

Throw away points ... don't lose any

How to maximise your marks by not losing points **unnecessarily** in:

1. Entrance / Halt

Entrance, halt and depart not on centre line, not at X
Halt not well enough prepared (abrupt or fading), not long enough, not "convincing" the judges
Problems with contact: horse getting above / below the bit, diving down
Move off not prompt enough
Depart nearly in medium trot (!), lack of collection
The rider should try to "convince" the judges by showing a long and well established halt.

2. ½ Walk pirouettes

Lacking collection, already at the preparation
Incorrect preparation, not position shoulder fore, cramped to the inside
Poll does not remain the highest point
Wrong flexion, tilted head
Loss of 4-beat, ambling (mostly in the 2nd part)
Badly placed (when 2 pirouettes have to be shown), not symmetrical either side of the centre line.
No room for clear canter depart after walk pirouette (JUN class)
Not coming from/ leading to a few steps of collected walk in a Freestyle
A pirouette always has to show a high degree of collection - in canter as well as in walk

3. Rein back

Halt not at marker, abrupt or fading, not long enough
Giving the aids for the rein back in a wrong moment
Contact not steady, poll not remaining the highest point
Move off very hesitatingly
Wrong number of steps
Look at the front legs to count the steps.

4. Medium / extended trot, canter

Not enough prepared/ developed; started late or too sudden with hurried steps/strides
Downward transition undefined, lack of collection on short side (!!)
Lacking correct bend/ flexion in corner(s) before after the extension
Not shown from/ to marker described, not clearly on diagonal line, changes too late (in corner)
No difference between medium and extended tempo
The riders often don't attempt the difference because judges neglect to correctly regard this important difference

5. Give and retake the reins

Contact has not fully been given up
Throwing away the reins, not moving hands smoothly along the crest of the neck
Moving hands hectically back and forth with each trot/ canter step
Retaking the reins too sudden
Rider leaning forward, not maintaining the horses balance out of his seat
Leaving it out = wrong execution of the movement which will lead to a mark < 5

6. Let the horse stretch on a long rein

Not gradually lengthening the reins but throwing them away, not keeping a light but steady contact
Not making the horse stretch forward-downward
Pushing the horse on the forehand, not keeping his balance
Retaking the reins too sudden
Not even trying = wrong execution of the movement which will lead to a mark < 5

7. Simple changes

One / both transitions unclear, through trot, no clear walk, maybe even ambling
Too few / too many walk steps
Not at the marker (walk sequence should be shown evenly either side of the marker)
Not coming from counter canter is not regarded as a change, so the rider should correct it, if possible

8. (½) Volte

Escaping quarters, crossing hindlegs, not on one track
Poll does not remain the highest point, tilted head
Badly placed, before or behind the marker, ½ voltes not symmetrical either side of centre line
Too large/ too small. ½ voltes with diameter 10 m should not have a **radius (!)** of 10 m (Pony/JUN)
The inner shoulder should never be blocked!

9. Shoulder-in

Too much/ not enough angle
Blocking poll with inner rein/ hand
Unclear ending: In front of corners, the horse has to be straightened, however, not before a volte or a diagonal line
Shoulder-in to the outside in a Freestyle does not make any sense ... and is difficult to recognise.

10. Half pass

Unclear beginning, before marker, cutting the corners
Bending not sustained until the end (when judges give the marks)
Not shown to marker prescribed, often too steep (→ I instead of G changes degree of difficulty)
Not executed precisely to the quarter line (when asked for 5-10-10-5 m)
Change of flexion in zigzags too early, zigzags not symmetrically executed
Poll not remaining the highest point
Rider should not sit against the movement.

11. Series of changes

Lack of balance and preparation
Not clearly on diagonal line, not arriving at the marker prescribed
Changes should be placed evenly either side of X
Very visible aids disturb the overall impression.

12. Pirouette

Insufficient collection and preparation
First stride too much sideways
Poll not remaining the highest point, horse losing uphill tendency
Hardly any bend, wrong flexion
Not started at the marker/ not kept on the line prescribed
Especially at the beginning and the ending of a pirouette the rider should support his horse.

13. Piaffe

Too early/ too late
Number of steps do not correspond with the requirements of the test (!!)
The rider should think ahead and prepare the piaffe early enough (especially mentally)

14. Passage

Not starting at the markers required
Outside flexion in corners and turns
Cadence not kept throughout

15. All kinds of transitions

Too early, too late, mentally not well prepared
Transitions within paces not clearly defined, often lacking collection
Trot showing passage-like steps after transition
Outside flexion in transition
Don't forget: many easy transitions (e.g. walk → canter) have a mark of their own!!
Riders often underestimate transitions ... and forget that even a simple transition very often counts the same as a more prestigious movement!!

Technical mistakes can always happen but this list should help avoid riders losing many points unnecessarily.