

PIAFFE IN ENGLISH

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Hyperflexion: A meander in equitation

The school of the successful

The extreme forms of hyperflexion, the excessive bending of the neck, came into "vogue" in equitation in the past 15 years.

The worldwide results and competitions of horsewomen had an "idol character". Three horses including their equestriennes are mentionable: Corlandus under Margit Otto-Crepin, Rembrandt under Nicole Uphoff and Gigolo under Isabell Werth.

The trainer of this "new style" was first of all Dr.Uwe Schulten-Baumer. These three lady riders were kept in charge of his training, at least temporary. The mentioned trainer and the three horses and their riders were in the spotlight at the end of the eighties and in the nineties. The public interest concentrated on their method of riding, because of their winning of Olympic medals and riding victories. The Dutchwoman Anky van Grunsven, her Bonfire, her Salinero and her trainer Sjef Jansen reached the function of an idol one (horse) generation later. Concerning the results of the named horses and horsewomen you remember: Corlandus was at the European Championship in the vanguard. Rembrandt won Olympic Gold in 1988 and 1992, in 1989 the European and in 1990 the World Championship.

At the World Championship 1994 (Grand Prix Special) and 1998, at the Olympic competition 1996 as well as at the European Championship 1991, 1993, 1995 and 1997, Gigolo was successful.

Bonfire won the freestyle World Championship 1994, the European Championship 1999, the Olympic Dressage Competition 2000 as well as the World cup decisions 1995, 1996, 1997 1999 and 2000. Salinero followed him in Olympic Gold in the years 2004 and 2008, the European Championship, the Freestyle World Championship 2006, the Freestyle World Championship 2007 and the World cup success 2004,2005, 2006 and 2008. Rusty, under Ulla Salzgeber at the European Championship 2001 and 2003, as well as at the Worldcup Finals in 2001 and 2002, until the detection of an "illegal substance" also in the year 2003 at the vanguard, never was an idol like the above mentioned horses concerning his head and neck position.

For a better comprehension of the pictures made ten years before, it has to be mentioned that both trainers of Rembrandt and Corlandus (Fritz Tempelmann, after Dr.Uwe Schulten-Baumer) wanted to manage a problem by bending the horse's neck excessively. The trainers wanted to compensate the adynamia of the horses' weak back, that means to coun-

teract this weakness by the use of flexion. This type of training was not only limited by the low neck position, but also by Hyperflexion. The type of Hyperflexion used with Corlandus was not to the same extent as with Rembrandt.

Rembrandt was extremely distracted. Moreover he tended to star-gaze.

With the strong bending of the neck, Rembrandt was brought under control and his visual field was limited. The latter means: with the extreme bending, the optical attractions which were not directly in front of the horse were eliminated. This way to fade out sources of irritation therefore functioned as a kind of natural blinker. With Rembrandt the proceeding was according to the principle, which is common in the Dressage Sport Riding at present, to evade disturbing external attractions, if possible, to eliminate them. The opposite strategy, i.e. the horse in a patient progressive training, making it familiar with the frightening attractions is used only little by the Dressage Riders in the past and at present. To consider is certainly in this regard: The habituation to strange attractions with these pure-bred horses used in the today's high-performance sport - and Rembrandt was a typical representative of such horses- is more difficult than with the "colder" horses, which once in the military riding worked satisfactorily and which are today totally relaxed in police employment.

With Corlandus as with Rembrandt it was probably added that Hyperflexion made their task more pleasant for the horsewomen, i.e. that the Hyperflexion gave the riders control, which facilitated the figuration of their horses.

Statements and truth content

Latter function of the Hyperflexion was probably also an important motive for Dr. Uwe Schulten-Baumer to let his student Isabell Werth ride Gigolo in this way. Dr. Schulten-Baumer underlined several times the promotion of the "suppleness" of the horse by his training method. The persuasive power, with which in the match having the unusually successful one effect of his method stated, is certainly to be differentiated from the truth content of the statement. Furthermore the temporal consequence of the training justifies no causal connection of the two phenomena in Hyperflexion (due to the judgments of individual judges). Thus the question, whether a pair succeeded because of Hyperflexion in training or whether their successes were achieved despite this method, remains legitimate in other words thus the question,

whether the Hyperflexion or whether other achievements of the horses, horsewomen mentioned and coaches for the conceptions on the square became decisive and then appropriate judgments. This question arises also in view of the victories and placements of the horses ridden by Anky van Grunsven and managed by Sjef Janssen. Besides, the question arises to what extent the stated (above all muscle-physiologically and psychologically) explanations for the extreme Hyperflexion represented and further represent the decisive motive for this kind of riding, in other words, to what extent the absolute controllableness of the horse gave the excuse in fact for the practice of the Hyperflexion and further if the (and the additional) muscle-physiological as well as psychological analysis

represents an explanation, which - for the promotion of the public reputation - is to justify, the reality however is more covered than revealed. Riding horses in a deep overbent neck position, became a new style and noble. Such a formulation is however only applicable as a separation of the present main training method from the one practiced in former dec-

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ades and described in the most read textbooks. If one grasps larger historical periods, then it will be illegitimate to call the excessive bending a “new” method. It is to be explained rather as a revival of historical ancestors, who were believed to be obsolete, also as the revival of procedures, whose practicing one had not (more) expected in particular with the top riders in international sport. These historical facts are to be held against the attempts of some advocates of Hyperflexion to describe the method as “new” or as their invention, to

stand out against their predecessors with one or the other practical measure as well as other theoretical reasons and so to get rid of the critical arguments, with which the role models of Hyperflexion had been discredited in the history of horsemanship. The latter also means: The reception of a method known for centuries does not become an innovation only by adding one or another peripheral version, by referring more or less globally to “recent sport scientific findings” and proclaiming the “new riding” – in contrast to the “old”.

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Epicrisis-is top sports only fiction?

A winter's fairy tale: Halla's safe world

By Dr. Peter F. Cronau

Caringly treated with a blanket, the life-size statue stands in front of the DOKR's building in Warendorf. Somehow a deeply symbolic picture. Memories awake.

In the early 50s of the last century, the DOKR bought Halla and placed it at Hans-Günther Winkler's disposal. At the Olympic Games of 1956 in Stockholm the legendary miracle mare wrote equestrian sports' history and won the gold medal in the 2. go-round of the hunt jumping, which counted for the team score at that time, with the painfully hurt "pilot" H.G. Winkler in the saddle. Then, Doping had not been a question yet.

New findings in handling horses, the progressing commercialization in equestrian sports, but also actions by animal rights activists have initiated a critical discussion. The situation at the moment in all equestrian disciplines is analysed impartially and regardless of persons or offices. Constructive suggestions for improvement for organisation in the whole field of equestrian sports show the way into the future. The author Dr. Peter F. Cronau is Veterinary specialist for surgery and horses. Be-

cause of his work of 15 years as the team vet of the German show jumpers, his membership in the DOKR's and FN's presidency as well as president of the veterinary committee of the FEI he has an uniquely extensive insight.

In medical sciences, the word epicrisis means a summarising assessment of a case concerning origin, course and result. In the following, I will try to transport this idea to my explanation.

A trend spreading in the USA signals that institutions are to be seen as moral personalities. Leading and institutional responsibility in organisations prompted the question whether collective or individual responsibilities exist. This is not completely uncomplicated, as if only the collective is responsible, the individual does not seem to be responsible anymore. Therefore, for collective responsibilities, there needs to be a certain individual co-responsibility.

Regarding the discussion about responsibility this means to ask whether the individual - the athlete, trainer, vet, official - can continue to be held responsible alone. Or, in fact, do comprehensive institutional responsibilities of associations for systemic relations exist, which go far beyond the possibilities of an individual? The double moral standard of the publicly condemned, but secretly encouraged doping,

of the success categorically required by the audience and press, of the "tactic fouls" objected to the outsider or the manipulation in equestrianism ("a little doping is ok") show that the individual is in a conflict between two parties.

Can you hold the individual responsible for everything if structural conditions got him into the dilemma? Can you really escape such a dilemma by developing double moral standards of public good conduct and secretly maximising success? If everyone tries to profit from secretly neglecting a sensible, general law, the validity of the law dissolves; efficiency of rules and moral decay. The dynamics of the dilemma are huge.

But if following rules is degenerated so far that breaking rules is the rule, every rule is inefficient and pointless. This is why athletes, politicians and economists who stick to fair rules of discussion get into a tragic dilemma of self-destroying system dynamics. He who sticks to the rule is disadvantaged. On the other hand, the successful who breaks rules produces systematic copycats. The system destroys itself. Rule violations which were not punished escalate in the sense of a positive feedback, if they put the violator in a better systematic position and are not controlled. The illusion of keeping the rules remains on the outside, but subliminally the law of maximising success rules up to complete rule anarchy. Has high performance sports already reached this state? The good-willed player with his fairness deals already seems to be left behind. Arguments like "sports are the mirror of society" are held up begging for an excuse. The realisation of the equal structures of economic, social-political and athletic competition copies the market-based maxim: "The better

the performance, the better the return." But does economic return really also mean better performance? You could infer from this: "The less return, the worse the performance."

Exactly this is the point where one has to countersteer. If the economy tells sports to keep cleanliness, not to dope because otherwise sports will lose its attractiveness and economy would not want to invest in it, the performances have to become worse. The devil's circle is there. The patent remedy for countersteering can also not be given at this point. The problem can also not be solved with generalisations. Possibly, the general starting initiative for fairplay in sports is a signal that there might be a fairer contact between us. Values which might heal the system like benevolence, charity and the readiness to sacrifice are not rewarded. Assertiveness, toughness and elbow power are the synonyms for leadership skills.

Joerg Kasper Roth thinks: "The less clear the rules of the game, the weaker the referee, the more partial the audience and the higher the prize, the more ruthless the foul game." Reducing economic pressure is an important aspect, but cannot solve the problem on its own, as brutalisation also takes part in disciplines which do not offer special prizes and opportunities to earn money.

Even for the German sports help association - the favourite child of Josef Neckermann - only the one criteria remains for financial allowances for athletes: "Without proof of performance no money." From the association's point of view, this is totally comprehensible; it is very hard to find another tool for deciding. But especially this pressure animates the athletes to all possible measures despite hard training, which are talked about but not taken

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From super worst case scenario in Athens to mega s

Uptodate notes by Dr. Peter F. Cronau 15 years later...

It is strange this life. Slogans and clever phrases characterise today's contact between people in a difficult time. With this I mean hints like "you have to learn from history". If this posit was fulfilled, we would live in an ideal world. As one of the ones still alive who have experienced the effects of the 2. World War I once imagined that "never war again on this planet" would be the only solution. This was wrong. Like this you may also argue in equine sports. After the worst case scenario of Athens where nine horses with tendon problems were involved, of these two tendon ruptures ended deadly and 70% of the rest have never seen a competition arena again, you could have expected that also after establishing a task-force and working teams something would happen.

Also the big chance - after the German debacle about Ludger Beerbaum and Irish Cian O'Connor who had first been declared as the winner of the gold medal - to produce clean sports has been left out. Never since the time of the establishment of doping checks in Olympic equestrianism (1976 Montreal) there has been such an amount of positive probes among riding horses.

The mega scandal about Capsaicin at the Olympic Games in Hongkong gave it the dot on the i. This scandal has various facettes.

An association cannot excuse itself by saying that they did not know about the usage.

1. Why does an association (FN and FEI) allow their athletes to run into such a dilemma if it should see its responsibility not only in punishing but also in preventing such doping cases? If it is known that Capsaicin is tested and that drugs containing Capsaicin are used regularly I think it is a major violation of their due diligence by the associations. Or are the associations so far from what's happening outside that they do not know anymore what's happening at the basis? An association cannot excuse itself by saying that they did not know about the usage. I dare to claim that every rider of international level knows what this is about. And the association wants to pretend they hadn't known about the usage of drugs containing Capsaicin!

2. Another scandal is the associations' handling of things when it comes to punishment. It cannot be that on Friday evening after the hearing in Lausanne at 7 pm they announce in the press news flash of the FEI that the ban for Mr. Alves is canceled and HRH Princess Haya cancels a decision on Monday with a short gesture of her hand which had been made by 10 professionals, carefully produced in 7 hours' work, among them also 4 experts from the FEI. How should outsiders understand that six cases with the same facts and the same view in the FEI (medication) were judged differently? Why does a judgement have to take that long anyways? This does not have anything to do with the FEI's claim they want to hear everyone. Rule-of-law principles are not valid here anyways. How can it happen that somebody is inhibited in his profession without a process? How can it be that the ban, announced immediately, is even elongated when he exhausts remedies?

Apparently, nobody has learnt from the Barr-Affair of 1990 how to handle a crisis.

3. The rules of the FEI are completely enough and is also prepared for cases from the Capsaicin-series. Therefore, the call for new rules is totally misplaced. You only have to interpret the existing rules in the right way. Then we wouldn't have had this incredible variety of different punishments, finally it has always been more or less the same elements of the crime.

4. Judicially, it is totally clear, as none of the involved has been caught in flagranti and all horses did not have any signs on their legs after the ride, that the element of crime of manipulation with the legs was not provable. Therefore, only the charge of a forbidden and of course not registered medication could be held.

Because of this crazy witch hunt after the cases there was danger of an overkill, which our German FN has practiced several times. Apparently, nobody has learnt from the Barr affair of 1990 how to handle a crisis. The FN focused on Christian Ahlmann, he is the victim now. But the whole problem is not solved by that. In Athens, there were injections and treatments with the FN knowing about them and nobody did anything about it. There were also reactions to the injections (shock). None of the numerous officials can say that he had not known about it, some were standing on the side and saw it with their own eyes. As long as there is no basic readiness to object this injection-lobbyism, there will be no change in paradigms and the righteous danger of the sport being vulnerable remains. Why does the FN go to CAS if the injection-lobby keeps working in the background, hoping not to be discovered? Rightly understood, we are not talking about a therapy indicated veterinarily, but about powerful substances which pursue a clear goal.

Now, they are cushioning on all sides, the sponsors should not withdraw, the presence on TV must not suffer and in the end, the audience on site must be calmed.

You could save half the anti-doping budget if you worked more efficiently.

The institutions are experienced in this kind of procedure which is internationally called the "calming effect". Also after Athens they had just managed to get back on their feet with this procedure. But the cycle of return will not be stopped if they don't work principally.

You could save half the anti-doping budget if you worked more efficiently. I don't mean the extremely expensive doping analytics but rather the very simple prevention. Other associations like the Hongkong Jockey Club have already understood this. Here, a PreRace-System exists, that means all horses participating are checked in the morning before the race and who is positive, does not participate and is disqualified. Thus, the problems are not carried into the expensive and worthy competition (nation, breeding, greed of the owners etc.) and remain outside. However, the repeating request from associations and organisers to make more doping tests is not the solution, it is expensive and not effective. But it is an alibi-measure. It is technically possible to watch all horses 24 hrs via webcam, the equipment could be passed on from one event to the other. Then there is the possibility to check on every horse around the clock (also from a place further away via internet). Why don't they check the horses' bandages and legs before they enter the parcours?

Finally the training and instruction of the athletes (rider, drivers, vaulters) must be mentioned. Despite repeating lip services that the associations are doing enough work, it has to be stated that maybe a lot is done but not enough and often also the wrong measures. Have the athletes sign a contract is not enough. That there is an ethic behaviour code for the horses' sake most riders do not even know. Also the WADA has noticed that constructive education is part of fighting doping. In every Olympic village there is a WADA-stand where questions can be asked. This has nothing to do with punishment but cultivates understanding and the credibility of an associ-

ation, cooperation between associations and athletes prevents doping from occurring.

The internet is not at all used for questions about doping in equestrianism.

The internet as a world wide communication tool is not at all used as a platform for questions about doping in equitation. There are no forums, no sign of further training regarding preventing doping.

Again and Again the sensibility of doping tests is named as the reason for the cumulative occurring. In many cases, this is right. But taking a closer look, doubts start to spread. In simple words, is it allowed to discuss whether the highly sensible examination tools can be cleaned properly without traces. I have experienced this personally as "witnessing analyst", that when sending clean water through an analysis tool the test was positive. Professionally speaking, we call this "pseudo-positive".

You will notice that in my essay up to here the rider has not been mentioned as the one who committed the crime. It is completely clear, that the human athlete in equine sports is the one at the decisive switchpoint. He himself decides about the treatment of his horse. It is in his hands alone whether he gives his horse an "Insterburger", whether he rewardingly touches it with his hand or gives it perfor-

mance influencing substances. Of course, this is the center point. If all people leave their horses in a natural state, the real clean athlete has a good chance of winning. This premise has to be decisive for the sport's cleanliness. Then the right rider and the right horse win, the sport is not vulnerable for anyone. But then we would have learned from history.

Again and again the mass media, the economy and politics are build up as threatening setting. This leads to a unleashing of focusing on winners and an inflation of requirements, which leads to an excessive demand for body and mind. Who does high sports according to the rules today, is thought naive and bad. Who cheats, acts normally according to the subliminal rules. This doping stimulating spiral leads to the quoted disconnection of talking and doing and finally to a bigotry of the associations, the high athletes, the scientists, the representatives of economy and politics. Publicly the anti-doping fight is propagated, but in the background the doping practices are - if not supported - at least tolerated scientifically.

Is sports increasingly fiction, winning only pharmacy and gene manipulation, the game a fake, the hero in reality a loser? Whether these forces can be held will be decided soon. This does not only depend on the athletes but also essentially on the people, who make, control the rules and punish violations.

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Rider and saddle shape the horse

Only a perfectly-fitting saddle is able to place the rider over the horse's center of balance. On the other hand, a badly-fitting saddle can cause various problems like soreness, gait malfunction, 'stiffness' in the back or even reluctance. Heike Kemmer and Bonaparte exhibited extremely high levels of performance at the Olympic Games in Hong Kong. With the German team, they won the gold medal in a custom made 'Equine Rose International' saddle.

The Rider and the saddle shape the horse

There is no doubt that the saddle was the most helpful invention when conquering world empires. Its development of one simple animal skin as an aid to protect the horse's spine up to one fastidious, handcrafted item which helped the rider to remain on the horse and to control it – as a means of transportation in times of peace and war. Provided that

it is a usable model from a competent manufacturer, today's saddle is likely to be one of the most expensive items one has to buy for the horse, apart from the horse. Much more important and for harmony in the saddle, the correct saddle is the most important link between the rider and the horse. Provided that the proportions of the horse and the rider correct and the saddle fits, a correct gymnastic training of the horse according to the training scale becomes possible. A badly-fitted saddle can cause both minor and major problems, including saddle soreness, 'stiffness' in the back and gait malfunctions, or even reluctance and behavioural problems of the riding horse. Experts argue: every second horse is suffering due to a badly-fitted saddle. To maximise the horse's performance, it is crucial that the saddle offers optimal freedom of movement under the rider.

The saddle must be convenient for the rider, too. Only (if possible) a custom-made saddle can set the rider into the balance. Concerning the saddle adjustment, unfortunately not all saddle manufacturers have realized that much has changed in the last years. Since the establishment of the 'working group saddle' on the fair Eurocheval 2008 an important step to improving of the "saddle problem" was made. Independent from this fact, the saddler master Jochen Schleese, early active eventing rider on high level, today owner of the company „Equine Rose International“ based in Canada, initiated a pilot project at that-German riding school in Warendorf as an advanced training measure for professional riders.

Piaffe spoke with Jochen Schleese about the most important 'saddle questions' - from the view of the horse and the rider. On the following pages are the answers.

Which requirements must a saddle fulfill today for a sport horse?

Referring to today's scientific findings, a saddle must prevent long-term damage, which are caused by a badly-fitting saddle.

Which anatomical minimum requirement should each saddle have?

In order not to press into the lumbar region, saddles should not be too long, in order to be able to react to permanent anatomical change of the horse, saddles should be adjustable.

What are a horse's requirements of a saddle?

The saddle tree should distribute the rider weight on a large surface (as possible) and it should be broad enough to ensure shoulder room, without exerting wrong pressure on the lumbar region, blade bones, back bone, nerves and bones.

Is it preferable or essential that a saddle tree is flexible(or inflexible)?

A saddle tree should be flexible, in order to achieve a better communication between the horse and the rider. If the saddle is too flexible, the weight distribution can be affected unfavorably. An inflexible tree is an inelastic object between two spinal columns and should be used at most as a work/lasso saddle.

Could a constant pressure distribution be reached with a flexible saddle tree ?

It is only possible with a flexible saddle tree to get an even pressure distribution. The flexible saddle tree has to move along the diagonals according to the diagonal movements of the horse.

Is a flexible saddle tree in view to the desired impulsion of the horseback positive?

Physically regarded an oscillation is reduced, if a contra oscillation took place. In order not to obstruct this desired oscillation in the horseback, a certain adjustable oscillation of the tree is necessary.

Has a flexible saddle tree a comfortable effect for the horseback?

To bring the horizontal spinal column of the horse and the vertical spinal column of the rider in agreement, a flexible saddle tree can realize this easier than a rigid saddle tree that blocks the flexible spinal columns.

Should the saddle be inflexible in longitudinal direction and flexible in lateral? Does that affect the shoulder rotation of the horse?

The saddle shouldn't be inflexible in longitudinal direction, because an inflexible tree can press into the horseback and can slip against or over the shoulder in the movement. The shoulder rotation would be affected unfavorably. If the lateral flexibility over the head from left to right between the local points is meant, then the saddle should not be lateral flexible - it would pinch the withers, thus also obstruct the shoulder rotation

Should the rider's weight be distributed on the surface from the 7th to the 18th thoracic vertebra? Or exclusively on the surface of „the ischiums “ of the rider (i.e. 3rd to 5th thoracic vertebra)?

The rider weight should divide between 7th and 18th thoracic vertebra into three ranges. The front and rear range in each case 30% and the middle range to 40%, because in the front and the rear range the most movement by the blade bone and the back movement take place.

Which size measure for the gullet width (e.g. at least three fingers) is to be considered?

The gullet width should be three with Thoroughbreds, four with Warmbloods and five fingers with baroque (cart) horses .

What effect could a too wide gullet width have concerning the saddle situation and/or the movement (locomotor system) of the horse?

On thin horses, a too broad gullet width may perhaps leave the saddle on the spinal column.

How should the suitable upholstery of the saddle be within the range of the withers (size, thickness)?

In the range of the trapeze muscle the upholstery should be thin and soft. Underneath the trapeze muscle the upholstery should be firmer and thicker.

Please explain the pros and cons of an „air cushion upholstery “?

The advantage of an air cushion upholstery is an even pressure distribution, as long as it is not too hard inflated.

The disadvantage can be, how scientifically proved, that everything that contains air also can dismiss air.

How do badly defined withers affect the saddle's position?

A low withers mislead the saddle to slipping. A high withers needs much wool, to reach space around the withers and proportionate balance. The disadvantage is that the rider sits too high over the horse.

Do waisted saddles make sense?

In the cross section men have rather oval thighs and women have rather round. Since most riders are nowadays women, waisted saddles make sense for this reason, in order not to rotate the legs of the horsewomen too much.

The dorsal „costal angles“ form the main surface of the saddle and have a shock absorbing effect. What happens, if the saddle is located too far back? Could this be the cause for shortened strides and step disturbances?

If the saddle is located too far back, it presses in the lumbar region and the back muscles of the horse are tensed up. This could be an important cause for shortened strides and step disturbances.

Which muscles of the horse are going hard with a too tight gullet?

There are a lot of muscles, which could be tensed up. Basically the long back muscle, which should always be lax and released should be unbraced.

In which manner participates the hollow back of a horse on the saddle situation?

The saddle presses extremely in the front and rear range, if the saddle is not adapted according to the hollow back.

Does a straight shoulder (and short upper arm) of the horse participate on the saddle situation?

A not correctly adjusted saddle could effect the forward slipping of the balance point.

Does an Atrophy of the back muscles (e.g. frequently seen with leisure horses) affect the saddle's position?

A saddle which is not orthopedic adapted will fall into the recess and thus the problem will aggravate. In particular, if the saddle isn't geometrically adapted all eight to ten weeks with an Adapt Tree.

Are replaceable head irons reasonable?

According to the current technical expertises replaceable head iron are very good, they are used by many saddle manufacturers. Unqualified head iron changes can harm more than using. Therefore most of the companies changed adjustable head iron, which should only be changed by the technical personnel.

The riders and our horses are not always perfect proportioned.

Which aspects must be considered with novice horses?

Since young horses change their growth permanently, the saddles should be able to react also during the growth phase to changes and according to the changes of each time, they should be adapted on the spot.

How does the exterior of a baroque horse (square horses) affect the saddle situation?

Baroque horses often have a short broad back and the saddle surface is shortened. By a shortened saddle surface, it always happens again that saddles sit too highly over the horse and slips on their shoulder which could be squeezed. Thus the saddle lies hollow in the center. That supplies increased pressure in the lumbar region and deforms the baroque horses negatively in the haunches.

Should dressage saddles have the emphasis more in front and jumping saddles more in the back?

Since women and men have different basins, also their emphasis distributions with the saddles are different. The dressage saddle for men has the emphasis centric, the dressage saddle for women further in front. The jumping saddle for men has the emphasis farther back and the jumping saddle for women further centric.

What has to be considered with the attachment of the girth fixation at the saddle?

The girth fixation should be fastened at three to five places per side to the saddle-tree, in order to reach an even pressure distribution.

How should be the stirrup iron suspension? Does it affect the correct seat of the rider?

The stirrup iron should be fixed with three solid rivets at the saddle. In relation of thigh to the lower leg should it be positioned correctly, so that the lower leg neither forward nor behind will be pulled.

How does the saddle girth knot affect the the even pressure distribution on the horse's back?

By the three to five points stripping suspension the rider must position them in that way, that the saddle does not slip on the shoulder or into the lumbar region.

What causes the correct or wrong stirrup suspension?

Since the stirrup functions like a pendulum, the stirrup always fall under the stirrup lock. Here is very important to know that in the gentleman or in the lady saddle the suspen-

sion in the stirrup lock is different to relation of the thighs/lower legs of the female and male rider.

Which characteristics/qualities should a saddle pad have?

The numnah must be cut according to the withers line. The thread eyes for the strips must hang in the correct position. The material should be easy to clean and breathe-actively. Furthermore, the numnah may not be too thick, in order not to obstruct the adapted saddle in its optimal passform.

What does the rider have to consider when purchasing a saddle regarding the situation of the stirrups?

There stirrup lock hangs in another position at the versatility, jumping and dressage saddle. Therefore, it is very important that, if the saddle is bought over catalogue or online, the salesman is informed whether the saddle is for men or for women.

Which material and which form does the cinch have?

Cinches should be manufactured either from leather or not skin irritating materials. The pressure distribution on the breastbone should, if possible, be broad and additional around the breast muscle and the elbow joint back-cut and swung. The belt must be long enough, in order not to press one of the three edges of the muscle.

When does a breast belt make sense?

In each case a breast belt is a prosthesis for a badly fitting saddle. Strictly speaking no breast belt should be used. And if one is used nevertheless, then only a well adapted breast belt.

Here it is to be made certain, that the belt remains away from the nerve ends at the withers and do not push the saddle on the lumbar region.

Can short belts affect (in general at the dressage saddle) the rider's seat?

Because of the fact, that the knee position from women and men is different, there are riders, particular women, which get a better, closer and more comfortable seat, if those buckles under the leg do not press.

The ideal saddle from the view of the rider

Case of problem:

Large rider on narrow horse. How can the problem (concerning to the saddle) be solved at the best?

In this case, the saddle should use each square centimeter of the available saddle surface. Large riders often have problems with the saddlebags. In dressage, eventing or jumping saddles, those bags must be placed further forward, in order to get a better leg contact at the narrow horse.

Case of problem:

The rider has bow legs, tight haunches or is overweight. What has to be considered in the view of the rider?

Tight haunches, bow legs or overweight is addressed to the volume of the saddle between the internal thighs. The combination of stirrup bar, waist size and seat width, divided or connected cushion, plays an important role with these requirements.

In principle, the head iron and the saddle tree must fit to the horse. But the seat bowl and the knee bulge and/or the knee roll must fit to the rider. How can the rider check whether he found the perfect saddle?

The rider should consult a specialist, in order to buy the correct suitable saddle only once. The specialists, whom you can find world-wide under the website www.Saddlefit4Life.com, like e.g. veterinarians, riding teachers, upholsterer, riding business, orthopedist, saddle manufacturers, saddle adjustment master, chiropractor. They are qualified by Saddlefit 4 Life, in order to help the rider to find the cor-

rect seat (fit), knee roll, head iron and the saddle tree.

When does the saddle not fit to the rider?

Examples: Knees lie before the saddle sheets - seat too far - too close to the cantle. The legs move either forward and/or backwards.

If the saddle was bought without an advisory specialist, the saddle does probably not fit to the rider. With the choice of the correct saddle the trained Saddlefit 4 Life specialist consider 86 options, in order to find the correct saddle for rider and horse. If a saddle slips over the shoulder, the rider weight falls behind and the knees walk over the bags outside. That is also valid, if a woman sits in a man saddle (seat too far - seat bones over the seat rubber range) because the basin is broader caused by the birth channel. If a saddle is bought and not adapted -like an advertisement-, if the saddle is sponsored or somebody gives it away. If a horse changes the exterior by age, training and health, the saddle will lose the balance and the rider sits in wrong emphasis. Thereby the legs of the rider will be pressed either in front or to the rear.

How can it be prevented that the rider sits too far in front or too far behind („Harley Davidson position“)?

After the horse and the rider are measured , the correct saddle was ordered and/or bought, it may not forget that the horse does not have a clavicle and the constant change of the three-dimensional horseback can shift the balance of the saddle. That means the emphasis of the saddle is displaced to the rear and again forward. Thus a saddle, which has an Adaptree (the first geometric adjustable saddle tree) is recommended, so that a trained Saddlefit 4 Life expert this balance (the emphasis) can correctly adapt the saddle passport form to each horse, at each time on the spot, even in a geometric mode.

Do exchangeable knee rolls really make sense?

Owing to exchangeable knee rolls, it is possible to adapt the size and the position of the knee rolls to the individual needs. This make

also possible the unproblematic extending or shortening of the stirrup length with simultaneous optimal positioning of the knee position.

Do women need a special saddle tree – if yes, why?

Considering the differences of woman and man basins, this question is unnecessary. Absolutely should be noted, that the angle of the thighs of women seen by the side and in front, is completely different to the men's thighs. Riding is a kind of sport, in which much balance and feeling are required. Therefore is it no miracle that a woman that sat once balanced and comfortable in a woman saddle, without irritations or pain, never would ride again with a man saddle or a not fitting saddle.

Frequently, riders only pay attention to whether the saddle fits them. If the rider sits yet uncomfortably, he must constantly balance again or rather press with the thighs and obstruct thereby the back activity of the horse or the horse cannot exhaust its full movement potential. How can this problem be solved?

The pressing of the legs may have many reasons. At first, you should consult a Saddlefit 4 Life specialist, who determines the reason for the uncomfortable seat. One of the reasons, why the rider pinches with the legs could be the missing balance of the saddle. Only if the saddle is optimally adjusted on the horse, the rider can sit in the emphasis of the saddle and the full movement potential of the horse can exhaust.

Does a particular saddle sores measuring make sense?

Saddle sores measuring are one of the first measuring procedures, which is used today only partly in different universities. Meanwhile also glass fiber cameras are used, thermography cameras. Magnet- Resonance tomography and seat printing mats among other things to measure the pressure distribution from the rider in the saddle. These methods gave the veterinary surgeons, the human medical profession and universities new find-

ings. Many articles became written, even books concerning the avoidance of long-term damage with horses and riders are today available on the market. With this new scientific findings, the company Saddlesfit4 Life has a system, acting world-wide, developed. This union of trained Saddlesfit 4 Life experts like e.g. veterinarians, riding teacher, upholsterer, riding business, orthopedist, saddle manufacturer, saddle adjustment master, chiropractors guarantees to the rider scientific saddle adjustment analysis and replaces the widespread opinion and guessing game of the today unfortunately saddle consultation. Only in very difficult incidents the saddle sores measuring is made.

Special questions to the topic:

Case of problem „overweight rider “

If the weight relation from rider to horse is unfavorably, the saddle must use each square centimeter of the available saddle surface, in order to reduce the resulting weight in the best possible way for the horse. The bearing surface should be divided into thirds. The

30/40/30 relationship plays a role with overweight as well as with overslim riders. On the front and the rear third of the saddle bearing surface should be distributed in each case 30% of the arising rider weight. The remaining 40% should rest upon the middle of the saddle bearing surface. It should be paid attention to the fact that the cushion bearing surface is yet not too broad, otherwise the muscles can be pulled lateral from the ribs.

Case of problem: Overslim rider

The most important aid is the seat aid, which is known also under weight aid. The light rider has no problem if he rides in an Adaptree, which has the possibility of letting the light weight through with particularly inserted flexible long rails. In this way the communication between rider and horse is possible. A problem is the overslim and/or lightweight rider, because these riders do not come near to the horse with conventional saddles and/or sit over the horse.

Piaffe thanks the company “Equine Rose international” for answering the questions.

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Sonntag's Thoughts

RESET or „A new beginning“

By Isabella Sonntag

In no field of work it is so necessary to always analyze yourself like in handling animals - above all if this work should be based on honest friendship, feeling and respect.

After 3.895 riding lessons, which I enjoyed voluntarily, „feeling“ took more and more a back seat. Eager for knowledge, I sponged everything about the correct seat, the manner of holding the reins, the minimum calf contact... the chin closer, the head more back, the shoulders fall lax, not to buckle in the hip un-

der any circumstances, the heels not too deep, lax dangling of the legs, the hands hold playful in front of me, with the navel to the hand...yes, I knew the instructions of my riding teacher by heart, in each life situation I could pray them.

Already during driving my car I practiced the seat in the saddle - also at my desk I didn't miss my training units.....and at the end I declared suddenly: in this way it doesn't work at all! I had to learn: This way puts me more away from the “essence” of being with my horse! I know perfectly how to use “clutch”, “brake” and “gas”, I handle the vehicle under

me like a motorcycle, like a puppet and forget about the quality of just being with my horse.

Briefly before joining the swimming club, because I measured me with my great idol and felt like a untalented lame duck, the solution came to me; it was so simple and obvious - and didn't come up to me during the riding, but on my weekly jogging tour in the forest: „Where do you want to go?“ this question came to my mind.

„What in the name of god do you want to reach on your noble animal? Is it not enough sufficient for you, to get this gift, to feel the movements under you? Whom do you still want to please, who should say that you are making a good figure on the horse and that you have already made progress? How much acknowledgment are you searching for? “At once it was clear: All of these questions and the missing answers my horse had to “bear” during riding and had to solve them for me under my pressure and my strain.

A new beginning was necessary...

And in this way I started completely from the beginning - in a new small private barn, completely alone and conscious of being without an indoor arena (well-knowing the qualities of it with ice, rain and snow). Now I was much closer to nature. I was also much closer to myself. Nobody looks at me now. Only me and my horse outside on the meadow - and behold, Shoulder-in, Crossing, Travers, Renvers and Transitions are suddenly working completely by themselves, without track and rails, without zoning - and we have fun. Perhaps we weren't sufficient enough for my riding teacher and her assistants and perhaps we wouldn't get a “9.6” from the judges at the “A” - but fortunately this doesn't play a role anymore... we are now far away from aspiring toward perfection.

Dear readers, please don't misunderstand me now! For preparing a young horse to carry the

rider's weight (if possible not before the 4th year of life!), it requires a very educated teacher and/or riding instructor, who knows much about the horse's anatomy. It is definitely not wrong to put the horse once in a while in the hands of a good trainer. Naturally you have to get also many riding lessons from a brilliant riding teacher, in order to learn with his assistance the necessary “tools” for riding (I would set the topic independent seat at the first place) – but it may never come so far that the actual feeling for the needs of the animal get lost and the satisfaction of being together is subordinated to a successful Piaffe.

I don't speak here as a teacher and also not as an ambitious sport rider, but as a „consumer“ like 99% of all riders. These 99% recreational riders - they do it for their pleasure and they may not ignore in any case the pleasure of their equine partner. Short note: The teacher as well as the ambitious sport rider should take precedence for the well-being of the horse.

If your horse has once within a few years for three or four months no daily (!) pasturing, because it is in a good training in another barn, then it is surely OK for the horse. But you may not refuse the basic needs of the horse like moving at fresh air, social contacts on the pasture and excellent feed. It means such a happiness to satisfy these three basic needs. I've known it to happen with my horse. Jailhouse box for years with a beautiful paled paddock demoralizes each horse in the long run. Each horse will be unhappy, sooner or later...and so the rider- if his feeling for this wonderful creature has not been lost due to his training by a perfectionist riding instructor...

- only considered on the well-being of the horses –

Isabella Sonntag

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Legendary Horses and Riders: Marzog

Series by Arnim Basche

The thoroughbred farm "Waldfried", founded in 1896 but closed for many years, did a lot for the breeding of the German racing horse. Insiders in thoroughbred breeding will mainly think about the ground breaking effect of the "Inlaenderrichtung" - the use of our own, native horses instead of using foreign stallions - for which Waldfried was not only spiritus rector at the beginning of the last century, but also precursor. But also the Hannoverian breeding owes its thanks to the breeding farm. With the stallion MARCIO xx born 1947, Waldfried delivered a stallion to Celle, who should be rewarded with a monument there actually. As there was no thoroughbred in the time after the war who gave his foals high riding horse qualities as regularly as he did. It also has to be stressed that all his foals were excellent in character as well as under the saddle.

As a state's servant, the Waldfrieder exclusively produced material and dressage horses, but among them almost no blanks. The best of his offspring - the big number 203 of them were officially registered in competition, because every barn wanted to have its Marcio xx at the time - were MAHARADSCHA, MARZIO and MAZEPA. Even more merits were gained by his grand children. Namely MADRAS, with who Dr. Uwe Schulten- Baumer won the European Championship in 1981 in Luxemburg, and MARZOG, who had even greater success under the Dutch Anne-Grethe Jensen.

MARZOG was the son of the only 160cm tall Swedish stallion HERZOG which had been bred in the main farm Flyinge and was exported to Denmark at the end of the 60s already as an older guy. His father HERISTAL carried the Trakehner-mark so that MARZOG's pedigree

was already great on the father's side. But the Joker was supposedly offered by his mother, bred in Hannover and by MARCIO xx, CHEEKY GIRL - as all experts think that the great dressage crack was influenced a lot by his thoroughbred grandfather. However: MARZOG was not commonly bred, but carried a genetic equipment which was a thickly stirred performance-cocktail and therefore allowed great hopes. Put short, he was made of the build of champions. First of course you saw only a cocoon - but you could guess what would come after its opening.

MARZOG was born on May 25th, 1973 and came to Anne-Grethe Jensen at the age of 4. He was a discovery by her husband Tonny, who served at the royal guard and reached 12th place in individual score at the Olympic Dressage in Montreal in 1976. "I did not like MARZOG at all at first. I have always dreamt about a black horse and now I got a bay horse which did not even look like much. But Tonny said that he would develop and that I would be happy then. And this was how it was. MARZOG developed to a beautiful and elegant horse through training, which I brimed over with enthusiasm for", his rider remembers.

From the very beginning, MARZOG had been cooperative and eager, because he belonged to those who liked to work. Therefore, it did not take him long to understand. Already in 1980 he won the first of six Dutch Championships - and also gave his debut at the international championships in the same year. His show on the great stage of sports was a pointed finger for the competition. As at the Festival of Dressage in Goodwood - replacing event for the Olympic Games in Moscow, boycotted by most western riders - he was 11th with his young age. He was separated by 225 points from the winning couple Christine

Stückelberger and GRANAT from Switzerland, but everyone saw that MARZOG was at the bottom of the staircase which would lead him to the goal of pursuit. It did not take him long to step on its first steps. At the European Championships in 1981 he was already 7th, at the World Championships won by AHLERICH in Lausanne in 1982 5th and won the bronze medal with the Dutch team.

That the horse was special and meant to do great things was also proven by the offers Anne-Grethe Jensen got regularly. Some believed the gossip of people who spoke about 1 Million Dollars. In reality it was completely different - as the blonde Dutch could have named the price herself. It had always been blank cheques which were sent!

"Of course we were thinking about whether to sell or to keep MARZOG at the time", says Anne-Grethe Jensen. "But the money would have changed my whole being and I didn't want that. Besides, you only find a horse like MARZOG once. What I have experienced with him no money of the world could have offered me."

She had the first big triumph with the bay at the European Championships in Aachen of 1983. MARZOG showed like a sunny boy: radiating and carefreely. Easy, effortless and self-evident he mastered all depths and undepths of the difficult task - as if it was something he did not have to put any effort into. Dressage language has its own terminus technicus for this, which unfortunately is not needed often. It is suppleness. And as it fit exactly for MARZOG's performance, the experts also put this term above his victory. He met everyone's consent; nobody criticised his performance and thought that another horse was better. Local champion AHLERICH for example, who became World Champion a year ago. He also could not win because he made lots of nonsense and mistakes compared to his normal performances. But also MARZOG's performance had a slight manko with the slightly boring Piaffe-Passage-tour. But he won very clearly with his 1501 points compared to AHLERICH's 1365 under Dr. Rainer Klimke. Besides, at the time, they hoped that the suppleness demonstrated by MARZOG - which

stood in pleasant contrast to the dynamics connected with inappropriate tension - as principle in dressage would be judged in future riding and judging. As I said - they hoped...

A year later the two rivals met again at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles for a duel about the first place. In the Grand Prix, it was raining high marks for AHLERICH. Therefore, he was strong at the top. MARZOG was second after an also excellent performance - where the distance of about 100 points was because of the Passages and Canter extensions which could have been a little more active. The question was now whether he would be able to advance in the Grand Prix Special - and whether AHLERICH would be able to repeat his excellent show of the team competition? The lottery for the order of showing of the individual decision had the result, that both horses had to enter the arena as third resp. fourth last. No director from Hollywood, only a stone's throw away, could have made the episode more exciting. But let's make it short: Muscle man AHLERICH won gold in the heat and the dancer MARZOG silver. Among other things, the Dutch horse showed weaknesses at the walk and trot, did not make the first Pirouette well and also had problems in the transitions. In the end, it was 1504:1442 for the Westphalian horse. And like at the EC of the previous year, you could not criticise this result.

In 1985, MARZOG put success after success in Bremen, Odense, Dortmund, Goodwood, Aachen, Falsterbo and the Dutch Championships. After that of all things, he became third at the European Championships in Kopenhagen. But in this case, he is excused. As that he only got bronze behind AHLERICH and LIMANDUS, ridden by the Swiss Otto Hofer, was less his fault than his rider's, as her mind might not have been totally focussed as Leif Toernblad, who was to be her second husband, had showed up.

In 1986, she won the first World Cup of dressage riders with MARZOG. Almost 5 months later the World Championships in the Canadian Cedar Valley was in the journal - where the pair proved that it still had what it takes to

win Championships. Although they had not been the favourites - this burden was carried by Christine Stueckelberger and GAUGUIN DE LULLY as well as Margit Otto-Crepin and CORLANDUS - they were first in the end. Nobody would have bet on this victory - but with a head start of 29 points to GAUGUIN DE LULLY it happened despite that. It was well their last chance for a great victory. Eye witnesses had said that MARZOG already had some problems with his legs in Cedar Valley and that he looked like a juggler who only kept his plates in the air with effort. It was clear that there had to be sherds at some point. It was in 1987.

At the European Championships in Goodwood MARZOG did not pass the veterinary check and now was a horse with a great past and no future. That was why his career soon came to an end shortly after that.

After that, MARZOG lived 4 years. In summer 1991, he became suddenly ill. They tried everything for 3 days, but in the end they had to put him down. His relatively early death at the age of only 18 years could also be related to his grandfather MARCIO xx. As it did not count to his qualities to create robust and long living horses. Besides, he died at the same age as his world famous grandson.

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Classic meets sports

Piaffe interviews Colonel (retired) Kurd Albrecht von Ziegner and Richard Hinrichs.

Kurd Albrecht von Ziegner

As cavallery-officer in World War II, Kurd Albrecht von Ziegner (born in 1918) has owed his life more than once to his faithful four legged partners. It is not the last reason for his deep love and connection to horses. After the end of the war, von Ziegner became known as a successful trainer. He worked three years as chief riding instructor of the Turkish Cavallery School in Istanbul. Since 1976 he has dedicated himself almost exclusively to riding and stays in the USA several times a year for trainings.

The carrier of the Golden Riding Sign (show jumping and dressage) edited the world famous riding school of Mueseler several times and cooperated at the production of the guidelines for Riding and Driving of the FN. His book "Elements of Training" has been part of the standard works for years. It contains the concept "Training Tree" which is a fixed part of the Dressage Manual of the American FN. The now 91 year old still climbs the saddle regularly and trains ambitioned riding students.

Richard Hinrichs

He is THE store sign of German baroque riding: In order to revive the ideas of classical riding again and again and also distribute it as part of nature- and culture-related life quality in our technical time, Richard Hinrichs founded the institute of classical riding in Hannover with some friends in 2000.

If he is not active as rider, trainer or author, the 55year old lawyer works at the Ministry of Environment of Lower Saxony.

Dressage is the foundation of all riding. The character of Dressage is to improve the horse's natural dispositions, to make it smooth and obedient, so that it can be ridden and controlled at all gaits. The goal of the whole training is suppleness. The course of training in the whole, but also every single unit, is based on

the so called training scale, which is like a red line through the whole dressage work up to high school training.

In issue 1/2008, PIAFFE was concerned with the first two points of the training scale - tact and suppleness. This issue is about the mean-

ing of the points dependence and impulsion. Harry Boldt writes about this in his book "The Dressage Horse":

"Dependence: It means the constant and fine contact between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth. A well trained horse should look for this dependence, the rider should sit independently from the reins. The degree of dependence changes according to the requirements which the rider puts on the horse. But the rider should always try to increase dependence only shortly and then go back to a fine dependence. A horse moving in the right dependence is on the reins, moves in balance

and carries itself. Only a horse which is in constant and smooth dependence allows the rider to define the necessary frame larger or smaller.

Impulsion: It is the result of complete suppleness, a swinging back and resilient hind quarters, and can only be developed by the hind quarters. With an impulsive horse, the moment of flying in trot and canter can be detected clearly. Impulsion shows in extensions and in collection."

Interview with Colonel (retired) Kurd Albrecht von Ziegner:

Why do the pushing aids have to be much stronger than the restraining aids in order to reach dependence?

"The pushing aids should always exceed the restraining ones, this is a principle. And this is valid for the young horse as well as for the Grand Prix horse. With the last, it is not as obvious anymore but it shows clearly in the transition from Piaffe to Passage. Otherwise, the horse is not in front of the leg and thus has the possibility to escape all aids. But the rider has to have the horse in front of the leg at all gaits, also when stopping or backing up. Not only the rider, also the horse has to think forward."

Which exercises advance a well ridden dependence?

"Especially the lections which require an energetic forward from the horse. This can be aids in one gait, so speed differences in one gait. But also a good two tracking or correct lateral gaits influence dependence positively. But it always has to be ridden well forward toward the hand. From back to front. Of course I also could simply say that riding semi-aids advances dependence. But then maybe people would start to just pull the reins because they don't know anymore how to ride semi-aids really and what they mean. The semi-aid is an increased invitation by weight and leg aids to the expecting hand. If the

named lections are ridden like that then they advance dependence because more power is coming from the back. But dependence is created first of all by evenly going forward at work speed on straight and bent lines."

Which influence does dependence have on riding turns, side tracking and increasing collection?

"Riding correct turns is simply not possible without dependence. The horse should bend itself and this bending affects the whole horse, from neck to back of neck the head.

I put alot of value on saying that bending is not reached by the backwards pulling inner hand, but rather by putting the outer hand slightly forward. You must not jam the neck into the bend. If you want to reach more bending, this is done by pushing more with the inner leg (at the girth) and the outer leg (behind the girth). As soon as the horse clings to the inner rein, the reason for this is mostly that the reaction to the inner leg as the column of the bend is poor. Also when side tracking the inner rein may show the direction, but must never hinder the forward-downward.

With increasing collection, dependence should become easier as the horse balances itself by stepping under the weight and should never look for help in the hand. If the success, an easier dependence, is there, a stroking - a very

Careful stroking - is recommended. Stroking is an excellent possibility to check the balance and reward the horse. It is an elegant gesture and not an abrupt letting go of the reins. It is definitely comparable to a "descente de main" like it is practiced in baroque riding in order to demonstrate Légèreté which is our "self carriage".

How important is "pushing off the bit" in connection to dependence?

"Pushing off means that the horse relaxes and eases the jaw muscles. The bit lies on the tongue but does not squeeze it. It is a yielding of the lower jaw at the invitation of the hand. The nose band has to be correctly done for this, two fingers should fit comfortably between the band and the nose. It must not be - as unfortunately seen very often - too tight. Judges should watch this and make it clear in their verdicts."

When do you say constraint of the lower jaw?

"If horses have relatively strong lower jaws. You want them to have a clearly visible gorge way, otherwise the horse will have problems in dependence. Strong lower jaws press the parotid gland when the head is in position, which is very painful and the horse fights it justifiably. But everytime you hurt your horse is violating the riders' ethics and is to be objected. This starts with a too tight nose band!"

What is the reason for "rolling the neck up" and "wrong bend"?

"Hyperflexion can have several reasons. For example, it can result from the constant use of draw-reins. Or in many cases it is the result of lacking ability of the rider, because the rider is not able to get his horse in front of his leg. The rider has to learn to get the horse in front with back and legs and without using the reins. Once the wrong bend is there, it is very hard to correct. Only an experienced rider can heal this escaping from the aids.

Some basic things about dependence:

In the USA I translate dependence (German: Anlehnung) with contact - in fact I also mean it in the sense of electricity. The pushing as one

pole and the restraining as the other contact each other in the mouth and there is an "electric current". This circle of electricity I call a "Circle of energy". If this circle is interrupted, "the lights go off". Often I have to encourage: "Turn the light on".

For example an uneasy hand causes a loose contact and does not create a Circle of energy which is the precondition for the pursued suppleness. It has to be ridden with a fine hand, but this can only result from a correct seat foundation. I like Sally Swift's example (Centered Riding): You should hold your hands so that you can hold two little birds in between. If your hands are too tight you will squeeze the little birds to death. If your hands are opened too wide, the birds will fly away. If you ride with hidden fists, you will squeeze their heads. I like the feeling and the comparison to have something lively in your hands with the reins."

How can flaws in dependence be improved in training?

"By improving the rider's seat and influence. In training, the rider's feeling for the horse's balance has to be schooled. The rider also has to know and understand that the degree of dependence varies in the horse's course of training. A young horse needs more dependence, namely in the direction forward-downward. In fact, they lean on the forehand at first in doing so, but this is the smaller mistake. The main thing is that the horse moves with forward motion, looks for the rider's hand and learns to carry the rider as if on a bridge (no rope bridge!). But of course you cannot ride forward-downward your whole life. Then, you cause damage for the horse. As soon as the horse is able to carry its rider, this means as soon as the horse can move supply at all three gaits with the rider's weight in tact and resiliently, it has to be built up from back to front. Approximately in the second/third year of training.

From thrust you develop the hind quarters' carrying capacity. Letting the horse "chew the reins from the hand" is always a welcome possibility for the horse to relax its muscles for a moment and gain the readiness for further

work. The rider has to know that young horses become tired rather quickly concerning the back and neck muscles. But as soon as tiredness is there you work against the direction."

Impulsion is characterised as the "soul of riding" (L. Seeger). Why is the development of impulsion this important for training?

Impulsion means resilience, and which part should be resilient? The supple back. And if the back is resilient, the horse can move with its natural gaits."

Which meaning does the back's activity have for the development of impulsion?

"We differentiate between the back mover and the leg mover.

Typical for a leg mover is that he moves his legs with little back movement at the trot. The trot is mostly shorter and higher in its frequency. Such a horse trots like a Jack Russel. In contrast, the back mover develops his movements from his resilient back and reaches an extension of the trot by extending the swing of the back. This resilience is comparable to a wave movement. When extending steps, the waves of the back become flatter but wider. When shortening the steps in increasing collection, the waves become higher but shorter. But the rhythm, the tact of the waves, does not change. If a horse becomes faster when extending the steps, it is ridden falsely or is not talented to be a riding horse.

The length of the waves is influenced by the rider's seat. With a good seat, the rider can extend or shorten the waves with it, by pushing the waves in front of him or sitting a little against the waves to shorten them. This way, he can extend or shorten the gaits."

Which possibilities are there in training to develop impulsion?

"If horses have little impulsion by nature, this can be improved to a certain degree. You can practise lots of transitions. Also using Cavalettis - for example also at the lunge - I can recommend. Don't hesitate to put them a little higher up. Then, the horse has to increase the use of its back. And it is all about using the

back. Thus, if a horse has little impulsion by nature, you have to concentrate on improving the back's activity.

But you must not try to get increased impulsion too early. First, the preconditions - according to the training scale exactly in the order suppleness, tact and dependence - be accomplished. The horse also has to be straight already, as only a straight horse can be required to develop more impulsion. No car mechanic would allow a car on the street which is not directed straight. It would always run askew and the tires would be broken soon. Therefore, I put a lot of value on the fact that straightness comes before impulsion in the training scale. A horse which is not straight is damaged at the joints, the tendons and ligaments up to the hooves by the increased impulsion. This leads to early waste and the vets earn additional money."

Are there differences in judging and the importance of impulsion between dressage and classic baroque riding?

"Yes. The classic baroque horse does not have the same possibility of resilience as the modern bred dressage horse has. From this also the different stressing of baroque riding and dressage results. Sometimes, you see successful baroque horses which do their lections relatively cleanly as leg movers. But today's dressage horse has to be a convincing back mover."

Which role does a deficient seat play in development the horse's impulsion?

"A very big one. A well sitting rider swings in the wave movement of the horse. With a deficient seat, responding to the movement is not possible. Mistakes of the seat are the cause for all further difficulties as from a bad seat only bad aids can develop.

Of course a horse is not able to develop its suppleness, its movement, its tact like that. Then, the rider is not a welcome partner to the horse, but a constant nuisance."

Is it damaging for the correct gymnastics of a young horse to require extensions or changes in speed too early?

"I totally object extending the gaits too early. Training extensions should only be allowed when the horse is accomplished in the basics of the scale and it is already able to move some steps in collection. I really only expect an extended trot when the horse has understood the basics of collection and can carry itself at the trot in collected balance. Exactly here, a lot of sins are committed in today's

riding. In the competitions for young horses. And especially the good horses, the expensive ones, are pushed too early into the extensions. I always have to warn you: The excellent movements of a young horse are a present from nature which have to be treated carefully. You must not accept this present too early. You have to know, if you start a firework too early, it will be all fired out too quickly. This is also the reason why so many young talents are already damaged seriously, before they are grown up, at least 7 years old."

Interview with ecuyer Richard Hinrichs

Why is constant exaggerated dependence bad for the muscular development of the horse?

"This question should be answered by an expert in biomechanics. Here, I recommend Professor Preuschhof or Dr. Gerd Heuschmann as competent respondents."

Which influence does dependence have on riding turns, side tracking and increasing collection?

"Dependence is one element among more, which the rider designs his lessons with. With a clean dependence the bend in turns, side tracking and increasing collection can be defined so that tension is prevented which affects the performance."

What are the reasons for difficulties in jaws and neck, like for example flawed bend in the jaws?

"There are physical as well as psychological reasons for this. If a horse has difficulties in mouth, jaws, back of neck or neck despite the lesson being sensibly designed, in every case an equine dentist and an osteopath or physiotherapist should be called."

What is the reason for "rolling the neck up" and "wrong bend"?

There are several reasons for this. Some excellent young horses are so sensible regarding

dependence conveyed by the bit, that they roll their necks up or show the wrong bend. Here, it can be helpful to start the horses the baroque way, by first creating dependence without the bit at the calveson with reins. In my experience, the horses don't roll their necks up as much as in bit-dependence. If the horse has understood how to carry its head, slowly dependence with the bit can be added and successively first accompany the dependence on the calveson and then replace it."

What is the reason for difficulties with the mouth and dependence?

"Next to physical and mental problems the main reason is the unskilled rider's hand."

How can flaws in dependence be improved in the course of training?

"It can be helpful to also improve the mental connection between horse and rider. Flaws in dependence are often obvious if the relationship between horse and rider is disturbed. An improved of technique can contribute to the rider becoming a trustworthy personality so that the horse can relax, that flaws in dependence go away."

Which special features do you see regarding dependence in classic and baroque riding?

"Classic baroque riding is about expressing joie de vivre. This joy of life is connected to feeling good.

There are people who feel better with a stronger dependence than with a weaker one. This is also valid for horses. And not only regarding the physical, but also the mental level.

Feeling good also depends on the choice of the bit. The snaffle bit is made for a stronger dependence than the curb bit, which is not made for constant pulling. The less intense the physical dependence, the stronger is the meaning of the mental dependence."

Impulsion is characterised as the soul of riding (L.Seeger). Why is developing impulsion this important for training?

"Because the essential element of riding is movement."

Which meaning does the back's activity have for the development of impulsion?

"Only with the right back activity the impulsion of the hind quarters can lead to a full development of the horse's movement abilities."

Are there differences in judging and the importance of impulsion between dressage and classic baroque riding?

"A special sign of baroque riding is collection. Precondition for developing collection is a controlled forward impulsion of the horse. In lections with little forward movement and inforcement of the upwards movement harmonic resilience of the horse is much more important than impulsion. For example the Piaffe: In this trot-like movement on the spot we do not see development of impulsion to the front. But without the expression of resilience, this lection becomes a caricature of itself."

Which role does a wrong seat play in the horse's development of impulsion?

"Correct aids can only come from a correct seat, which favour the horse's development of impulsion rather than preventing it. But many

horses also show a remarkable resistency to mistakes in seat by the rider."

In Dressage, you often see horses which show "impulsive" movements with obvious tension. Is it right that horses with a tight, stiff back can extend the flying phase this way? Is this the reason for so called "flying steps"?

"The flying phase can be extended in several ways. Some baroque horses tend to become too tense in an overdone walk, step and jumping frequency. If you manage to make these horses move in tact and calmly, it is the precondition for extending the flying phase. With such horses, you won't be able to get the desired, supply swinging back from one moment to the other. In training horses and riders you always meet deficiencies. He, who manœuvres best gets farthest. This is valid in baroque riding as well as in competitive riding."

In baroque riding, developing impulsion is sometimes neglected in favor of the ability of collection. Is this because of the breed or the deficient abilities of the rider/trainer? Or are deficiencies in exterieur the reason?

"Reasons for neglecting important aspects in training can be found on the rider's as well as on the horse's side. The baroque horse is compact with not inevitably a short back. Andalusians and Lusitanos often meet the requirements of a short-lined horse. But this is mostly not valid for Lippizaner which often have a rather long back and still have a high ability to collect themselves.

Every horse needs a adequate, individual treatment so that it can demonstrate its natural strengths. Here, interieur as well as exterieur need to be regarded. Some riders who engage themselves in baroque horses, just assume that their horses cannot move resiliently and therefore unnecessarily put narrow limits to the possibilities of development for their horses."

If horses have little impulsion by nature how can you improve it in training?

"A horse which has learnt to move in tact and resiliently in collection, can easily be moti-

vated to keep the resilience in forward motion."

Is it damaging for correct gymnastics of the young horse to require extensions and speed changes too early?

"Yes. This is also valid for the forced extension, because an early waste is created by this. Fine speed changes can improve the horse's attention and elasticity also already at an early state of training.

Recently, in connection to the subject impulsion, the term "supple back" is often discussed. Author of this term is Udo Buerger who said the following in his book ("Vollendete Reitkunst" - Mueller Rueschlikon Publishing): "Only a back in supple, convex tension transfers the impulsion to the front. The extremes of disobedience are the tight, arched

upwards or arched downwards back and the "loose back" which avoids either to the side horizontally or, which is very rare, vertically in a wave movement, which reminds the spectator of a creeping caterpillar [...] on the loose back the rider sits comfortably, but the pushing force is missing, the impulsion from the hind quarters is lost behind the saddle, the horses are tight and cannot move forward properly."

Some people claim that the "loose back" is found a lot in the baroque riding scene. What do you think about this?

"In my experience, there is the difficulty with some baroque horses to get the back, naturally swinging in a very small frame, to swing in a bigger frame. Therefore, I think the problem of the loose back is rather a theoretical problem."

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The Rider's Impacts and Their Timers

Riding transitions correctly from one gait to the other with a timer

Part 4

(Part 1 in Piaffe 1/07 pages 46-57, Part 2 in Piaffe 1/08 pages 66-75, Part 3 in Piaffe 2/08 pages 45-47)

The basics of classical riding, developed over centuries, are based on knowledge gained from mother nature. They are mirrored among others in the impacts of the rider for transitions from one gait to the other in order to change the horse's order of step with his aid. This impact/aid consists of impacts from the leg, the seat and the hand. Connections between

- the moment of the work movement and the movement of the horse's back and the horse's trunk on the one
- and the rider's impacts on the other side are displayed in mini-picture-tables.

The transition from canter on the right to walk

The transition from the "jumping" canter to the "pacing" walk - catching approx. 450-650 kg weight from not inconsiderable speed - is done only through the trot with young horses. With a trained horse, you first shorten the canter.

In table 2 the rider first abandons the canter position. At the same time, he uses his last chance before the transition to balance himself growing from up to down and require attention from the horse with a semi-aid.

His right (inner) leg has fallen "by itself" on the horse's trunk. In table 3, a slight pull of the inner (right) rein limits the forward movement of the front leg on the same side.

In table 5 the outer (left) leg of the rider wants to fall on the horse "by itself" but it - the heel is resilient downwards the toes are raised - is not used and the outer (left) rein holds an elastic contact. This may be accompanied by a "waaalk" from the rider's voice at the beginning.

In table 6 the transition from canter to walk is complete.

In table 8 the movements of the horse's trunk and back offer the chance to "recenter" yourself and require diligence from the horse via a semi-aid - also if it may chew the reins from the hand after some steps. For the use in the saddle, the rider again only memorizes a short formula:

- At the "working by itself" inner leg start a semi-aid and abandon the canter seat (-> 2)
- immediately after that slight pull of the inner rein (-> 3)
- don't allow the outer leg to work by itself and keep constant elastic contact with the outer rein (the reins are a little shorter now) (-> 5,6)

The transition from walk to trot

Walk-Trot-Walk, Trot-Canter-Trot are no problem for the young horse which has been prepared carefully for the service under the saddle in working at the lunge or at the hand. It knows the meaning of

- clicking with the tongue
- voice
- pressure from the leg
- being touched with the whip

- but also of short, restraining pulls on the reins

...and will react to this readily and willingly. The movement phase where it can do this it finds by itself, when starting to trot or to canter possibly only after some quicker little steps. For young riders on the experienced school horse these transitions offer a first possibility to communicate with their four legged friend. Clicking with the tongue and using the voice are not desired in group lessons. But the young rider learns how to build up the horse's readiness to do something with semi-aids ("Attention, I want something in a second"), how the horse shows it to him. And that he only has to allow a higher gait then by giving the reins a little.

Transitions from the walk are especially good for this because this gait causes the least difficulties for the young rider to balance himself. Thus, he can fully concentrate on his impacts. That some long experienced riders on dressage horses often cannot make the transition from a walk in pure tact to the trot has two reasons:

- The horse has to work itself from the "pacing" walk into the "impulsive" trot, where the horse has to catapult its body into a movement with a flying phase. This requires, especially for the transition, a lot more power.
- Also some old riders with success at competitions does not feel the moment, when a hind leg is about to move forward, obviously because of deficient flexibility, is however not able to use the leg which is working by itself when it is needed. But the horse requires a very precise aid for a correct transition.

Looking at the tables, it becomes clear:

The horse is ready to trot because of the semi-aids, which are not shown in the pictures. In table 3 the left leg, working on its own, starts a semi-aid, thus the "recentering yourself" or the "growing up and down". In table 4 a slight pull of the left rein has the left hind leg step-

ping earlier than usual. In table 5 the right hind leg also left the ground earlier, therefore it will pass by the standing leg a little earlier. In tables 5, 6 - walk phase 1 and trot phase 3 melt together in the transition - the rider's right leg follows the horse's trunk earlier and influences the horse demandingly. The rider's hand has gone forward and allows the first trot step.

The walk phases in transition to trot of tables 4 and 5 are a little different from the normal picture and signed with "iÜzT".

In table 8 the self working left leg of the rider offers the possibility to push a little if necessary, at least to start a new semi-aid. The step orders walk and trot consist of two parts by the way, the second is the inverted image of the first, that means that what the right (left) leg is doing in the one part, the left (right) leg is doing in the other part.

Therefore, transitions are possible...

- from walk phase 1 (6) to trot phase 3 (<< 3) or from walk phase 7 (-) to trot phase 9 (<< 1) - in both cases after a slight change of the normal course -,
- from trot phase 2 (>> 2) in walk phase 1 (6) or from trot phase 8 (>> 4) in walk phase 7 (-).

The rider can choose according to the natural side inclination of his horse or to the bend he gave the horse whether he starts the transi-

tion with the right or the left (self working) leg: Slowing or limiting the stepping of the hind leg, is easiest on the convex (outer) side. Of course, the rider only memorises a short formula for the transition from walk to trot.

For this and all following short formulas: First recenter yourself with the semi-aids and tell the horse "Attention".

- Outer side, here means the side which is convex at that moment, inner side is the momentary concave side of the horse. This is independent from whether the bend is desired or comes from the natural side inclination of the horse. The references to the tables (like -> 3 and so on) should make the first understanding of the short formula easier, but they are not part of this formula. "Semi-aid" here always stands for "growing up and down" or "recentering yourself" and embraces the time period of the self-working leg of the other side. The semi-aid is only in a suitable situation, but never principally connected to an influence of hand and/or leg!
- Growing and recentering yourself, if the outer leg wants to become self working (-> 3),
- immediately after this slight pull of the rein (-> 4)
- supporting the self working inner leg demandingly and move both hands forward at the same time (-> 6)

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The Dream of Harmony

By Peter Kreinberg

Being one with the horse, forming a unity and giving it back its easiness and mobility under the rider which it has when playing with other horses as a foal and a youngster. Doesn't every rider dream about this ideal? And how can it be done? Is there only one way, one goal? Does the dream of lived harmony between man and horse only fulfill itself in the saddle? Is it reserved only for great riders and those who work their whole lives on themselves and their horses?

Acknowledged and competent hippologists agree: the feeling of harmony between man and horse can be reached in several ways. Neither the way of riding nor the training level, neither place nor environment are decisive. Only the level of agreement of both beings in the moment and the easiness of the movements measure this feeling. You feel harmony when you experience it: as a part of it or as the audience. In the beginning it is just a elusive state which you cannot catch and keep. It can only be experienced as longer if you create and keep up the right circumstances. Harmony between man and horse does not appear by itself, the two beings are too different and the two bodies' work movements are too complex. But taking a closer look, you see many similarities and new work movements can be practised. Which possibilities does a horse lover have to fulfill this dream? This question has to be asked, as anyhow ca. 1.5 million Germans are trying to make it work. Three quarters are girls and women, only about 10% of these horse enthusiasts take part in competitions sometimes or on a regular basis. About half of all riders are members in associations which belong to the German Riders' Association (FN). 10 000s have associated in various smaller interes grouping, the

others enjoy their hobby just like that. Therefore, the FN is by far the biggest and most important Organisation in the area of equestrianism. It also has other general tasks in the equine field beyond aspects of competiton.

From horse lover to horseman

Fulfilling the dream of living harmonically with the horse has never been given to anyone. In order to be able to fulfill this experience, the preconditions have to be created for this: the horse has to be trained. This training has to be done by someone. This is the second precondition: the trainer has to be good at his job, for the training to be succesfull. Already almost 2500 years ago the Greek Xenophon EMPFEHLEN in the oldest written riding doctrine to leave the training of the horse to a experienced and acknowledged trainer. You have to find him and this costs a lot of money and time. The other way is to try it yourself. This is what most riders try today. They name several reasons for this:

- because they had disappointing experiences with riding instructors, associations and training stables
- because there are not enough competent trainers and training stables, where a really goal oriented and serious training is practised
- because such a serious training exceeds the economic possibilities of most horse lovers and riders
- because you don't want to put the beloved horse into strange hands
- because you like the challenge of making it yourself
- because you have bought a horse which has already been ridden (or badly ridden) and needs correction.

These riders who choose to do it themselves, normally have less experience in training horses systematically. They often don't have the best basic conditions for a structured training. Considering the factor time, they have a lot of time in the long run, but considering regular, daily, systematic work still not enough. Although the preconditions have weaknesses in comparison to a "professional training", they hope for a good result. Lacking practical experience, they look for theoretical instructions, which they interpret and realise in the frame of their possibilities. Who doubts whether this is enough, has an instructor accompany the training and gets help from there. If there is no trainer available, another rider who gives his opinions and ideas without charging for it, is enough for them. DVDs and articles in professional magazines complete the fund for the course of training.

Learning how horses learn

Who wants to be a hobby-trainer, quickly learns some things:

- you notice that there is a big difference between theory and practice
- despite all theoretical preparation you know very little about how horses really behave, how they learn and how they "work" biomechanically and how you keep them healthy during training.
- you notice that you have to learn a lot more than you thought
- you learn that being insecure is a constant companion, "have I interpreted the horse's behaviour in the right way, have I acted right, has the horse learned what I wanted it to learn, have I required too much?"
- the more you inform yourself, the more confusing the situation becomes.

The number of books and articles about this topic fill shelves. The opinions are various, confusing. The ideas sometimes even seem to contradict each other. What is right, who is

right? Learning seems harder in the equine world than elsewhere. Too many old and new masters, too many ideas and contra-ideas. Different ways of riding, normally organised in associations and represented by officials who tell you what is right. Dogmas, prejudices, semi-knowledge and fashions. Everybody claims to represent the only truth. The equestrian scene has always been formed by this situation of contradicting, babylonian language and understanding confusion. But it could be very easy, today more than ever: From the horse's and man's biomechanics and from both beings' psychology in working together, all necessary comes from itself. And where in former times complex experiences, the sixth sense and now and then also speculations served as the basis for all knowledge, today we have more scientifically proven results which allow less and less room for interpretation.

From horse to riding horse

For many horse people, the difference between a horse and a riding horse is not clear. The horse is despite its domestication, which has been going on for thousands of years, and although it grows up under human hands mainly ruled by instincts. It often reacts with fear on the environment. It is declined to uncontrolled movements. It definitely can react aggressively to other horses or to humans if there is a reason for it. A rider on its back first disturbs it in its balance and strains muscles, ligaments and joints without the right training so much that it can be damaged. Cut short, a horse has to make certain experiences in the course of a systematic training and experience a development which can result in a lasting change of behaviour. Only with the new behaviour patterns a horse becomes a "schooled" riding horse. Horses are able to learn and to a certain degree they want to learn. In the wild they learn when playing and because of their curiosity. But in order to learn the behaviour of a riding horse, they lack motivation. This form of learning is set by the human. This phase of training means change and requires mental and physical inconveniences. Therefore, it is important to respect the aspect of

motivation in the course of training sufficiently. It is easy to aspire to a training without force in theory, but in order to do it the trainer has to overcome many difficulties. Only with all the qualities acquired in a friendly training it is able to fulfill all requirements in an alien environment and in the field of use decided by the human easily. If training should be as gentle as possible for the horse, it has to aspire to the mental as well as the physical change and development of the horse. For almost 2500 years this knowledge is mirrored in equestrian literature. Another very important aspect for the stress-free training as possible is not defined clearly in most professional books and is not discussed in depth, namely the need of a basis of understanding between the trainer and the horse. But only if the trainer is able to make the horse understand what he wants it can understand his requirements and fulfill them with motivation. And only through this understanding the form of a harmonic relationship grows which is characterised by trust and friendly contact and not by fear, distrust and unbroken force. Every appropriate system of training for horses therefore has to respect the three important aspects, communication, education and work out in order to find its way to a friendly, harmonic partnership of convenience between human and horse, with the human as the leader. For this reason, it is desirable for each trainer to be proficient in at least the basics of communication in theory and practice as well as of mental and physical education. Every horse will learn the easiest if these three aspects of training are respected in a balanced and appropriate way. Horse training can generally be divided into a basic training and the specialising, secondary training.

The following belongs to basic training:

- a. working out the unmistakable basis of communication
- b. its instinctive behaviour has to be changed systematically
- c. the horse has to learn to slowly give up its own actions and adapt and submit itself to the human will.

This part of training can be summarised with the term "education". The goal of this work is the "motivated obedience", it has to be learned step by step. Only like this a horse becomes gently but still reliably controllable without losing its composure. This combination of reliable composure creates the foundation for a gentle, physical work out first in the basics, later in higher profiles. These three columns: Communication, education and work out are the basis of a horse appropriate basic training. This basic training can be almost the same for most horses. But the purpose of each horse decides the actual, practical contents of further training. Horse type or breed are furthermore decisive for contents and techniques. So, in horse training, there are some general principles: but their use and realisation always has to be seen individually and according to the situation. There cannot be one way of training for all horses. This knowledge does not really make it easier for the trainer. He has to judge the horse, define the goals in training and then determine the way of training and notice progress or setbacks. He needs experience to be able to do all that. Through experience, he gains "feeling". Every mistake in training on his side will show in a more or less significant "wrong behaviour" of the horse, measured with the aspired, "correct" behaviour. If he notices misdevelopments on time and changes his way of training, it does not have a lasting negative effect on training. But if he does not realise that something is going wrong, the mistakes become a habit of the horse. Depending on the type of horse, it will react to mistakes in training more or less explicitly. In this sense, there are difficult and easy types of learners. The more careful a trainer progresses methodically, gently, consequently as well as step by step, the earlier he realises a misdevelopment and can correct it. The more solid his relationship, characterised by communication, trust and respect, with the horse is, the easier is the following training. Basic training has a formative character. But every later experience can also strongly change the horse's behaviour. Therefore, horses are always learning. "Experimental training" does not always have to lead to negative results under these aspects. Training always happens, consciously or unconsciously. Which helps in orientation are

offered to the "hobby-trainer", who wants to train systematically and is looking for an instruction to a solid basic training?

FN guidelines as orientation aids

Which training system offers practically realisable help to the hobby trainer, in order to arrange a solid basis for his horse? What lies nearer than taking a look at the most influential professional association. With the FN's "Guidelines for riding and driving" you hold the "official training system" in your hands. All trainers, and instructors are schooled according to this system and convey it to their students. The chapter 4. "Basic training of the horse" begins with the following sentence: "It is the aim of equestrian basic training to form a pleasantly moving, obedient, willing, capable and skilled horse. By accustoming, careful education and gymnastics the natural dispositions of the horse are kept, improved and made useable to the rider in certain situations. Dressage training is the basis for this. It is the prerequisite for further training in all equestrian disciplines."

Furthermore, there is written: "The horse understands the human as conspecific. As a teacher, the human has to replace the conspecific. This position cannot be attained through force, but only by reason. If the horse makes mistakes under human influence then most certainly only because it did not understand the human correctly. To be able to understand the human, the horse has to trust him. Trust is the foundation of understanding. Tools for communication for the human to the horse are the aids and auxiliary means: Voice-touch-weight-reward. Secure communication is reached by accustoming to the aids."

With this, the three important aspects of horse appropriate training, communication, education and gymnastics are already named in the introduction. As a fourth aspect changing the natural balance, which is caused by the rider's weight, is mentioned. If you look for practical instruction in the following text, with which measures or exercises communication, understanding for the means of communica-

tion or obedience should be obtained, you won't find any further instructions. Only about gymnastics, there is a deeper instruction.

Gymnastics in the foreground of the FN guidelines

In chapter 4.5 Dressage training (basic training) the "training scale" is explained: "If you talk about the "training of the horse" you must never mean drilling. Training is rather systematic gymnastics, which is about getting the horse to fully unfold its physical and mental natural possibilities and make it an obedient, pleasant and versatile riding horse. The training scale is a summary of the basic traits of the ridden horse and displays the individual phases which are necessary to reach these goals. Remember: The criteria of the training scale have to be fulfilled by every horse, independent from its use, in order to react obediently, without force and harmonically to the rider's aids. The training course has three phases (accustoming, developing thrust, developing carrying capacity), which are divided into six smaller subphases (tact, suppleness, dependence, momentum, straightness, collection). For a trained dressage horse proficiency in those criteria is indispensable. But also horses used in show jumping, eventing or even recreationally ridden horses should have had the systematic basic training to follow the rider's aids supply at all times. With this, harmonic riding is guaranteed and the health of the horse is kept safe at the same time."

In the following, the six points are explained as training goals. The FN guidelines therefore define desirable training goals and ideals, but a practical instruction is only provided concerning dressage gymnastics in the frame of the training scale. With this, many riders miss an understandable instruction to educating their horses without force. And with this, exactly the foundation is missing which makes a harmonic and sensible gymnastics without force possible.

About the requirements for the trainer it is written in the introduction: "In the following paragraph we will, in contrast to the first part,

assume that the rider meets the necessary requirements of seat, giving aids, feeling and influence. A young horse should only be ridden by an experienced rider, who can feel the strengths and weaknesses of the horse and can adjust to that. Everything else remains a patchwork and results only in unhappiness for everyone involved because of unrideable, tense and disobedient horses." "Years of experience in the saddle on different horses are required in order to be able to train the young horse appreciatively. The trainer has to be a versatily trained rider."

With this position, it becomes clear that the FN excludes that horse owners without "years of experience in the saddle and in handling different horses" or who do not meet the "requirements in seat, giving aids, feeling and influence", are concerned with educating and training young horses. This point of view of course is not principally wrong. But it assumes unreal preconditions. There are not enough qualified trainers and training places in Germany to give a good training to every horse under these circumstances. From an economic point of view, appropriate training according to the guidelines of the FN would cost as much as a car of the upper middle class, but only a few horse owners want and are able to do this investment. In reality, only very few horses really get the kind of training the FN suggests as ideal. As a result, there are hundred thousands of ridden horses which haven't had the pleasure of such a training. They are ridden and with it trained by their riders at the same time consciously or unconsciously, without the skills required by the FN. Most of these people are looking for some kind of help in order to improve their horses skills despite their limited training capacities. The FN's guidelines are only little adept for this, but they also leave room for various interpretations and misinterpretations. Regarding the important topics of communication and education they do not help you. Regarding gymnastics, the dressage horse as training goal is placed in the center, "driving riding" and the development of "momentum" are elementary requirements of the training work. These specifications do not meet the training goals of many recreational riders on horses of different breeds.

Therefore, you can state: Principally, the FN guidelines transport many acknowledged and proven training principles, the necessary, practical, detailed instruction to a basic training under the conditions which are usual for recreational riders is not provided. They specify a training goal, but they still owe the way of training.

Filling the gap

A training system or a method which really wants to respond to the needs of recreational riders who want to learn and really wants to help, first has to consider the real conditions and goals. Above all, this means not to assume the ideal conditions, but to respond to the existing deficiencies. Feeling and communication which are assumed with a training professional have to be developed first. Generally understandable, clear information without interpretable "professional language" replace "professional Latin". Didactically, in small steps theory and practice are explained and summed up in course plans or exercises. Before you start to really act, misdevelopments have to be pointed out, noticed and corrected. Aspects of safety, of appropriateness of acting, of the development of feeling, self-confidence and control have to be regarded in special exercises to at least develop the basics in "trainer competency". Tense-free and this means first also momentum-free working to practice new movement patterns without stress have to be put first. The foundation of communication between trainer and horse has to be developed in the frame of systematic exercises step by step. With the The Gentle Touch method, the author has developed a training concept which offers exactly this help. In the field of systematic ground work, the TGT-ground school, important basics regarding communication and education are acquired. This form of ground work is different from various other methods by relating every exercise to later riding. Ground work is not an end in itself, but it prepares human and horse equally for the tasks which have to be fulfilled in gymnastics under the rider. Doing so, it creates a connection to the points of the training scale systematically. This has the effect,

that also horse people who haven't yet engaged themselves in the topic, develop a better consciousness and understanding for the meaning of these six important basic traits of a well schooled riding horse. This helps them to interpret and respect these points in the later work under the rider sensibly and in the right way. With the horse, the basic preconditions for working on the training scale's points later under the rider are set in the conditions of the ground work.

For example, this concept already becomes clear with the lead training, one of four fields in the TGT ground school. The relation between contact pressure and yielding as a fundamental principle which is the basis for communication and later for giving aids, is acquired step by step in exercises which build on each other. Understanding leads to cooperation without force and easiness. With this, an essential precondition for suppleness is created. Responding directly to movements of the leg, to holding and flying phase creates the

consciousness and the possibility to influence in the field of the scale-point tact, exercises for direct step or walk extension, the development of eagerness and active stepping prepares the later development of momentum. Leading on both sides of the horse has a straightening effect and balances natural or acquired beveledness. Other exercises at the hand motivate the horse to bend the hind legs better, improve the mobility of the joints and make it stronger in the first steps. With this, the ground is prepared for working on collection, which comes a lot later, connected with bearing more weight, as the last stone of the gymnastics work and rounds the picture of the training scale. Similar are all exercises of the four fields of the TGT ground school. About the aspect of preparing for gymnastics this direct ground school also has a very practical use: the learned good manners at the hand make the daily handling safer and more harmonic. And a horse which moves "at a silk thread" will also like to receive the rider's aids from the saddle.

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Improving suppleness

Lectons for loosening and collecting exercises

By Hans-E. Schneider

After further weeks and months, our four to five year old or also older - but ridden in the wrong way - horse has reached a state where it can be brought to a relative elevation from total downward extension forward by semi and full aids without problems.

This state is mainly characterised by the horse not trying to run away under the rider's weight, but moves in a calm, even rhythm at all three gaits under a smoothly sitting rider, finally because of the controlling influence of the leg. Because of a sufficiently long loosening phase with extended head/neck party in front of the front legs the horse has learnt to

relax especially the big dorsal muscles, to release it from carrying tasks and concentrating exclusively on the rider and not reacting fearfully to the environment, as also moving completely balanced in this position with downward extension under the unnatural rider's weight.

I have to stress an especially important criteria of this training level, which is that the horse knows the rider's leg not only as a pushing, but rather as a "limiting the speed", collecting and a equine body closing influence and starts to allow this aid to flow from back to front.

Further work should now aim at repeating precise aids patiently using lections to be ridden in more or less short intervals - always after a sufficiently long loosening phase - increasing the level of collection of the animal cooperating without force slowly but lastingly.

In order to be clear and complete, I have to stress and mention that endlessly "sailing around" in the arena is rather counterproductive and that it makes the horses put too much weight on the forehand which hinders the hind legs to step under the weight and stops the training progress.

From the level of training described at the beginning the question after suitable lections for the further, aim oriented training work arises. With the lections "usually" taught in riding lessons we differentiate between "loosening" and "collecting" exercises.

I don't want to dogmerise the exact, timely order of the loosening exercises in the course of training. It is important that the horse has got to know the influence of the rider's two legs and that it reacts supply when "riding aids".

While the two legs influence evenly on both sides at the same spot when riding full and semi aids, this is different in the lections which are described in the following. The horse now has to learn the pushing sideways, pushing forward, controlling and collecting influence of the two legs as individuals and in their interaction.

The turn around the forehand

For this, there is - named first - turn around the forehand, misjudged or neglected by the official side. An important one of the reasons for the neglect, which showed in its missing in age suiting dressage patterns, is the former practice to develop this lection from the stop, which lead to aids from the rider which were hard to understand for the horse. Unfortunately, no progress has been made up to today in the official dressage patterns for classes A and L.

Understanding the aids from the walk is much easier for the horse which knows leg influence than from the stop. From this, we see that the transition should be done fluently from motion.

For example, you ride the horse at the walk on the left hand on the long side of the arena, where the horse has to perform a change of hand by turning around the forehand shortly before you reach the corner. Shortly before the spot the rider puts the outer (right) leg behind the girth (it becomes pushing sideways) and the inner (left) leg clearly far more behind, it becomes the controlling one. In the interaction of both, also pushing legs, with a slight pressure of the left rein and the right rein positioning the horse but ready to yield, the horse's hind quarters are pushed around the forehand, while the forehand keeps working in the walk rhythm on the spot on the inner margin of the track, so that the neck-head party stays straight and is not pulled around and gets enough room from the wall. If the horse has completed the turn at an even walk-rhythm calmly, always at the aids and has not tried to evade with the head (where the wall is very helpful with), the legs go back to their normal position and the walk is continued on the right hand on the track. During this lection, the horse remains straight because of the whole leg and rein influence and is only bent very slightly around the leg which is pushing sideways in its whole length from the back of the neck to the tail. A main criteria for the quality of this exercise is the constancy of the dependence and of the rhythm of the movement, during it and after it.

Backing up

Another lection which favours loosening the horse as well as its later collection - depending on the way of doing it -, is backing up. If you have understood the basics of "good" riding, you object strong hand influence also in this lection, which saves the horse's sensible mouth. According to years of positive experience, the development of the back up from the turn around the forehand in a closed arena with high walls has proved itself worthy. As backing up should be a diagonal step order like in the basic gait trot, you don't call it pac-

ing, you call it stepping. You start the turn around the forehand like described above on the left hand. When the horse has reached an angle of 90° with the wall, the left leg's influence is increased while the leg which is pushing sideways reduces its influence and is put a little more behind and pushes as much as the other one at the same spot.

Because of this influence of both legs the horse which is 90° to the wall will step one or more steps backwards - provoked by the wall - at the beginning with a very easy hand influence. After a reward from the rider the horse knows that it has understood the aids right and has performed the lection correctly. Here also, you should end this exercise after a few times of rewarding and transform the horse slowly from the wall's influence to the aids of an easy hand, supported by the legs and have it back up with the same aids as before especially by the legs on the track.

I recommend to keep up a deeper position of the neck-head party at first always with strong influence on both sides by the legs and only in the change of hand (forward to backward and forward again) reminding the back of the neck over the horse's mouth of suppleness with the hand, which must never lead to the horse evading with the head. If this change of direction between going forward and backward is managed in constant, determined by the legs, supple dependence and activity of the back, the most important preparation for the lection "swing" is already done.

As a criteria for judging a right or wrong trained horse, the "swing" plays an important role. That is why it should already be required in class L instead of as a "feared lection" in class S.

Of course, as an author, you could write a lot more about these lections, the required influences and their judgement by the judges. But in the frame of this contribution, this cannot happen and must be reserved for later, more specialised statements. But in order to not leave out the collecting effect of backing up, the horse's inclination to evade collection by

fleeing backwards has to be mentioned. It is important to counteract early in training by pushing the backwards moving horse after one or two steps already back in to forward motion. With this exercise, you keep the hind quarters under the weight and improve their carrying capacity.

Improving suppleness

An even advanced, positive effect on the suppleness of the learning riding horse is gained by the combination of the two named lections "turn around the forehand" and "backing up" by requesting them in short intervals (according to the training level) - always under keeping up the suppleness of the back of the neck - with the necessary leg influence. The motto should be: "Replacing reins by legs"! For example, you ride a turn around the forehand at the walk at the end of the long side of the arena, at the middle of the long side five steps backwards and at the next corner another turn around the forehand.

This combination of lections experiences a clear progress towards collection if it is connected with transitions from trot to walk or even (a lot more difficult) from canter to walk for example like this: Trot at the long side of the arena, at the end a transition to the walk and after two steps a turn on the forehand, followed by a trot. In the middle of the long side again a transition to the walk - after two more steps back up immediately from the walk. Followed by a trot with transition to the walk and turn on the forehand in the next corner of the same side.

Of course, these combinations of lections require a logically influencing rider and a developed horse, which underlines the logic of the training work which has to be conveyed to the horse and has to find mentioning and consent in the most positive way.

Further lections, their combinations and the very important transitions should be reserved for the following article, as well as the connected aids by the weight, which have not been mentioned a lot yet.

magazine page 80

The Correct and Easy Way to Learn Riding

Less is more

Series - Part 2

As in the first part of the series the ideal picture of the well ridden horse and general basic exercises for rider and horse had been introduced, this part now contains special core exercises for gymnastics for the young horse. All this happens under the aspect of wholeness; now exercise should relate to single body parts but rather stand in the context of the whole rider's/horse's body. It is only sensible and logical like that.

Although, some lections are discussed specifically, it is important not to train the horse with lections as the goal, but in order to do gymnastics for its whole body. This is done according to its age and level of training, correctly performed lections are the result of the right training. They are a good indication for the status quo of training. But before discussing the 11 core exercises, I want to mention some basic thoughts:

Training a young horse requires great knowledge and a lot of experience. If you don't fulfill these requirements, you should only work under professional instruction or not do it at all. Very quickly, horse and rider are on the wrong way if the rider lacks the know-how. It neither helps the horse nor the rider if everything goes wrong.

It also belongs to the trainer's experience how to use the equipment adequately. For starting a young horse on the lunge, a calveson is appropriate; so that the horse can be led without being disturbed or hurt in the mouth. The FN's guidelines also name the possibility of

using a Hannoverian bridle together with the bit instead of the calveson. The horse's legs should be protected with bandages or boots in order to prevent injuries. Especially the inexperienced horse could perform abrupt, uncontrolled movements. The topic saddle has been discussed thoroughly in the last issue. I just point out that in the first phase, an eventing saddle is appropriate, which allows the rider to have short stirrups. The Remonte has to be ridden with with short stirrups, so that the rider can always assume the hunting position. You will read more details in the second core exercise in this article.

The horse learns by the experience of "right" and "wrong". That means that the horse has to get a feedback immediately about the right as well as the wrong performance, in the sense of "reward" and "reproach". But reproach does not mean punishment but a constant negation of the wrong behaviour. An example for this: If the young horse canters on the wrong foot, the horse is brought back to trot and the rider gives an unmistakable aid for canter again. If it is on the right foot, it is rewarded with the voice or a touch. If it is on the wrong foot again, the rider has to look for a better spot for the canter (i.e. towards the closed side on a bent line), prepare the horse better in position and balance and use the words the horse already knows from the lunge. It is senseless to punish the horse because of a wrong canter with spurs, hand or the whip. Another example: The horse has to learn that it has to stand still when the rider mounts it. This is practised at first with a

second person who holds the horse. Slowly, this is reduced so that it can be done without the help. If the horse wants to move again, the rider repeats it until it works without help. A wrong punishment at this point only leads to the horse even more trying to flee when the rider mounts. Generally, it is valid for reward and reproach that they always have to make sense and have to be understandable for the horse.

It also belongs in the trainer's experience to notice when a horse is exhausted. This can be physically or mentally. These two topics will be discussed in the following core exercises.

The young horse should be prepared for its later career as a riding horse. For this, gymnastics of the whole horse's body is necessary. These gymnastics are based on the knowledge of the training scale. They are the fundament which the horse's training is based on. Rhythm, suppleness, dependence, impulsion, straightness and collection are the six elementary steps which should be reached in the course of training. The importance of especially the first three points will be discussed on the following pages. I can recommend the scale to every rider. It is a logical sequence of training steps which do not necessarily have to happen in this order, but especially at the beginning should be mixed among each other. Rhythm is not possible without a certain degree of suppleness and suppleness is not possible without rhythm. Both criteria are in strong interaction resp. are connected to each other. Who studies the theory and its practical procession will always be on the safe side. Constant further education is a must in handling and training horses.

"Experienced rider on young horse" and the other way around. In the course of this article, dear reader, you will become conscious why this expression will never lose its validity! Initial point of the following core exercises is the unriden horses which is used to humans and trusts him. The first exercise steps are consciously kept small. It is about preparing the horse for its career as a riding horse. It should have joy in working and remain healthy; this is where the ethical principles fit, which are closely connected to the German

Law Of Animal Welfare. Training correctly is animal welfare in practice! If you progress too quickly and leaves out steps, loses the possibility of a long career as a riding horse. In the following you now read the next 11 points about the training of a young horse, which are explained detailedly:

- Creating the circumstances - starting with a content, supple horse
- Starting to lunge - getting it used to voice,
- Creating physical preconditions - building up fitness
- Getting to know the rider's weight - working together - safety first
- Suppleness under the saddle - the resilient back
- Building up "connection"
- Developing the basics of giving aids ("Aids-ABC")
- Developing the muscles' ability to extend
- First lessons: Turns, leg yielding and turn on the forehand
- Cavaletti-work, various training in the countryside
- Developing the basics of rhythm, suppleness and dependence

1. Creating preconditions - starting with a content, supple horse

What?

What do we understand by a "content" horse?

I mean that a horse should convey a supple impression already before training starts. And this already begins with grooming and saddling the horse. The horse shows an inner contentness it perceives the rider, reacts to

him already in handling, wants to be cared about by him. If at this point, already uneasiness, bustle and tension rule, very bad precondition for a training unit have been created.

How?

How do a achieve it that my horse is content?

That is not that hard:

The horse is an animal which is born to run. It needs light, air, running and contact with other horses. We have to satisfy these basic needs in order to get a horse which is supple and happy on the inside. That means: The horse should be out on the grass daily so that it can move freely. This also includes a second horse, a partner, so that it can satisfy its social needs. Of course, there are limits to this, i.e. if it's a stallion or horses which do not like each other. Also weather, ground situation and the factor personnel play a role, of course. But everything should be done so that the horse can move every day. No horse needs a day of standing in its stable!

Why?

Advantages of daily running on the grass or in a paddock are big: daily running in fresh air, being allowed to move freely are behaviours which meet the natural want to run of the horse and will make it happy. Starting work with such a horse is not only easier but also less dangerous.

In bringing up young horses, open grass stables are already common, as the breeders have noticed that this way of keeping them supports their health and is necessary for the later sale. When the horses become riding horses, often they are not allowed to go on the grass anymore. This must not be!

A horse which gets enough running everyday is not only happy and balanced, but also has a better immune defense and therefore does not become ill as easily.

2. Starting to lunge the horse - Getting used to voice, workflow and side-reins

What?

Getting used to voice and workflows means to acquaint the horse with the daily procedure. In this very first phase of training with a young horse it is important that the trainer designs his actions in a way they are understandable to the horse, so that it can get used to them.

Also getting to know side reins (also triangle reins) belongs to this, in order to give the horse a certain "dependence". This won't happen in the very first lesson but as soon as the horse has got used to running in a circle. The time the horses need varies from horse to horse; but normally it only takes a few times.

Why?

Why is this phase of getting used to everything so important?

From the beginning, it is about giving the horse trust and creating a familiar atmosphere. In such an atmosphere, you can work comfortably and without tension. Already here, you have to aim at suppleness.

Why the side reins?

It is a help to the horse to find support on both sides (I don't want to speak of dependence yet) and balance. It also prevents the horse from losing balance by making too big movements with the neck to the right or left.

In cases, where the horse does not want to loosen up, we use the triangle rein. It offers a limit upwards and therefore is helpful if the horse wants to evade with its back and upwards. But it can happen that the horse tries to hide with the triangle rein because it does not get enough dependence. Then, the side reins make more sense.

How?

Let's now start with the preparation to lunge. Appropriate ground is recommendable, which

can be a lungeing arena or a separated circle in the inside or outside arena. It is important, to give the horse an optical barrier. Ideally, two persons work together at that point in order to reach the goal faster and avoid misunderstandings for the horse. The extra time you think you are using and probably you think wasting here, you will gain later.

The horse must get used to some new things:

- It has to learn to move in a circle around the person who holds the lunge. With the help of a second person the horse is lead around the circle line, the person who holds the lunge stays at the center and makes the horse get used to moving around him in a circle.
- It must learn to understand the lunger's language. This does not happen with undefined words but with defined terms for walk, trot, canter and stop. All of these are workflows which the horse has to memorise and which can later be used under the rider.
- It must learn that also the lunge lesson always starts with a round of walk. At least 10 minutes walk are the minimum that the horse can loosen up adequately. This means starting loosening and warming up (increased blood circulation) of muscles, tendons and ligaments. The joints only reach its full elasticity after this time of movement as the layers of cartilage accept more synovial fluid. The horses should get used to these workflows and automatise them. When they are ridden later, the lesson also starts with the walk...
- The beginning and the end of the lesson - also if it's only a lunge lesson - should always be at the same spot, at the same place in order to get calmness into the programme from the beginning.

This phase is incredibly decisive for the horse's further future. As for the rider, it is also valid for the horse to learn the right things from the beginning and automatise it and not to memorise the wrong stuff.

3. Creating physiological preconditions - building up fitness

What?

What do you mean by creating physiological preconditions and building up fitness?

"Physiological" in general means related to the life processes and the functions in the organism. The young, unriden horse neither has fitness nor the appropriate muscles to carry a rider. Its organism has to be prepared for that. We know the term fitness from human sports which can be transported directly to riding. In our case, it is important to make the horse "fit" for its career as a riding horse.

Fitness means the capacity of the horse to perform, which is especially characterised by structure and function of the energy delivering organ systems. The fitness abilities include endurance, strength, speed and flexibility.

Why?

Why is it important to build up fitness? The answer is provided by the following to points:

- If a horse becomes a riding horse, we make requests for its fitness. It has to get endurance so that we can design the training in an appropriate length. It has to get strength so that its muscles are strengthened in order to be able to contract or give resistance (shorten) or meeting a resistance with yielding (extend). It has to be fast in order to get the highest possible reaction and movement speeds (especially important for jumping horses). And it has to be flexible in order to reach a special ability of the muscles to extend themselves. But also the space in joints or joints systems is part of flexibility, more a feature you are born with. Flexibility is especially important for dressage horses.
- By nature, the horse is a running and fleeing animal rather than a carrying animal. Its back has not been born to carry. But it is possible through adequate gymnastics and conditioning to strengthen the muscles in a

way that the horse is able to carry the rider effortlessly.

How?

How do I condition my horse?

In order to obtain the described abilities we use the knowledge of the training doctrine. For this, a training is executed which increases

the horse's ability to perform step by step. We expose the horse to the strain of training, which is characterised by the training's extent, its content, its frequency, its length, its intensity and its concentration.

These terms should not confuse you, dear readers, but make clear that for training a horse also knowledge from the field of training is helpful and desirable.

magazine page 92

The Federal Championship - Wish and Reality

The Federal Championship doesn't brake the horse, but the way there does. Is this way of training still fair to the horses?

The Federal Championship in Warendorf is the biggest breeding event for the breeders. National and international breeders, riders, trainers and horse people attend, in order to get an overview of the development of German horse breeding. The annual visitor resonance is enormous and concerning the horses, the Federal Championship is the "shop window" of the German Sport horse breeding and the absolute sales meeting. On the different Championship arenas altogether 20 Federal champions become inspected. Country wide more than 100 riding, Dressage, jumping and versatility horses are qualified for the Federal Championship – among them always also particular spectacular equine athletes with ground despoising movements in the Dressage Ring and on the jumping track.

At the Olympic Games 2008 in Hong Kong the German breeders got a lot of medals, among them were also 16 German horses, which were shown at the Federal Championship in the course of their career. In the German (FN-publishing house) published book „Olympia of the riders“- Hong Kong 2008, the German horse breeding and the world-wide meaning became impressively appreciated. From this the question appears, if a horse can only really

be successful in the sport, if it will go through the "program Federal Championship"? The authoress of this article, Anne Schmatelka from Warendorf, has spoken with well-known and prominent personalities of breed, training and sport.

These are the main contents:

1. Which meaning has the Federal Championship from the view of the breeders for the riding sport?
2. How must the training of the three- and four years old horses be in order to satisfy the requirements of the Federal Championship as well as its further positive development?
3. Which health damage results for the young sport horse through incorrect and age-inappropriate training?
4. How can horsemanship be united with the achievement expectation and the demanded potential of the young riding horse?

„The love for the horse should be our goal“

The considerations of Mrs. Susanne Schmitt Rimkus - regarding the 3-year-old horse - are very interesting.

A stud farm trains many young stallions for the breeding selection, therefore the early breaking-in is normal there.

From the view of Mrs. Schmitt Rimkus, you must find a compromise, to bring three-year old horses without excessive demand up to the Federal Championship. Owners and riders must learn to estimate better. „Three-year old horses want to be stimulated, but not excessively demanded. A three-year old horse doesn't want to go only at the lunge, it must also be ridden. The 2-2 1/2 year old stallions are already prepared for the breeding selection. Thus, they will be broken-in at the end of their second year of life. The horses don't want only the lunge, they are simply under-challenged with the lunge. You must show the world to the young horses. In the stud farm, we offer a varied work, like the horses usually don't have anymore after the time here. Nevertheless I also see the ambition of the people as the problem. Horses bear much and many owners often do not realize the limit“, says Mrs. Schmitt Rimkus.

„Breeders must approach to qualitative trainers like a horse master, not to self-appointed ones, which had sometime once some success. The less the owner knows and is proficient, the more it is important that he approaches a horse master. This horse master also has experience in the management of a horse, e.g. feeding, well developed training and the reasonable athletic exposure. They learn all these things in the course of their training. They are high-quality trainers. But there are also negative exceptions. A few black sheep which can not be generalized. But in general, the horse master goes through an intensive training, so that most of them are good. If you see bad pictures, you must not forget the fact that these could be exceptions.

The majority of the trainers and riders ride well and horse-fairly.

The platform Federal Championship is optimal. Humans must fill it out. There must be al-

ways continuing education. The trainers must be helpful and show to these riders, in which way they should ride and in which way not. Well ridden horses are recognized from their musculature and their movement. In order to improve that again and again, the FN imposed concepts called „good riding“. The human being must continue to develop himself, in order to estimate what the individual trainer is able to. The media should write about misdemeanours absolutely clearly, like seen on the picture. However these are no typical pictures for the Federal Championship. The love for the horse should be our goal, not only the commerce. If it is so harmonious that you can speak of dancing, then riding will be beautiful and that should be our goal. Obviously there are riders, which have never felt that.

Regarding the photo (page 95) of the horsewoman which stands in the stirrup irons and is pulling the nose of the horse, you have to ask yourself, how a horsewoman with such a wrong muscular horse could qualify. This question goes to the judges of the rural competitions, which provided that someone who rides in that way, can achieve so far. Surely these misdemeanours have to be criticized, but there must also be positive examples, like Ingrid Klimke. Clarifying that there are also different ways of riding. Well ridden horses have another charisma.

We teach this to our horse masters in our training courses again and again, so that you'll find these pictures ever less in magazines“, so the concluding comment by Mrs. Schmitt Rimkus.

„The Federal Championship is a shop window of the German riding and of their development“ notices Hannes Mueller, education chief of the German Riding School. The FC became the market place for economic success. For riders, breeders and also trainers. The commercial aspect stands meanwhile very strong in the foreground. The experienced trainer has to ride a young horse and for this reason you can find on the Federal Championship mainly professionals, which have learned to train a horse correctly and how to present it. Less and less amateurs are represented.

Over the years you see always again the same faces of riders, which present new young horses each year. At the Federal Championship the best horses of an age-group are represented. In order to become fair to the age and the possible state of training in general, the task categories became changed. In former times a young rider/a young horse could present on A and L-level.

Today several tests are made, in order to differentiate more clearly.

There are many good trainers and the horses are educated fairly. We can see this daily in our advanced training of the horse masters.

If a horse is blocked in an examination, the question is how this horse could participate at the FC? But with a young horse, being in the development, the training must be coordinated on the respective level of development.

If horses refused their job on the Federal Championship, the physical development impulses of these horses were not enough considered. Young horses can't be kept on a very high level for weeks. The pressure of the owner and/or the ambition of the rider can become a problem.

If you want to bring young horses up to the level Federal Championship, you will have to observe it exactly and think of it again and again, that it is a Remonte which grows continuously and which is facing new tasks on a daily basis.

The FN disagrees – concerning correct riding and training of the horse - more and more also with the statements of the FEI. Because of political reasons, this won't be made very public. Tough training methods, like they are used by Anky van Grunsven, are methods which aren't supported in any way in Germany. The German riding school is dissociating itself completely from such methods.

In our courses we have taken position with the riders and the judges and we expressed this with the help of banners.

The only bad thing of this is, that this misunderstood training is still working. Even on international level there are still many examples for it.

The usual rider at a rural competition is often not able to differentiate, what is correct or incorrect. So he copies what the successful riders on international level are exemplifying to him. We are trying to stop that at our apprentices, at our job training courses and in the riding apprenticeship and retraining and to sensitize judges and future trainers to that. The German guidelines are going to become examples for the international level now.

In my opinion, the quality of the riding at the Federal Championship is making full allowance“, formulates Hannes Mueller. In his opinion, the young horse passes in the original sense a process of gymnastics according to the scale of training. If you follow these guidelines, the young horse won't have any health disadvantages. But if you want to reach much in a short time or you are just going there and look what the examination order is instructing, the meaning of the training scale is going to lose.

If the trainer is able to adapt his training methods to the development of the horse, thus to follow the guidelines of the training scale, there won't be any health problems. Exactly this experience and the theoretical background is missed by many riders and thus the required knowledge. The only problem is that strong riders are able to promote less talented horses in a way that makes you believe, that they have such a big potential. These horses, trained and ridden at the limit, will have to get health damage.

Today, the judges can estimate very well, which horse is active out of the haunches and which horse is only trained for the show. If horses were failing in examinations, are not supple, resist and do not release, stepping out in the examinations, this is always a reference to the fact, that mistakes were made in training and management.

From the view of the trainer Hannes Mueller, the correct seat must be an extra require-

ment. The correct seat and the fine influence are the basis for the entire development of rider and horse. Unfortunately the pictures from the international scene are shown, so that it seemed to be working with bad examples. „The seat training should take a larger value. Altogether the Federal Championship is an exemplary meeting.”

For the successful rider Wolfram Wittig, who is breeder, stallion owner and coach of Isabell Werth, the Federal Championship is a competition like every one. „Regarding the evaluations of the individual examinations“, says Wittig, „they seem to be high. On international level the riders reach with their horses value marks like 76%. At the Federal Championship you can find value marks up to 95%. That doesn't fit completely. In a critical view, you have to assume that internationally successful riders -on the way to the Grand Prix level- failed very much with their way of riding.“

Also Wolfram Wittig, who won the first Federal Championship in 1989 in Mannheim with his horse Woosnam, a “Weltmeister” son, presented in further years horses from his breeding. These horses weren't always on top of the ranking but were later even more successful and still are, like his stallion “Breitling W”. „The Federal Championship is a shop window of German breeding. But the life of the horse should continue after the Federal Championship“, stated Wittig. „There are some horses, which didn't win the Federal Championship, but years after, they were very successful and still are. Today a lot is read into what happens at the Federal Championship. The business Federal Championship will be marketed. It is not THE event of the German riding... It is the most important event in and for Warendorf. In my opinion, there are many more important competitions like Aachen, Stuttgart, Frankfurt etc....“

In fact, it is disappointing that only 60-80 horses qualify in Dressage for the Federal Championship, if you consider that each year approx. 35,000 horses are born. You have to ask yourself what the reason for this is.

The German breed is standing in all international categories surely at the first places.

„But, says Wittig, „it is the riders, who aren't matched for the breed quality. In breeding you are orientated forward. The results are strongly moving, very smooth horses with high riding horse qualities, fine and sensitive. It is sad that so many horses perish, because the riders don't seem to develop with the same speed. They don't deal with their horses with the necessary acuteness, in order to keep them healthy.“

We produce with our breed such high-quality horses, who take the work off the rider.

Due to this quality the rider is no longer forced to ride carefully. The riding level becomes continuously worse“, says Wolfram Wittig.

In the specialized magazines the theme of the three-year old horse at the competition and the achievement expectation will be more and more discussed. Wolfram Wittig has a very critical opinion about this. “I don't allow one of my 3yr olds at the Federal Championship. I don't want my horse to be ridden in this way“, he says today. „If I ride a young horse every day like this, I would get problems with the health of my horse. Even if youngsters/novice horses may start from the first of May at a competition, you have to train them very early. Too early! Such horses must be ridden the first time at the latest with two years. There are many horses at the FC which are not even three years old, because they are born late. These horses do not have a chance to develop, do not have a chance to grow. Thus, late born horses must be worked correctly with two years. In order to be shown at the Federal Championship, these horses which are in growth and development, must have been running a lot in their life. Too much!“

Too many horses are mentally and physically overstrained.

Even with a highly talented horse, you have to work in small steps according to the development of the muscles and the mental balance.

Thus, everyone must ask himself, whether his horse can bear the stress. The responsibility is incumbent on each rider and breeder. The Federal Championship doesn't break the

horse, but the way there does. The system and the commerce are the reasons, which make a fair training partly not possible. But without the commerce the horse won't get the value, which secures thousands of breeders, salesmen, professional riders and teachers their living costs. If a four-year old horse is shown at a competition that is surely early enough. But you will hardly find consensus in this point.

An example for this: Many young stallions, just one year old, don't see anymore pasture, in order to be prepared for the breeding selection. If a stallion isn't presented like a four to five-year-old one, you don't have a chance at the breeding selection", so he notices critically.

These early and high requirements are always connected with extreme psychological stress for the horse. This psychological stress is connected with hardenings. Hardenings mean step inequalities. The correct pace is the base of each riding and each correct training: I have noticed that also at the Federal Championship a lot of horses with incorrect gaits were seen there.

According to Wolfram Wittig, the judge is demanded to work against this in a strong measure. In times of the great classic riders, there were no horses with this towering movements, thus it was simpler to reach a pure gait. Also the horses weren't by far so sensitive. That doesn't mean that today, the pure gait may not be more the criterion for correct riding. The pure and in regular intervals correct gait is above all a criteria for suppleness. You must ask yourself whether the young horses are able to present themselves released and relaxed under this pressure, in accordance with the training scale. „I cannot ride today any longer in such a way like in former times, because the potential of the horses is so much higher. The horse has so much developed in his quality, that much of them what the classical equitation dictated is today no longer convertible. Not with our Warmbloods, not with this movement potential.

A horse with an extreme complex step has e.g. problems in the collected walk and cannot step any longer behind the front hoof, like it was demanded in former times. But these interval impurities like rein lameness and pace are not acceptable in any case.

There are today also breeding lines, from which we know that these horses have a problem in a basic gait. But this cannot be excused. The judge has here a clear demand, which says: "Pure step at all gaits is the highest criteria". Today horses are highly ranked due to their lections, although the pure gait wasn't shown. That is not correct, but it is exemplified on international level", criticizes Mr. Wittig in our interview."

The judges can/must reduce to that what they see in the competition. Even if it was noticeable that on the break-in place something was not OK, the horse passes the competition more or less suitable, the judge must reduce to this moment.

On the musculature of the presented horse you can see whether the horse is correctly or less correctly worked and trained. The judge has to criticize the correct riding, the correct conception at the crossing and the correct under-stepping of the haunches at the basic gaits.

Not the pulling of the hind legs under the belly makes the quality, but the correct stepping under the emphasis and the crossing of the haunch over the front hoof reflects the correct training. A horse must be ridden into the deep; Elevation should constitute only a small percentage of the training time, with a youngster not at all. If a horse is ridden correctly over the back and not on the forehead, the correct elevation comes from alone during training, because the muscles will be developed in the correct place. So the horse can walk in the self position without hand pulling of the rider.

In the last years the examination regulations have been changed. More tasks/examinations have been added to the competition, so that the requirements are rising for the young horse. Many of these lections are no longer

adequate. Apparently something new must always be developed. The horse must have fun with a varied, age-adequate and fair to the state of training education and has to cooperate with joy. The scale of the training is the basis for the entire development. First of all the young horse must go through the first three education steps and must take in these steps – this isn't possible within a few months. Beat/step, suppleness and the contact with the bit are the basis, afterwards straightness follows. Today, this basis is missing with many horses. These important components are more and more forgotten or not considered in the training.“

„This very day the criteria of the classical equitation are still valid.“

Dr. Gerd Heuschmann, author of the book „Finger in der Wunde“ and recently published film, „Stimmen der Pferde“ has a very critical position to the topic of training and riding young horses. „Basically I agree upon Wolfram Wittig, that a three-year old horse must not be shown at a competition, not in the current form. But we must also consider the breeding (economic) aspect. Therefore: If the three-year-old horse must be presented at a competition, it may have only shows a year. The Federal Championship would then be the fourth start.

The horse should be presented with an eventing/English saddle, with short stirrup irons, so that the rider doesn't get the idea to sit deeply in the back. It is impossible to ride young horses in such a way and to prepare them for such a difficult examination, like it is required in general for the FC and all the other examinations. If a horse is not supple, thus it is walking with bound steps, a fixed back and suspen-

sion steps, then the judge must completely and clearly say, this horse, respectively this performance does not correspond to what we want to see, because it isn't compliant with the requirements of our riding traineeship. The examination is indeed a snapshot, but the judge must see, must be allowed to see, as good or bad a horse is presented. Today they rather judge on lections and spectacular appearance. The judge must, independently of organizers and participants, completely refer a clear position against such a riding way. He may also ring off, without getting personal negative consequences. It is still today like this, that judges who swim against the current won't be invited to competitions. Thus they adapt to the system.

Also the customer and buyer learn, that not the horse is that what is good, but spectacular suspension steps, pedalling by the diagonal, but the horse which in real - according to the criteria of the scale of the training - is worked/educated. Therefore it will come sooner or later to a change of thinking. This very day the criteria of the classical equitation are still valid and are the only real basis for the whole development of the horse.

In my film „Stimmen der Pferde“ (www.stimmen-der-pferde.com) we have represented explicitly by means of stereoscopic animations the effects of wrong riding in respect of biomechanical criteria. The spectator can clearly see which effects good and bad riding have on the horse, on its movement and particularly on his health. Due to the current public discussion, which is also more and more present in the media, we will have to rethink in Germany. That means also that we must consider, whether young horses can be presented in the future like we are doing it now“, says Dr. Heuschmann in conclusion.

10 Questions For The FN

1. Piaffe: Worldwide, at least 115 million animals are tortured and crucified to death in cruel and pointless animal experiments, the dark figure is much higher. Now, the riders are said to be rather friendly to their horses. But is this what is discussed in the media today regarding equitation a trivial offence or meanwhile normality in comparison to animal experiments?

FN: ?

2. Piaffe: In SPIEGEL (issue 45/2008) the doping discussion is presented to a broader audience using the example of Christian Ahlmann. It is one topic how the creature horse is exploited for medals and money. For insiders of equine sports it is not a novelty that one or the other rider prepares his horse with various prohibited tools so that he can deliver the highest performance in competition. Are you convinced that the associations have done enough in the past that the existing development is now suppressed rigorously by officials.

FN: ?

3. Piaffe: Today, the horse is not anymore conceived as sports colleague among most competitors, but as a piece of sports equipment. Is it time to reform the current concept? What goes wrong in today's competitions and what do the associations have to do as quickly as possible regarding the topic animal welfare in order to fight the increasing bad image in public?

FN: ?

4. Piaffe: According to SPIEGEL, last year only 1436 horses were checked in competitions - compared to almost 3300 competitions and 1.4 million starters in Germany. Only 16 riders were caught doping. Does the existing official

rulebook (nationally and internationally) have to be reformed or is missing assertiveness more the problem?

FN: ?

5. Piaffe: In a press release of the leading German show hosts, they call on the FN to act as fast as possible and at the latest until March 1st, 2009 regarding the topics "medication/doping" and "animal welfare". Is this only a threat regarding the dependency of most show hosts on sponsors or is it already about the survival of some show hosts?

Is equestrianism threatened by a downfall, similar to what happened to cycling, if ARD and ZDF (German TV programmes) cancel broadcasting equestrian competitions?

FN: ?

6. Piaffe: More than 2.5 billion Euros are spent each year by horse people and breeders in Germany according to the association. Our breeding stables have been producing the best sport horses of the world for years. Has the increasing commercialisation also contributed that "Ethics in equestrianism" are more and more abandoned?

FN: ?

7. Piaffe: The crisis in equine sports shows deeper and deeper traces. Not only the systems seems to be sick, but also how people treat each other and the principles of training. The term "art of riding" in the sense of pursuing harmony seems to be left behind more and more. Is the term "art of riding in the sense of the old masters" for you obsolete?

FN: ?

8. Piaffe: Already in 1995, the FN passed the "Ethical Principles of Horse Friends", since 2008 there are the "Horsemanship Guidelines" of the "Personal Members". Xenophon's training principles have been existing for 2000 years.

For a true horseman it is rather frustrating that many riders, not only the high rollers and trainers, show exactly the contrary in their daily handling of their horses: i.e. by using the "method hyperflexion" - the extreme bending of the horse's neck in training. There is no want of explanations about the connected tortures and damages for the horse. Do not also the judges and the ones responsible for the trainers' education have to be held responsible in this context? Or do we really need something like "ethics-supporters" in the future?

FN: ?

9. Piaffe: In the FN's tasks there is also the working team "ethics", there are guidelines for judging barns according to animal welfare, regulations for animal protection in transport and regarding the APO also a working team

for labeling horse businesses. Labelling of officially acknowledged horse businesses is also done on a regional level as far as I know. I want to suggest that we create a guideline which contains a clear "draw-reins free"-zone. This means the businesses labelled like that have to commit to that neither trainers nor riders use draw-reins when riding a horse. Do you think that this would make sense regarding the current situation and the proven damage for health - or said differently, could it be enforced?

FN: ?

10. Piaffe: Some weeks ago the movie premiere of "If horses could speak" (by Wu Wei Verlag) took place. The movie caused some head lines in the horse world, as it pointed out misdevelopments in today's dressage scene, on the basis of anatomic laws of the horse, ruthlessly. Could you imagine to cooperate with PIAFFE, to fight for renouncing draw-reins on a national level?

FN: ?

By Juergen Kemmler