Beginners Ridden Series: Test One

Establishing Harmony Under Saddle

1. Objective

The purpose of the Madrix Beginners Ridden Test is to establish the foundations of harmonious bitless riding, encouraging clear communication through subtle aids, balanced riding and mutual understanding.

The test focuses on the quality of the partnership rather than advanced movements, head carriage or a manufactured outline. The horse should demonstrate a natural, relaxed way of going, responding willingly to the rider's requests.

2. Test objectives

Focus	Desired outcome
Transitions	Calm, willing transitions between halt, walk and trot.
Rhythm	Consistent rhythm and a natural way of going.
Rein communication	Soft, considerate rein communication.
Rider aids	Effective use of seat, leg, weight and body aids.
Direction	Balance and accuracy during changes of direction.
Confidence	Relaxation on both reins.
Lightness	Minimal visible pressure and subtle riding aids.
Harmony	Mutual understanding between horse and rider.

There is no canter, lateral work or advanced collected movement in Test One.

Horse first. Always.

The quality of riding is not measured by how much we can ask of the horse, but by how little we need to ask for the horse to understand.

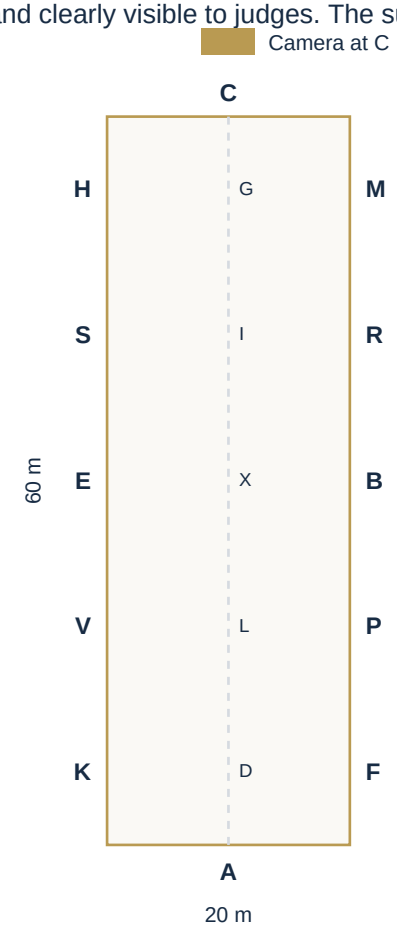
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Arena & Recording

Test environment and camera placement

3. Arena requirements

The test must be performed in a 20 m × 60 m dressage arena. Barriers, piping and fencing around the arena itself are not compulsory, provided the surrounding environment is safe and all external markers are correctly positioned and clearly visible to judges. The surface must be level, suitable for ridden work and free of hazards.



Standard arena layout

External markers are 6 metres from the corners, with 12 metres between markers on each long side. A and C are centred on the short sides. Internal centreline letters are imaginary reference points.

4. Camera placement

Place the camera centrally at C, outside the arena, facing directly down the centreline towards A. The lens must be at the eye level of a seated dressage judge (approximately 1.2 m as a guide).

Use a fixed position that keeps the entire arena, horse, rider and external markers visible.

Recording requirements

One continuous recording, starting before entry at A and ending after the final halt and salute. No camera movement, panning, zooming, editing, cuts, music, filters or changes to playback speed. Original audio must be retained.

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Test Movements

Prescribed sequence | Walk and trot

5. Movement sequence

No.	Marker	Movement	Max.
1	A	Enter in medium walk.	10
2	X	Halt, immobility for five seconds and salute.	10
3	X to C	Proceed in medium walk.	10
4	C	Track left.	10
5	H X F	Change rein in medium walk.	10
6	F A K	Continue in medium walk.	10
7	K	Transition to working trot.	10
8	E	Circle right, 20 metres, in working trot.	10
9	E S H C M	Continue in working trot.	10
10	M X K	Change rein in working trot.	10
11	K A F P	Continue in working trot.	10
12	B	Circle left, 20 metres, in working trot.	10
13	B R M C H S	Continue in working trot.	10
14	E	Transition to medium walk.	10
15	E V K A	Continue in medium walk.	10
16	A	Turn down the centreline.	10
17	X	Halt, immobility for five seconds and salute.	10
		Movement subtotal	**170**

Leave the arena at A in a relaxed walk after completing the test.

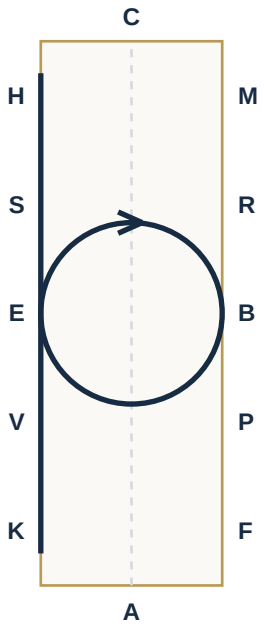
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Required Arena Figures

Two 20-metre circles and two changes of rein

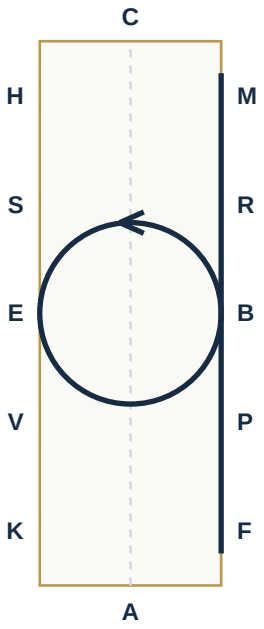
E: Right rein

20 m circle in working trot



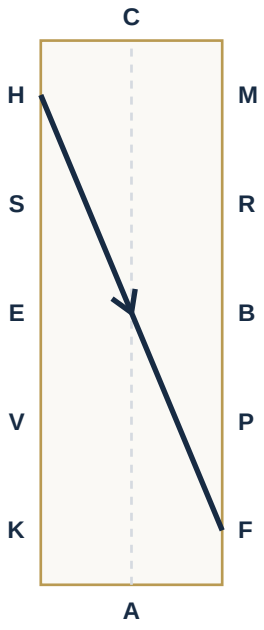
B: Left rein

20 m circle in working trot



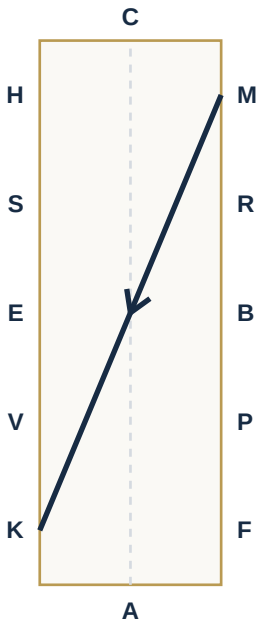
H X F: Change rein

Long diagonal in medium walk



M X K: Change rein

Long diagonal in working trot



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Equipment & Judging

Welfare, lightness and quality of communication

6. Rider and horse equipment

Compulsory or permitted	Not permitted
Correctly fitted bitless bridle	Any form of bit
Suitable, correctly fitted saddle	Spurs
Equestrian safety helmet	Riding whips
Appropriate riding footwear	Draw reins
Appropriate riding clothing	Side reins and restrictive training aids
Suitable protective horse equipment	Equipment used to cause discomfort or intimidation
Considerate voice aids	Excessively restrictive nosebands

All bitless equipment must be correctly fitted and appropriate for the horse. Bitless riding does not automatically mean pressure-free riding. Riders may use rising or sitting trot according to comfort, balance and development. Competition jackets, plaiting and traditional dressage attire are not compulsory; presentation must be neat, practical and safe.

7. Judging expectations

Criterion	Desired outcome
Walk	Relaxed, natural four-beat rhythm without rushing or tension.
Trot	Consistent two-beat rhythm with natural forward movement.
Transitions	Smooth, willing responses to light aids.
Circles	Balanced, round 20 m figures with appropriate bend.
Changes of rein	Calm, balanced direction changes with rhythm maintained.
Rider position	Independent seat, soft hands and considerate leg aids.
Subtle communication	Minimal visible aids, appropriate release, no excessive pressure.
Emotional wellbeing	Willingness, relaxation, confidence and absence of significant distress.
Harmony	Mutual understanding rather than forced compliance.

Reward natural head and neck carriage, not a manufactured outline. Assess interaction rather than breed, conformation, extravagant movement or athletic ability.

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Scoring & Progression

Consistent Madrix marking terminology

8. Collective marks

Collective assessment	Maximum
Rhythm and consistency of paces	10
Rider balance and independence of seat	10
Subtlety and effectiveness of aids	10
Lightness and appropriate release of pressure	10
Communication and connection	10
Confidence and emotional wellbeing	10
Collective subtotal	**60**

Total possible score: 230 points (170 movement marks + 60 collective marks). Final percentage = adjusted total ÷ 230 × 100.

9. Marking guidelines

Mark	Description	Mark	Description
10	Exemplary	4	Emerging
9	Outstanding	3	Inconsistent
8	Established	2	Deficient
7	Consistent	1	Fundamentally lacking
6	Competent	0	Not demonstrated
5	Developing		

10. Achievement levels

Percentage	Achievement
90–100%	Gold: Outstanding Partnership
80–89.99%	Silver: Confident Partnership
70–79.99%	Bronze: Established Foundations
60–69.99%	Developing Foundations
Below 60%	Further Foundation Development Required

Recommended progression: minimum overall score of 70%, with no individual movement below 5.

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Competition Rules

Errors of course, safety and welfare

11. Errors of course

Error	Penalty
First error of course	Deduct 2 points
Second error of course	Deduct 4 additional points
Third error of course	Test marked incomplete

Errors of course are assessed separately from the horse's ability. If a horse misunderstands a request, calmly re-establish communication rather than forcing the movement. A test caller may read the prescribed movements only, without coaching or additional instructions.

12. Safety and disqualification

Competitors may be disqualified for excessive force, deliberate intimidation, punishment, persistent harsh rein contact, aggressive use of the legs, prohibited equipment, unsafe riding or failure to comply with the recording requirements.

Any horse displaying apparent lameness, significant distress or discomfort must not be required to continue. Accidental breaks in gait or moments of misunderstanding should be reflected in the movement score rather than resulting in automatic disqualification.

The welfare of the horse must always take priority over completing the test.

13. Judges' final assessment

Each competitor should receive constructive feedback on strengths, areas for further development and the recommended focus before progressing. Use the score sheet on the following pages.

HORSE FIRST. ALWAYS.

Communication · Connection · Confidence

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Judges' Score Sheet

Part 1 of 2 | Individual movements

Horse: _____ Rider: _____
Entry number: _____ Judge: _____

No.	Marker	Movement	Max.	Mark	Judge's comments
1	A	Enter in medium walk.	10		
2	X	Halt, immobility for five seconds and salute.	10		
3	X to C	Proceed in medium walk.	10		
4	C	Track left.	10		
5	H X F	Change rein in medium walk.	10		
6	F A K	Continue in medium walk.	10		
7	K	Transition to working trot.	10		
8	E	Circle right, 20 metres, in working trot.	10		
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13	B R M C H S	Continue in working trot.	10		
14	E	Transition to medium walk.	10		
15	E V K A	Continue in medium walk.	10		
16	A	Turn down the centreline.	10		
17	X	Halt, immobility for five seconds and salute.	10		
		Movement subtotal	170		

Safety requirements met: Yes / No Recording requirements met: Yes / No

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Judges' Score Sheet

Part 2 of 2 | Collective marks and feedback

Horse: _____ Rider: _____

Collective assessment	Max.	Mark	Judge's comments
Rhythm and consistency of paces	10		
Rider balance and independence of seat	10		
Subtlety and effectiveness of aids	10		
Lightness and appropriate release of pressure	10		
Communication and connection	10		
Confidence and emotional wellbeing	10		
Collective subtotal	60		
Movement subtotal	170		
Total before penalties	230		
Error penalties			
Final score	230		

Percentage: _____ % Achievement level: _____
Recommended for progression: Yes / Not yet Test incomplete: Yes / No

Strengths demonstrated

Areas requiring further development

Recommended focus before progressing

Marking key: 10: Exemplary | 9: Outstanding | 8: Established | 7: Consistent | 6: Competent | 5: Developing | 4: Emerging | 3: Inconsistent | 2: Deficient | 1: Fundamentally lacking | 0: Not demonstrated

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