance: "Relative distribution of the weight of horse and rider on the fore and hind legs and the left and right legs. The horse is in good balance when the weight is distributed evenly left and right and sufficiently towards the hind legs so that it can work with light and mobile shoulders but depending on the stage of the horses training".

Self-carriage: "A state in which the horse carries itself in a balanced and unconstrained manner, without taking support or balancing on the rider's hand"

Collection: "Collection is the increased engagement and activity of the hind legs, with the joints bent and supple and stepping forwards under the horse's body"

Engagement: "Hind legs stepping well under the horse's body. Increased flexion of the joints of the hind quarters during its weight bearing phase. This causes a relative lowering of the hindquarters/raising of the forehead, thus shifting more of the task of load-bearing to the hindquarters".

**Q) How do you mark a horse whose freedom and impulsion is naturally limited compared to a horse that has plenty of both from nature?**

A) This answer came from a discussion at the Judges Convention in 2016;

You judge a horse according to its capabilities up to a level. If a horse is complying with the scales of training to the best of its abilities and performing the required movements well you can give them good marks in tests up to a level that do not require them to show big differences within the paces nor movements which require a high degree of impulsion.

**Q) How should we comment on and mark issues related to horses that are short in the neck or behind the vertical.**

A) These notes are taken from the earlier section on Contact. P 17. There are further helpful comments in the FEI Judges Handbook p 10.

- If the horse stays clearly behind the vertical, the technical mark for the movement cannot be satisfactory (< 6). If the horse is behind the vertical only *for a short moment*, e.g. in a transition, without being blocked in the hind legs and without resistance against the rider's hands, the technical mark for this movement and the collective mark for submission will not be seriously affected
- If one of those mistakes is *repeatedly* or *permanently* shown, also the collective mark for submission must be significantly diminished

**Q) Cadence. What exactly is it and how much should we expect to see at the different levels?**

A) This description is taken from the FEI Judges Handbook. "The marked accentuation of the rhythm and (musical) beat that is a result of a steady and suitable tempo harmonising with a springy impulsion" Cadence becomes more developed through the levels.