

Comments when a horse is irregular in a test

In the Training Scale, rhythm is Numero Uno. Dressage horses must have 3 regular paces. It is important to remark on loss of regularity in walk, trot or canter, to explain why the mark is low. If the horse is lame, ring the bell for his welfare. If you do not ring the bell, make your remarks tactful. Irregularity can be divided into:

- uneven - when the steps of a bilateral pair of legs (2 forelegs or 2 hindlegs) are not the same length and
- unlevel - when the steps of a bilateral pair of legs are not the same height

Horses can be irregular for many reasons. Common causes are loss of balance, tension, lack of suppleness (especially in lateral work) injury, wear and tear, insufficient or poor training, bad riding or all of the above!! Ideally, comments reflect the degree of irregularity. Some examples -

Keep the fluency on the turns

Slight loss of balance & rhythm

He tightened on the 10m circle, affecting the jump in the canter

Show a clear V in the walk

Left hind not always stepping thru

Finding rhythm late in medium trot

Missed some steps over X (medium trot)

Take care with the clarity of the canter

Steps could be more equal on the corners

Began well, then steps varying

More equal hock bend

Tension affected quality of the walk/trot/canter

Reach thru the shoulders not equal on circle

Not fluent on short end

Short neck impacted on his ability to keep the suspension & swing thru back

Becoming quite lateral in collected walk/pirouette

Keep the contact elastic or he goes together behind in canter

Losing the diagonal pairs in trot

Not always 3 beat canter

Trotting behind (in canter)

Wendy Barker EBTC

