

DRESSAGE NZ
FREESTYLE GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES & RIDERS
MEMO from SUE HOBSON | DRESSAGE NZ JUDGES OFFICER
29/10/2015



During last season and now again this season we had a few incidents which, although rectified, did cause some concern regarding musical freestyles. With holding our national clinic at Equidays and SI this year with two excellent presenters it has not been possible to cover freestyles as much as we would have liked. However, if judges will recall I did send out the following newsletter (and also put in Bulletin) some information which I hoped would assist last March but it seems issues have already arisen this year again. As judges we do not want to eliminate a rider for riding movements above the level but do want them to use their expertise to invent degrees of difficulty within the level they are riding for the chance to achieve higher marks so we have to be open minded to what they ride within the current rules. I am hoping the following will remind you all to have empathy with what is in front of you and to know the work involved in putting together a freestyle whilst at the same time making sure rules are adhered to. Taking this into account it is also the riders responsibility to know what they can and can't do. Remember it is "deliberately" showing movements that costs the rider elimination but it has to be clearly and logically in the test that they had them in the pattern of the test and not just a balance issue before we would eliminate.

We all know that with freestyles you can ask advice from your fellow colleagues and it is always wise to do so. When at C and discussing a query with your judges at H and M please consider the judges at E and B also as sometimes these judges are left out in the cold and they need to know how the C judge is dealing with an issue should it arise. Don't hesitate to send your writer to advise the judges. However, in saying that I would hope we don't see people jumping in and out of cars too often.

A few areas of concern that I have been aware of to date are:

Level 2 freestyle, counter canter on a curved or straight line is allowed. This means that you can ride a counter canter on a curved line!! Where the curved line is is irrelevant.....remember if someone rides a good balanced counter canter it gets a good mark and the more difficult the curved line is the better.....please do not penalise for where the curved line is done as that is the riders choice – it is a freestyle – they can do it on a half circle, a circle, a loop, a serpentine – all are curved lines. The main issue here is the quality of the canter, the balance, the positioning etc.

Another issue you may come across in the lower levels is flying changes. Please do not eliminate a rider for "deliberately" riding a flying change if it is not obviously in their choreography. Young horses lose balance and if coming around corner in counter canter lets say it changes leads and gets disunited or similar then it is common sense to accept this is a balance issue not a deliberate change. Then because the musical interpretation is so closely related to the movements the rider has no option but to get back into the correct canter to carry on otherwise they are out of time with their music so they could change back. If the change back takes too long then they also lose marks in their musical interpretation. Obviously you would not give them a good mark for the counter canter or whatever they lost their balance in but you would not eliminate them. Elimination in this instance would only be if their choreography was absolutely "deliberately" containing flying changes. However, you would still let them complete the test and have a marked score sheet so that they have a score to go back to should there be a query.

Also in Level 4 we have had issues of “trot counter changes of hand” being “eliminated”. This also is allowed. A counter change of hand in trot is two half passes (OK), a zig zag is three half passes not OK. Please allow the riders to try for their degree of difficulty as a counter change of hand at Level 4, (as clearly stated in the test book) done well with rhythm and energy should gain high marks and also a good mark for difficulty.....as long as it comes off.

Another movement to consider at level 4 is maybe a horse does a half pass in canter then straight for three or four strides which could maybe include a change through trot then re-positions and half passes back – as long as you have straight strides in between the canter half passes then this is not a counter change of hand but more correctly two half passes with a simple change through trot in the middle. Again a degree of difficulty should be looked at here and the quality of the canter and straightness through the change through trot. If we penalise these levels for trying to create a degree of difficulty then why would the riders try to be artistic and why bother having a degree of difficulty mark?

If you are at all unsure of these movements please don't hesitate to look up the relevant rules so that you are absolutely conversant with the movements before you commence judging the class. Our test book is quite clear as to what is and not allowed but if something occurs which is not written then discuss by all means and work out your decision with empathy for the rider.

I believe a horse at level 4 at HOY also cantered in to a halt for the entry. Now this is not allowed as canter to halt is not required at level 4. This is a clear transition movement and simple to differentiate. However, if rider had have entered at canter (which is simply a straight line in canter) then made a transition to trot somewhere before the halt and then halted then this would be fine.....as canter/trot/halt is acceptable.

Always remember that we do not ever want to have to eliminate in freestyles unless it is a welfare issue and we have to, ie lameness, blood etc. In freestyles if movements are shown that you feel are not allowed simply judge the whole test, make your assessments, look up the relevant rule or discuss with your co-judges and you can ask for sheets to be held until end of class so you have time to check but please don't ring the bell on them until you are absolutely sure you are correct. I would also urge you all to also be courteous when dealing with situations that involve queries and always be prepared to listen and discuss. It is so important that we have a good understanding between riders, judges and also trainers and officials. The best way to deal with these situations is to find a quiet private spot and all discuss the situation before it gets to the “protest” stage as nine times out of ten these things can be talked through without any unpleasantness. Remember also that I am only at the end of the phone and so is our Rules Officer so never be worried about ringing to clarify things.

A situation occurred at HOY last year also where we had an incident of a horse “overturning” in the half canter pirouette at level 6 also at HOY and we simply waited until the second half piro had been ridden to see if it was simply a mistake. The second half piro. was ridden correctly and therefore quite obvious the first one that had “slightly” overturned was a balance issue and was not “deliberate”. Therefore the rider got a low mark only for the first piro. Remember we are on the side of the rider and sometimes balance issues arise at all levels. They may not necessarily be deliberate. This is why you could wait for the mirror image to be ridden so you can see what happens before marking.

Finally I would stress to riders that they must carefully read the requirements relating to the walk at the level they are riding. If it says 20m continuous walk then you must make this very clear for judges to see otherwise they cannot possibly give you a high mark.

Hopefully the above will assist somewhat in assisting both judges and riders. Believe me, no judge wants to eliminate unnecessarily so let’s work together on making sure only accepted movements are shown at all levels. If in doubt, ASK. “

Refer to the Test Book Freestyle section pages 86/90 where there are tables showing “allowed” and ‘not allowed movements” which are also repeated on page 4 of this document.

If movements are clearly “deliberately” shown in the choregraphy of the test then “Elimination” will occur at the end of the test. The rider is allowed to complete the test.

Sue Hobson
Judges Officer

DRESSAGE NZ TESTS	
LEVEL 2: Optional Movements: Any movement occurring in current NZ Dressage Tests up to and including Level 2 Standard may be included. Riders deliberately showing movements above Level 2 will be eliminated.	
ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
Circles of any size permitted	Travers
Free walk on a long rein	Shoulder In
Reinback	Renvers
Leg Yield (walk and trot)	Turn on haunches
Lengthened strides in trot and canter	Half Pass
Trot Serpentine	Pirouettes (walk or canter)
Give and retake reins	Flying changes
Walk to Canter	Piaffe & Passage
Change of lead through trot (3 - 5 strides)	
Counter Canter (straight or curved line)	

LEVEL 3: Optional Movements: Any movement occurring in current NZ Dressage Tests up to and including Level 3 Standard may be included. Riders deliberately showing movements above Level 3 will be eliminated.	
LEVEL 3: ALLOWED – all movements from Level 2 Plus	NOT ALLOWED
Turn on Haunches from walk	Half Pass
Shoulder In, Travers & Renvers	Canter pirouettes
Medium trot and canter	Flying changes
Canter to walk	Piaffe & Passage
Simple change	
Counter canter on curved line	
Canter serpentine without change of lead	

LEVEL 4: Optional Movements: Any movement occurring in current NZ Dressage Tests up to and including Level 4 Standard may be included. Riders deliberately showing movements above Level 4 will be eliminated.	
LEVEL 4 ALLOWED All movements from Levels 2 & 3 Plus	NOT ALLOWED
Walk Pirouettes	Canter pirouettes
Extended walk, trot & canter	Trot & Canter Zig - Zag
Half Pass in trot & canter	Flying changes
	Piaffe & Passage

LEVEL 5: Optional Movements: Any movement occurring in current NZ Dressage Tests up to and including Level 5 Standard may be included. Riders deliberately showing movements above Level 5 will be eliminated.	
LEVEL 5	
ALLOWED – all movements from Levels 2, 3 & 4 Plus	NOT ALLOWED
Extended walk, trot & canter	Sequence changes less than 4 strides
Trot zig-zag	Canter zig-zag (More than one consecutive counter change of hand)
Flying change (s) including sequence changes every 4 th stride	Half & Full Canter pirouettes
Single Counter change of hand in Canter	Piaffe & Passage
¼ Canter pirouettes	

LEVEL 6/7 Optional Movements: Any movement occurring in current NZ Dressage Tests up to and including Level 7 Standard may be included. Riders deliberately showing movements above Level 7 will be eliminated.	
LEVEL 6/7 (Advanced)	
ALLOWED – all movements from Levels 2, 3, 4 & 5 Plus	NOT ALLOWED
Half or full canter pirouettes	One time changes
Sequence changes every 2 nd & 3 rd stride	Piaffe & Passage
	More than single pirouettes in canter (i.e. more than 360 degrees)



MEDIUM TOUR FREESTYLE TO MUSIC (LEVEL 8)

Effective 1 August 2014

Arena 60m x 20m

Time Allowed: Performance to be finished between 5:00 and 5:30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS:

For NZ only: May be ridden in a double bridle or ordinary snaffle

All trot work must be executed sitting.

Medium Tour Freestyle

- In the event of any movement being DELIBERATELY shown of a higher level than the corresponding test the competitor will receive '0' for the whole movement and the scores for the choreography as well as the degree of difficulty cannot be higher than a 5
- More than single pirouettes in canter final mark = 0
- If illegal pirouette only shown to the left then, only left pirouette would score 0
- Piaffe, must be on straight line with min 10 straight steps. If ONLY shown as pirouette = score technically insufficient. If piaffe pirouette is shown in addition to a piaffe with a minimum of 10 steps straight the piaffe will be scored technically as usual
- Passage must be on one track (min 20 metres)
- Passage in half pass not permitted



Directives for Judges - FEI Freestyle Tests

Pony Freestyle

In the event of the following movements being deliberately shown the competitor will receive 0 for the whole movement and the scores for choreography as well as for the degree of difficulty cannot be higher than 5.

1. More than half pirouettes in walk (i.e. more than 180 degrees) Final mark for pirouettes 0 (regardless of any other correctly executed pirouettes).
2. If the walk is not shown on one track (on straight or curved lines only), but is only performed clearly as a lateral movement, it is considered as 0.
3. Counter changes of hand in trot are allowed, the angles of which are left to the rider's discretion.
4. Travers and renvers are allowed as additional part of the choreography but do not substitute the requested half passes.
5. Movement 13: If the collected canter is only shown without 8 m circle(s), a maximum mark of 3 can be given, and a maximum of 5 for degree of difficulty and 5 for choreography.

However, if any movements which are not mentioned in Pony level standard tests are deliberately shown, the competitor will be eliminated. E.g. Flying Changes, Canter Pirouettes, Canter Half Passes, Piaffe, Passage.

Junior Freestyle

In the event of the following movements being deliberately shown the competitor will receive 0 for the whole movement and the scores for choreography as well as for the degree of difficulty cannot be higher than 5.

1. More than half pirouettes in walk (i.e. more than 180 degrees) Final mark for pirouettes 0 (regardless of any other correctly executed pirouettes).
2. Flying changes shown in sequence (of every 4 strides or less) Final mark for all flying changes 0 (regardless of any other single flying changes shown).
3. One counter change of hand in canter is allowed. However if more than one change of direction is performed, the final mark for canter half-passes, both left and right is 0 (regardless of any other correctly shown individual half-passes)

NB Counter changes of hand in trot are allowed, the angles of which are left to the rider's discretion.

4. If the walk is not shown on one track (on straight or curved lines only), but is only performed clearly as a lateral movement, it is considered as 0.
5. Travers and renvers are allowed as additional part of the choreography but do not substitute the requested half passes.

However, if any movements which are not mentioned in Junior level standard tests are deliberately shown, the competitor will be eliminated. E.g. Canter Pirouettes, Piaffe, Passage.

Young Rider Freestyle

In the event of the following movements being deliberately shown the competitor will receive 0 for the whole movement, and the scores for choreography as well as for the degree of difficulty cannot be higher than 5.

1. More than half pirouettes in canter (i.e. more than 180 degrees) Final mark for pirouettes 0.

NB If the "illegal" pirouette was shown only to the left for example, then only the left pirouettes would score 0, regardless of any other correctly executed left pirouettes, and vice versa if it was shown only to the right.

In order to obtain a high technical score, half canter pirouettes must be shown from a straight line to a straight line, in canter. Half pirouettes may be shown coming out of a half pass and/or leading into a half pass. However, if half pirouettes are shown **only** in direct combination with a half pass, the movement will be scored as technically insufficient.

Half canter pirouettes performed from and into walk or halt, will only be regarded in the harmony and choreography sections.

2. Flying changes shown in sequences of two time and one time. Final mark for all flying changes 0 (regardless of any other correctly shown four time and three time sequence changes).

Counter changes of hand are allowed. The angles are left to the rider's discretion.

3. If the walk is not shown on one track (on straight or curved lines only), but is only performed clearly as a lateral movement it is considered as 0.

4. Travers and renvers are allowed as additional part of the choreography but do not substitute the requested half passes.

However, if any movements, which are not mentioned in Young Rider level standard tests are deliberately shown, the competitor will be eliminated. E.g. Piaffe, Passage.

Intermediate I Freestyle

In the event of the following movements being deliberately shown the competitor will receive 0 for the whole movement, and the scores for choreography as well as for the degree of difficulty cannot be higher than 5.

1. More than single pirouettes in canter (i.e. more than 360 degrees) Final mark for pirouettes 0.

NB If the "illegal" pirouette was shown only to the left for example, then only the left pirouette would score 0, regardless of any other correctly executed left pirouettes, and vice versa if it was shown only to the right.

In order to obtain a high technical score, canter pirouettes must be shown from a straight line to a straight line, in canter. Pirouettes may be shown coming out of a half pass and/or leading into a half pass. However, if pirouettes are shown **only** in direct combination with a half pass, the movement will be scored as technically insufficient.

Canter pirouettes performed from and into walk or halt, will only be regarded in the harmony and choreography sections.

2. Flying changes shown in sequence at every stride. Final mark for flying changes 0 (regardless of any other correctly shown three time and two time sequence changes).

3. If the walk is not shown on one track (on straight or curved lines only), but is only performed clearly as a lateral movement it is considered as 0.

4. Travers and renvers are allowed as additional part of the choreography but do not substitute the requested half passes.

However, if any movements, which are not mentioned in Intermediate I level, are deliberately shown the competitor will be eliminated. E.g. Piaffe, Passage.

Grand Prix Freestyle

In the event of the following movement being deliberately shown the competitor will receive 0 for the whole movement and the scores for choreography as well as for the degree of difficulty cannot be higher than 5.

1. More than double pirouettes in canter (i.e. two pirouettes of more than 360 degrees each, in one continuous movement). Final mark for pirouettes 0.

NB If the "illegal" pirouette was shown only to the left for example, then only the left pirouette would score 0, regardless of any other correctly executed left pirouettes, and vice versa if it was shown only to the right.

In order to obtain a high technical score, canter pirouettes must be shown from a straight line to a straight line, in canter. Pirouettes may be shown coming out of a half pass and/or leading into a half pass. However, if pirouettes are shown **only** in direct combination with a half pass, the movement will be scored as technically insufficient.

Canter pirouettes performed from and into walk, halt, or from and into piaffe, will only be regarded in the harmony and choreography sections.

2. Piaffe. In order to obtain a high technical score piaffe must be shown on a straight line with a minimum of 10 steps straight. If piaffe is only shown in the form of a pirouette, it will be scored as technically insufficient. If a piaffe pirouette is shown (in addition to a requested piaffe with a minimum of 10 steps straight) it will be scored technically as usual.

3. Passage. In order to obtain a high technical score, passage must be shown on one track (a minimum of 20 m). If passage is only shown in the form of a half pass it will be scored as technically insufficient. If passage in half pass is shown in addition to a passage on one track, it will be scored technically as usual.

4. If the walk is not shown on one track (on straight or curved lines only), but is only performed clearly as a lateral movement it is considered as 0.