

2004 GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES

FEI YOUNG HORSE TESTS

COMMENTARY GUIDELINES – *at the end of each ride by one panel member*

- Be brief
- Be positive
- Discuss the highlights of the performance
- Comment on the general education of the horse corresponding to the classical dressage principles and the horse's long-term potential
- Give comments to justify scores for gaits/paces

JUDGING GUIDELINES

- Tolerate the joyfulness and the curiosity of the young horse
- Is the horse's education going the right way?
- Is this horse suitable for an FEI dressage horse?
- For the Five Year Old Test, does the horse show the **DESIRE** to collect?
- For the Six Year Old Test, does the horse show the **ABILITY** to collect?

POINTS FOR SCORING

A. Basic Paces

WALK: Criteria are rhythm, relaxation, activity, ground cover, and suppleness and use of the topline.

TROT: Criteria are rhythm, suppleness, length of stride (covering ground), activity, impulsion, and elasticity. Observe the willingness to collect. Tense steps with a rigid back and short neck must be taken negatively into a judge's deliberations.

CANTER: In general, the same criteria as trot. **An uphill canter must be especially highly marked.**

B. Aspects of the training scale

Within the general training scale and classical principles of dressage the following are highly weighted:

* Special emphasis has to be made of the soft and constant contact, the chewing of the bit and activity of the mouth, and an elastic poll in all the basic gaits and in the transitions.

- The strides in walk, trot and canter must always be in rhythm and free of tension.
- The horse's ability to 'bend' and/or position himself correctly in corners and evenly on both sides must be noted. His lateral suppleness must be taken into consideration.
- There must be impulsion, developed through the hindquarters, over a swinging back into a soft and steady contact.
- Ability to self-carry.
- In the Six-Year-Old Test, obedience including flying changes, shoulder-in, and half pass.

Fundamental training errors will generally lead to lower marks being awarded. These are for example:

- **continued lack of contact**
- **incorrect rhythm**
- **rigid in the back**
- **crookedness and insufficient engagement**
- **lack of confidence**

Smaller faults are for example:

- Not standing quite square in halt
- Short in the neck AT TIMES
- At varying times slightly above the bit
- A canter depart through one step of trot
- Slight crookedness in the medium canter
- Slightly wider angle in the shoulder-in than normal
- In the half passes, after a correct beginning, the horse tends to get too straight
- Flying changes not quite exactly at the point where they are asked for in the test

Such things **MUST NOT** be heavily penalized if the horse otherwise shows a correct performance. Horses that show early tension and lack of concentration coupled with "looking" (at flower pots for example), but that improve and relax as the test progresses should not be as severely punished as they would in a regular dressage test. Impulsion and going forward is more important than doing exact dressage movements.

C. Overall Impression

Here the judge should weigh the correctness of the movements (standard of training) in all three paces, and the type and conformation of the horse. The judge must also consider the horse's presence, the ease with which he masters the test, and the smoothness of the overall performance. The horse that shows talent (potential) and presence **MUST** always be awarded better points than a simply obedient horse.

Compiled by Janet Brown, revised 3/20/04