

8-9 April 2013, IMD, Lausanne (SUI)

DRAFT

Review of the Freestyle judging format

1. Background

The format of the Freestyle does not make it easy to judge. The Freestyle is characterized by the most subjective judging elements among all Dressage tests and thus continuous efforts should be made to further increase its objectivity.

The artistic marks (rhythm, harmony, choreography, degree of difficulty and music) can make a huge difference in the overall judgement of a performance. If, for example, all judges give a mark of 10 for all artistic components, versus a mark of 9 for all artistic components, the difference from one judge to the other is 10% for the artistic side and 5% in the overall result.

2. Objective

To further increase consistency and accuracy in the judging of Freestyle competitions which will benefit athletes, judges and the Dressage sport in general.

3. Concerns

The format should not be further complicated due to the significant time-pressure faced by the judges during competition. Spectators want to get the results of athletes as soon as possible, meaning that a provisional score should be published shortly after the ride and not only one ride later.

4. Strategy

To conduct a test event in 2013 with several Freestyle test competitions where various new ideas can be tested and the results reported back for evaluation to the FEI Dressage Committee, the FEI Dressage Director and the FEI Dressage Judge General.

In each test competition the Ground Jury shall in a majority test a new format whereas the minority shall serve as a control group judging according to the current format (which allows a comparison of the test results against the normal results).

The following ideas are aimed to be tested:

4.1 Judging the degree of difficulty

- according to a defined catalogue of difficulties
- by asking riders to submit their Freestyle choreography (only diagrams, not video) to an appointed panel who will decide what their optimal mark for difficulty can be when they achieved a perfect test. In case of mistakes or errors, the judges only have to deduct from the optimal mark given by the experts (if execution is marked with less than 6, it is a minus).

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- 4.2 Judging the interpretation of music according to detailed criteria (following FEI consultation of music experts)
- 4.3 Judging the choreography according to detailed criteria (following FEI consultation of choreography experts)
- 4.4 Judging in pairs of 2 so that one judge awards the technical marks and the other judge the artistic marks
- 4.5 Taking the marks for "rhythm, energy and elasticity" as well as "harmony between rider and horse" over to the technical side
- 4.6 Splitting "rhythm, energy and elasticity" into three marks for
 - Walk
 - Trot
 - Canterand leave it on the artistic side OR take it over to technical side (2 tests)
- 4.7 Splitting "music and interpretation of the music" into two marks for
 - Suitability of the music to the horse
 - Interpretation of the music
- 4.8 Using smaller decimal points in the artistic part for more precision (currently only .5 possible)
- 4.9 Giving the JSP the opportunity to change marks in the Freestyle (procedural feasibility has to be checked with IT providers)
- 4.10 Merging "Choreography. Use of arena. Inventiveness" with "Music and interpretation of the music" so that there is only 1 mark for both
- 4.11 Splitting some technical marks in order to have more of them (the more items, the more precise the final result)

5. Implementation

- 5.1 FEI to establish a budget for the test event, taking into account the cost for:
 - Transport of 20 horses over a distance of 400km (200km one way to the event)
 - Transport of a minimum of 5 judges
 - Compensation for the organizer who has to arrange for setting-up the arenas, stables, etc
 - Cost for IT company (travel, working hours, IT developing costs related to the test event)
 - Meals for riders, grooms, judges, judges' assistants, arena crew, IT personnel
- 5.2 FEI to find an organizer that is willing to host a 1 day test event (expenses paid by FEI). The potential organizer has to be able to
 - accommodate 20 horses in temporary or permanent stabling
 - provide one 20x60m competition arena and one 20x60m warm-up arena
 - provide necessary arena equipment for a Freestyle dressage test (arena fencing, judges huts, etc)
 - provide at least 10 judges assistants (5 scribes and 5 computer operators)
 - provide a room for the IT company to operate

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- 5.3 FEI to contact IDRC & IDTC in order to recruit riders willing to participate in the test event with horses on Grand Prix level
- 5.4 FEI to create protocols for the various tests and contract an IT provider willing to develop the IT testing software and work at the test event