

# The Artistic Marks in Freestyle Performances

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## RHYTHM, ENERGY, ELASTICITY of PACES

### → Combination of the first two collectives

- Consistency of rhythm in all 3 paces
- Freedom and lightness of paces, elasticity of steps / strides
- Impulsion
  - a) Engagement of hindlegs
  - b) Supple, swinging back

Emphasis should be more on rhythm than on impulsion

**Loss of rhythm in at least one pace as well as a lack of impulsion diminish this mark.**

## HARMONY between RIDER and HORSE

### → Combination of the 3. and 4. collective

- Throughness, confidence, submission + absence of severe mistakes (!!)
- Correct training of the horse in accordance with the training scale
  - Suppleness, activity of mouth, contact, acceptance of bit, straightness, collection, self carriage, elevation
- Rider's position /seat, correctness of his aids

Emphasis should be more on correct training of the horse / way of going / confidence and absence of mistakes

**Tension and disobedience, mistakes, lack of throughness, but also an aggressive way of riding reduce this mark.**

## CHOREOGRAPHY (5 main criteria)

### 1. Structure:

- Choreography should take examples from the composition of other forms of art (film, theatre)
- Entering the arena → rousing attention of spectators (and judges)
- Interesting beginning → positive signal
- Middlepart can consist of quieter phrases
- Impressive finish with highlights, not with weaknesses!

### 2. Originality:

- Not designed like a standard test
- If possible not always trot – walk – canter
- New lines, surprising transitions
- Combinations of movements / transitions
- Not too many „isolated“ movements without connection to other movements
- However: No “circuslike“ sequences

### 3. Use of Arena:

- Arena should be used as a whole
- There should be a balance between left lead work / right lead work
- Not too many movements shown on standard lines (track, diagonal...)
- Not the same movement shown on the same line several times
- Clearly recognizable lines
- A symmetric freestyle gives the impression of being well structured

### 4. Balance:

- Balance within paces: no one-sided preference of a "favourite pace"
- Balance within movements: not too much use of "favourite" movements
- Interaction of collection and extension
- Interaction of straight and curved lines
- Interaction of lateral work and riding straight forward

### 5. Suitability for the horse:

- Exact analysis of the horse's possibilities
- Emphasis on the strengths by placing them effectively
- Emphasis on the strengths by repeating them appropriately
- “Masking” the weaknesses by placing them less clearly recognizable

**DEGREE of DIFFICULTY** (5 main criteria)

**The risk in accordance with the ability of rider and horse is the main criterion for its assessment !!!**

**1. Movements:**

All movements might be - generally spoken - regarded as a difficulty if they

- exceed the requirements of the respective class
- are in compliance with the FEI rules
- are executed correctly (marks of 7 and better)

There are only three (combined) movements existing that are not part of any standard test:

- Piaffe pirouette
- Half pass in passage
- Canter pirouette more than 360° (max. double)

**2. Transitions:**

All transitions can be regarded as difficult if they

- exceed the requirements of the respective class
- are executed correctly

Transitions should be executed with promptness and smoothness to be regarded as a difficulty

**3. Combinations:**

Combinations of movements (2, 3, or more movements) can increase the mark

To be regarded as a difficulty, the combinations must follow each other as directly as possible.

(Exception: All combinations with canter pirouettes which have to show some canterstrides before/after!)

**4. Lines / Points that make the execution more / less difficult:**

- Easy: All movements on the track; pirouettes on circle line; half passes less steep than required in the respective standard test
- More difficult: movements on the 2nd track, quarter line, centre line; changes on curved lines (circle line, serpentine, through 2 corners) occasionally: movements that lead to the outside (towards spectators, exit ...)

**5. Repetitions:**

A difficult freestyle exceeds the minimum requirements (see FEI Guidelines for Degree of Difficulty, 2009)

Fundamental movements should be appropriately repeated.

**Reins in one hand** for a few special movements can increase the mark for harmony and for the degree of difficulty, but the technical execution must be as correct as if ridden with both hands.

**MUSIC** (5 main criteria)**1. Well fitting to all Paces and Transitions:**

- The music should fit to the mechanics of the horse → a music of its own for each pace is required
- There should be a differentiation between music for trot or piaffe / passage
- (Canter) music needs "structure" (a clear beat emphasising the inner front leg)
- No background music like in a supermarket
- Changing pace / transitions in time with the music, not at prescribed markers
- Too many changes within the paces are difficult to realise by the music and often give the impression of a hectic performance

**2. Well fitting to the Movements:**

- Movements can be underlined with a significant "theme"
- Regard the "value" of each movement: half passes rather light-footed, extended trot dynamic, passage energetic, pirouettes appear to "change" the canter rhythm
- Underlining the piaffe can only be recommended if the horse executes the piaffe very rhythmically and clearly diagonal
- Movements can be underlined but also "concealed" by the music
- Movements and music should never contradict themselves
- Entering the arena and the finale should be accentuated by the music. Clear finish to the test.

If you close your eyes you should be able to imagine, which movement the rider shows this very moment.

**3. Well fitting to the Type of Rider/ Horse:**

- A good freestyle music should not contradict the appearance of rider / type of horse. Example:
- No too melancholic music for a young pony rider
- Very heavy music can slay a lightfooted thoroughbred
- Music can be extraordinary... as long as it fits well

#### 4. Style of the Music:

A good freestyle music is a musical unity

- If possible taken from one genre: Softpop, rock, musical, film soundtracks, classical music ...
- Preferably one type of orchestration
- Short sequences such as jingles, minimum vocals, sounds, etc. can give good emphasis to particular movements
- Vocals are not forbidden but should not be too dominating

A judge should never ask himself whether HE/SHE likes the music as long as it fits well to paces, transitions, movements, horse and rider.

#### 5. Evoking positive Emotions

A good freestyle music evokes positive feelings and emotions

- The rider must "sell" his freestyle to the audience
- Preferable: A catchy music that stays in the heads
- The rider should not choose neither a boring, nor a too complicated or even "aggressive" music

**Practical remarks to the technical movements** (do not replace the knowledge of the Freestyle Directives)

#### Entrance and Halt:

- The rider has the freedom to choose the pace and the place without the mark being diminished
- Technical mistakes that happen before the 1st salute and in the transition have to be considered
- The move off has also to be considered (regarding contact, promptness ...)

#### Walk:

- Has to be shown in both tempi min. 20 m on one track = straight or curved line. Not to be performed as a lateral movement. The collected walk can be interrupted by a walk pirouette.

#### Lateral Movements:

- Shoulder-in: Should be shown on clearly recognizable lines (min. 12 m)
- Half Pass: The steepness is at the discretion of the rider, but should not be shown below the requirements of the standard test
- Beginning and end of the lateral movements to be clearly defined
- A broken change after a canter half pass will reduce the mark for this half pass

#### Extensions:

- Extended trot should be shown on a straight line; on circle line is regarded as medium trot
- Transitions must be integrated into the mark for extensions
- A broken change influences the mark for the extended canter

#### Series of changes on a curved line:

- Maintenance of balance, quality, length of canterstrides, straightness

#### Pirouettes:

- On both reins from/ to collected, straightened canter
- According to the requirements of the class (half, full, max. 2x)
- Judged as one movement, no average of two rotations
- Combination of pirouette left and right must have 3-4 straight strides in between to be counted

#### Piaffe:

- Minimum 1x 10 steps straight; steps to be counted!!

#### Passage:

- Minimum 20 m on one track.

Transitions: only to be counted as passage-piaffe-passage transitions (not pi-pa-pi)

- Should be shown at least once on a straight line
- Transitions on a curved line from piaffe-pirouette to passage-half-pass are counted as transitions

Piaffe Pirouette (judged as piaffe if the rider shows min. 1x piaffe on straight line, otherwise < 5):

A piaffe pirouette can be shown in many ways: from 90° - 360°, as a fan or back and forth.

More than 360° in one direction should not be allowed. (→ Unbalanced choreography)

Correct execution:

- Clearly diagonal, consistent rhythm throughout, regular
- Consistent collection, balance, lightness of contact
- All legs turn 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 , ½ etc. piaffe pirouette should be shown to both sides to prove the horse is well trained
- Before and/or after the piaffe pirouette there should be some steps straight

Mistakes:

- Diagonals visibly breaking up, uneven steps, change of rhythm and tempo
- On forehand, loss of self-carriage/ balance, etc.
- Losing activity, falling into walk, stiffening the back, any form of resistance
- Turning around the middle, escaping quarters, stepping sideways/ backwards/ forward, too large
- Outside flexion/ no bend at all

Half-Pass in Passage (judged as passage if the rider shows min. 20m passage on one track, otherwise < 5):

A half-pass in passage can be shown as an ordinary half-pass or as a “zig-zag”. It should be executed at least 5m sideways to make it recognizable. Less crossing of legs/ less steepness of angle are expected.

Correct execution:

- Consistent regularity and cadence
- Consistent collection, true self-carriage, balance, lightness of contact
- Maintenance of same level of activity and elasticity of back
- Slight but uniform flexion/ bend, slightly crossing legs
- If possible, a half-pass in passage should be shown to both sides

Mistakes:

- Loss of regularity and cadence
- Loss of collection, self-carriage, balance, horse getting above the bit, strong in hand ...
- Lacking energy and engagement behind, getting hollow in the back
- Loss/ change of flexion/ bend, tilted head, quarters leading
- Not crossing at all, not far enough sideways

### Reins in one Hand

Showing a horse successfully with the reins in 1 hand is reflected in the marks for harmony (= rider) and difficulty

- Reins in 1 hand, the other hanging still and relaxed by the rider's side
- Rider must not influence the public /his horse with the free hand (otherwise minus 0.5 in harmony)
- The contact must remain light and steady
- The execution of the movements must be as if ridden with both hands
- Flexed exercises should be executed on both hands

### **Guidance for Scoring:**

Mark for rhythm: Influenced by quality of paces (mainly) and impulsion.

Mark for harmony: Influenced by execution of test incl. technical mistakes and quality of riding.

Often connected with degree of difficulty if difficulties are presented very harmoniously.

Mark for choreography: Influenced by creativity, structure etc.(see above). Often connected with degree of difficulty if difficulties are well presented on interesting lines or in original combinations etc.

Will clearly be diminished (down to 5) in case of showing a Freestyle not in accordance to the rules.

Mark for degree of difficulty: Influenced by all kinds of difficulties (see above) and their technical execution(!).

Will clearly be diminished (down to 5) in case of showing a Freestyle not in accordance to the rules.

Mark for music: Influenced by the rider's choice of a well fitting music (see criteria above) but also by the execution of the movements which must always remain in accordance with the music.