

27.03.2009

To the management of the German Equestrian Federation (FN)

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

Due to the increasing professionalisation of equestrian sports and the growing pressure of economic constraints, the official interpretation of good riding has changed dramatically in the past 30 years.

Dressage, which forms the basis for the education of riding teachers, should at the same time provide the best example of classical schooling of the horse. Instead, it has degenerated to a superficial, coercive exploitation of the horse. A very high proportion of horses pay the price for this, under the almost completely indifferent eyes of the authorities.

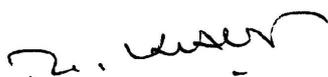
On each level, from the national federations to the FEI, whether out of ignorance or complacency, judges have, little by little, allowed the unacceptable to become the norm. This tragic drift occurred worldwide. In ethical and aesthetical terms, it leads to a serious cultural regression. The ranks of those who reject such a way of riding continue to grow steadily.

The German Equestrian Federation (FN) holds a dominant position in the world of dressage. As such, it should take the lead of a reform movement that would do it great honour.

It would be naive to think that a clever manipulation of the “training scale”, some nice sentences about “harmony”, “gymnastics for the horse” or “classical riding” would bring about a real change of direction. What we need are sensible, radical rules that could easily be implemented and which could at one and the same time protect the horses, put a stop to offenders' games and promote healthy training and competition.

In this spirit I would like to propose that the FN incorporate the following concrete points into the rules.

Yours faithfully,



Philippe Karl



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1. Auxiliary reins connected to the bit are forbidden, whether on the longe or under saddle. The longe should always be attached to a cavesson.
2. Tight nosebands are forbidden, both in daily training and competition. (In addition, it is permissible to present a horse without a noseband.)
3. The horse's mouth must be checked immediately prior to every test or performance. Any injury leads to disqualification.
4. Any horse showing injury from spurs to be disqualified.
5. Overflexion (nose behind the vertical) in any movement to be punished with a mark of at most 3.
6. Blocked jaws, tongues pulled up or hanging out and grinding of the teeth in any exercise to be punished with a mark of at most 4.
7. Neck extension (long position in which the mane is nearly horizontal, the nose keeping in front of the vertical) becomes a part of every dressage test, in all three gaits and on both reins.
8. The walk is reinstated as a fully-fledged part of each dressage test, representing up to 30% of total marks possible, at least in tests on E, A, L and M level.
The lateralisation of the walk (horse comes close to ambling) leads to disqualification.
9. In tests for young horses as well as auctions, the young horses must be presented in neck extension in all three gaits, with the rider rising to the trot.



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