

# **FEI PARA DRESSAGE JUDGING MANUAL**

**To be considered in connection with the FEI Para Dressage Rules and the FEI Dressage Handbook Guidelines for Judging.**

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## OBJECT AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PARA DRESSAGE

Wherever possible the Para Dressage Athlete should follow the object and general principles of Dressage. However, as Athletes with impairments do not have the use of the entire body, all references to the aids must be interpreted to include the use of other parts of the body and/or appropriate and approved compensating aids (Para Dressage Rules, Art. 8416.5).

1. The object of Dressage is the development of the horse as a happy athlete in a positive mental & physical state through harmonious education, allowing the horse to be calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with the rider.

These qualities are revealed 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 transmitted through a supple back,
- The acceptance of the bridle, with throughness without any tension or resistance.

2. The Horse thus gives the impression of doing, of its own accord, what is 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 regularity of the paces is fundamental to Para Dressage.**

The walk and the trot are regular, supple and free. The canter is united, light, uphill, balanced and equal on both reins. 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 a 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 in front of the Athlete's aids, "on the bit", but it also has to accept 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 to the extension or collection of the pace, and when it accepts the bridle with a light and consistent soft submissive contact, thereby chewing the bit with a quiet, sensitive mouth. The head should remain in a steady position, as a rule with the nose line 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. It is the proof of well-developed impulsion and the ability to carry weight that enables a Horse to move with proper harmony, well-marked regularity and balance. Cadence must be maintained in all the different trot or canter exercises.

7. 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, except in transitions where the Horse approaches the letter from a diagonal or perpendicular to the point where the letters are positioned. In this case, 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.

## **BASIC PACES OF THE HORSE**

### **THE WALK:**

The walk is a marching pace in a regular and well-marked four (4) time beat with eight (8) different phases. This regularity combined with full relaxation must be maintained throughout all walk movements.

There is no moment of suspension.

When the foreleg and the hind leg on the same side are moved forwards and set down at the same time (or almost at the same time) will this lead to a serious deterioration of the pace. The walk tends to become an almost lateral movement, so called "pacing" or "ambling".

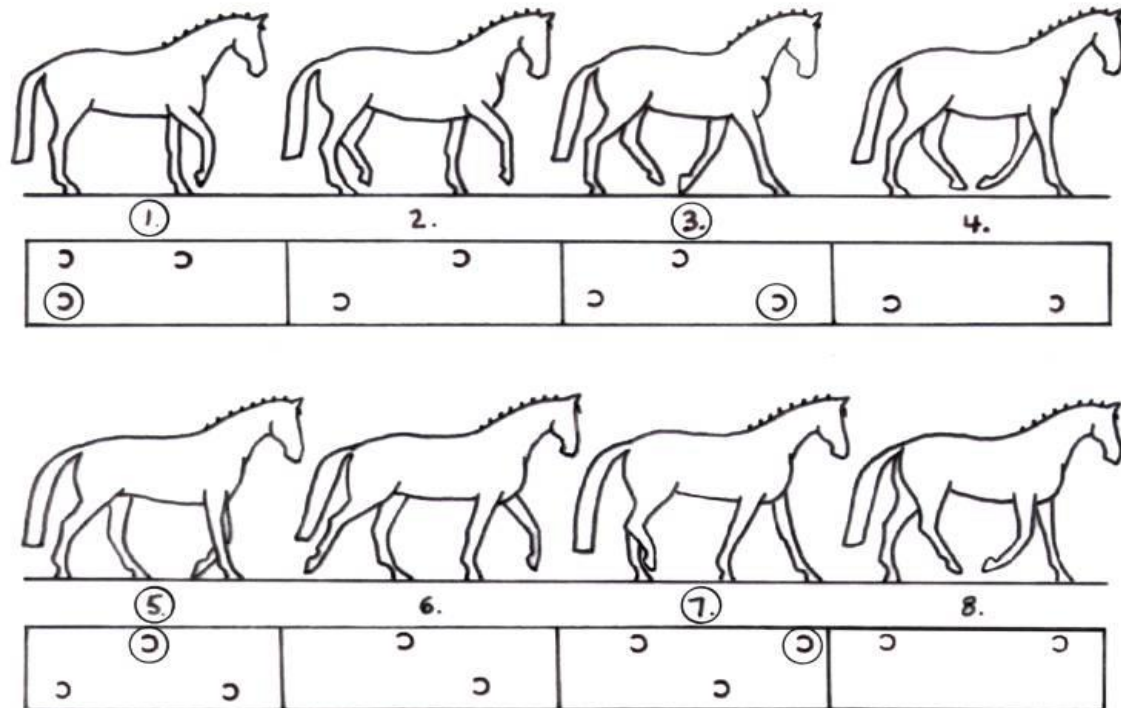
The following walk tempi are recognised: **Collected walk, Medium walk, Extended walk, and Free walk.** There should always be a clear difference in the attitude and overtracking in these variations.

**Collected walk.** The Horse remains "on the bit", moves resolutely forward, with its neck raised and arched and showing a clear self-carriage. The head approaches the vertical position and a light contact is maintained with the mouth. The hind legs are active and engaged with good hock action. The pace should remain marching and vigorous, the feet being placed in regular sequence. The steps are shorter, higher and more active than in medium walk, because all joints bend more markedly. Ideally, the hind feet do not track over the footprints of the forefeet.

**Medium walk.** A clear, regular walk of moderate lengthening. The Horse, remaining "on the bit", walks energetically but relaxed with even and determined steps, the hind feet touching the ground in front of the hoof prints of the forefeet. The Athlete maintains a light, soft and steady contact with the mouth, allowing the natural movement of the Horse's head and neck.

**Extended walk.** The Horse, showing utmost freedom of shoulders, covers as much ground as possible, without haste and without losing the regularity of the steps. The hind feet touch the ground clearly in front of the hoof prints of the forefeet. The Athlete allows the Horse to stretch out head and neck (forwards and downwards) without losing contact with the mouth and control of the poll. The nose must be clearly in front of the vertical.

**Free Walk.** The free walk is a pace of relaxation in which the Horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch out head and neck. The degree of ground cover and length of steps, with the hind feet stepping clearly in front of the footprints of the front feet, are essential to the quality of the free walk.



The walk is a pace in four (4)-beat rhythm with eight (8) phases.

(Numbers in circles indicate the beat).

## **THE TROT:**

The trot is a two (2)-beat pace of alternate diagonal legs (left fore and right hind leg and vice versa) in four (4) different phases, separated by a moment of suspension.

The quality of the trot is judged by general impression, i.e. the regularity and elasticity of the steps, the cadence and impulsion in collection as well as groundcover and impulsion in extension. This quality originates from a supple back and well-engaged hindquarters, and from the ability to carry and maintain the same rhythm and natural balance in all variations of the trot.

The trot, always with free, active and regular steps, should be moved into without hesitation or haste.

The following trot tempi are recognised: Collected trot, Working trot, Lengthening of steps, Medium trot, and Extended trot.

**Collected trot.** The Horse, remaining "on the bit", moves forward with the neck raised and arched. The hocks, being well-engaged and flexed, must maintain an energetic impulsion, enabling the shoulders to move with greater mobility, thus demonstrating complete self-carriage and elevation. Although the Horse's steps are shorter than in the other trots, rhythm, elasticity and cadence are not lessened.

**Working trot.** This is a pace between the collected and the medium trot, in which the training of the Horse is not yet developed enough and ready for collected movements. The Horse shows

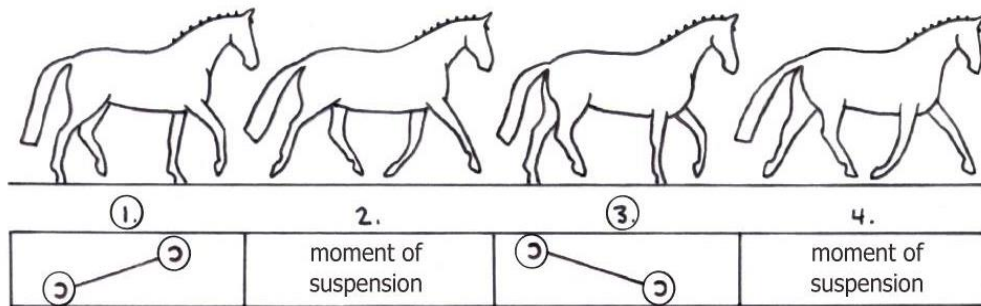
proper balance and, remaining "on the bit", goes forward with even, elastic steps, well-activated hind legs, good hock action and a supple, swinging back. The expression "good hock action" underlines the importance of an impulsion originating from the activity of the hindquarters.

**Lengthening of steps.** In some Para Dressage Tests, "lengthening of steps" is required. This is a variation between the working and medium trot.

**Medium trot.** This is a pace of moderate lengthening compared to the extended trot but allowing the front legs to still be "rounder" than at the latter. Without hurrying, the Horse goes forward with clearly lengthened steps generated by the impulsion from the hindquarters and through a supple back. The Athlete allows the Horse to carry the head a little more in front of the vertical than at the collected and the working trot, to lengthen the neck and to open the frame accordingly. The steps should be even, and the whole movement uphill, balanced and unconstrained.

**Extended trot.** The Horse covers as much ground as possible. Without hurrying, the steps are lengthened to the utmost as a result of great impulsion from the hindquarters. The Athlete allows the Horse to lengthen the frame whilst controlling the poll. The forefeet should touch the ground on the spot towards which they are pointing. The movement of the fore and hind legs should reach equally forward in the moment of extension. The whole movement should be well balanced and unconstrained. The transition into the extension should be softly developed; the transition to collected trot should be smoothly executed by taking more weight on the hindquarters, thereby maintaining rhythm, self-carriage and cadence

Para Athletes in all Grades may execute all trot work "sitting" or "rising". It is also allowed to combine both during the same test.



The trot is a pace in two (2)-beat rhythm with four (4) phases.

(Numbers in circles indicate the beat).

## **THE CANTER:**

The canter is a three (3)-beat pace in six (6) phases where, in canter to the right, for example, the footfall is as follows: left hind, simultaneously right hind and left fore, right fore, followed by a moment of suspension with all four (4) feet in the air before the next stride begins.

The quality of the canter is judged by the general impression, i.e. the regularity and lightness of the strides and the uphill tendency, the impulsion and cadence originating from a supple back and well-engaged hind legs with active hock action. The canter should be equal on both reins maintaining the same rhythm and a natural balance, even after a transition from one canter to another. The Horse should always remain straight on straight lines and correctly bent on curved lines. Unlike in trot, a slight flexion of the poll to the inside is allowed on a straight line.

The canter, always with light, active, cadenced and regular strides, should be moved into without hesitation or haste.

The following canter tempi are recognised: Collected canter, Working canter, Lengthening of strides, Medium canter, and Extended canter.

**Collected canter.** The Horse, remaining "on the bit", moves forward with the neck raised and arched. The hocks, being well engaged, maintain an energetic impulsion, enabling the shoulders to move with greater mobility thus demonstrating self-carriage and an uphill tendency. The Horse's strides are shorter than in the other canters, without losing rhythm, elasticity and cadence.

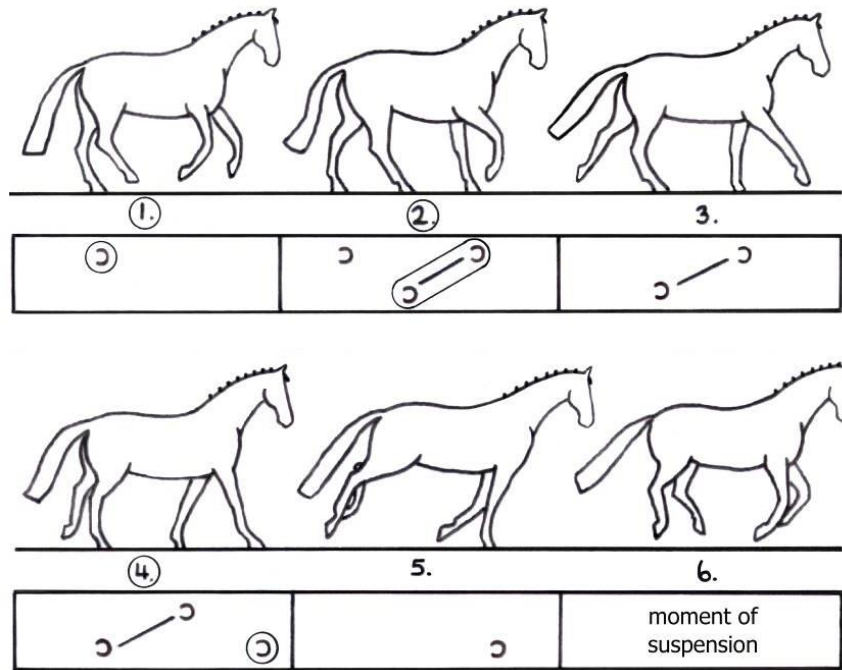
**Working canter.** This is a pace between the collected and the medium canter, in which the training of the Horse is not yet developed enough and ready for collected movements. The Horse shows natural balance while remaining "on the bit", and goes forward with even, light and active strides, good hock action and uphill tendency. The expression "good hock action" underlines the importance of an impulsion originating from the activity of the hindquarters.

**Lengthening of strides.** In some Para Dressage Tests "lengthening of strides" is required. This is a variation between the working and medium canter.

**Medium canter.** This is a pace between the working and the extended canter. Without hurrying, the Horse goes forward with clearly lengthened strides and impulsion from the hindquarters. The Athlete allows the Horse to carry the head a little more in front of the vertical than at the collected and the working canter, to lengthen the neck and to open the frame accordingly. The strides cover more ground than in working canter and should be uphill, balanced and unconstrained.

**Extended canter.** The Horse covers as much ground as possible. Without hurrying, the strides are lengthened to the utmost. The Horse remains calm, light and straight as a result of great impulsion from the hindquarters through a supple back. The Athlete allows the Horse to lengthen the frame with a controlled poll and to gain ground. The whole movement should be uphill, well-balanced and unconstrained. The transition into the extension should be softly developed; the transition to collected canter should be smoothly executed by taking more weight on the hindquarters, thereby maintaining rhythm and cadence.

**Counter canter.** The Counter canter is a balancing and straightening movement that must be executed in collection. The Horse canters in correct sequence with the outside foreleg leading with positioning to the side of the leading leg. The foreleg should be aligned to the same track as the hind leg.



The canter is a pace in three-beat rhythm with six (6) phases.

## **THE TRANSITIONS:**

The changes of pace and variations within the paces should be exactly performed at the prescribed marker. The cadence (except in walk) should be maintained up to the moment when the pace or movement is changed or the Horse halts. The transitions within the paces must be clearly defined while maintaining the same rhythm and cadence throughout. The Horse should remain light in hand, calm, and maintain a correct position.

The same applies to transitions from one (1) movement to another.

Transitions that come from or into a faulty pace (e.g. from or into a lateral walk) are not considered completely correct.



### **THE HALF HALTS:**

Every movement or transition should be invisibly prepared by barely perceptible half halts. The half halt is an almost simultaneous, coordinated action of the aids of the Athlete (where possible the seat, the legs and the hands), with the object of increasing the attention and balance of the Horse before the execution of the movements or transitions to lower and higher paces. By shifting slightly more weight onto the Horse's hindquarters, the engagement of the hind legs and the balance on the haunches are improved for the benefit of the lightness of the forehand and the Horse's balance as a whole.

### **Aim of half halts:**

Increase attention, improve balance and collection of the Horse.

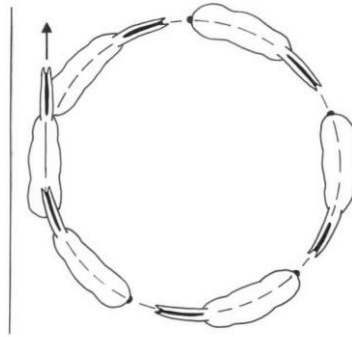
## **THE FIGURES:**

The figures asked in Dressage tests are the Volte, the half Volte, the Serpentine and the Figure of eight.

Figures with one (1), two (2) or three (3) loops on the long side or either side of the centre line are called shallow loops. Shallow loops leave/join and cross the lines diagonally, unlike Serpentine which must cross the lines at ninety degrees (90°).

### **1. Volte:**

The volte is a circle of eight (8) or ten (10) metres in diameter. If larger than ten (10) metres it is a circle.



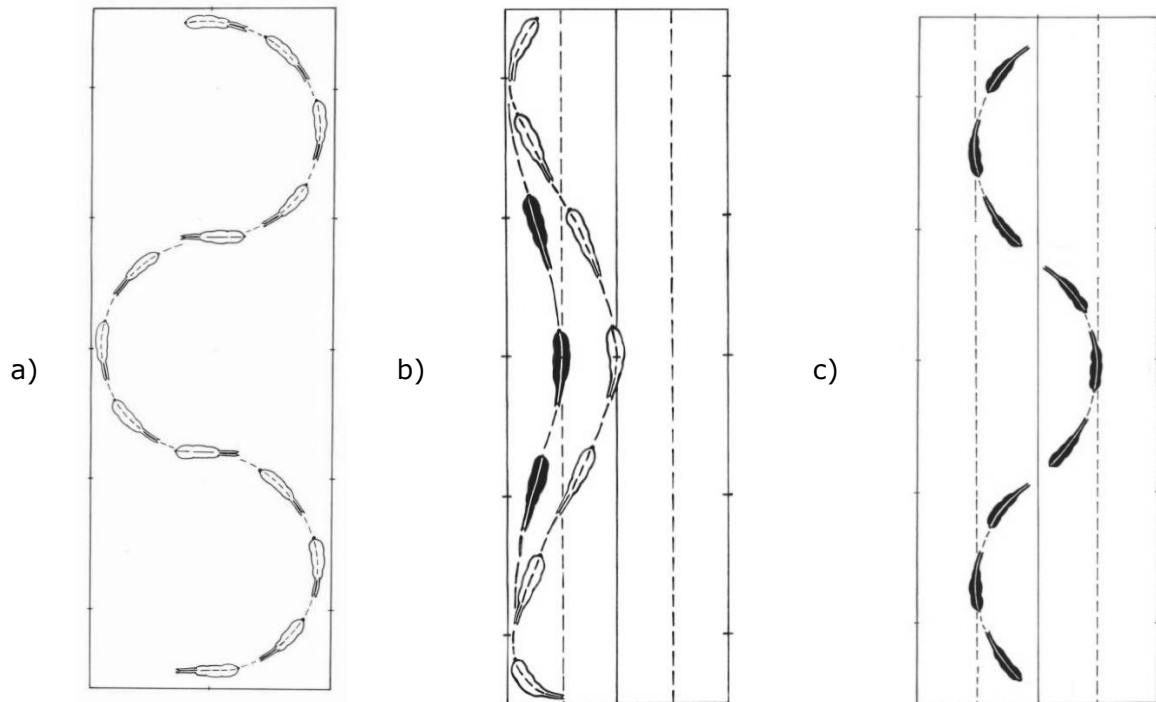
### **2. Half Volte (10 m Ø):**

Very closely connected to the volte is the half volte (10 m Ø) which can be shown:

- a) out of the corner, returning to the track at a well described marker with change of rein
- b) a combination of half volte left/ half volte right (or vice versa)

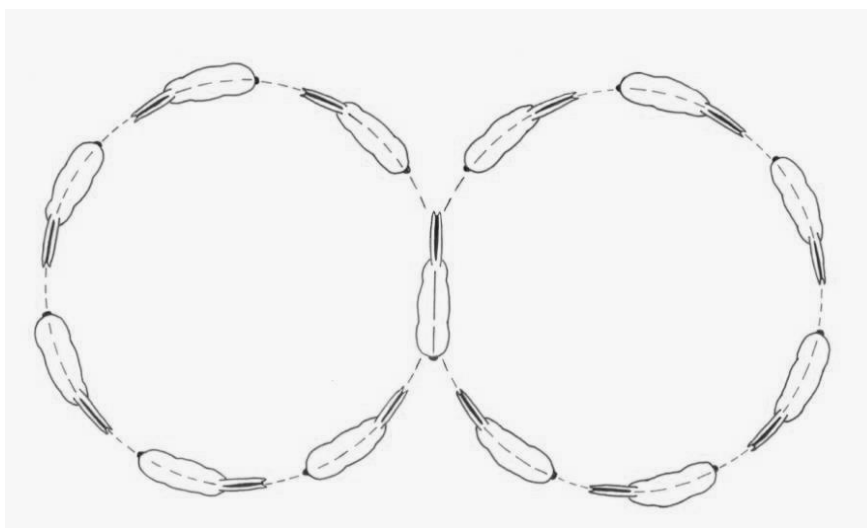
### **3. Serpentine:**

The serpentine with several loops touching the long side of the arena consists of half circles connected by a straight line. When crossing the centreline, the Horse should be parallel to the short side (a). Depending on the size of the half circles, the straight connection varies in length. Serpentine with one (1) loop on the long side of the arena are executed with five (5) metres or ten (10) metres distance from the track (b). Serpentine around the centre line are executed between the quarter lines (c).



#### **4. Figure of eight:**

This figure consists of two (2) voltes or circles of equal size as prescribed in the test, joined at the centre of the eight (8). The Athlete should make the Horse straight an instant before changing direction at the centre of the figure.



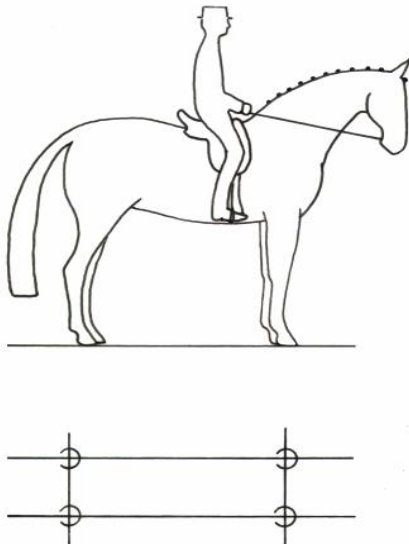
## **BASIC PARA DRESSAGE EXERCISES:**

### **THE HALT:**

At the halt the Horse should stand attentive, engaged, motionless, straight and square with the weight evenly distributed over all four (4) legs. The neck should be raised with the poll as the highest point and the nose line slightly in front of the vertical. While remaining "on the bit" and maintaining a light and soft contact, the Horse may quietly chew the bit and should be ready to move off at the slightest indication of the Athlete. The halt must be shown for at least 3 seconds. The halt should be shown throughout the salute.

The halt is obtained by the displacement of the Horse's weight to the hindquarters by a properly increased action of the aids of the Athlete, driving the Horse towards soft aids causing an almost instantaneous but not abrupt halt at a previously fixed place. The halt is prepared by a series of half-halts (see transitions).

The quality of the paces before and after the halt is an integral part of the assessment.



### **LET THE HORSE STRETCH ON A LONG REIN:**

This exercise gives a clear impression of the "throughness" of the Horse and proves its balance, suppleness, obedience and relaxation.

In order to execute the exercise "let the Horse stretch on a long rein" correctly, the Athlete must lengthen the reins and allow the Horse to gradually and confidently stretch its neck forwards and downwards until its mouth reaches more or less a horizontal line corresponding with the point of the shoulder. An elastic and consistent contact with the Athlete's hands must be maintained. The pace must maintain its rhythm and cadence, and the Horse should remain light in the shoulders with the hind legs well engaged. During the retake of the reins the Horse must accept the contact without resistance in the mouth or poll and keep rhythm, balance and impulsion.

## **Aim of letting the Horse stretch on a long rein:**

Demonstrating willingness of the Horse to lengthen the neck and to stretch to the bit without losing balance and self-carriage.

## **REIN-BACK:**

Rein-back is a rearward diagonal movement with a two (2)-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 the hind legs.

During the entire exercise, the Horse should remain "on the bit" with the poll as highest point, maintaining its desire to move forward.

Anticipation or precipitation of the movement, resistance to or evasion of the contact, deviation of the hindquarters from the straight line, spreading or inactive hind legs, and dragging forefeet are serious faults.

The steps are counted as each foreleg moves back. After completing the required number of steps backward, the Horse should move forward in the required pace immediately. Showing a square halt after the rein-back is no longer asked for in any FEI tests. In tests where a rein-back of one (1) Horse's length is required, it should be executed with three (3) or four (4) steps.

## **Aim of rein-back:**

To show thoroughness and obedience, the Horse should trust the Athlete's aids and accept the aids immediate.

## **SIMPLE CHANGE OF LEG:**

This is a movement in which, after a direct and smooth transition out of canter into walk, with three (3) to five (5) clearly defined steps, an immediate transition is made into the other canter lead.

## **Change of canter lead through trot:**

This is a movement in which, after a direct and smooth transition out of canter into trot, with the correct number of clearly defined steps, an immediate transition is made into the other canter lead.

## **THE CHANGES OF DIRECTIONS:**

At changes of direction, the Horse should adjust the bend of the body to the curvature of the line it follows, remaining supple and following the indications of the Athlete, without any resistance or change of pace, rhythm or speed.

Changes of directions can be executed in the following ways:

- a. Right-angled turn including riding through the corner, i.e. ¼ volte of approximately six (6) metres.
- b. Short and long diagonal.

- c. Half volte left returning to track with change of rein.
- d. Combination of half volte left/ right or vice versa with change of rein.
- e. Half pirouettes and turn on the haunches.
- f. Serpentine loops.
- g. Counter-changes of hand (in zig-zag)\*. The Horse should be straight for a moment before changing direction.

\*Zig-zag: A movement containing more than two (2) half passes with changes of direction.

## **TURN ON HAUNCHES:**

The "turn on haunches" is an exercise to prepare the Horse for collection. The turn on haunches, a turn of one hundred and eighty (180) degrees, is executed out of medium walk or trot, prepared by half halts to slightly shorten the steps and to improve the ability to bend the joints of the hindquarters. When executed from walk or trot the Horse does not halt before or after the turn. The turn on haunches can be executed on a larger radius (approximately ½ m) than the ½ pirouette in walk, but the demands of the training scale concerning rhythm, suppleness, contact activity and straightness are the same. To maintain the forward tendency of the movement one (1) or two (2) forward steps at the beginning of the turn are permitted.

### **Aim of turn on haunches:**

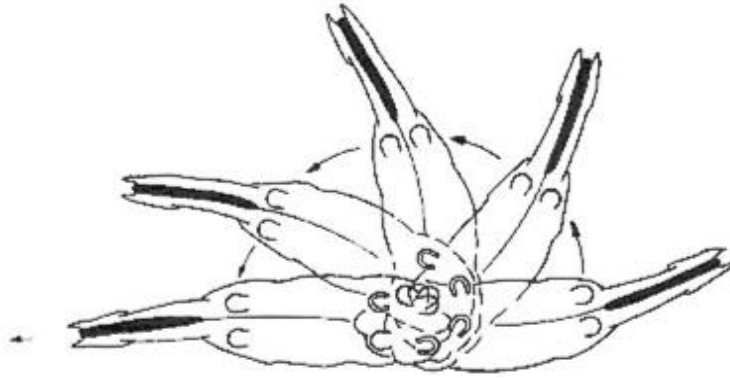
To prepare a Horse for further collection.

## **HALF PIROUETTE in WALK:**

A half-pirouette in walk, i.e. a turn of one hundred and eighty (180) degrees is executed out of collected walk with the collection and correct walk rhythm being maintained throughout the exercise. Any loss of rhythm, either by one or both hind legs being stuck or by the loss of the correct four (4) beat is seen as a serious deterioration of the movement. When the Horse exits the half-pirouette it returns to the initial track without crossing the hind legs. A half-pirouette in walk should show a few (3 – 4) steps of collected walk when approaching or after the half pirouette.

### **Aim of the half-pirouette in walk:**

To increase flexion of all joints of the hind legs and thereby improve carrying power and collection.



Half-pirouette in walk.

## **WORK on Two (2) TRACKS:**

A distinction must be made between the following movements: **Leg-Yielding, Shoulder-in, Travers, Renvers, and Half-pass.**

The aim of movements on two (2) tracks is:

To improve the obedience of the Horse to the cooperative aids of the Athlete.

To supple all parts of the Horse, thereby increasing the freedom of the shoulders and the suppleness of back and quarters, as well as the elasticity of the bond connecting the mouth, the poll, the neck, the back and the haunches.

To improve straightness and cadence (only in trot and canter) and bring the balance and pace into harmony.

## **LEG-YIELDING:**

Leg-yielding is performed in medium walk and working trot in FEI Para Dressage Competitions. The Horse is almost straight, except for a slight flexion at the poll (no bend - that distinguishes leg-yielding from lateral movements) away from the direction in which it moves, so that the Athlete is just able to see the eyebrow and nostril on the inside. The inside legs pass and cross in front of the outside legs.

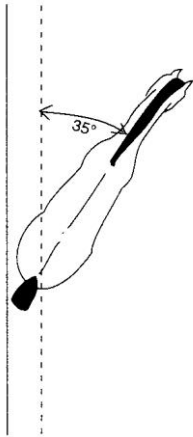
Leg-yielding in walk or working trot should be included in the training of the Horse before it is ready for collected work. Later on, together with the more advanced shoulder-in movement, it is the best means of making a Horse supple, loose and unconstrained for the benefit of the freedom, elasticity 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 sides of the arena, although the forehand should be slightly in advance of the hindquarters. It can also be performed "along the wall" in which case the Horse should be at an angle of about thirty-five (35) degrees to the direction in which it is moving.

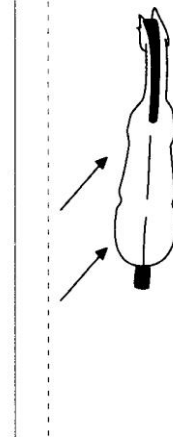
Aim of leg yielding:

To demonstrate the suppleness and lateral responsiveness of the Horse, accepting the Athlete's aids.

Leg-yielding along the wall



Leg-yielding on the diagonal





## **ADVANCED DRESSAGE EXERCISES:**

### **LATERAL MOVEMENTS:**

The main aim of lateral movements - shoulder-in, travers, renvers, and half pass is to develop and increase the suppleness of the Horse as well as the engagement of the hindquarters and thereby also collection and straightness.

In all lateral movements, the Horse is slightly bent and moves on different tracks.

The bend or flexion must never be exaggerated so that it does not impair the rhythm, the balance, the cadence and the fluency of the movement.

The pace should remain free and regular, maintaining a constant impulsion transmitted through a supple back. The impulsion gets often lost because of the Athlete's preoccupation with bending the Horse and pushing it sideways.

### **SHOULDER-IN:**

The shoulder-in is performed in collected trot. The Horse is ridden with a slight but uniform bend around the inside leg of the Athlete maintaining engagement and cadence and a constant angle of approx. thirty (30) degrees. The outside shoulder of the Horse is brought into alignment in front of its inside hip; from the front and from behind one sees three (3) lines. The Horse's inside foreleg passes and crosses in front of the outside foreleg; the inside hind leg does not cross but steps forward under the Horse's body weight following the same track of the outside foreleg, with the lowering of the inside hip.

At the end of the shoulder-in, the forehand is brought back to the track and aligned with the hindquarters unless the shoulder-in is followed by a circle or a consecutive exercise on the diagonal line.

#### **Aims of shoulder-in:**

To increase flexion of the hip and knee joints,

To bring the inner hind leg more under the centre of gravity,

To enhance longitudinal bend, freedom of shoulders, suppleness of back and thereby straightness,

To improve the engagement of the hindquarters and thereby developing carrying power, collection and throughness to show obedience to the Athlete's aids.

### **TRAVERS:**

Travers can be performed in collected trot or collected canter. The Horse is slightly bent around the inside leg of the Athlete but with a greater degree of bend than in shoulder-in.

A constant angle of approximately thirty-five (35) degrees should be shown (from the front and from behind one sees four (4) lines). The forehand remains on the track and the quarters are moved inwards. The Horse's outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. The inside hind legs step forward. Rhythm, balance and cadence are maintained.

The Horse is bent in the direction in which it is moving.

To start the travers, the quarters must leave the track or, after a corner or circle, are not brought back onto the track. At the end of the travers, the quarters are brought back on the track (without any counter-flexion of the poll/neck) as if the Horse would finish a circle.

### **Aims of travers:**

To increase flexion of the hip and knee joints,

To bring the inner hind leg more under the centre of gravity,

To enhance longitudinal bend, suppleness of back and thereby straightness,

To improve the engagement of the hindquarters and thereby developing carrying power, collection and thoroughness,

To show a fluent collected trot movement on a straight line with a greater degree of bend than in shoulder-in.

### **RENVERS:**

Renvers is the inverse movement in relation to travers. The hindquarters remain on the track while the forehand is moved inward. To finish the renvers the forehand is aligned with the quarters on the track. Otherwise, the same principles and conditions that apply to the travers are applicable to the renvers.

The Horse is slightly bent around the inside leg of the Athlete. The Horse's outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. The inside hind legs step forward. Rhythm, balance and cadence are maintained.

The Horse is bent in the direction in which it is moving.

### **Aims of renvers:**

To increase flexion of the hip and knee joints,

To bring the inner hind leg more under the centre of gravity,

To enhance longitudinal bend, suppleness of back and thereby straightness,

To improve the engagement of the hindquarters and thereby developing carrying power, collection and thoroughness,

To show a fluent collected trot movement on a straight line with a greater degree of bend than in shoulder-in.

### **HALF PASS:**

Half pass is a variation of travers, executed on a diagonal line instead of along the wall. It can be performed in collected trot (and in passage in a freestyle) or in collected canter. The Horse should be slightly bent around the inside leg of the Athlete and in the direction in which it is moving. The Horse should maintain the same rhythm, cadence, self-carriage and balance throughout the whole movement. In order to give more freedom and mobility to the shoulders, it is of great importance that the impulsion be maintained, especially the engagement of the inside hind leg. The Horse's body is nearly parallel to the long side of the arena with the forehand slightly in advance of the hindquarters.

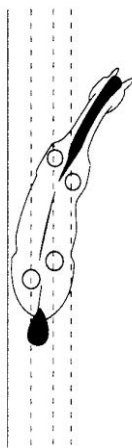
In trot, the outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs, the inside hind legs steps forward. In canter, the movement is performed in a series of forward/ sideways strides in which the legs do not cross.

Half passes can be also shown with one counter change of hand or as a "zig-zag"

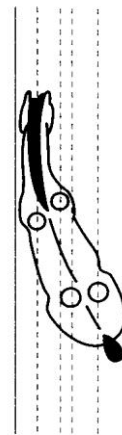
**Aims of half pass in trot and canter:**

- To increase flexion of the hip and knee joints,
- To bring the inner hind leg more under the centre of gravity,
- To enhance longitudinal bend, suppleness of back and thereby straightness,
- To improve the engagement of the hindquarters and thereby developing carrying power, collection and throughness ,
- To show a fluent collected trot movement on a straight line with a greater degree of bend than in shoulder-in.

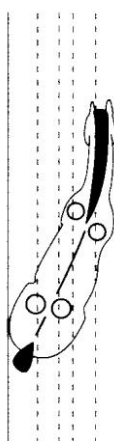
Shoulder in



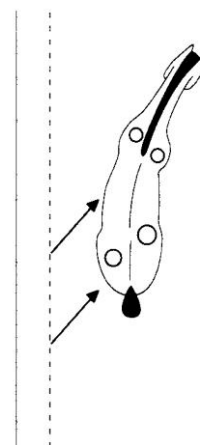
Travers



Renvers



Half Pass



**FLYING CHANGE OF LEG:**

The flying change of leg is performed in one (1) stride with the front and hind legs changing at the same moment. The change of the leading front and hind leg takes place during the moment of suspension. The aids should be precise and unobtrusive.

Flying changes of leg can also be executed in series at every 4th, 3rd, 2nd or at every stride. The Horse, even in the series, remains light, calm and straight with lively impulsion, maintaining the same rhythm and balance throughout the series concerned. In order not to restrict or restrain the lightness, fluency, uphill tendency and groundcover of the flying changes in series, enough impulsion must be maintained.

**Aim of flying change of leg:**

To show the reaction, sensitivity and obedience of the Horse to the Athlete's aids for the change of leg.

**PIROUETTE AND HALF PIROUETTE IN CANTER:**

The Pirouette/ half-pirouette is a turn of three hundred and sixty (360) degrees/ hundred and eighty (180) degrees executed on two (2) tracks, with a radius equal to the length of the Horse and the forehand moving around the hind quarters. The inside hind leg describes a circle as small as possible.

Pirouettes/ half-pirouettes are usually carried out in collected walk (180°) or collected canter but can also be executed in piaffe.

At the pirouette (half-pirouette) the forefeet and the outside hind foot move around the inside hind foot. The inside hind leg describes a circle as small as possible.

In executing the pirouette or the half-pirouette in canter, the Athlete should maintain lightness and uphill tendency of the Horse while accentuating the collection. The Horse's hindquarters are well engaged and lowered and show a good flexion of the joints. An integral part of the movement is the quality of the canter strides before and after the pirouette. The strides should show an increased activity and collection before the pirouette, and jump and balance should be maintained until the end of the pirouette.

The Horse, slightly flexed in the poll and bent in the direction in which it is turning, remains "on the bit" with light contact, turning smoothly around. The poll remains the highest point during the entire movement.

During the pirouettes/ half-pirouettes, the Horse should maintain its activity and never move backwards or sideways.

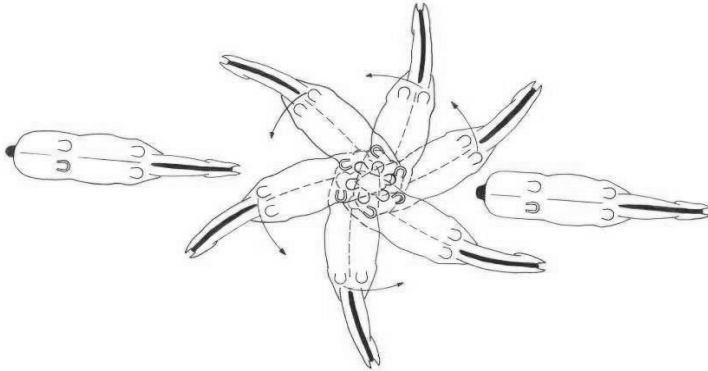
The quality of the pirouettes/ half-pirouettes is judged according to the suppleness, lightness and regularity, and the precision and smoothness of the entrance and exit. Full pirouettes in canter should be executed in six (6) to eight (8) strides – half pirouettes in three (3) to four (4) strides.

In the pirouette or half-pirouette in canter, the Judges should be able to recognize correct and clear canter strides although the feet of the diagonal inside hind leg/ outside front leg – are not touching the ground simultaneously.

## **Aims of the pirouette and half-pirouette in canter:**

To increase flexion of all joints of the hind legs and thereby improve carrying power and collection,

To demonstrate the willingness of the Horse to turn around the hind quarters with the inner hind leg describing as small a circle as possible, while maintaining impulsion and activity of the canter. Proof of straightness, balance and quality of canter during, before and after the movement.



Pirouette in canter.

# Marking of Fundamental Mistakes in Para Dressage Movements

(FIREWALLS and DEDUCTIONS)

## Preliminary remarks

The most important task for the Judge is to keep the **Welfare of the Horse** in mind. Therefore, they must pay special attention to all signs of discomfort and penalize them significantly - be it by deductions from the originally intended mark for minor mistakes or in case of serious mistakes by a 'Firewall', i.e. by a mark that shall not exceed five (5).

The **Scale of Training** is of great importance for the presentation of a Dressage Horse. General training deficiencies must never be overlooked. Severe, basic faults in rhythm, suppleness, contact, or lack of impulsion, straightness and collection must be clearly marked down. All low marks must be explained to the Athlete by appropriate remarks, however, it is always helpful for the communication between Judge and Athlete if the Judge comments also on higher marks.

Apart from irregularities in rhythm or severe suppleness issues, such as a tight or hollow back, a severely agitated tail or arrhythmic, compressed breathing in certain movements, Judges must pay special attention to all contact problems. A neck that is pulled together, an unsteady contact or a very busy, clearly open mouth with the tongue drawn up must be seen as fundamental mistakes. If the tongue is clearly hanging out to the side the mark cannot be higher than 5, whenever it occurs or is noticed by the Judge - maybe even lower when the tongue is in addition over the bit.

## 1. PACES

### WALK:

Characteristics of a correct walk - FEI Dressage Handbook p. 6 and 24 – 41

Regular, active, well marked four-time beat, full relaxation and suppleness throughout the body, consistency of tempo. Correct head and neck position, correct contact. Smooth transition into the walk, precision of line and markers.

### **Collected walk:**

Regular, active, energetic walk, steps shortened and heightened, engagement of hind legs, good hock action. Neck raised and arched, poll highest point. Steady, light contact. Change of outline when coming from extended walk.

### **Medium walk:**

Regular, energetic walk with moderate lengthening of steps and frame. Nose line slightly more in front of the vertical than at collected walk. Overtrack of one (1) – two (2) hooves, not like extended walk which asks for more overtrack.

## Extended walk:

Freedom of shoulders and clear overtrack (= groundcover) without haste or losing regularity, showing relaxation and the ability to move through the whole body. Stretching of head and neck **to the bit** without losing contact with the mouth or the control of the poll.

Problems with rhythm and submission:	Mark
- no characteristics of walk being performed	0
- walk barely recognisable - extremely/very uneven behind or in front - very clear pacing, jogging or passaging for most of the sequence, multiple breaks of pace - severe resistance throughout	1, 2, or 3  (depending on severity)
- clearly uneven behind or in front - mainly pacing, several jog/passage steps - breaking pace for several steps - resistance, disobedience	Below 5 (lower depending on severity of problem)
- lacking a clearly defined four-beat; legs of the same side do not show a 'V' for a short moment - somewhat uneven or tense steps - 1 - 2 jog steps - extended walk: in rhythm but not reaching footprints of forefoot - collected walk: in rhythm but not asking for any collection, overtracking three (3) hooves or more	5 – 5.5
- pacing for a few steps after a transition	Not automatically 5, depending on entirety of movement
- artificially raised or stiffened front legs	7 max. when shown in a mild form, lower when more extreme

## Additional Considerations:

- **Resistance:** 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 it happens (e.g. when shortening the reins to collect the horse). Not necessarily penalised in both tempi.
- **Slight overtrack in collected walk:** Acceptable when the Horse shows true collection, especially after a huge extended walk. However, if the Athlete cannot collect the Horse and allows them to overtrack two (2) hooves or more the mark has to be diminished by a deduction, if overtracking 3 hooves or more the mark cannot be higher than 5.5 max.
- **Extended walk:** Not stretching to the bit/ remaining clearly overbent in the neck or the Athlete giving up the contact leads to a deduction of 1 – 1.5 points from the mark for the extended walk.

- **Execution at letter prescribed:** Each walk should be shown exactly from/to the letter prescribed and not anticipating the transition into the next movement - otherwise a deduction should be made in either the walk or in the next movement due to a lack of precision. However, if the transition is executed much too early or late (clearly more than 5 metres before/ after), the deduction has to be considered in both (see FEI Dressage Handbook p.101).

## TROT:

### **Characteristics of a correct trot - FEI Dressage Handbook p. 7 and 43- 67**

Regularity and elasticity of steps, cadence and impulsion, supple back, well-engaged hind quarters, ability to maintain same rhythm and natural balance. The following trots are recognised: Working trot, lengthening of steps, collected trot, medium trot, extended trot. The greater the lengthening of trot that is required, the more lengthening of the frame must be shown.

#### **Collected trot:**

Regular, active, expressive trot with shortened, elastic, cadenced steps. Hind legs carry weight, stepping further under point of gravity. Neck raised and arched, poll highest point. Steady, light contact. Straight = on one (1) track in figures and corners.

#### **Medium trot:**

Moderate lengthening of steps expected, slightly lengthened frame. Regularity, activity, self-carriage and balance. Not to be expected like extended trot!.

#### **Extended trot:**

Utmost maximum of impulsion with as much lengthening and groundcover as possible, utmost maximum energy and engagement of hind quarters, self-carriage and balance. Hind feet overtrack as much as possible, front feet touch ground in direction to where they are pointing. Supple back throughout.

<b>Problems with rhythm and submission:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
- no characteristics of trot being performed	0
- extremely uneven (giving clear impression of lameness) (FEI Dressage Handbook p. 48) - if this Horse is not eliminated by the C-Judge	Elimination 4 or below
- trot barely recognisable - multiple breaks of pace - severe resistance, disobedience throughout	1, 2, or 3  (depending on severity)
- severe loss of regularity in a movement - breaking pace for several steps or in a transition - resistance, disobedience - extension not attempted	Below 5  (lower depending on severity of problem)
- short stumble, momentary loss of regularity - one leg higher or unlevelled for only a few steps	6 or below



## **Additional Considerations:**

### **Rhythm issues:**

- It is not recommended to ring a Horse out in lateral work as it might only be blocked by the Athlete's hand. Make sure it gives a clear impression of lameness also on a straight line. This must always be clearly stated in the remarks to the Athlete.

### **The transitions from/to the trot extensions:**

Watch **both** transitions, into and back from the medium/extended trot including the precision of both corners (bend, riding into the corners).

Do not give the mark immediately at the end of the diagonal if the short side is still part of the movement. In the case of a separate transition mark, the short side is part of this mark.

React when the Athlete rushes through the transition without even trying to collect. If there is no separate mark for the transition, reduce the mark for the extension by 0.5 - 1 point.

- Judges should 'reward' an Athlete with a higher mark for the transition when they very precisely bend the Horse in the corners/ execute the transitions very correctly.

## **CANTER:**

### **Characteristics of a correct canter - see FEI Dressage Handbook p. 8 and 68 - 93**

Regularity and lightness, natural balance, engagement of hind legs, ability and willingness to carry weight, uphill tendency, straightness, equality on both reins.

The following canters are recognised: Working canter, lengthening of strides, collected canter, medium canter, extended canter.

### **Collected canter:**

Regular, fully balanced and cadenced, hind legs moving forward under Horse's body, carrying weight, neck raised and arched, poll highest point. Uphill tendency, supple, straight.

**Medium canter:** Forward with clearly lengthened strides, maintaining uphill tendency and straightness.

**Extended canter:** Strides are lengthened to the utmost without hurrying, or losing balance, straightness or uphill tendency.

<b>Problem with rhythm and submission:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
- no characteristics of canter being performed	0
- canter barely recognisable due to tension - breaking pace for several strides - severe resistance and crookedness throughout - out of/ not enough under Athlete's control	1, 2 or 3  (depending on severity)
- showing some resistance or some disunited/ wrong canter strides - breaking pace for some strides - wrong strike off, not immediately corrected	Below 5 (lower depending on severity of problem)
- strike off with one disunited stride, immediately corrected - proceed in canter through several trot steps - resisting transition for 1-2 strides - momentary break of pace in the canter section	5 or below
- unintentional flying change between two movements, immediately corrected	Deduction of 2 p. max 6 (watch the whole movement before deduction)

## Additional Considerations:

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 point (or more if done very late and crooked).

- Transition to canter: The mark for the canter should not be given until the movement has been completed because the judge also has to assess the quality of the canter.

The mark for the proceed 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, straight, uphill, high quality of canter, coming from a clear pace.

- The transition after a weak extension has to be marked below seven (7) (because it did not come from a real extension!).
- If a Horse shows unintentional flying changes between two movements, the Judge should check in which movement this error belongs - a change of the previous mark might be necessary.

## Problems in EXTENDED CANTER, TRANSITION and CHANGE:

Problems in the extended canter are not always easy to solve because the difficult situations happen very fast and the Judge must decide very quickly.

<b>Case study 1: To be applied in Para Dressage Freestyles</b>	
<b>Correct extension, disunited flying change or Horse changes back and forth in transition</b>	
<b>1 mark</b> for extension, transition and flying change (marked as one exercise)	Max. 5  Lower for hurried extension or serious

<b>Case study 2:</b>	
<b>Horse changes in extension, is corrected, correct flying change afterwards (Flying Change only in Para Dressage Freestyles)</b>	
<b>1 mark</b> for extension, transition and change	Below 5
<b>2 separate</b> marks:  one for extension,  one for transition	Below 5  Depending on quality. If the transition cannot be executed from a clear extended canter, the mark for transition has to be lowered.

<b>Case study 3:</b>	
<b>Horse shows some resistance at the end of the extension, changes into disunited canter or falls into trot, no transition</b>	
<b>2 separate</b> marks:  one for extension  one for transition	Depending on quality  2 or below

	<b>0 or 1 only when no canter strides are shown throughout entire movement</b>
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## 2. MOVEMENTS:

### Entrance and HALT:

<b>Problem:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- severe resistance and disobedience throughout</li> <li>- halt barely shown</li> <li>- loss of regularity, breaking pace(s) for several strides</li> </ul>	1, 2 or 3 (depending on severity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- extremely short immobility with tension</li> <li>- resistance in halt or through transitions</li> <li>- breaking pace(s) before/after for a few strides</li> </ul>	Below 5 (lower depending on severity of problem)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- halt very insecure</li> <li>- stepping back with two (2) legs</li> <li>- halt very inaccurately placed (~ 5 m before/ after marker),</li> <li>- very crooked</li> <li>- resting one leg throughout</li> </ul>	Max 5  5 - 5.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- repositioning one leg in halt to find the balance after transition</li> <li>- slight loss of straightness</li> </ul>	6.5 or below

### **Additional Considerations:**

- Watch also the self-carriage, the steadiness of the contact and the poll remaining the highest point (!) If coming too low or above the bit, deduct accordingly 0.5 or 1 point.

Athletes not taking the reins in one hand at the salute will be penalised with the deduction of 0.5 % from the total. (FEI Dressage Rules 2023, Art. 424, 4.2.2).

### ½ WALK PIROUETTE / TURN on HAUNCHES:

<b>Problem:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- severe resistance and disobedience throughout</li> </ul>	1, 2 or 3 (depending on severity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stuck behind for some steps</li> <li>- stuck behind for one (1) step</li> </ul>	Below 5  5 or below

- clearly not in 4-beat <b>throughout</b> - lost 4-beat in second part	Below 5 5 or below
- very large - crossing hind legs for several steps - very wide or stepping out/ stepping sideways behind - stepping back	5 or below
- rather large - losing self carriage, diving down	5.5 or below
- (clear) outside flexion <b>throughout</b>	5 or below

## Additional Considerations:

**Turn on haunches** are shown from/ to medium walk or trot; **½ walk pirouettes** are required from collected walk. Walk pirouettes have to be finished with a few clear collected walk steps. The proceed into canter directly out of the walk pirouette or a walk pirouette without some clear walk steps before/after the pirouette (e.g. in a FS) has to diminish the mark.

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 to the outside. Closing one hind leg under the body towards the centre of gravity.

- Walk pirouettes must be judged independently from the quality of the walk.

## SIMPLE CHANGE of LEG:

<b>Problem:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
- severe resistance and disobedience throughout	1,2 or 3 (depending on severity)
- loss of counter canter without being corrected clearly before the change or - change of lead before the transition to walk → no change	Below 5 for both, change and counter canter
- wrong or disunited canter after 2 <sup>nd</sup> transition - <b>both</b> transitions with trot steps into/out of walk - walk steps clearly pacing or jogging	Below 5 (lower depending on severity of problem)
- <b>one</b> transition through some trot steps into or out of walk - walk steps unclear in rhythm - clear transitions but only one (1) walk step - canter and walk not regular enough - very inaccurate execution concerning the number of walk steps (7 or more) - very inaccurate execution concerning the placement	5 or below

## **(Half) VOLTE, CIRCLE, SERPENTINE:**

### **Additional Considerations:**

#### **1. Volte (8 or 10 m):**

The accuracy: correct size in required place, shape. Deduct 0.5 - 1 p. for imprecise riding.

#### **2. Half Volte (10 m):**

The accuracy of the 10 m half volte, the straightness on the centre line and the correct change of bend and flexion. Deduct 0.5 - 1 p. for imprecise riding when the half voltes are clearly too large, or the change of flexion/ bend is not shown precisely on the centre line, or the Horse does not remain on one (1) track.

#### **3. Circle (20 m):**

The accuracy of the circle line and the 10 m radius in ½ circles (often shown too flat). Deduct 0.5 - 1 p. for imprecise riding.

**A circle in counter canter cannot replace the compulsory movement circle which has to be shown in true canter (!).**

#### **4. Serpentine:**

- **Touching the long sides:** starting/ending at the middle of the short side, cutting 1st and last corner, half circles connected by a straight line.
- **Along the centreline or the long side:** starting/ending at the correct markers, correct size (5m, 10m). According to the diagram in the FEI Dressage Handbook the Horse should cross the centreline diagonally and **NOT** in a 90 angle.
- **The accuracy:** equality and positioning of the loops, correct change of bend and flexion. Deduct 0.5 - 1 p. for imprecise riding.

## **REIN-BACK:**

<b>Problem:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- severe resistance and disobedience throughout</li> <li>- Horse getting out of control</li> </ul>	1, 2 or 3 (depending on severity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clear resistance, clearly against the Athlete's hand</li> <li>- no immobility at halt</li> <li>- no diagonal steps throughout</li> <li>- very hurried</li> <li>- both transitions with a clear loss of rhythm</li> <li>- (very) extremely crooked</li> </ul>	Below 5 (lower depending on severity of problem)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- halt short</li> <li>- immobility not direct/ not completely established</li> <li>- stepping forward after halt</li> <li>- incorrect number of steps</li> <li>- one transition with a loss of rhythm</li> <li>- rein-back not fully diagonal</li> <li>- Horse dropping poll, nose line behind vertical (!) or slightly above the bit (!)</li> <li>- loss of straightness</li> </ul>	<p>Deduction up to 2 p., depending on quality of rein-back</p>
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## **MOVEMENTS on 2 TRACKS:**

**Leg-yielding → no bend, only flexion**

**Shoulder-in, Travers, Renvers, Half pass in trot → lateral movements**

<b>Problem:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- severe resistance and disobedience throughout</li> </ul>	<p>1, 2 or 3 (depending on severity)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- severe loss of regularity throughout</li> <li>- break of pace, not immediately corrected</li> <li>- no bend at all, flexed to the wrong direction (except leg-yielding which is not supposed to have bend)</li> <li>- complete loss of energy, loss of desire to move forward</li> </ul>	<p>Below 5 (lower depending on severity of problem)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not precisely performed from point to point</li> <li>- incorrect positioning at the start</li> </ul>	<p>Deduction up to 2 p., (depending on severity of problem)</p>

## **Additional Considerations:**

### **1. Shoulder-In:**

At the end of the shoulder in, before the corner, the forehand is brought back to the track and aligned with the hindquarters, however, not before a volte or a diagonal line.

### **2. Half Pass:**

If a half pass begins and/or ends much earlier than at the markers prescribed, it can make the execution of the movement itself or of the following movement easier.

If a movement is not precisely performed from marker to marker, the Judge should think of deducting 0.5 – 1 p. from the original mark.

### 3. Leg-yielding (walk and trot):

- Leg-yielding usually starts from the quarterline. If the Horse is not on the correct quarterline and/or does not start the leg-yielding at the correct point, both movements will be affected.
- The Athlete should clearly position the Horse straight at the beginning and end of the movement.
- The Horse should remain parallel to the long side and maintain fluency throughout.

#### **HALF PASSES in CANTER:**

<b>Problem:</b>	<b>Mark</b>
- severe resistance and disobedience throughout	1, 2 or 3 (depending on severity)
- break of pace - no bend at all, flexed to the wrong side	Below 5 (lower depending on severity of problem)
- 1 disunited change - loss of desire to move forward	5.5 or below

#### **Additional Considerations:**

Half passes in Freestyle should not be less steep than in the respective class.

#### **LET THE HORSE STRETCH ON A LONG(ER) REIN**, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 223:

In Para Dressage this movement is only performed in Medium Walk in Grades I, II and III.

- The Athletes may show this on a longer rein according to their impairment.
- A longer frame may lead to longer steps, but we do not ask for an Extended or Free Walk.
- A light contact should be maintained.
- If there is no visible intent to lengthen and stretch the frame in a forward-downwards direction the score must be below 5.
- There are two marks, one for the stretching and one for the transitions.
- The mark for the stretching reflects also the relaxation and the quality of the Medium Walk.
- For the transition mark take care to observe whether the Athlete retakes the reins smoothly and without any resistance from the Horse.

#### **GENERALLY IMPORTANT:**

It must be noted that the Athlete 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 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt is not allowed and will be penalized by giving an error of course.

#### **Only the score for the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt will count.**

Transitions out of a 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt movement, even if the 1<sup>st</sup> transition has been shown correctly, the overall mark for the transitions has to be very low.



## **Directives for FEI Para Dressage Freestyle Tests**

### **General Directives**

#### **Technical Marks:**

The mark for the Technical Execution depends on the quality of performing the compulsory movements of the test. Scoring is as in standard tests. The Judge gives a mark (full and half marks are allowed) for each single movement shown. If the Athlete performs a movement several times, the Judge has to give several single marks, which then will be averaged by the Judge to a final mark for this movement at the end of the performance. The total for the Technical Execution is found by adding the final marks for each movement multiplied by their coefficients.

Deductions have to be made according to Art. 8421.4.2 FEI Para Dressage Rules.

#### **Execution of Movements:**

- **All Grades:**
  - o **Halts:** The first and the last Halt and Salute have to be shown on the centre line in the direction of C. Mistakes before the first Halt and Salute have to be considered.
  - o **Walk:** Walk should be shown twenty (20) meters consecutively on a straight or curved line. Turns-on-the-haunches (180°) in Medium Walk or ½ Walk Pirouettes (180°) in Collected Walk may be embedded.
  
- **Grade IV:**
  - o **Counter Canter** should be shown twenty (20) meters consecutively on a straight line (on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> track along the long side of the arena) or on curved lines (circle lines, loops, corners).
  - o **The Changes-of-canter-lead** can be shown from Counter Canter to Counter Canter.
  
- **Grade V:**
  - o Extensions: Extended Trot on the circle line or through two (2) corners is only regarded as Medium Trot.
  - o Lateral Work:
    - Zig-zag Half Passes in Collected Trot and Canter are allowed. The angles of the Half Passes are at the Athlete's discretion. A badly performed Flying Change directly after a Half Pass in Collected Canter affects the mark for the Half Pass.
    - Travers or Renvers are allowed as additional part of the choreography, but do not substitute for the compulsory Half Passes.

#### **Artistic Marks:**

The five Artistic Marks are scored by full, half or decimal marks and multiplied by their coefficients:

1. Rhythm, Energy, Elasticity
2. Harmony
3. Riding Skills
4. Choreography
5. Music and Interpretation of Music

The total of the Artistic Marks is found by adding the five final marks multiplied by their coefficients.

## **Deductions:**

- Eight (8) points each time a not allowed movement is deliberately shown
- Zero point five percentage points (0.5%) for Time Penalty if the performance is longer or shorter than the stipulated time. A margin of ten (10) seconds should be allowed without deduction of points.

The Artistic Marks should correspond with the Technical Marks, in general will be higher than Technical Marks, Choreography and Music Marks should be the decisive marks for the really good performances.

The Artistic Marks can be lower if the "Additionally Allowed Movements" go wrong or if there are penalties for Disallowed Movements and/or Time and/or Exceeding Allowed Movements and/or Movements left out.

"Additionally Allowed Movements" cannot be judged in the Technical Marks. Therefore, showing them can only be reflected in the Artistic Marks.

- If they are well performed, it enhances the Artistic Marks and confirms the marks already given or makes them slightly higher.
  - If they are **NOT** well performed:
    - They will be penalised.
    - **Every mark** can be affected.
- N.B.: In Grade I and III also the 1<sup>st</sup> mark (Rhythm) will be affected if they show extra paces.

## **1. Specific Directives for FEI Para Dressage Freestyles**

**The Artistic Marks #1 (Rhythm, Energy, Elasticity) and #2 (Harmony) are "classical" Dressage Riding marks and do not need further directives.**

**2.1 Riding Skills:** Equestrian feel and skill of the rider, accuracy, clarity and fluency of movements.

### **Is linked to the Harmony and the Choreography Marks.**

- **Equestrian feel and skill of the rider:**
  - Applying the Training Scale
  - Response of the Horse to the Athlete's "aids"
- **Accuracy:**
  - Correctness of execution of movements as described in the FEI Dressage Handbook.
  - Correct sizes, distances, number of movements as described in the compulsory movements for the Technical Mark for each Grade.
- **Clarity and fluency:**
  - Movements and patterns must be clear and easy to identify.
  - Logical structure and cohesive design.
  -

**When these points are established throughout the Freestyle, the base score should be 7.0.**

<b>The score should go up:</b>	<b>The score should go down:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When there is good harmony between the Athlete and the Horse</li> <li>- When the movements are correctly executed according to the Dressage Principles and the requirements as set up in the Technical Mark for each Grade</li> <li>- When the Judge can easily follow the structure and identify the movements shown.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When resistances and disobediences make it difficult to follow the structure</li> <li>- When the movements are not correctly executed according to the Dressage Principles and the requirements as set up in the Technical Mark for each Grade.</li> <li>- When the structure is confusing, and the movements cannot be easily identified.</li> </ul>

**2.2 CHOREOGRAPHY: Use of Arena. Inventiveness. Creativity. Suitability for the Horse**

**Is linked to the Riding Skills Mark.**

- **Use of Arena:**
  - o Using space in its entirety.
  - o Distributing elements throughout the arena.
  - o Equality of right and left rein work.
  - o Balanced use of paces
  
- **Inventiveness and Creativity:**
  - o Combination of elements in an imaginative/surprising way.
  - o Interesting and uncommon lines – off the first track, e.g. between the quarter lines, short diagonals, transitions not at letters.
  - o Not “test-like”: not showing the movements in the same location as in standard tests.
  - o Balance and distribution of compulsory and “Additionally Allowed Movements”.
  
- **Suitability for the Horse:**
  - o Highlighting the Horse’s strengths.
  - o Combining movements according to the Horse’s quality.
  - o “Harmonious” patterns and combinations– not too difficult for the Horse (and Athlete).

**When these points are established throughout the Freestyle, the base score should be 7.0.**

The score should go up:	The score should go down:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When the arena is used in its entirety.</li> <li>- When the right and left rein work is balanced.</li> <li>- When there are good combinations of movements with an element of surprise.</li> <li>- When the design is not "test-like".</li> <li>- When there are clear highlights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When the movements are only placed in one part of the arena.</li> <li>- When the work on one rein is too dominant.</li> <li>- When the movements are too "test-like" and conservative ("boring").</li> <li>- When a movement is omitted or not shown over the required distance.</li> <li>- When the patterns and combinations are too confusing and too difficult.</li> </ul>

## 2.3 MUSIC and INTERPRETATION of MUSIC

### MUSIC:

- **General Remarks:**
  - Music is **not scored on the likes or dislikes** of the judge, but on a very specific set of criteria.
  - The music score equates to everything that happens **before** the show in terms of music selection and how it is assembled.
  - This score can be affected by the Technical Execution.
- **Suitability** – Main criterion in assessing the score for Music:
  - The music should enhance the Horse's way of moving or at least not detract from it.
  - It should fit the character of the Horse
  - It should be level-appropriate
- **Cohesiveness** – Modifier:
  - The various selections in the Freestyle have to feel unified. They may be connected by genre, theme or instrumentation.
    - Genre: A style of music like jazz, classical, rock and roll, etc.
    - Theme: A unifying quality or idea such as Elvis, children's music, etc.
    - Instrumentation: The musical instruments used in the composition whether a small combo, full symphony or the highlighting of a particular instrument.
  - If there is a question as to cohesiveness, the benefit of the doubt goes to the Athlete.
- **Seamlessness** – Modifier:
  - Editing refers to how the music is cut (edited); sometimes in the body of the music; usually heard on the pace transitions.
  - Nothing should disrupt the flow of music.
  - Abrupt cuts disturb the flow of the music.
  - Short fades take the edge off a cut.
  - Overly long fades will leave movements or transitions unsupported.
  - Freestyles should not end with music that fades.

**INTERPRETATION OF MUSIC:**

- **General Remarks:**
  - Interpretation is ***the relationship between the music and the movement***
  - Interpretation equates to what happens ***during*** the performance.
  
- **Music Expresses Paces** – Main criterion in assessing the score for Interpretation of Music:
  - How the music's rhythm and tempo relate to the paces
  - Beat is the underlying pulse of the music; a footfall within a pace
  - Rhythm is a repeated pattern of sounds (music); timing and sequence of footfalls
  - Tempo is the rate of the beat (music); rate of repetition of the rhythm (equine)
  - Matching music with the paces' tempo shows the clearest *relationship between music and movement*.
  
- **Phrasing and Dynamics** – Modifier:
  - Dynamics refers to the variations in the intensity (loudness and softness) of the music.
  - Forte means loud; Crescendo is building to loudness; Piano means soft; Decrescendo is building to softness.
  - Phrasing is the manner in which sequences of notes are grouped to form units of melody.
  - The movements and the music's dynamics and phrasing should reflect each other.
  - Places to expect proper use of phrasing:
    - First halt and salute
    - First movement with first change of music
    - Lengthenings, mediums, extensions in Trot and Canter
    - Changes of paces and transitions
    - Final halt and salute
  
- **Miscellaneous Notes:**
  - After the bell, the Athlete has 60 seconds to signal to start the music. Once the music starts, the Athlete has 30 seconds to enter the arena.
  - Entry music is not compulsory but enhances the performance and should introduce the theme or genre.
  - Walk music can be relaxed but can still have energy.
  - Lyrics are permitted but should not be overly distracting.
  - Music must cease at the final salute.
  - Exit music is not permitted.
  
- **Conclusion – Assessing Music and Interpretation of Music:**
  - The likes and dislikes of the Judge do not determine this score.
  - The **Main Criteria** are:
    - Suitability
    - Music Expresses Paces
  
  - **Modifiers are:**
    - Cohesiveness
    - Seamlessness
    - Phrasing and Dynamics

**When the music is suitable and matches with all 3 paces, the base score should be 7.0.**

**The score should go up:**

- When the music suits and matches the Horse's type and **all** paces shown.
- When the chosen music or the combination of different pieces of music creates a positive and cohesive overall impression.
- When the changes of music go together with the changes of the paces.
- When special movements or tempo variations within the paces are clearly marked by the music.

**The score should go down:**

- When the music ***does not*** suit or match the Horse's type and ***not all*** the paces.
- When the changes of music ***do not*** go together with the changes of the paces.
- When special movements or tempo variations within the paces ***are not*** marked – "Background Music".
- When the Athlete is ahead or behind the music and finishes before or after the music finishes.

## MARKING OF OMISSIONS AND INCORRECT EXECUTIONS IN FEI PARA DRESSAGE FREESTYLE TESTS

Clearly above/below required time limit (with a margin of 10sec): deduction of 0.5 percentage points from total of Artistic Score

Technical marks: Half marks (0.5); Artistic Marks: Decimals (0.1) may be used

Refer also to Para Dressage Rules, Art 8421

		Final technical Mark	Penalty	Riding Skills	Choreography
<b>General directives</b>					
<b>A</b>	<b>Deliberate OMISSION of a compulsory movement</b>	0		Max. 5.5	Max. 5.5
<b>B</b>	<b>Showing a NOT ALLOWED movement deliberately</b>	No mark possible	8 pts	Max. 5.5	Max 5.5
<b>C</b>	<b>INCORRECT EXECUTIONS</b> (see below)				
<b>C-1</b>	EXCEEDING requirements deliberately	Below 5		Deduct - 1 pt	Max 5.5
<b>C-2</b>	Execution deliberately NOT ACCORDING TO RULES	Below 5		Deduct - 1 pt	Max 5.5
<b>C-3</b>	Execution deliberately + clearly BELOW REQUIREMENTS	Below 5		Deduct - 1 pt	Max 5.5
	Applies only if movement has not been shown correctly at least 1x				
	<b>Example:</b>  Clearly less than 20m walk on centre line				
<b>C-4</b>	Showing an allowed additional movement but executing it in a way not according to the Principles of Riding as described in the FEI Dressage Handbook and/or not considering the Welfare of the Horse	No mark possible		Deduct -1 pt	Max 5.5
	<b>Example:</b>				

		Showing a full Pirouette in walk.					
<b>Specific directives</b>							
<b>Grades 1 and 2</b>							
	Trot		allowed				
	All lateral work in walk and trot		allowed				
<b>B</b>	<b>NOT ALLOWED movements – if deliberately shown:</b>						
	<b>Examples:</b> Canter, piaffe, passage			No mark possible	8 pts	Max 5.5	Max 5.5
<b>C</b>	<b>INCORRECT EXECUTIONS</b>						
	<b>C-3</b>	Execution deliberately + clearly BELOW REQUIREMENTS					
	<b>Examples:</b> <b>Grade 1:</b> clearly less than 20m walk on centre line			Below 5		Deduct -1pt	Max 5.5
	<b>Grade 1 and 2:</b> clearly less than 20 m of allowing stretch on a long rein			Below 5		Deduct -1pt	Max 5.5
	<b>Grade 2:</b> clearly less than 5 steps lengthening at trot shown			Below 5		Deduct -1pt	Max 5.5
<b>Grade 3</b>							
	Trot		allowed				
	All lateral work in walk and trot		allowed				
	Canter work including counter canter		allowed				
<b>B</b>	<b>NOT ALLOWED movements – if deliberately shown :</b>						
	<b>Examples :</b> Canter lateral work, flying changes, half or full pirouettes, piaffe, passage			No mark possible	8 pts	Max 5.5	Max 5.5
<b>C</b>	<b>INCORRECT EXECUTIONS</b>						



	<b>C-3</b>	Execution deliberately + clearly BELOW REQUIREMENTS					
		<b>Example:</b>  Clearly less than 20 m of allowing stretch on a long rein in walk		Below 5		Deduct -1pt	Max 5.5
<b>Grade 4</b>							
		All lateral work in walk, trot and canter	allowed				
		Canter work including flying changes	allowed				
<b>B</b>	<b>NOT ALLOWED movements – if deliberately shown:</b>						
		<b>Examples:</b>  In canter: sequence changes and half or full pirouettes, piaffe, passage		No mark possible	8 pts	Max 5.5	Max 5.5
<b>C</b>	<b>INCORRECT EXECUTIONS</b>						
	<b>C-3</b>	Execution deliberately + clearly BELOW REQUIREMENTS					
		<b>Examples:</b>  Clearly less than 20m of medium walk or extended walk  Clearly less than 12m of shoulder-in  Clearly less than 20m of counter canter in each direction		Below 5		Deduct -1pt	Max 5.5
<b>Grade 5</b>							
		All lateral work in walk, trot and canter	allowed				
		Single flying changes, 3- and 4-time sequence changes	allowed				
		Half pirouettes in canter	allowed				
<b>B</b>	<b>NOT ALLOWED movement – if deliberately shown:</b>						

	<b>Example:</b> More than a half pirouette in canter		No mark possible	8 pts	Max 5.5	Max. 5.5
<b>C</b>	<b>INCORRECT EXECUTIONS</b>					
	<b>C-2</b> Execution deliberately NOT ACCORDING TO RULES					
	<b>Example:</b> Collected walk executed only 2 tracks (as shoulder-in/half-pass)  Extended trot on a circle or through 2 corners		Below 5		Deduct -1pt	Max. 5.5
	<b>C-3</b> Execution deliberately + clearly BELOW REQUIREMENTS					
	<b>Examples:</b> Clearly less than 20m of collected walk or extended walk  Clearly less than 12m of shoulder-in		Below 5		Deduct -1pt	Max. 5.5

## Directives for Collective Mark

The Collective Mark – General Impression – consists of the following aspects:

### 1. Harmonious presentation of the Athlete/Horse combination

This implies:

- An overall positive impression of the entire performance
- **Two (2)** “Happy Athletes” – the Horse and the human Athlete
- All aspects of the Training Scale according to the level of the test are well fulfilled

### 2. Equestrian Feel and Skill of Athlete – discreet and effective influence of the aids

This implies:

- An invisible way of communication between Athlete and Horse
- Applying the Training Scale
- Response of the Horse to the Athlete’s “aids”

### 3. Accuracy

This implies:

- Correctness of lines, execution of movements at the correct marker
- Correctness of execution of movements as described in the FEI Dressage Handbook

### Directives:

- The **overall performance** should be the starting point for giving this mark.
  - Good and accurate riding should be rewarded with high marks even if the performance regarding the quality of paces is more “average”.
  - In general, the marks given for the single movements in a test should correspond with the mark for General Impression.
- **Single mistakes** in one or two movements or **temporary issues** during the test are already considered in the mark for the movement and **should not influence** the mark for General Impression negatively.
- However, **basic issues** concerning the Training Scale **must lead to a lower mark** for General Impression, e.g.:
  - Often or permanent irregularity of pace(s) that do not lead to elimination
  - Often or permanent issues with suppleness – tension, tight back, lack of bend etc.
  - Often or permanent contact issues – resistance, above or behind the bit, tight neck, tilted etc.
- **Inaccurate lines** and the execution of movements **not at the correct marker** should be considered in the movement itself. If this happens **more often or permanently**, the mark for General Impression must also be lower.