

EXPLANATION OF EVALUATION CRITERIA for IBOP tests

Walk

The walk is a marching gait in which the footfalls of the horse's feet follow one another in "four time". The four legs are lifted alternately and separately as in the example beginning with the left hind leg: left hind, left front, right hind, right front, etc. The hind foot is placed in the same spot on the ground that has just been vacated by the front foot. The walk movement must flow throughout the horse's body. For a brief moment during the walk, the legs on the same lateral side form a distinct V shape.

The IBOP tests require only the medium walk. At the medium walk, the horse moves forward in a spirited, uninhibited manner displaying an active yet calm appearance. The walk is regular and firm. The rider leads the horse by in a constant slight moving through.

Characteristics: even cadence, agility, long strides, activity, relaxed appearance, spring.

Trot (riding and driving tests)

The trot is a gait of "two time" on alternate diagonal legs (left front with right hind and right front with left hind) separated by a moment of suspension. Example: left front with right hind, moment of suspension, right front with left hind, moment of suspension, left front with right hind, etc. At the trot, the placement of the legs is always free, active and regular. The IBOP riding and driving tests require the working and medium trots. The trot required in the show driving test is described separately.

The working trot is a gait between the collected and medium trots. The horse should display good balance, hold its neck arched upwards, and move forward in uniform springy steps with active hind quarters. Active hind quarters does not mean that the horse is ridden towards or in collection but that it is ridden with enough impulsion that the hind quarters should be full of driving effort.

The medium trot is a gait between the working and extended trots. At the medium trot, the horse moves forward freely and visibly extends its strides at an equal rate accompanied by a corresponding extension in the upper line. This extension originates from a clear impulsion with driving force from the hind quarters. The rider allows the horse to extend its neck so that the nose is pointed forwards rather than straight down as it is in the working trot. The

strides remain regular and movement is balanced and relaxed. The horse covers more ground with its extended strides but the speed at which it places its feet on the ground does not increase.

Characteristics: even cadence, agility, stateliness, spring, balance, carriage, impulsion, moment of suspension, long strides, activity, relaxed appearance, use of forelegs.

Canter (riding en driving test IBOP)

The canter is a “three time” gait, the legs being placed in a canter on the left lead as follows: right hind, diagonal right front with left hind, left front, moment of suspension, right hind, etc. The canter should be light and cadenced with a regular stride. Breaking into a canter should always appear resolute. The IBOP requires only the working and medium canters (with a few flying changes).

The working canter is a gait between the collected and medium canters. In this version of the canter, the horse should display good balance, hold its neck arched upwards, and move forward in equal, light, cadenced bounds. The hind quarters are active and with sufficient impulsion to provide a full driving effort. The medium canter is a gait between the working and the extended canters. The horse moves forward freely and visible extends its bounds with moderate extension and corresponding extension of the upper line. This extension originates from a clear impulsion with driving force from the hind quarters. The canter remains a clearly three-time gait. The rider allows the horse to extend its neck somewhat from the more arched position so that the nose is pointed forwards rather than straight down as it is in the working canter.

Characteristics: even cadence, agility, balance, impulsion, carriage, spring.

Carriage and balance

The proper carriage during the trot involves the drop of the hind quarters and the rise of the forequarters. The horse relaxes in the upper line and retains its straightness. The total picture is one of a clear slant upwards in the direction of the forequarters.

Characteristics: withers higher than the croup due to the drop in the hind quarters and the rise in the forequarters, relaxation in the upper line.

In 'balance', what is important is the proper equilibrium situation in which the horse moves during all the gaits. The horse should move rhythmically, calmly and with regularity, including the times when it lengthens its stride. When coming to a halt, a horse that is in balance places more of its weight on its hind quarters during transition and moves through as it stands still and faces straight ahead. When the horse extends its neck, it should maintain its pace, cadence, regularity and the use of its back so that the horse can extend its neck in a relaxed and balanced manner while retaining a slight moving through and impulsion.

Agility

A horse's agility is its ability to turn, stretch and bend its body without resulting in any stiffness or blockages in the spinal column or the joints. Agility is largely made possible by the suppleness and flexibility of the muscles. Agility allows a horse to tighten, extend and move its spinal column sideward without undesirable tension or resistance while completely retaining its rhythm of movement.

The horse moves while retaining its cadence and balance while its body accurately follows the line of the figures and turnings. In following these lines, the entire length of the horse's body curves in the same direction. The horse must display a willingness to be guided from left to right.

The curvature in the horse's body is seen only in the neck and loins but not in the rib and croup areas.

When the horse has its head in the right position when being ridden, its neck and trunk remain in a straight line and the horse will bend its head slightly to the left or right when given the proper aids. The rider sees one eye and the edge of one nostril of the horse.

Transitions

Transitions and changes of tempo are the basis of the equestrian art. In the transition, the horse remains relaxed, retains the cadence of the gait until the moment of transition, moves through properly and faces straight ahead.

Transitions and changes of tempo must be clearly observable. From a transition from a working gait to a medium gait, the neck of the horse should

point somewhat farther forward, thus making it possible to lengthen its strides. This allows the horse to remain relaxed, to retain its rhythm and to clearly extend its strides (at the trot) or its bounds (at the canter). The difference between a working gait and a medium gait (and back again) should be clearly observable.

Impulsion

In competitive show driving, this is called ‘willingness’.

The horse’s urge to go forward, but always controlled and limited by the rider. The rider has control over the forward impulse and determines to what extent this urge results in the horse’s forward movement, i.e., the tempo. The energy generated from the hind quarters is controlled by the rider and is the basis the horse obliging the commands of the rider and working through.

Characteristics: forward energy generated from the hind quarters and lets the horse be transformed by the rider into a forward direction with an upward slant to the upper line and an appearance of being a closed solid unit.

Trot (show driving test)

The trot is a gait of “two time” on alternate diagonal legs (left front with right hind and right front with left hind) separated by a moment of suspension.

Example: left front with right hind, moment of suspension, right front with left hind, moment of suspension, left front with right hind, etc. At the trot, the placement of the legs is always free, active and regular. The IBOP riding and driving tests require the working trot and medium trot.

In the IBOP show driving test, the trot is characterized, in comparison with the trot in the riding and driving tests, by a longer moment of suspension, well-extended forelegs, high stepping forelegs, and powerful hind legs in which the hind feet are placed farther beneath the body. This latter characteristic makes the forehand lighter so that it rises. The trot is accompanied by a proud bearing.

Characteristics: as compared to the riding and driving tests more and higher front and hind leg action, longer moment of suspension, definitely rising from hind quarters to forehand.

Use of hind legs of show driving horse

This is the extent to which the horse brings its cannon to a horizontal position and the extent to which the horse picks up its hind legs from the ground (power) and places them forward. The hind legs cover a lot of ground between lifting them and placing them on the ground and the rear hoof is placed far in front of the impression left by the front hoof. Both the hock and ankle display considerable flexion. The hind legs are placed far under the body.

Characteristics: power, flexion in hock and ankle, stateliness, strength.

Use of forelegs of show driving horse

This is the extent to which a substantial flexion in the knee brings the forearm of the foreleg at least to a horizontal position and the degree to which the foreleg is stretched forward.

Characteristics: forearm reaches at least a horizontal position and, once the forearm has reached its highest position, it should not simply drop but extend as far forward as possible.

Moment of suspension of show driving horse

This is the length of time at which the horse is changing between the two diagonal pairs of legs and when the horse is not making any contact with the ground. The moment of suspension is the extent of movement resulting from the delay and elasticity of lifting the hind legs and not by the speed of doing so.

Characteristics: powerfully lifted hind legs, feet lifted high off the ground and covering a lot of ground.

Front of show driving horse

At the trot, the horse uses its head and neck to achieve a proud bearing in which the neck is almost vertical as opposed to the body but tightly arched so that the nasal bone is held perpendicular to the ground.

Characteristics: shape and length of the neck, angle of head and neck, placement of the head.

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