

Lightness Tournament

Rules Book



Version 3.1 October 2015

1.0. Turnout Inspection

1.1. Before the start of the actual **class**, the participants will be inspected on proper tack and attire. All exhibitors will come into the arena in the direction ordered by the judge. The judge will give a score from 1-10 for the following: 1) cleanliness of horse and tack. Tack cleaned, horse clean and mane/tail appropriate for discipline. 2) Tack and attire are appropriate for discipline the exhibitor has chosen. 3) Tack and attire is appropriate to the tradition and rules of the eligible disciplines according to paragraph 5.1

1.2. If tack and attire are not appropriate, the participant will be excused.

1.3. During the presentation phase, riders are required to wear respective hats:

- 1) Alta Escuela with respective hats,
- 2) Dressage – optional with no hat, hat or helmet,
- 3) Doma Vaquera with respective hat,
- 4) Western with respective hat

1.4. Any exhibitor who does not enter the arena for the inspection within one minute of the official call shall be disqualified.

1.5. The judge(s) may decide at will how much time will be given to a particular exhibitor who may be riding two or more horses which he may also wish to present for inspection.

1.6. All the exhibitors will have at least 10 minutes between the inspection phase and the start of the ridden tests.



2.0. General Guidelines Regarding Execution of Movements

2.1. No spurs are allowed for any of the tests. A crop or whip is not authorized, however, a twig is allowed if necessary under saddle. For long reining tests, an in hand whip is authorized. The in hand whip is 60-64” long.

2.2. For freestyles, the order and placement of each required movement is up to the individual. Any exercise performed, when possible, must be done in both hands (directions).

2.3. The announcer will call the exhibitors in the order established at random. After the call bell, the exhibitor shall enter at “A” within one minute of being called.

2.4. After entering, the rider shall halt and salute the judge; it shall also be repeated at the end of the test. The salute shall be done at a complete halt with the right hand and taking off the hat for men and with inclined head movement by female exhibitors. All the reins **and the twig** will be held in the left hand.

2.5. If the judge observes any lameness, the exhibitor will be excused.

2.6. After each exhibitor’s ride, the judge will hand his mark sheet to the show secretary for tabulation. The marks will not be communicated to the participant or the audience, only the comments from the judge and the final result.

2.7. Participants may show the same test once or twice. The philosophy of this tournament is that each participant masters each level and upgrades to the next level. This is why participants have a second chance.

In the case of showing the same test a second time, the final evaluation will consist of the average marks of both tests.

Showing the same test a second time is up to the rider.

2.8. In case of a fall involving horse and rider, the exhibitor will not be disqualified. Points will be deducted from the movement during which the fall occurred. The clock will continue running.

2.9. A horse whose four feet leave the arena at any time during the test will be disqualified.

2.10. The test begins from the moment the horse enters at “A” and ends after the final salute or upon exiting the arena, depending on the test. Any occurrence before or after, does not affect the marking. The rider must leave the arena as prescribed on the test sheet.

2.11. If the music starts before the rider is in place, then he has 20 seconds in which to appear from the moment it began, and the music should end with the final salute, or upon exiting the arena.

2.12. All the exhibitors must provide show management with their recorded music, duly identified, within the time specified by show management or the judge.

2.13. Music will be provided for those who do not bring their own.



3.0 Judge’s Marks

All the movements and transitions that shall be judged are enumerated on each test sheet, and will be judged on a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being the highest.

The marking breaks down as follows:

0= Not performed	6= Satisfactory
1= Unacceptable	7= Very good
2= Poor	8= Well done
3= Rather poorly done	9= Excellent
4= Insufficient	10= Outstanding/ Perfect
5= Average	

3.1. Marking Criteria

The evaluation of each test is split into 3 sections

-The Movements

-The Technical Composition

-The Artistic Presentation

Depending on the test, the value of the Movement section is around 2/5, the value of the Technical Composition is around 2/5, and the value of the Artistic Presentation is around 1/5.

The Technical Composition is very representative of the philosophy of Riding in Lightness.

3.2. Marks for Technical Composition

The Technical marks are given for the entirety of the composition; each element being evaluated from 0 to 10. The co-efficient will vary, according to the level and is found on each test.

The Technical Composition focuses on:

1. **Gait 1 (Depending on the test: Medium Walk or Collected Walk or Collected Trot)**
2. **Gait 2 (Depending on the test: Working Trot or Collected Canter or Piaffe)**
3. **Gait 3 (Depending on the test: Working Canter, Counter-Canter or Passage)**
4. **Gait 4 (In some tests: Collected Canter)**
5. **Impulsion and regularity of the horse**
6. **Submission and enjoyment of the horse**
7. **Balance and Lightness of the horse**
8. **Self-carriage**
9. **Lightness and discretion of the rider's aids**
10. **Descent of the aids**



3.2.1. Details Regarding the Technical Elements

The judge will give partial notes to each part of a movement set as he/she sees fit and will assign a mark to a particular exercise though it may not equal the exact average of the partial notations.

The judge must make certain that all required movements were included in the test and that no additional movements were added, which would result in **a sanction of 10 points or disqualification**.

Sections of walk, trot or canter to connect the requested exercises are not considered as additional movements.

The marks should reward the horse and rider who demonstrate the highest degree of Lightness, impulsion and energetic, willing performance; however a pleasing choreography, for example, will not make up for lack of difficulty or poor execution.

3.2.2. Definition of Terms for Technical Composition

3.2.2.0 Gaits:

The walk should exhibit **life, impulsion**, regularity, looseness and spontaneity.

The trot should be free, elastic, **cadenced**, active and showing suspension.

The canter should be united, light and cadenced. The hindquarters must always remain active and engaged. Response should be to the minimum of aids demonstrating Lightness and spirit. The gaits should be ample, regular and should have frankness.

3.2.2.1. Impulsion and Regularity of the Horse

The horse should easily demonstrate lively impulsion and elastic articulations free of resistances, offering obedience without hesitation, responding calmly and precisely, showing natural balance and harmony both mental and physical. The judge will mark the willingness to go forward, engagement, cadence and balance.

3.2.2.2. Submission and Enjoyment of the Horse

Throughout the test, the horse must demonstrate submission including at the halt, should show true engagement and be in the rider's hand, showing an arched neck depending upon its level of training and accepting light contact at all times. The head should remain in a fixed position slightly ahead of the vertical, with the poll as the highest point. Judging of this element will keep in mind the ease, confidence and steadiness which the horse demonstrates while maintaining contact with the hand. Rider and horse have to be a team, and so the horse has to enjoy his work.



3.2.2.3. Balance and Lightness of the Horse

The horse has to show balance and Lightness during the entire test. The horse should not be on the fore-hand, neither the fore-head being behind the vertical nor the poll not being the highest point of the curve of the neck.

3.2.2.4. Self-Carriage

The horse has to keep the frame of the head-neck by himself, the gait and the impulsion by himself, without the permanent assistance of his rider.

3.2.2.5. Lightness and Discretion of the Rider's Aids

The rider has to show imperceptible aids as much as possible. The audience and judge would like to see the horse doing everything by himself and everything looking effortless.

3.2.2.6. Descent of the Aids

Descent of the aids is one of the goals and proof of Riding in Lightness. The co-efficient of this element will vary, according the level, being low for low level tests, and high for more advanced levels. Descent of Aids will include descent of all and as many aids as possible, i.e. hands, legs, seat, whip...etc...

3.3. Marks for Artistic Presentation

3.3.1. Rhythm, Selection of the Music

The first element of an artistic impression is visual, meaning that is the first impressions that the entrance of the artist onstage makes, and must be impressive markedly the purity of the horse's gaits which are **underscored by the music**. The adequate rhythm and selection of the music will be appreciated by the judge.

3.3.2. Interpretation of the Music

The second element of an artistic impression is the visual artistic creation formed by the horse and rider. The way the music is interpreted and dramatized to create calm or expressive and energetic movements, highlighting transitions synchronized with the music, whether collected or extended movements. The

interpretation of the music should give a high personalized choreography, demonstrating the personality of the participant and his horse.



3.3.3. Choreography, Use of the Arena

The more fluid and nice the choreography, the better mark. This includes the splitting and use of the arena, highlighting the most difficult exercises and performing their choreography in the place where the judge and audience can easily appreciate them.

3.3.4. Degree of difficulty

Degree of difficulty: How the exercises are connected, and their transitions, will be taken into consideration by the judge.

3.3.5. Harmony and Grace Between the Rider and the Horse

The rider must demonstrate an ease of communication of the aids. His ability to execute all the movements with grace and fluidity throughout the sections of the test will be noted. A rider who attempts advanced movements, must realize that the quality of the movement and its artistic impression will both be judged, thus penalizing poor execution of a difficult movement. Advice: Better to do an impeccable test at the correct level than attempt advanced movements for which neither horse nor rider are totally prepared. Two competitors at the same level of difficulty may have two artistic marks that vary dramatically. A poorly executed movement scoring 4 will never acquire a mark above 5 in artistic merit. The artistic merit marks must reflect the harmony or lack thereof between horse and rider, and creativity and flair.

3.4. Time limits

The time allowed for each test will be indicated on the outline sheet for each level and its tests. In any case, the announcer will call out a two-minute-to-go signal indicating that time remaining during each test. When time runs out, a bell will go off signaling the rider to leave the ring. From that moment on, no movement will be scored although the music selection will continue for each rider until the rider completes the final halt and salute to the judge.



4.0. Mastering the levels & Approbation of the Tests

4.0.1 Same rules applied for mastering the levels under saddle and Pied-a-Terre.

4.1.0. Every horse/rider pair needs to start with Level 1 and need to master each level to move to the next level.

4.1.1. The participant needs to have Mastered or Mastered with Brilliance the test A to be allowed to show the test B of any level.

4.1.2. A level under saddle will be considered Mastered when the test A and the test B of the same level have been Mastered or Mastered with Brilliance.

The average of both tests will be taken to determine if the level has been Mastered or Mastered with Brilliance. This means one test can be Mastered and the other test can be Mastered with Brilliance and if the average of the two tests is 80% or higher, the overall Level will be Mastered with Brilliance.

4.1.3. A level Pied-a-Terre will be considered Mastered when the test of the same level has been Mastered or Mastered with Brilliance.

4.1.4. For riders that have mastered Level 3 in the past, they are authorized to show a new horse in Level 1, 2 or 3 without having to follow the levels order.

If the rider has mastered Level 4, then that same rider can bring a new horse to either Level 1, 2, 3, or 4.

If the rider has mastered Level 5, then the rider can bring then new horse to either Level 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

The rider is not allowed to start a new horse at a higher level that what they have mastered in the past with a previous horse.

This rule applies to riders that have mastered Levels 3, 4 or 5 in the past. If the rider has mastered Level 1 or 2 in the past and have NOT mastered Level 3 yet, that rider must start with Level 1 with the new horse.

4.2. Participants may show the same test once or twice. The philosophy of this tournament is that each participant masters each level and upgrades to the next level. This is why participants have a second chance.

In the case of showing the same test a second time, the final evaluation will consist of the average marks of both tests.

Showing the same test a second time is up to the rider.

4.3. The marks will not be communicated either to the participants or the audience. The only communication that will be shared is if the entrant has mastered, mastered with brilliance or not mastered the test.

4.3. The participant will receive a copy of the evaluation sheet. This copy will not reveal marks of the movements or the grand total. However, the rider will be able to see the marks of the technical composition and the artistic presentation as well as the judge's comments.

4.4. The judge will consider the test mastered when the global mark is 70% or higher.

4.5. A special mention of "Mastered with Brilliance" will be added to the master when the global mark of the test is 80% or higher.



5.0. Tack and Attire

5.1. Eligible Disciplines

The Lightness Tournament is open to any horse and rider from any discipline. However, the tack and attires for showing will be limited to the disciplines of: Alta Escuela, Dressage, Doma Vaquera and Western Reining and will follow their respective rules.

5.1.1. Alta Escuela

Reference → Alta Escuela Rules...PRE Foundation

http://www.prehorse.org/assets/horse_shows/AltaEscuelaRules_EN.pdf

5.1.2. Dressage

Reference → F.E.I

<http://www.fei.org/fei/regulations/dressageand>

http://www.fei.org/sites/default/files/file/DISCIPLINES/DRESSAGE/Rules/RULES_DRESSAGE_2011_BLACK-VERSION_web.pdf

5.1.3. Doma Vaquera

Reference → Real Federación Hípica Española/ Reglamento para los Concursos de Doma Vaquera

<http://www.rfhe.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Vaquera-2014.pdf>

5.1.4. Western Reining

<http://www.nrha.com/handbook/showrules.pdf>

5.2.0. Lightness Rules are a Priority

The Lightness rules concerning the tack and attire take precedence over the rules of each of the other disciplines.



5.2.1. The French riding costume of the XVIII century will be recommended in addition to the numerous possibilities to dress the horse and the rider from the rule books of the 4 disciplines. In fact, this costume will be the most appropriate to represent the Lightness of the French origin. The Tricorne hat, as well as the cavalier hat, is accepted in accordance with the costume.

5.2.2. The presentation of the horse, including mane, tail and other accessories, will respect the original rules of each discipline.

5.2.3. The opening of the horse's mouth must NOT BE RESTRICTED. Only a cavesson noseband, regular noseband and a Spanish serreta (media caña) are permitted.

5.2.4. The noseband has to have 1 inch between the horse's jaw and the noseband.

5.2.5. Only the Spanish serreta (media caña) must be tight.

5.2.6. Any test may be presented with 2 or 4 reins held as follows:

2 Reins:

a) Separated in the left and right hand.

b) 2 reins on the left hand. This manner is considered to have a higher degree of difficulty and will be appreciated by the judge.

4 Reins:

a) In the French manner.

b) 3 reins in the left hand (left false rein, left curb rein, right curb rein) and the false right rein in the right hand.

5.2.7. Regardless of the discipline and its respective tack and attire, the bridle may be the serreta plus the Spanish sweet iron curb or a double Spanish bridle with the Spanish sweet iron curb.

The use of the serreta is not allowed at level 3 or higher. For level 3 and higher only simple bits or double bridle are authorized.

6.0. General Rules

The judge should not be influenced by the type of music selected for a particular test, and shall focus solely on its appropriateness and effectiveness in correlation to the choreography.

6.1. Causes for Disqualification

The following shall be specific causes for disqualification:

a) Entering the arena prior to the ringing of the bell.

b) Entering the arena out of order.

c) The horse steps out of the delineated competition area.

d) Causing harm to the horse or showing a horse that exhibits illness or wounds of any sort.

e) Loss of temper by the rider, unsportsmanlike behavior.

f) Abuse of the horse while in the arena.

g) Is found to be in tack and attire which are not appropriate or not up to standards of condition.

- h) Being more than one minute late when called to the arena to compete.
- I) If any part of the tack or attire is changed after the turnout inspection and before performing in the test. The only exclusion will be for the helmet, which is at the discretion of the rider.
- j) Any lameness shown by the horse.
- k) If the horse refuses to execute a required movement within 20 seconds.
- l) Getting out of course 3 times in the technical tests (with letters).



6.2. Tests

- a) There are two forms of Lightness which are judged: The ridden work and work “**Pied-a-Terre**” (long-reining and in-hand).
- b) There are five levels of ridden tests. Each level has an A and B test. Test A need to be Mastered or Mastered with Brilliance before a participant can show the test B, this for any level.
- c) Level 1 test A and B are sequential (with letters) tests.
- d) Level 2 test A is also a sequential test. Level 2 Test B is a freestyle test.
- e) Tests from Level 3, 4 and 5 are all freestyle tests.
- f) There are five levels of Pied-a-Terre, long-reining tests.
- g) All the Pied-a-Terre tests are freestyle tests.
- g) On each test sheet, all the exercises are spelled out.
- h) Horses are considered young horses until they are **six** years old.

6.3. Choreography

Marks will be given based on the utilization of the arena and creativity, taking into account the structure and progression of the routine as well as attention being given to:

- How well the space is used in making the routine flow together.
- How the routine is sequenced to maximize the coordination of the type of movements with the other elements of music, etc.
- The placement and execution of the important movements within the routine.
- The effects achieved through originality of presentation.

Marks will be higher for those routines exhibiting inventiveness, balance and a construction which maximizes both artistry and demonstration of technical ability.

6.4. Degree of Difficulty

The artistic marks will be based upon the virtuosity and ease of execution demonstrated by horse and rider keeping in mind the following:

- Combinations of movements which demand the greatest technical ability.
- Performing movements in a sequence which increase difficulty or demonstrate greater rider/horse skill, such as executing difficult movements with reins in one hand.

The judge will award a higher mark to a test demonstrating a maximum of difficult sequences or movements whenever they do not interfere with the overall flow and harmony of the test presentation.

6.5. Musical Interpretation

For spectators, the most important element of a musical freestyle is the music, since it creates the essential difference between the freestyle and a normal test. The musical selections must suit the horse/rider combination which is a question of style, intuitive interpretation and taste. The horse's gaits and the music must be in rhythmic accord, especially at the moment of transition from one gait to another. The transitions must be in accordance with the moment in the music, not by reaching a specific point in the arena. One must have the impression that the horse and rider are **dancing to the music, interpreting it**. A free style that is based on one piece of music, as if to provide only background, will be marked down as contrary to the spirit of the format.



We emphasize the importance of:

- Synchronized change of the music with changes of gait or type of movement.
- Gaits that are adapted to the tempo of a piece or vice versa.
- The overall harmony.

6.6. Changes of Direction

During changes of direction, the horse should change the curvature of his body to reflect the new direction, remaining flexible and able to modify speed or gait easily.

For the right angle changes such as the walk in the corner, the horse will scribe a quarter circle equivalent of a circle of approximately six meters (18 feet), and likewise the six meter circle should be used for all collected movements. The medium and extended gaits shall be demonstrated in an equivalent to a 10 meters circle.

The rider will briefly straighten the horse before each change of direction.

If there is a required number of strides for any given exercise, the number must be strictly respected.

6.7. The Required Figures

The size of the circles will be up to the rider. Lightness requires the horse to be on the haunches and so 6, 8 and 10 meters circles will be considered of high difficulty by the judge. Circles greater than 10 meters will be considered of low difficulty.

6.7.1. The Serpentine

This figure is a semicircle, united by a straight line with the width of the semicircle being determined by the length of the line and prescribed in the test.

6.7.2. The Figure Eight

As the name indicates, two circles touch, and when passing to the other circle, the rider shall straighten the horse for an instant before entering the new circle at the center of the figure.



6.7.3. Included Movement

Shoulder-in, leg-yielding, haunches-in, haunches-out, half pass and full-pass.

All these movements should be performed in 4 real tracks on the ground with a real angle to the traveled direction from 30° to 45°. The angle to the traveled direction required for the full-pass is from 70° to 90°.

In the circles angles greater than 45° are authorized as long as the horse can still clearly cross his legs without hurting the supporting legs.

6.7.4. Lateral Work Includes These Objectives

To perfect the horse's obedience to the individual aid applied. To elasticize the horse and to free up his shoulders and hindquarters to better engage with flexibility. To improve the cadence and balance at all gaits. To help the horse come through from behind and therefore aid in collection. In all movements it is understood that the inside refers to the side to which the horse is curved, while the outside is simultaneously the opposite side.

6.7.5. The Leg-Yielding

It is essential that the horse remain almost straight with a **very** slight curving of the neck in the direction opposite the movement, the rider seeing only the edge of the eye and nostril of that side.

No matter what the lateral exercise, the horse must remain on 4 distinct tracks and always with a slightly curved body (**with exception of the Leg-Yielding**). Any excessive curvature of the neck or spine will inhibit movement and must be kept in mind, particularly with half-pass.

6.7.6. The Shoulder-in

This is the best exercise for elasticizing the horse, regulating his gaits and achieving harmony and lightness. The horse advances with shoulders slightly to the inside track and curved off the inside leg. The angle to the traveled direction as explained earlier, must be from 30° to 45°.

6.7.7. The Haunches-in

The horse looks to the wall or down the centerline and with his body from a 30° to 45° angle, proceeds down the line with the shoulders on the track and hindquarters slightly curved following on the inside track, with a direct bend (the horse bends in the direction where he is going).

6.7.8. The Haunches-out

The same, except that the horse's hindquarters follow the track with its front on the inside track and slightly ahead.

6.7.9. The Half-pass

This movement requires the horse to look in the direction that it is travelling, slightly curved to the inside and moving off the outside leg. The front legs should be very slightly ahead of the back legs, keeping an even and cadenced rhythm above all, with amplitude of shoulder movement.



6.7.10. The Walk

The walk should exhibit life, impulsion, regularity, looseness and spontaneity in its three variations: collect walk, Medium walk (or Castellan Walk) and extended walk. If the bridle is equipped with a mosquero, this one should be swinging in all the walks.

6.7.11. The Trot

All trot work is done as sitting trot, unless specified differently in a test. The trot must be ground-covering with over-tracking and above all, regular in cadence and balanced with back and front legs showing parallel extensions. The transition to collected trot must be smooth and without resistance as the weight shifts back to the hindquarters.

6.7.12. The Canter

The judge looks for normal rhythm, Lightness and an overall harmonious picture with great engagement from behind and no stiffness in the neck or elsewhere, and the ability to maintain the same tempo. The horse must not lose straightness in any of his figures by incorrectly moving his shoulders or haunches out of line.

Four distinct canters/gallops are judged:

Collected Canter: Showing great Lightness in front demonstrating deep engagement behind while remaining easily maneuverable with high, arched neck and lightly on the bit.

Working Canter: Generally for horses not yet fully capable of collection, in-between the collected and medium canters, but presenting nice balance. Impulsion is vital in this gait with even, light and cadenced strides.

Medium Canter: Between training canter and hand gallop or extended canter. The rider allows the horse to be slightly ahead of the vertical and pushing into longer strides off the back end. As greater extensions of stride are asked for, the horse is allowed to slightly lower the head and neck to elongate while maintaining balance and looseness so as to easily be brought back.

Extended Canter or Hand Gallop: The horse covers the maximum ground but conserving the same tempo, extending the strides to the maximum without losing calm or Lightness of control.

The horse will naturally be allowed to extend the neck and head without losing balance or correct contact with the hand.



6.7.13. The Counter-Canter

Principally a movement teaching balance and flexibility, the counter-canter should be done with the placement of the neck to extend the line of the circle, or other figure. It is incorrect for the rider to allow the haunches to drift out of the line of the scribed circle.

6.7.14. Simple and Flying Changes

The simple change is generally done by scribing a circle on one lead, then at the top of the circle at X go for three-four steps of walk and strike off on the new circle on the opposite lead. Flying changes are done in whatever series required by the test. The judge looks for a little less collection so that the horse maintains forward impulsion through the changes.

6.7.15. The Rein-Back

The horse should move in a straight line or in the line of any of the figures such as the circle or figure 8, without resistance, picking up the diagonal pairs evenly and calmly. The horse will stop, then move backwards and without the slightest hesitation, be ready to spring forward. Anticipation of or precipitation of the movement is penalized as is any resistance to the hand, dragging of front or back legs or wiggling out of line behind. If a transitioning into a trot or canter there should be no other walk steps in-between.

6.7.16. The Pirouette and Half-Pirouette

These movements are two-track figures in which the horse's front end moves in a half or whole circle around the smaller diameter scribed by his hindquarters. Generally executed at walk and canter, the Pirouette to Piaffe also may be executed. Primarily, the interior hind leg stays in place lifting in time to the gait but essentially stationary while the other legs are carrying the movement. The horse is slightly curved in the direction of movement in light contact turning with ease and without rushing conserving the tempo, regularity of stride and while keeping the poll as his highest point. In canter pirouettes the rider accentuates the collection, asking for maximum hindquarter flexing, and keeping in mind that the strides both before and after the pirouette are also part of the figure.

6.7.17. The Passage

A brilliant collected movement with maximum elevation of the trot in prolonged suspension. The engagement of the hocks in a powerful lifting motion will propel a more elevated front leg in each moment of the slowed cadence. The toes of the hind leg should reach the height of the middle of the front cannon bone if correct engagement is attained. The horse should be able to pass into Passage to Piaffe and back to Passage without hesitation or apparent effort and without altering rhythm. Any irregularities shown by one pair of legs or the other or any "lateral dancing" of either

front or back legs is a grave fault. There should be a clear difference between Passage and Collected Trot.



6.7.18. The Piaffe

The classic trotting in place of the Piaffe requires a soft, flexible back with a clear lowering of the croup as it engages underneath the horse, freeing the front legs to lift and suspend for a moment. The pastern of front legs should elevate to approximately the level of the knee of the front leg in support, the fore-arm being horizontally, while the toes of the back legs lift to approximately to the middle of the cannon bone of the hind leg in support. The fore-leg in support (on the ground) must be at the vertical. If this one is behind the vertical, this shows that the balance of the horse in the Piaffe should still be perfected and is on the forehand. The head must be near the vertical and held lightly, the neck high and arched. The horse moves up and down in a harmonious, cadenced manner. This movement must not be labored but energetic and full of forward intention. It is allowed for the horse to move forward a hoof print each stride and the horse should move immediately off into another gait when asked. The slightest movement backwards, irregular, crossed or lateral dancing strides will all be penalized, as will tension or a lack of suspension.

6.8. Airs Above the Ground

Introduction:

These Airs above the Ground are defined by the presence of two front or back feet off the ground at once or by all four feet leaving the ground at once.

The principal Airs are:

6.8.1. The Terre-a-Terre

The Terre-a-Terre is defined as a canter in place where the horse goes up and marks the first beat with the front legs then immediately marks the second beat with the hind leg marking the “lead” more forward than the other, so that one, can see which lead he is on. The Terre-a-Terre is a showy movement and must be done in two tracks.

6.8.2. The Classical Pesade

The Classical Pesade is a lifting of the front end up to a 30° degree angle above the hindquarters. This is a more difficult movement to hold than the Levade as the horse must remain motionless and lifted in front at a 30° degree angle with tucked legs.

6.8.3. The REAAE Levade

The Real Escuela Andaluza de Arte Ecuestre Levade is a lifting of the front end up to a 45° angle above the hindquarters with the more motionless and quiet the front end, the better.

6.8.4. The Mezzair

The Mezzair is similar to the Terre-a-Terre, with the particularity of being a little bit higher than the Terre-a-Terre, and the horse performs this air by keeping his whole body straight and not in two-tracks as in the case of Terre-a-Terre.



6.8.5. The Modern Courbette

In the Modern Courbette, the horse rises into a rearing posture and hops at least two times forward off his back legs.

6.8.6. The Cadre Noir Croupade

The horse elevates the croup very high and kicks energetically with both hind legs.

6.8.7. The Cabriole

Classical by definition, the Cabriole exhibits the most spectacular degree of submission, collection and obedience. This is the ultimate expression of the Airs Above the Ground and the Saut d'Ecole at the highest level, the most perfect and the most difficult.

The horse jumps very high and when reaching the maximum height of the trajectory, the horse kicks energetically with both hind-legs, still keeping a horizontal aspect, before landing in lightness.

6.8.8. Le Pas et Saut

Here, the horse gathers momentum from the Terre-a-Terre movement then jumps into a Courbette from which he then pushes himself in to a Cabriole.

6.9. Movements and Adornment

6.9.1. The Spanish Walk

The front legs of the horse are each in turn lifted and extended to the maximum in a slow cadenced walk. The front foot should strike the ground from the extended leg without curling back under so as to impede forward impulsion.

6.9.2. The Jambette

One front leg is lifted and extended into the air and suspended there without forward movement. Once the horse can maintain either leg in the extended position then one proceeds to forward movement into Spanish Walk.

6.9.3. The Three Legs Pirouette

So called, because the horse lifts one front leg into a “Jambette”, and then uses the other front leg as a stationary pivot while moving the hind legs in a circle around that point. The horse should not put down his lifted leg during the half or full Pirouette.



6.10. Submission and Impulsion

1. Submission does not signify blind obedience but rather an obedience demonstrated by attention given to the rider’s requests, the good will and confidence demonstrated by the horse, and the facility with which the horse performs all the different movements without upset or resistance to the bit or the aids, maintaining light contact and going neither behind nor in front of the bit.
2. If the horse sticks out his tongue, tries to put it over the bit, grinds his teeth or wrings his tail, those are generally signs of nervousness and resistance. The Judge will keep this type of behavior in mind when scoring this section.
3. Impulsion is the term employed to describe the will and intention of the horse to go. Impulsion is in the mind of the horse and can be appreciated by observing the transmission of the propulsion from the hindquarters, which should be active but controlled and stemming from animation and energy of the hocks. Impulsion does not translate into speed which only flattens the gaits, but instead reflect the flexibility and continuous action of the hindquarters going forward then rising up in a moment of suspension.

6.11. More on the Aids and Position of the Rider

All of the airs should be obtained without evidence of the aids used by the rider. The rider should remain centered, balanced and in a classical position without touching the horse. A Classical position is required with low hands elbows near the body, free upper body, and imperceptible aids as much as possible. The seat is all important and only a rider who has control of his lower back and abdominal muscles can instantly communicate by relaxation or resistance.

On all tests the reins shall be held the way described in section 5.2.6. The use of the voice is strictly prohibited which includes any clucking or other sounds and will result in two points off any movement where utilized.

6.12. Transitions

The judge will look for transitions between gaits and speed that are rapid but done with ease and without abruptness. The current rhythm should be maintained until the moment the change is asked for with the horse remaining responsive, light, calm and in a correct frame. Half-halts should be imperceptible, having as an object to alert the horse to an upcoming change, either up or down, sending a bit more weight behind, thus lightening the front for better balance and response.