Dressage Terminology

SUBMITTED BY THE EDUCATION AND DRESSAGE COMMITTEES

Editorial Note: *This new column, Dressage Corner, is a joint effort between the Education Committee and the Dressage Committee. We look forward to this running on a regular basis.*

BASICS

Reference to the basics that are the correct foundation of the progressive training of the horse, independent of the execution of specific test movements. The basics include the following (as suitable to the level and exercise):

- pure rhythm with suitable tempo
- relaxation, suppleness, elasticity, looseness
- correct contact, connection
- impulsion, straightness and longitudinal balance

Correctness of the basics is indicated by the preservation and/ or improvement in the purity and quality of the gaits and paces, the gymnastic ability and physique of the horse, and the horse's attitude and willingness to be driven.

RELAXATION

1. Unruffled mental state. Calmness, without anxiety or nervousness.
2. Absence of muscular tension (contraction) other than that needed for optimal self-carriage, strength, and range and fluency of movement.

CONFIDENCE

The horse performs with boldness and self-assurance and shows total trust in his partnership with the driver, and vice versa, the driver shows trust in his partnership with his horse.

OBEDIENCE

Willingness to perform the movement, transition, or figure asked by the driver. May demonstrate resistance or evasion, yet still be "obedient" (e.g., the horse may perform a precise circle, but still may be against the bit or not be engaged enough; thus he obediently performs the task, but not necessarily submissively, supplely, etc.)

SUBMISSION

The yielding of the horse's will to that of the driver, as revealed by constant attention, willingness, and confidence in the attitude of the horse. In addition, submission is demonstrated by the harmony and ease displayed in the correct execution of the movements. This includes correct bend, acceptance of and obedience to the driver's aids, and a balance appropriate to the task at hand.

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