

Section 7 Appendix 1

PCAT DRESSAGE JUDGING CRITERIA

STANDARDS THAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED AT VARIOUS STAGES

Standard of Performance

Pony Club dressage is conducted under EA rules, but due to the younger ages of PC members, we cannot expect the same standard of performance especially in the lower grades. For Grade 1 ODEs and A group (17 yr old and over) riders we would expect the EA level of performance for the relevant standard test, so one would expect the working paces of a preliminary horse to be 'on the bit', but we certainly would not expect it of the Grade 4 and 5 combinations.

Remarks

For the benefit and education of our riders we ask that judges provide constructive and encouraging comments on the scoresheet. Remarks should be simple and generous with their praise and every sheet should somewhere carry remarks that comment on the rider's ability or otherwise to fulfil the basic requirements of each grade as below.

Grade 5

Grade 5 is for the youngest age group and least experienced riders, and should be used as an education and training exercise. This grade is unofficial and in the name of safety, riders may use restricted equipment. All trot work should be rising.

- a. The TWO BASIC requirements are to keep the pony going at the required pace and on the correct line.
- b. The judge should not be too concerned with details of position or correctness of the aids.
- c. Correct diagonal or leading leg should be rewarded.
- d. Free walk at this stage may be on a loose rein. If the pony walks in the right direction on a loose rein that is all we ask.

Grade 4

Grade 4 is for those with little experience.

- a. The horse should go willingly forward on a light contact with a steady head carriage. Where the head is carried at this stage is not important as long as it is steady most of the time. The horse that goes quietly but lacks impulsion should mark better than one that is pulling.
- c. The rider who tries to get their horse near the corner and on the track should be marked more leniently than the rider who lets the horse take the line it chooses. The fact that the rider has to use the outside rein causing the horse to look to the outside is a minor detail.
- d. Riders should be rewarded for trying to do transitions accurately.
- e. Lengthen/Increase the trot. Judges should show leniency at grade 4 as horses will not be able to maintain rhythm and lengthening and will tend to run and quicken the stride. When asked to increase the trot the rider should be able to ride a reasonably straight diagonal, with the horse going forward more energetically, so that there is a difference from the working trot. If the horse does not lengthen the stride this should not be penalised at this grade.
- f. Free walk at this stage MAY be on a loose rein. The horse should be rewarded for staying straight.

Grade 3 and C Group

- a. The rider should be starting to show an ability to influence the horse's way of going, including working towards maintaining straightness, correct bend and flexion.
- b. Riders should be able to ride accurate figures and transitions.

- c. The horse would be expected to accept the bit with a steady contact, and at this stage it would be rewarded if this is consistently maintained. Momentary lapses behind the vertical/above the bit should not outweigh correct work shown in other aspects.

Grade 2 and B Group

- a. The rider should have a reasonably balanced position, be moderately steady in sitting trot, and demonstrate that they understand correct application of the aids.
- b. They should be able to ride forward to contact on the bit and be able to maintain a steady frame most of the time.
- c. The rider should demonstrate an ability to make the horse more active in his movements.
- d. Consistent over-bending and any restriction of the horse's natural stride throughout a movement should be penalised. However, momentary lapses should not outweigh correct work shown in other aspects.
- e. When executing "moderately lengthened strides" the rider should try to show clear upward and downward transitions, strides should lengthen and show a difference without loss of rhythm. The horse should be straight, but some loss of balance should not be heavily penalised.
- f. In order to execute "stretch on a long rein" the rider must lengthen the reins in order for the horse to stretch gradually forward and down, but always maintains a steady contact. During the taking up of the reins, the horse must accept the shortening of the contact.
- b. The horse should now show correct bend into corners and circles can be ridden without loss of rhythm and tempo

Grade 1 and A Group

For this Grade we would expect the EA level of performance for the relevant standard test.