

Guidelines for the Marking of Fundamental Mistakes in Dressage Movements (acc. to the FEI Dressage Handbook and following proposals of the 5* Judges’ Seminar 2017)

WALK: description acc. to Handbook p. 24 ff.:

Problems with the rhythm:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Walk: Virtually unrecognizable: Extremely uneven/very clear pacing or disobedient, extremely tense, jogging, passaging If walk is unrecognizable in both (all) tempi: → collected mark for paces below 5 → collected mark for submission below 6, if very disobedient	1, 2, or 3 (depending on severity)	Below 6 in case of clear and continuous disobedience in all walk sequences
Walk: Virtually pacing/mainly uneven or several jog steps	Below 5	
Walk: Not always clear regularity of 4-beat/somewhat uneven or hurried steps, moment of tension, 1-2 jog steps	Below 6	
Ambling for a few steps after a transition	Not automatically 5, depending on entity of movement	
Artificially raising the front legs	Below 7, however, differentiate between "mild" and extreme form	

Generally important in walk:

Well-marked 4-time beat, full relaxation and suppleness throughout the body, activity, consistency of tempo.

Collected walk:

Steps shortened and heightened, engagement of hindlegs, good hock action. Neck raised and arched, poll highest point. Steady contact. Change of outline (!) when coming from extended walk.

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

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

Medium walk:

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

Extended walk:

Freedom of the shoulders (!) and clear overtrack (groundcover). Stretching of the neck **to the bit** without losing contact.

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

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

TROT: description acc. to Handbook p. 43 ff.:

Problems with the rhythm in the trotwork:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Very uneven THROUGHOUT	Elimination	
If this horse is not eliminated by the C-judge → collected mark for paces below 5	Below 5, or lower, depending on severity	
Not always regular, several uneven steps. Tension evident. Break of rhythm in transitions or extension	Max. 5	Apprpr. deduction, depending on reason:
Short stumble, momentary loss of regularity, one leg higher for only a few steps	Below 7	Either in paces or in submission
Problems due to a lack of balance:		
Clearly irregular steps in half pass, shoulder-in etc. caused by a lack of balance, or a short disobedience, e.g. breaking into canter for some strides	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
A few irregular steps in half pass, shoulder-in etc. caused by a lack of balance	Deduction of 1- 1.5 p., however, max. 6	
Extended trot: Very tight in neck/back, no overtrack, however, clear rhythm	Below 7	

Important in addition to the description in the Handbook: The transitions from/to the trot extensions

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

CANTER: description acc. to Handbook p. 68 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Proceeding in canter, showing resistance or some disunited canter strides	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Proceeding in canter through several trot steps	Below 6, depending on quality of canter	
Proceeding in canter, ONE disunited canter stride, immediately corrected	Max. 6, depending on quality of canter	

The mark must be reduced when the canter comes from a jogging or pacing walk (unclear transition)
Think of rewarding a well performed proceed into canter: precise, uphill, high quality of canter

Unintentional break of pace (losing canter)	Deduction of 2 p., However, max. 6	
Unintentional flying change between 2 movements		
Shortly changing behind Check in all cases above in which movement this error belongs, a change of the previous mark might be necessary		
Flying change after extension not on diagonal, too late, not straight	Deduction of 0.5 - 1p.	

Problems in EXTENDED CANTER, TRANSITION and CHANGE

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

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

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

Problem 3: The horse changes by itself before the aid and far enough from the marker for the rider to correct (clearly more than 5m → HB p. 101), but hasn't been corrected		
1 mark for extension, transition and change (if performed as one exercise):	Below 5 and lower, depending on whether the change was correct or not	Coll. mark f. submission:
2 separate marks: one for extension, one for transition and change	Mark for extension is reduced (not executed over full distance) → HB p. 101 Mark for transition and change: Below 5; lower when the change was broken, transition with resistance, etc.	Appropriate deduction
	No zero when the line and the pace is maintained. Both marks must be reduced because both movements have been affected. This is often not accurately represented!	

Problem 4: The horse changes at the end of the extension into disunited canter or falls into trot, no transition, no clear flying change		
1 mark for extension, transition and change (if performed as one exercise):	Below 4	Coll. mark f. submission:
2 separate marks: one for extension, one for transition and change	Mark for extension: depending on the quality Mark for transition and change (not correctly shown): Below 3	Below 7; exceptions depending on general quality of test
	Zero only when no canter strides are shown throughout the entire movement	

Important in addition to the description in the HB:

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

HALT, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 18 ff.:

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

- Watch also the self-carriage, the steadiness of the contact and the poll remaining the highest point (!), not coming too low or above the bit and deduct accordingly 0.5 or 1 point.
- Athletes not taking the reins in 1 hand at the salute will be penalised with the deduction of 2 points from the total. (Art. 430 6.2. FEI Dressage Rules)

½ WALK PIROUETTE / TURN on HAUNCHES, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 160 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Stuck behind for some steps	Below 5	Appropriate deduction. Below 7 if it happens in both pirouettes
Stuck behind for 1 step	Below 6	
Clearly not in 4-beat THROUGHOUT	Below 5	
Lost 4-beat in 2 nd part	Below 6	
Clear outside flexion	Below 6	

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

SIMPLE CHANGE of LEG, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 95 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Horse changes in counter canter (and then e.g. changes from left to left = NO Change)	Below 5 or even lower, depends on severity of problem e.g. resistance	Appropriate deduction. Below 7 if the mistakes happen more than 1x
Horse takes the incorrect lead (= NO change)	Below 5 or even lower, depends on severity of problem e.g. resistance	
Both transitions with trot steps into and out of the walk	Below 5	
One transition out of/into canter shows some trot steps	Below 6	
Walk sequence not in 4-beat, pacing, jogging	Max. 5	
Only 1 step of walk	Max. 5	
Too many steps of walk (= changing degree of difficulty)	Deduction of 2 p., max. 6	

VOLTE, CIRCLE, SERPENTINE, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 108 ff.:

Important in addition to the description in the HB:

1. Volte (8 or 10 m):

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

A volte in counter canter in a freestyle cannot replace the compulsory movement volte in true canter (!)

2. Half Volte (10 m):

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

3. Circle (20 m):

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

4. Serpentine:

The accuracy: 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. Deduct 0.5 - 1 point for imprecise riding.

REIN-BACK, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 115 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Clear resistance, out of control	Below 4	Appropriate deduction
Multiple mistakes: Very hurried, no clear immobility, steps clearly not diagonal and clearly incorrect number	Below 5	
No immobility at all at halt	Below 5	
Unclear transitions, breaking into canter instead of trot	Below 5	
Halt short, not established	Deduction up to 2 p., depending on quality of rein-back; max. 6	
Stepping forward after halt		
Rein back clearly not diagonal THROUGHOUT	Below 5	
Rein back not fully diagonal	Max. 6, depending on severity of problem	
Horse dropping poll, nose line behind vertical (!) or slightly above the bit (!)	Deduction up to 2 p., however, max. 6	

LATERAL MOVEMENTS, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 121 ff.:

Leg-yielding, Shoulder-in, Travers, Renvers, Half pass

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

When irregularities occur within the lateral exercises, the collective mark for submission will be diminished. The collective mark for paces, however, will not be affected providing the horse remains regular on circles and straight lines and corners.

Important in addition to the description in the HB:

1. Shoulder-in:

The rider should straighten his horse before the corner. However, not before a volte or a diagonal line.

2. Half-pass (trot and canter):

Watch that the half pass begins and ends at the markers prescribed (!) and deduct 1 - 1.5 points for inaccurate start/finish which often makes the execution of the movement itself or of the following movement easier:

Too early an arrival (more than 5 m) changes the degree of difficulty of the movement (!) as it

- is a wrong execution (too steep, avoiding to ride forward - sideways)
→ e.g. in PSG or YR's tests trot half passes clearly arriving before G
- gives more time to prepare the next movement
→ e.g. in PSG the canter half pass right arriving at R or shortly after R (instead of 1 stride before M) which allows some additional strides to prepare the change
→ e.g. too early beginning of the trot half passes in the GPS or the canter half passes in Inter II/ GP 16-25

CANTER ZIG-ZAGS, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 153 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
2 and more counting mistakes	Below 5	Below 7
2 and more broken flying changes	Below 5	
Clear loss of canter → HB p. 157	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
2 changes short behind → HB p. 157, or 1 broken change	Below 6	
1 counting mistake	Below 6, depending on quality of zigzags	
Zig zags not symmetrical, not from/to quarterline	Deduction of 0.5 - 1 p.	

- Trot zig-zags generally have to be shown 5m sideways to both sides. Watch whether the rider performs the zig-zags to both quarterlines and deduct 0.5 - 1 point for imprecise riding if not.
- The last change in a canter zig-zag has to be at G, even if the zig-zags have been finished earlier. However, the judge should diminish the mark if the zig-zags are generally badly placed, not equidistant from the centreline, too steep or hardly sideways. Also if the riders changes the flexion too early, sometimes 2 strides before he changes the direction

FLYING CHANGE of LEG, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 174 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Not shown: "0" is only possible if the horse does not show any canter before/after the change	1 or 0	Below 6
Late behind/in front (disunited) for several strides:	Below 3	Appropriate deduction
Late behind/in front (disunited) for one stride:	Below 5	
Change visibly not on the aids	Deduction of min. 1 p. depends on promptness	

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

FLYING CHANGES in SEQUENCES, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 180 ff.:

Make a difference between

- **Slight deficiencies** (1x croup high, one change shorter, 1 x hind legs parallel) and
- **Mistakes** (late behind/in front for ... strides, break within the changes, break of pace)

Deficiencies must diminish the mark, with regard to the general quality of the changes.

Deductions in case of **mistakes** see below:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
2 and more mistakes (faulty changes and/or in numbers) Horse shows flying changes only after several attempts	Below 5	Below 7 if it occurs in both sequences
1 counting mistake or 1 change short behind	Max. 6, depending on quality and number of changes	Appropriate deduction

1 disunited change or 2 and more changes short behind/ hind legs jumping together (worse if the faulty changes are all to the same side!)	Below 6, depending on quality and number of changes	
Clear loss of canter within the sequence	Below 5	
Short break before/ after sequence of changes	Below 6, depending on quality	
Problems in numbers:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
One-tempi changes: 2 more than required (very high quality) Several more than required	Max. 6 Below 5	Appropriate deduction
One-tempi changes: 2 less than required (very high quality) 2 changes less than required (limited quality)	Below 6 Below 5	

Think about:

- Who made the mistake? Did the rider miscount or did the horse not react on the aids - which is worse!
- The relation of the missing changes to the required number:
Missing 2 out of 3 is clearly worse than missing 2 out of 15

CANTER PIROUETTE, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 167 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Horse changes, remaining disunited for some strides, trots out	Below 3	Appropriate deduction
Horse changes into, during, out of pirouette	Below 5	
Horse breaks canter rhythm/falls momentarily into trot/walk	Below 5	
Loss of control, full pirouette in 3 - 4 strides	Below 5	
Describing small circle/turning around the centre	Below 5, or lower depending on size	
Hindlegs clearly jumping together THROUGHOUT	Below 5	
Hindlegs clearly jumping together several times	Below 6	
Horse changes shortly before pirouette when being collected or shortly afterwards but is immediately corrected (balance problem)	Below 6, depending on quality of pirouette	
Horse clearly flexed/bent in wrong direction	Below 6, depending on how wrong flexion is	

Important in addition to the description in the HB:

Too late or early execution of a pirouette has to be penalized by an appropriate deduction of points, depending on where the pirouette was shown. Deductions also if the pirouette is not shown on the required line.

PIAFFE, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 194 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Problems with the rhythm:		
Severe resistance (e.g. badly rearing, out of control)	Below 3	Below 5
Horse breaks piaffe after a few steps, canters or falls into walk	Max. 3	Below 6 if shown more than 1 x
Short break of rhythm, steps clearly not diagonal	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Momentary loss of rhythm, steps not always diagonal	Below 7, depending on severity of problem	
Too much forwards:		
Advancing for more than 4 - 5 m = showing half steps	Below 5; lower if travelling even more	
Travelling approximately 3 - 4 m	Below 6	
Travelling approximately 2 m	Deduction of 1 - 2 p.	
Number of steps:		
Only showing very few piaffe steps (only slightly indicated)	Below 3	Below 6 if shown more than 1 x
Showing clearly not enough steps	Below 5	

Not quite enough piaffe steps (< 10 if 12-15 are required)	Below 7, depending on quality	Appropriate deduction
Problems with the balance:		
Some clear steps backwards, clear backward tendency	Below 5	
Extreme balancing from side to side, very crooked, drifting sideways or Extreme crossing front or hind legs	Below 6, depending on severity of problem	
Momentary loss of forward tendency, 1 step back	Below 7, depending on quality of piaffe	

PIAFFE in Inter A, B and Inter II (see Guidelines for the evaluation of piaffe in Inter A/B, Stephen Clarke 2014):

Regular, highly expressive piaffe steps that travel forwards 1m (Inter II) or 2m (Inter A/B) can be rewarded with a (very) high mark as it is allowed to advance for up to 1 or 2 metres.

If, however, the piaffe is shown "more or less in place" as in the GP, and is performed in an "excellent" way, judges should be prepared to give the maximum score as the Guidelines only state that it is allowed to advance for up to 2 metres, not state that the piaffe "must" advance 2 metres.

PIAFFE PIRQUETTE:

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

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

Correct execution:

- As for piaffe
- The horse turns around the inside hind leg, radius as small as possible, not more than ½ m
- Maintenance of same level of activity and elasticity of back and steps
- Very slight flexion/bend to the direction of the movement required
- If possible, a ¼ or ½ piaffe pirouette should be shown to both sides to prove the horse is well trained

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
See mistakes in piaffe	Same as for piaffe	Same as for piaffe
In addition, given that the piaffe is technically correct:		
Turning around the middle, escaping quarters, stepping clearly sideways, backwards or too much forward, too large	Below 5	Appropriate deduction
Outside flexion, lacking bend	Below 6, depending on severity of problem	

PASSAGE, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 188 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Completely irregular THROUGHOUT	Below 4	Appropriate deduction
Insufficiently regular, clearly uneven steps behind or in front	Below 5	
Trotlike, lacking cadence THROUGHOUT	Below 5	
Some steps with double beat, slightly uneven steps behind/in front	Below 6	
Almost walking behind	Below 6	
Badly crossing front or hind legs/badly swaying	Below 6, depending on severity of problem	

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

PASSAGE HALF PASS:

A half pass in passage is judged as passage. It can be shown as single half passes in one direction or as a "zig-zag".

It should be executed at least 5m sideways to make it recognizable. A passage half pass which is not correctly executed should not be regarded as a difficulty.

Correct execution:

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

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
See mistakes in passage	Same as for passage	Same as for passage
In addition, given that the passage is technically correct:		
Loss/change of flexion/bend, tilted head, quarters leading	Below 7, depending on severity of problem	Appropriate deduction
Not crossing at all, not far enough sideways	Below 6, depending on severity of problem	

PASSAGE-PIAFFE-PASSAGE TRANSITIONS, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 200 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Severe resistance, jumping out of piaffe (Take care to observe whether or not the subsequent passage starts from the marker described and deduct accordingly)	Below 4	Below 5 if shown more than 1 x
Both transitions into and/or out of piaffe fail	Below 4	Appropriate deduction
Totally undefined, leading to/coming from a "half steps piaffe"	Below 5	
Some loss of rhythm/regularity in one transition	Below 6	

Watch the pa-pi-pa transitions/ transitions in connection with piaffe or passage:

- If a piaffe is really travelling, the transition is not clearly defined and cannot be more than max. 1 point higher than the piaffe
- Imprecise riding of transitions can lead to multiple deductions of points: e.g. the piaffe is clearly not shown at the marker prescribed (deduction of p.), the subsequent passage is clearly too short (deduction of p.)
- If the horse loses the last passage on the centre line, the mark for the halt has to be affected as there is no transition passage - halt

OTHER TRANSITIONS from/to Passage technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 205 ff.:

Problem:	Technical mark	Coll. mark f. submission
Transition to passage from clearly lateral walk	Below 6	Appropriate deduction
Transition to passage from tense collected walk	Below 6	
Transition to passage from jogging walk (diagonal footfall)	Below 5	
Transition passage - ext. trot - passage: 1 transition fails completely (e.g. horse breaks into canter)	Below 5	
Transition passage-canter: strike off into some disunited canter strides	Below 5	
Transition passage-canter: strike off into ONE disunited canter stride, immediately corrected	Max. 6, depending on quality of canter	

GIVE AND RETAKE THE REINS, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 223:

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

LET THE HORSE STRETCH ON A LONG REIN, technical execution acc. to Handbook p. 223:

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

GENERALLY IMPORTANT:

It must be noted that the rider is only allowed to have one attempt at any of the movements, i.e. circling away in a case of resistance in order to make a 2nd attempt is not allowed and will be penalized by giving an error of course. **Only the score for the 1st attempt will count.**

Transitions out of a 2nd attempt movement, e.g. a piaffe cannot be considered. Even if the 1st transition has been shown correctly, the overall mark for the transitions has to be very low.