

*The information for this document is taken from the FEI Dressage Rules (2023), directives and guidelines currently available on the FEI website (2023), Guidelines for Marking Fundamental Mistakes in Dressage Movements 2017, FEI Dressage Handbook - Guidelines for Judging. This information has to be updated every year in accordance with the revision of Dressage Rules and other guidelines.*

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## THE TRAINING SCALE



### Origins

The Training Scale developed from the manual for the German cavalry, “Heeresdienstvorschrift H.Dv. 1912,1937,” whereas the term “Skala der Ausbildung” (literally translated “Training Scale”) only

started being used in the 1950s. The H.Dv.12/37 named the goals and principles for the training of a horse. It provided a detailed training plan as guiding rules for the training of a military horse.

The forerunner of today's training scale is found in Siegfried von Haugk's book, "The Training of the Recruit in Horseback Riding" (1940). Haugk defines, in the appendix for instructors, the training goals in the same order as we know them in today's Training Scale.

## Purpose

The Training Scale is the most important guideline for trainers, riders and judges. It is valid for the training of young horses and more advanced horses up to Grand Prix. By following these classical principles, the general principles of dressage can be achieved.

**The Training Scale is the measure of the quality of performance and the guideline for the judges while judging a competition.**

**Throughness** - supple, elastic, unblocked, connected state of the horse's musculature that permits unrestricted flow of energy from back to front and front to back and the influences of the aids to freely go through to all parts of the horse's body;

**Connection** - state in which there is no blockage, break, or slack in the circuit that joins horse and rider into a single, harmonious elastic unit and allows the unrestricted flow of energy and influence from the rider to and throughout the horse and back to the rider.

## Step 1 "Rhythm - regularity of tempo"

The **Rhythm** is the first step of the Training Scale that should be established. The **Rhythm** is the specific sequence of the beat (footfalls) and phases of a given pace. **Regularity** is the correct sequence of footfalls. **Tempo** is the speed of **Rhythm**.

Steps and strides in each pace should cover equal distance and be of equal duration, remaining in a consistent tempo. Rhythm should be maintained in transitions within a pace as well as in turns, corners, and straight lines.

## Step 2 "Suppleness - elasticity and freedom from anxiety"

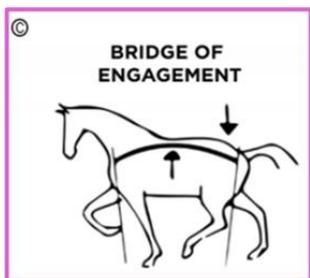
Suppleness, together with rhythm, is an essential aim of the preliminary training phase. Indications of suppleness are:

- happy expression (calmness without anxiety or nervousness);
- a quiet mouth;
- elastic, smooth, and fluent steps;
- relaxed neck;
- swinging back;
- absence of negative muscle tension;
- tail carried in a relaxed manner;

The horse's mental state goes hand in hand with its physical state. Only when the horse is physically and mentally free from tension or constraint it can work with suppleness and acquire positive muscle tone, give itself fully and accept the influence of the rider without becoming tense.

## Step 3 "Contact - acceptance of the bit and aids, self-carriage"

Contact is the soft, steady connection between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth. A correct, steady contact allows the horse to find its balance under the rider and a good rhythm in all the paces. Connection is achieved when the energy generated in the hindquarters by the driving aids flows through the whole body of the horse and is received in the bit, referred to as the “Bridge of Engagement”.



The contact to the bit must be elastic and adjustable. Acceptance of the bit is identified by the horse's quiet chewing which activates the salivary glands, so that the mouth becomes moist, and production of saliva is evident. The softly moving tongue should remain under the bit and be pink.

#### Step 4 “Impulsion - increased energy from hindquarters”

Impulsion is the transmission of controlled, propulsive energy generated from the hindquarters into the athletic movement of the eager horse. Impulsion allows the horse to move in a powerful and athletic way, to show elastic and expressive movement and is associated with a phase of suspension. Impulsion is therefore seen only in those paces that have a period of suspension (not in walk, not in piaffe).

Impulsion is measured by the horse's engagement of its hind legs and desire to carry itself forward with a lowering of the croup, elasticity of its steps, suppleness of its back, and increased lightness of the forehand.

#### Step 5 “Straightness – equal bend on both reins”

A horse is said to be straight when its forehand is in line with its hindquarters, when its longitudinal axis is in line with the straight or curved track it is following. This allows the horse to load both front legs equally, to engage both hind legs evenly, to keep the body vertical (no leaning), and this prepares the horse for collection. If the horse is straight, the hind legs push towards the centre of gravity.

The development of impulsion and straightness is essential to prepare the horse for collection and to improve suppleness and “throughness”. This process improves the lateral as well as the longitudinal balance of the horse.

#### Step 6 “Collection - engagement and balance”

A horse shows collection, when it lowers and engages its hindquarters, and shortens and narrows its base of support, resulting in lightness and mobility of the forehand. Because the center of gravity is shifted backward, the forehand is lightened and elevated. The aim of collection is to further improve the equilibrium of the horse.

The horse has "uphill" tendency. The horse's neck is raised, arched, forming a harmonious curve from the withers to the poll. The poll is giving an impression of being the highest point. The horse shows shorter, powerful steps and strides. Elevation must be the result of, and relative to, the lowering of the hindquarters. This is called **relative elevation** (the head carriage and elevation of the withers) which is a direct consequence of correct collection.

A training problem is indicated if the horse raises its neck without displacing its center of gravity to the rear and lowering the hindquarters. This is called **absolute elevation** and can, adversely affect the horse's health.

## Phases of the Training Scale

There is a logical reason for the order in which the six elements of the Training Scale are listed. The horse needs to achieve certain skills in previous step to be capable to progress to the next one. But none of the six elements of the Training Scale stands by itself. They interact and depend on one another. The individual qualities are systematically incorporated into the training process of the horse.

The six elements are divided into three overlapping training phases. The regularity of rhythm is at the base and every layer is built upon the next.

### **Phase 1: “Development of understanding & confidence”**

Focusing on the rhythm, suppleness, and contact, which form the accustoming phase. In this part of training the horse is supposed to get accustomed to the rider and his aids. This phase is also used for the warm-up in the daily work.

### **Phase 2: “Development of pushing power”**

Focusing on suppleness, connection and acceptance of the bit, impulsion, and straightness, which help to develop the driving/pushing power of the hind legs. In this phase, the horse is supposed to work more from behind and step diligently forward to the bit. This phase focuses on versatile gymnastic work to get a flexible and athletic horse.

### **Phase 3: “Development of carrying power”**

Focusing on impulsion, straightness, and collection with the aim to develop the carrying power of hind legs. The horse is supposed to bear more weight over it's hindquarters, which is mandatory for true collection and relative elevation. Both are necessary to reach higher goals in dressage training.

## PACES

The basic paces/gaits are paces given to a horse by nature. The idea of correct dressage training is to maintain their purity of the gaits and to improve the quality under the saddle. There are three recognized gaits in dressage: the four-beat walk; the two-beat trot; the three-beat canter;

There are also varieties within the gaits.

## The TROT

The trot is a two-beat pace of alternative diagonal legs separated by a moment of suspension. The following trots are recognized: working trot, lengthening of steps, collected trot, medium trot, extended trot. All trot work is executed “sitting”, unless otherwise indicated in the test.

### Important criteria

- Clear two-beat rhythm with a moment of suspension;

- Relaxed swinging back, suppleness throughout the body, elasticity of steps, freedom in the shoulders;
- Mental suppleness and freedom from anxiety;
- Light and steady contact, poll giving the impression of being the highest point;
- Engagement from behind, powerful push off, hind legs stepping under the body, natural cadence;
- Uphill tendency;
- Bending of the joints, elevation of “front knee”;
- Straightness and correct bend in figures, corners and turns;
- Groundcover in extensions;
- Elevation, overtrack and frame depending on degree of collection;
- Should be able to maintain the same rhythm and natural balance within all the variations of the trot and in all transitions;

Collected trot => hind feet step into the hoofprints of the front feet;

From working to extended => over-track must be increased;

The greater the lengthening of steps => the more lengthening of the frame;

If a rider shows collected trot instead of working trot => lower the mark a little bit (0,5) & make a clear comment;

## **Variations of the Trot**

### **Working Trot**

A pace between collected and medium trot. Hind feet touching the ground in front of the footprints of the front feet.

### **Lengthening of steps**

Variation between the working and medium trot in which the horse's training is not developed enough for medium trot. Hind feet touching the ground in front of the footprints of the front feet more than in working trot.

**Lengthening** – elongation of the stride and the outline of the horse yet maintaining the same tempo and balance as in the corresponding working pace.

**Frame** – the longer or shorter outline of the horse dictated by the relative degree of extension or collection.

### **Collected trot**

The horse, remaining on the bit, moves forward with the neck raised and arched. Hocks well engaged and flexed maintain an energetic impulsion, enabling the shoulders to move with greater mobility. The horse is demonstrating self-carriage, elasticity, and cadence. Hind feet step into the hoofprints of the front feet.

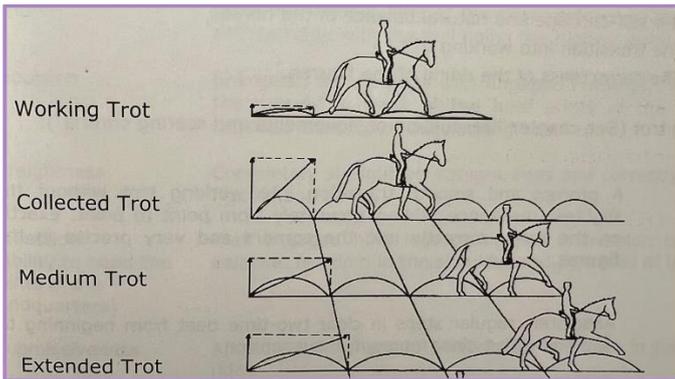
### **Medium trot**

A pace of moderate lengthening (compared to extended trot). Without hurrying, the horse goes forward with clearly lengthened steps and with impulsion from the hindquarters. The moment of suspension becomes longer. The head is carried a little more in front of the vertical than in the collected and the working trot. The head and neck are slightly lowered. Hind feet stepping clearly and more than in working trot over the footprints of the front feet.

### **Extended trot**

Covers as much ground as possible, clear difference from medium trot. Without hurrying, the steps are lengthened to the utmost as a result of great impulsion from the hindquarters. The moment of suspension becomes longer than in medium trot. Rider allows the horse to lengthen the frame (a little longer than in

medium trot) while controlling the poll. Fore feet touching the ground on the spot towards which they are pointing. The fore and hind legs reach equally forward in the moment of extension. Hind feet stepping as far as possible over the footprints of the front feet while maintaining the same tempo.



## Common problems

- Loss of rhythm, uneven steps, unlevelled steps
  - very uneven throughout – **elimination**;
  - if the horse is not eliminated by the C-judge - **below 5** (dep. on the severity);
  - not always regular, several uneven steps, tension evident, break of rhythm (1-2 steps) – **max 5**;
  - short stumble, momentary loss of regularity, one leg higher for only a few steps – **below 7**;
  - clearly irregular steps in a half-pass, shoulder-in, leg-yielding caused by lack of balance / breaking into canter for some strides – **below 5**;
  - a few irregular steps in a half-pass, shoulder-in, leg-yielding caused by lack of balance - deduction **of 1-1,5 points, max 6**;
- Lack of natural cadence, flat;
- Lack of basic impulsion - no pushing power, hurried;
- Stiff hind legs, dragging hind legs, out behind, high hocks;
- Passage-like steps;
- Wide behind in extensions;
- Too much action with front legs - not coordinated with hindlegs;
- Tight back;
- In extended trot: very tight in neck/back, no overtrack, but clear rhythm - **below 7**;

## Transitions:

- Watch both transitions including the precision in both corners;
- Do not give the mark for extension immediately at the end of the diagonal. The short side might also be a part of this mark;
- When transition mark is separate, the short side might also be part of this mark;
- If a rider rushes through the transition without even trying to collect (if there is no separate mark for transitions) reduce the mark for the extension by **0.5 - 1 point** and this will also influence Collective mark/s.
- Reward riders with a higher mark for transitions when they very precisely bend their horse in the corners and execute transitions correctly;

## The CANTER

A jumping pace in clear three-beat followed by a moment of suspension when all four feet are in the air before the next stride begins. The following canters are recognized: working canter, lengthening of strides, collected canter, medium canter, extended canter.

### Important criteria

- Regularity and maintenance of tempo;
- Natural balance (including corners and after transitions);
- Lightness, suppleness, and elasticity throughout the body;
- Engagement, active hock action, bending joints, taking weight behind;
- Cadence and spring, good groundcover;
- Inside hind leg working under the body in the direction of the center of gravity - this enables the hindlegs to carry and bring the horse uphill;
- Uphill tendency, natural self-carriage;
- Straightness (can be slightly flexed in the poll to the inside);
- The same quality on both reins;
- “Rounded” front leg;
- The canter must be “manageable”, not too big;

### Varieties within the Canter

#### Working canter

A pace between the collected and medium canter. The horse shows natural balance while remaining on the bit, poll giving the impression of being the highest point, hindquarters are actively working, demonstrating good hock action;

#### Lengthening of Strides

A variation between the working and the medium canter in which the horse’s training is not developed enough for medium canter.

#### Collected Canter

The horse remains on the bit, the neck is raised and arched. Hocks maintain energetic impulsion, enabling the shoulders to move with greater mobility, thus demonstrating self-carriage and uphill tendency. Strides are shorter than in other canters without losing elasticity and cadence.

#### Medium Canter

A pace between working and extended canter. Without hurrying the horse goes forward with clearly lengthened strides and impulsion from the hindquarters. The head is carried a little more in front of the vertical than in collected and working canter. The neck and head are slightly lowered. Active hind legs landing in front of the hoof prints of the front feet.

#### Extended Canter

The horse covers as much ground as possible. Without hurrying the strides are lengthened to the utmost. The horse moves with great impulsion from the hindquarters. Moment of suspension becomes longer than in medium canter. The frame is lengthened (more than in medium canter), but the rider continues to control the poll. The horse is gaining ground with clear difference from the medium canter. Active hind legs are landing even more in front of the hoof prints of the front feet than in the medium canter.

### The Counter-canter

The counter-canter is a balancing and straightening movement that must be executed in collection. The horse canters with correct sequence with the outside foreleg leading with positioning to the side of the leading leg.

### Essentials:

- good quality of canter, correct rhythm;
- consistency of tempo and balance, self-carriage;
- straightness;
- clearly on the bit, can have slight flexion to the outside;
- the accuracy of riding and obedience to the aids;

### Common problems

- loss of rhythm (becoming 4-beat);
- lack of natural cadence, flat;
- lack of basic impulsion - no pushing power, hurried;
- not enough uphill;
- tight back;
- losing balance and changing legs;
- tension behind, some steps together behind or changing behind, disunited;
- crooked;

### Suggestions for judging some problems in canter

- Unintentional break of pace - losing canter (immediately corrected) – **deduction of 2 points (but max a 6)**;
- Unintentional flying change between 2 movements (immediately corrected) - **deduction of 2 points (but max a 6)**;
- Shortly changing behind between 2 movements - **deduction of 2 points (but max a 6)**;
- Check in all cases above in which movement this error belongs, a change of the previous mark might be necessary;
- The transition after a weak extension must be marked **below 7**;
- Flying change after extension not on diagonal, too late, not straight - **deduction of 0,5 – 1 points**;

### Problems in transition to canter

- Proceeding into canter showing resistance or some disunited canter strides – **below 5**;
- Proceeding into canter (from walk, halt) through several trot steps - **below 6**;
- Proceeding into canter with one disunited canter stride, immediately corrected - **maximum 6 (depending on the quality of the rest of the canter in a movement)**;
- The mark must be reduced when the canter comes from a jogging or pacing walk (unclear transition);
- Reward a well performed proceed into canter: fluent, precise, uphill;

## The WALK

A marching pace in a regular and well-marked four-time beat with equal internals between each beat. The following walks are recognized: medium walk; collected walk; extended walk; free walk.

There should always be a clear difference in the attitude, frame and over-tracking in these variations.

## Important criteria

- regular and well-marked 4-beat rhythm;
- equal intervals between each beat;
- relaxation, suppleness of the back, freedom of the shoulder;
- Activity, marching (purposefulness in steps);
- The legs on the same side show “V” for a short moment;

## Extensions

- Stretching to the bit;
- Groundcover and freedom of shoulders;
- Over-track;
- Movement must flow through the whole body - elastic like a „panther“;
- Straightness and correct bend in figures, corners and turns;

## Medium Walk

- A clear, regular unconstrained walk of moderate lengthening;
- Hind feet touching the ground in front of the hoof prints of the fore feet (approx. two hoof length);
- Light, soft and steady contact with the mouth, nose more in front of the vertical than in collected walk, allowing natural movement of the head and neck, with the poll remaining the highest point;

## Collected Walk

- The horse remains on the bit with light contact, neck raised and arched, head approaches vertical position;
- Showing a clear self-carriage;
- Hindlegs engaged with good hock action, marching and energetic;
- Steps cover less ground and are higher than in medium walk, because all joints bend more markedly;
- Steps are shorter, but show greater activity than in medium walk;
- Hind feet stepping into the prints of the front feet;

## Extended Walk

- Covers as much ground as possible without losing regularity;
- Hind feet touching the ground clearly in front of the hoof prints of the fore feet (more than three hoof lengths);
- Allowing the horse to stretch out the head and neck without losing contact with the mouth and control of the poll;
- The line of the nose is clearly in front of the vertical, allowing the natural movement of the horse's head and neck.

## Free Walk

- Very relaxed and supple;
- The horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch out the head and neck;
- Hind feet touching the ground clearly in front of the hoof prints of the fore feet (more than three hoof lengths);

## Problems in walk - Loss of clear 4-beat rhythm

When the foreleg and the hind leg on the same side move on almost the same beat, the walk is getting closer to lateral movement, which might become ambling.

Extremely uneven, clear pacing – **below 4**;

Virtually pacing, mainly uneven- **below 5**;

Not always clear regularity - **below 6**;

Unequal length of steps, short-long behind or in front - **below 6**;

Ambling for a few steps after a transition - **not automatically 5**, depending on the quality of the rest of the movement;

## Other common problems

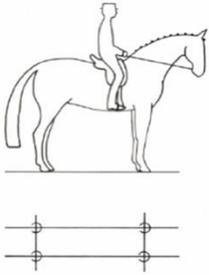
- Very hurried, tense and short steps – **below 6**;
- If very disobedient, extremely tense, jogging, passaging – **1,2 or 3**;
- Artificially raising front legs (goose-stepping) - **below 7**;
- Several jog steps (3 and more) – **below 5**;
- Some tension, 1-2 jog steps - **below 6**;
- Lacking activity - only getting slow;
- Blocked in the back, stiff shoulders;
- Overtrack and lack of collection in collected walk - **below 7**; Slight overtrack in collected walk - acceptable when the horse shows true collection, especially after a huge extended walk;
- In extended walk clearly overbent in the neck – **minus 1 – 1.5 points**;
- In extended walk not accepting the bit / remaining clearly overbent in the neck - **deduction of 1 – 1.5 points**;

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).

# MOVEMENTS

## The Halt

The horse should stand attentively, motionless, straight and square, with the weight evenly distributed over all 4 legs and show readiness to move forward at the slightest indication of the rider. Neck raised and arched with the poll as the highest point and the nose line slightly in front of the vertical.



## Entrance and Halt

What to assess:

- Consistent and regular rhythm and quality of gait(s) before and after the halt throughout;
- Optimal contact: head (mouth), neck position and function;
- Precise placement (marker) and immobile halt (min 3 seconds);
- Well balanced, hind legs under the body with 4 limbs placed squarely;
- Fluent and direct transitions in and out;
- Straight on center line;

Common Problems:

- Halt not square, not straight, not at x, not on center line;
- Halt not immobile or too short - **below 5**;
- Resistance in halt / transitions - **below 5**;
- Resting one leg during halt - **below 6**;
- Stepping clearly back - **max. 5 (depending on number of steps)**;
- Stepping slightly back (to keep balance after transition) - **max. 7**;
- Losing gate for a few strides - **below 5**;
- Problems with contact: unsteady, diving down;
- Problems in transitions: not precise, abrupt, not fluent;
- Breaking into canter for some strides instead of trotting out of the halt - **below 5**;
- Bad quality of one or both paces;

Don't give your mark too early, wait for the second pace! Watch also self-carriage, steadiness of the contact, the poll appearing to be the highest point, not coming too low / above the bit - deduct accordingly (depending on the severity).

Athletes not taking the reins in 1 hand at the salute will be penalized with the **deduction of 0,5%** from the total result of each judge.

## Give and retake the Rein(s)

The rider moves his hand(s) along the top line of the horse for some steps/strides, fully giving up the contact(!). The rider should neither throw away the reins nor move the hands hectically back and forth with each step/stride. The athlete should retake the reins softly and keep the horse steady in the neck. Athlete should not lean forward but maintain the horse's balance out of the seat. The nose-line may slightly come in front of the vertical. The goal of this movement is to show the maintenance of collection, self-carriage, balance, tempo and straightness of the horse.

Leaving it out is an error of the execution of the movement and must be penalized.

If the clear release of the contact is not shown, it must be marked - **below 5**;

## Let the horse stretch on the long Rein

The rider lengthens the reins and lets the horse's neck gradually stretch forward and downward. The contact is light but steady. The rider retakes the reins smoothly and without any resistance from the horse. The rider should not push the horse on the forehead but maintain the natural balance of his horse.

Leaving this exercise out is an error of the execution of the movement which must be penalized. The goal of this movement is to show the maintenance of rhythm, balance, tempo and natural cadence. This exercise is proof of suppleness.

If there is no visible lengthening and stretching of the frame in a forward-downwards direction (not even trying) the score must be - **below 5**.

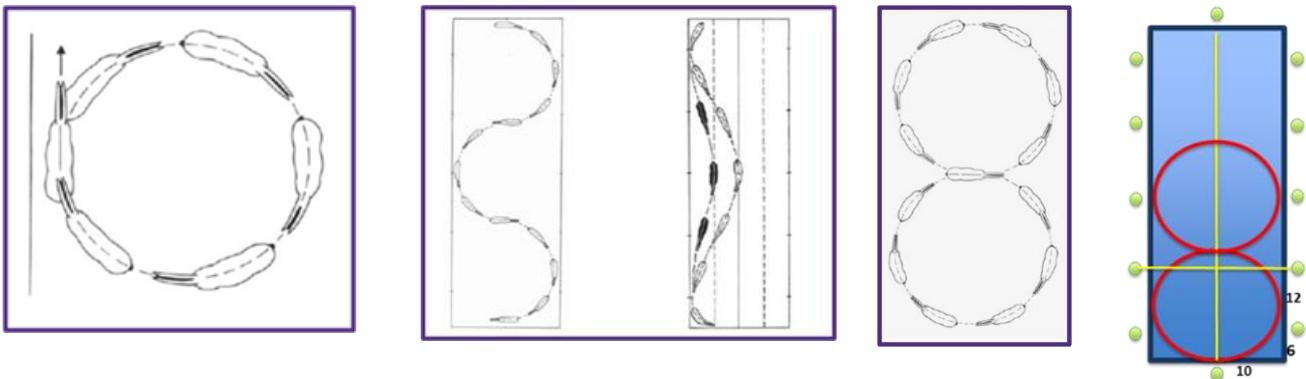
## Volte, Half-volte, Serpentine, Loop

**Volte:** the volte is a circle of 6, 8 or 10m in diameter. If larger than 10m it is called a circle.

**Serpentine:** serpentines with several loops touching the long side of the arena consist of half circles connected by a straight line. Depending on the size of these circles the straight connection varies in length.

**Serpentines with one loop** on the long side of the arena are executed to reach a 5m or 10m distance from the track.

**Figure of eight:** This figure consists of two voltes or circles of equal size as prescribed in the test, joined at the center of the eight. The rider should make his horse straight an instant before changing the direction at the center of the figure;



The voltes, serpentines and figures of eight are generally ridden in either working or collected trot or canter.

Essentials:

- consistent and regular rhythm throughout;
- collection and balance;
- quality of trot or canter - fluency, cadence, suppleness;
- optimal head, neck and back position and function;
- appropriate alignment, consistent bend, flexion, symmetrical execution, correct size of volte and loops;
- precise execution from marker to marker;
- acceptance of the outside guarding aids;

Common problems:

- losing balance / regularity;
- lack of correct bending, escaping quarters;
- tilted head;
- horse dropping poll, coming on forehand (often in the second part);
- incorrect volte size (too large / too small), volte not round;
- serpentine loops not symmetrical, not straightening the horse when crossing centerline;
- going into the corners when riding a serpentine;

Accuracy:

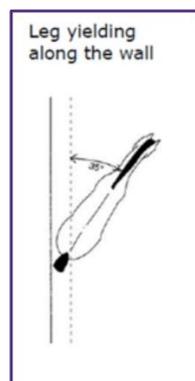
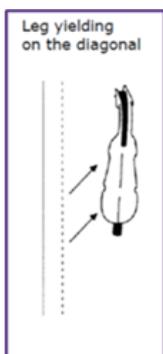
If any of these requirements are not fulfilled - **deduct 0.5 - 1 point for imprecise riding:**

- Volte (8 or 10 m) - correct size, required place, required shape;
- Half volte (10 m) - the radius is 5m(!), straightness on the center line, correct change of bend and flexion;
- Circle (20 m): the radius is 10m (often too flat);
- Serpentine – starting / ending at the middle of the short side, cutting 1st and last corner(!), equality and positioning of the loops, correct change of bend and flexion.

## The Leg-yielding

Leg-yielding is performed in working trot. The horse is almost straight, except for a slight flexion at the poll away from the direction in which it moves, so that the rider is just able to see the eyebrow and nostril on the inside. The inside legs pass and cross in front of the outside legs. Leg-yielding helps to make the horse supple, loose and unconstrained for the benefit of the freedom, elasticity and regularity of its paces and the harmony, lightness and ease of its movements.

Leg-yielding can be performed **on the diagonal**, in which case the horse should be as nearly as possible parallel to the long side of the arena, although the forehand should be slightly in the advance of the hindquarters. It can also be performed **along the wall**. In which case the horse should be at the angle of about 35 degrees to the direction in which it is moving.



Essentials:

- maintaining regularity in trot;
- quality of trot - fluency, cadence, suppleness;

- correct contact;
- straightness with only a slight positioning of the poll away from the direction of the movement;
- the clear crossing of the inside legs over the outside legs;
- the obedience to the aids;

Common problems:

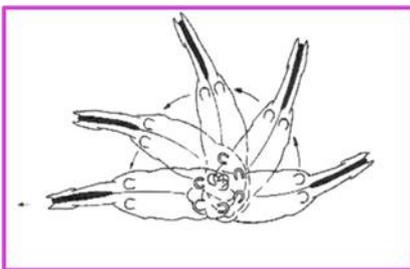
- Hurried and flat or getting slow;
- Lack of freedom and suppleness;
- On the forehand, getting tilted;
- Not consistently sideways;
- The body is not straight, some bending, escaping through the shoulders;
- Not parallel enough, haunches trailing;
- not from point to point, lacking accuracy - **deduction of 1- 1.5 points**;
- Breaking pace for 1-2 strides immediately corrected - **below 6**;
- Breaking pace for several strides - **below 5**;
- Clearly uneven throughout the whole movement - **below 5**;
- Some loss of rhythm, a few irregular steps caused by a lack of balance - **deduction of 1 - 1.5 points, maximum 6**;

## Walk half-pirouette and turn on the haunches

The half-pirouette is a turn of 180 degrees executed on 2 tracks, with a radius equal to the length of the horse and the forehand moving around the haunches. The forefeet and the outside hind foot move around the inside hind foot. The inside hind leg describes a circle as small as possible. The horse is slightly bent in the direction in which it is turning, maintaining the exact sequence and timing of footfalls of walk.

Half-pirouette is executed out of and into collected walk. When the horse exits the half-pirouette, it returns to the initial track without crossing the hind legs.

Turn on the haunches is executed out of and into medium walk (must be prepared by half halts to shorten the steps). It has a larger radius but rhythm, contact, activity, straightness are the same as in half-pirouette.



Essentials:

- maintaining regular 4-beat rhythm,
- maintaining fluency, collection, self-carriage, uphill tendency throughout;
- taking weight behind, active steps;
- poll giving the impression of being the highest point;
- consistent flexion and bend;
- when two are performed - symmetrical placing;
- Correct size:

- half-pirouette as small as possible - radius equal to the length of the horse;
- turn on the haunches – inside hind leg describes a circle of  $\frac{1}{2}$  m;

Common problems:

- Getting large or backward tendency;
- Lack of rhythm, clearly not in 4-beat throughout - **below 5**;
- Lost 4-beat in the 2nd part - **below 6**;
- Stuck behind for 1 step - **below 6**;
- Stuck behind for some steps - **below 5**;
- Breaking gate - **below 5**;
- Clear outside flexion - **below 6**;
- Lack of fluency;
- Lack of taking weight, high behind, turning around the middle, escaping quarters;
- Contact problems: on the forehand, outside flexion, tilted head, against the hand;
- Execution not clearly at marker prescribed;

Watch the activity, correct bend and flexion, uphill tendency, forward tendency, size, not escaping with the hind legs to either inside or outside.

Walk half-pirouette must be executed out of and into clear collected walk. Proceed into canter directly out of the walk pirouette (JUN test) must lead to a mark - **below 6**;

## The Rein-back

A rearward diagonal movement with a two-beat rhythm but without a moment of suspension. Each diagonal pair of legs is raised and returned to the ground alternatively with the forelegs aligned on the same track as hindlegs. After completing the required number of steps backward the horse moves forward immediately in the required pace. The steps are counted as each foreleg moves back. In tests where a rein back of one horse's length is required, it should be executed with 3 or 4 steps.

### What to assess:

- consistent and regular diagonal rhythm throughout;
- precise placement and straightness;
- immobile halt with 4 legs placed squarely;
- correct number of well defined, controlled diagonal steps;
- optimal flexion of front and hind limb joints;
- correct head (mouth), neck and back position, nose line on the vertical, poll stays the highest point;
- willingly performed, fluent and direct transitions;
- hind legs carry weight;

### Common Problems:

- clearly not diagonal throughout - **below 5**;
- not fully diagonal – **max. 6** (depending on the severity of the problem);
- loss of collection, hind legs not taking weight, stepping out, getting wide, dragging feet;
- contact problems: overbent, nose line behind vertical, tilted or short in neck, open mouth, dropping poll, slightly above the bit - **deduction up to 2 points, max. 6**;

- hurried, stiff, hollow back, crooked;
- no immobility at all in the halt - **below 5**;
- halt too short / stepping forward after halt - **deduction up to 2 points, max. 6**;
- incorrect number of steps;
- Clear resistance, out of control - **below 4**;
- Unclear transitions / breaking into canter instead of trot - **below 5**;
- Combination of 2 or more mistakes (hurried, no clear immobility, steps clearly not diagonal, incorrect number of steps) - **below 5**;

## The Shoulder-in

Performed in collected trot. The horse is ridden with a slight but uniform bend around the inside leg of the rider, maintaining engagement and cadence and a constant angle of approximately 30 degrees. Inside foreleg passes and crosses in front of the outside foreleg. The inside hind leg steps forward under the horse's body following the same track of the outside foreleg, with the lowering of inside hip. The horse is bend away from the direction in which it is moving.

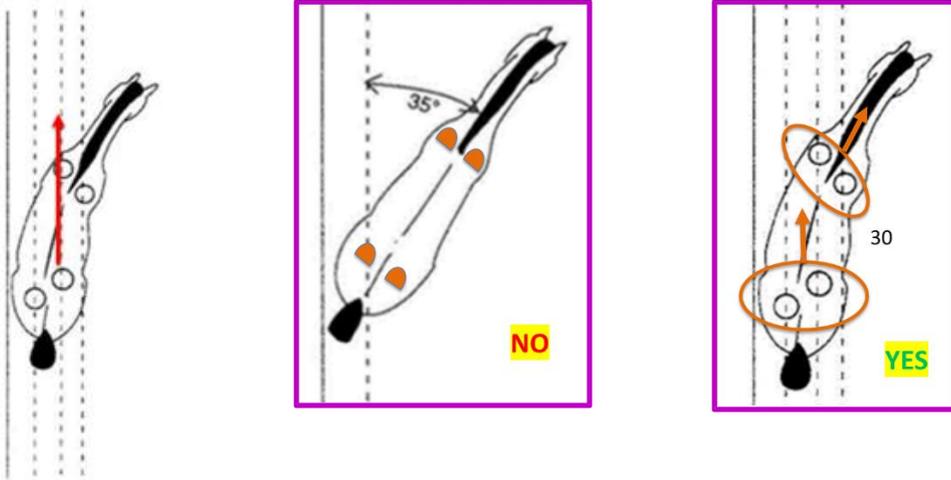
Can be performed along the wall, centerline, quarterline. At the end of the movement, the forehand is brought back on the track (for example, before the corner) unless the shoulder is followed by a circle or a diagonal.

### Essentials:

- consistent and regular rhythm throughout;
- quality of trot: flow, cadence, suppleness, collection, balance;
- constant angle, consistent bend/flection;
- appropriate alignment (front limb placement relative to hind limb);
- optimal head, neck, back position and function;
- precise execution from marker to marker;
- clear and fluent beginning and ending;

### Common problems:

- Starting / ending not exactly at the required marker - **deduction of 1- 1.5 points**;
- Clearly uneven throughout the whole movement - **below 5**;
- Some loss of rhythm (few irregular steps) - **deduction of 1 - 1.5 points, maximum 6**;
- Breaking pace for several steps / strides, not immediately corrected - **below 5**;
- Losing flow, cadence, collection, balance;
- Not enough bend / losing bend;
- Too much angle;
- Problems with contact: tilted head, wrong flexion, tight in neck or fully against the rider's hand;
- Hurried or passage-like steps;
- Falling on (inner) shoulder;
- Hindlegs crossing;



## The Half-pass (trot and canter)

Half-pass is a variation of travers, executed on diagonal. It can be performed in collected trot, collected canter (or passage in GP Freestyle). The horse should be slightly bent around the inside leg of the rider in the direction in which it is moving. The horse's body is nearly parallel to the long side of the arena with the forehand slightly in advance of the hindquarters. In the trot the outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. In the canter, the movement is performed in the series of forward/sideways strides.

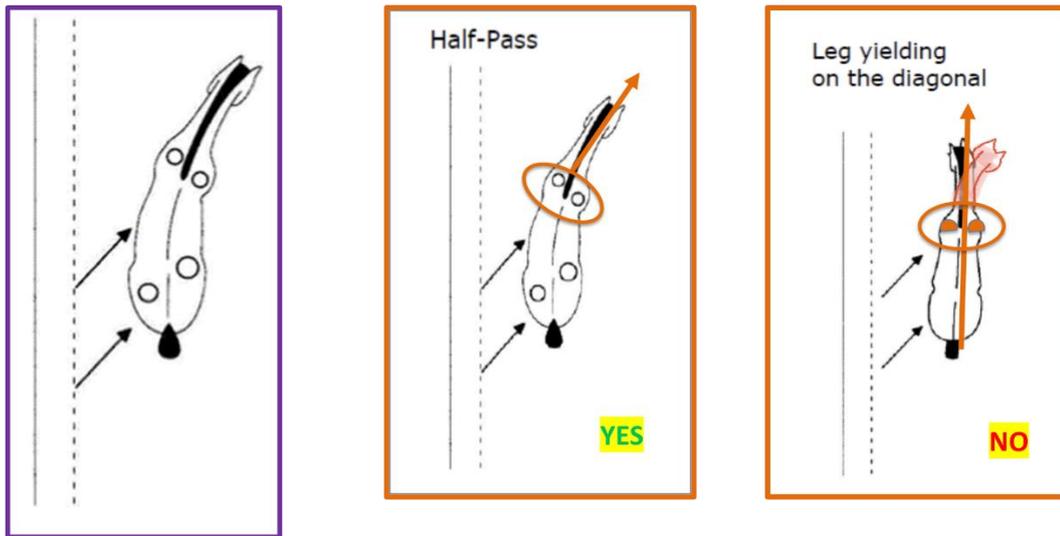
### Essentials:

- quality of trot/canter - maintaining fluently, consistent and regular rhythm, same collection, impulsion, cadence and balance throughout the whole movement;
- consistent and appropriate alignment - front limb placement relative to hind limb: shoulders slightly leading, half pass parallel to the long side;
- consistent bend, flexion;
- optimal range of movement (in trot: lateral reach and lateral crossing);
- correct contact, optimal head, neck and back position and function;
- precise execution from marker to marker;
- rider sitting in the direction of the half-pass;

### Common problems:

- Uneven throughout the whole movement - **below 5**;
- Some loss of rhythm, a few irregular steps caused by a lack of balance - **deduction of 1 - 1.5 points, maximum 6**;
- Breaking pace for several steps / strides, not immediately corrected - **below 5**;
- losing quality of the gate: fluency, cadence, suppleness, collection, balance;
- in trot: uneven, hurried, passage-like steps, falling on (inner) shoulder;
- in canter: short, not elastic strides;
- losing or changing bend (often: horses lose bend at the end);
- quarters leading;
- contact problems: wrong flexion, tilted head or poll not the highest point; other;

- starting / ending not exactly at the required marker - **deduction of 1-1.5 points** for inaccurate riding;
- sitting against the direction of the half-pass -> blocks the back of the horse.



## PRECISION & TRANSITIONS

### Execution of movements at certain points

In a movement which must be carried out at a certain point of the arena, it should be done at the moment when the athlete's body is above this point.

In transitions where the horse approaches the letter from a diagonal or perpendicular to the point where the letters are positioned the transitions must be done when the horse's nose reaches the track at the letter so that the horse is straight in the transition. This includes the execution of flying changes.

### Precision

What to assess:

- The way the rider correctly prepares the movements;
- Whether movements are executed accurately (e.g., size of voltes, correct corners, serpentines etc.);
- Whether movements are shown at the markers, on the lines prescribed;
- Whether the rider shows/keeps the required tempo;

Precision is very important and needs to be rewarded as it adds to the degree of difficulty in the test. Lack of precision always takes the mark down => starting from **minus 0,5 for** a minor fault and becoming more and more substantial depending on the severity of the problem.

Examples of lack of precision:

- cutting corners or serpentines with the horse going too deep into the corners;
- movements shown not symmetrical with respect to the center line or the middle point of the exercise;
- halt not on X, halt shorter than 3 sec;
- diagonal not straight or not aimed at the marker prescribed;
- not correct radius of a half volte/half circle (often too flat);
- size/shape of voltes not correct;
- collecting too early in the extensions;
- rushing through the transitions in trot without trying to collect;

## Transitions

Transitions can be

- within a pace;
- from pace to pace;
- from movement to movement (passage-piaffe-passage);

Aims of the transitions:

To encourage the horse to develop more engagement, to achieve more swing over the horse's back and to establish balance so the horse is able to perform movements with ease. The execution of transitions, acceptance of the aids and half-halts helps to increase the level of obedience and ability to perform promptly.

Essentials:

- the changes of pace and variations within the paces should be performed exactly at the prescribed marker;
- the cadence or activity should be maintained up to the moment when the pace or movement is changed or the horse halts;
- transitions within the paces must be clearly defined while maintaining the same rhythm and cadence (activity) throughout;
- the horse should remain light in hand, calm, and maintain correct position of the head and neck;
- the rider should show all the necessary preparation and the horse should willingly accept the aids and half halts;
- the quality of gates before / after influences the mark for transition itself.
- if there is no separate mark, the transition goes into the next exercise.

Common problems:

Transitions are often executed too early or too late. If the distance of the point of actual execution of the transition to the prescribed marker is **not more than 5m** before or after the prescribed marker it should be considered only in the mark for the transition. But if transition is executed (caused by anticipation or resistance) much too early or late (**clearly more than 5m**), then it must be considered also for the previous or following movement with the remark "not executed over the full distance". For imprecise transition deduction should start **from 0,5** and more (depending on the severity of the problem);

- Transition after a weak extension must be marked **below 7** (not coming from a real extension);
- Transitions shown not totally on required lines;
- Rushing through the transitions in trot without trying to collect;

- Loosing regularity in the transition;
- Avoiding the contact – coming behind the vertical or becoming too heavy on the reins;
- Becoming crooked during transition;

### Transition into canter

- Proceeding into canter showing resistance or some disunited canter strides – **below 5**;
- Proceeding into canter (from walk, halt) through several trot steps - **below 6**;
- Proceeding into canter with one disunited canter stride - **maximum 5**;
- The mark must be reduced when the canter comes from a jogging or pacing walk (unclear transition);
- Reward a well performed proceed into canter: fluent, precise, uphill;

## THE CONTACT

Contact is the soft, steady connection between the rider's hands and the horse's mouth. The horse should go rhythmically forward from the rider's driving aids and "seek" contact with the rider's hand, thus "going into" the contact. The horse seeks the contact, and the rider provides the contact. A correct, steady contact allows the horse to find its balance under the rider and a good rhythm in all the paces.

The poll should always give the impression of being the highest point of the neck, except when the horse is ridden forward/downward with long reins.

The contact must result from the energy of the active hind legs being transferred over a swinging back to the bit. It is totally wrong to try to obtain the contact by pulling back with the hands. This way of riding will always stop the energy coming through from behind.

Indications of a good Contact:

- The horse steps forward to the bit through a straight and supple poll;
- The horse accepts an elastic contact with a quiet mouth gently chewing the bit, the tongue is not visible;
- Contact must be steady, but light;
- The poll gives an impression of being the highest point;
- The line of the nose is slightly in front of the vertical, and in highly collected exercises at the vertical;
- In medium and extended paces there should be a visible lengthening of the frame;

Evaluating Contact:

When judging whether a horse is correctly accepting the contact or "on the bit" it is not enough to look only at the head and neck. Judges need to look at the whole horse, its position and carriage and the way it moves. When a horse is presented showing a good acceptance of the contact judges should mark in a very positive way in order to encourage good riding.

Even if there were small mistakes in the test a good correct contact must be rewarded. A faultless test where the contact is forced or showing resistance must be considered of a lesser quality.

The main contact with the horse's mouth must be through the snaffle rein with a lighter contact with the curb rein. If the rider presents a test with a curb rein hanging completely loose => deduction in the Collective Mark for General Impression or Rider's position and seat. If the rider presents a test with the main contact only being with the curb bit and the snaffle is loose, one point should be taken off every movement and deduction the Collective Mark for General Impression or Rider's position and seat.

Judges should keep in mind that problems with the contact always influence Collective mark/s.

## Problems with the Contact:

**BLOOD** - the horse must be eliminated immediately. The welfare of the horse is paramount;

**OPEN MOUTH** - **deduction from 0.5 to 2 points** each time it is observed (depending on severity);

**OVERACTIVE LIPS** is not a fault and can be ignored, if the way of going is willing and in every other way correct;

**GRINDING TEETH** is not considered a fault if the horse appears content and willing to work. Then it is not a resistance and does not need to be penalized. If the grinding is caused by tension (stiff in back, swishing of tail, etc.) => deduction of 1 point from the quality of the movement;

**TILTING** - slight tilting will result in the **deduction of 0,5 point** per movement (**1 point** where more severe);

**STRONG CONTACT** – the horse is correctly in front of the vertical, but the contact is strong, and the horse is not through enough or leaning on the bit => **at least 1 point deducted** per movement;

**AGAINST THE HAND, ABOVE THE BIT** - the horse's nose is well in front of the vertical. The horse will not flex at the poll and uses the muscles on the underside of the neck to resist the hand, while at the same time stiffening and hollowing the back => mark **not more than a 5**;

### **BEHIND THE VERTICAL**

Nose behind the vertical caused by hands used too strongly - this fault may result either from a momentary mistake in applying the aids or it may be a symptom of a long-term incorrect schooling.

Broken arch in the neck - this occurs as a result of the rider attempting to establish contact by using hands in a backward direction. The highest point of the neck is no longer the poll but a point further back, usually between the second and the third vertebrae.

Behind the bit, dropping the contact, which is not caused by strong hands - the horse is overly sensitive and refuses to accept the bit (often associated with this is a flexion at the vertebrae further down the neck rather than at the poll).

Leaning on the bit - the horse is not working sufficiently from behind, it seeks support from the rider's hands, using them as a "fifth leg".

- momentarily a little behind the vertical but the overall picture is willing and on the aids - the fault is not severe, can be ignored;
- short in neck or too deep in front for a longer time - **deduction of at least 1 point** per movement;

A momentary tightness can be neglected but a tight neck throughout the test is a serious mistake and cannot be accepted. A tight neck blocks the hindlegs!

## Problems with the Tongue

Issues with the tongue are evidence that the horse is avoiding the contact and has problems to accept the right contact through the bridle.

- tongue drawn right up and open mouth - **deduction of 0,5 - 2 points** each time it is clearly observed depending on the severity (score **not higher than 6**);

- tongue slightly visible at the side repeatedly - **1 point deducted** off the respective movement;
- tongue is hanging out to the side - score **not higher than 5 per movement**;
- tongue is clearly over the bit - **not more than 4**;
- very small piece of the tongue (some mm) slightly visible at the front of the mouth - can be ignored.  
When this becomes exaggerated - **1 or 2 points deduction** depending on severity;