

Instruction Program Definition of USPC Riding Test Expectation Terms

Basic Balanced Position

This is the universal basis of specialized riding. It is the foundation used to develop balanced for any rider pursuing any equestrian discipline and is the foundation for the development of an independent seat and coordinated use of the aids.

On the flat, this is a position, when viewed from the side, which permits a vertical line to be drawn from the top of the rider's head, through the ear, point of shoulder, hip joint, and ankle. As stirrups are shortened for work over fences, the upper body inclines forward with a flat back to bring the shoulder over the knees while the ankle remains under the hip. In jumping position a line may also be drawn from the rider's knee to the rider's toe.

Base of Support

When riding on the flat a rider's base of support is the seat and inner thigh (the weight-bearing surfaces) supplemented by the lower leg and foot when posting. Galloping and over fences, the base of support is predominantly the inner calf supplemented by the inner thigh and seat when necessary. The width of this base is dependent on the length of stirrup. Long stirrups have a very narrow base of support, concentrating weight in a small area requiring an independent seat and excellent balance and tactful aids. Only more experienced well-balanced riders should ride with long stirrups. A shorter stirrup offers a wider base of support, improving stability of the upper body and is more appropriate for jumping and novice riders.

Independent Seat

A position with relaxed, open joints that allows the rider's body to flow with the movement of the horse, and remains unchanged by action of the hands and legs. Tension and bracing in any joints of the rider's body prohibits development of an independent seat.

Coordinated Use of the Aids

Use of seat, legs, and hands independently and/or in coordination with each other and coordinated with movements of the horse. An independent seat is the basis of coordinated use of the aids.

Free Forward Movement

The horse's strides are free; he is relaxed in the back and balanced. His movement is unencumbered by resistance caused by rider's lack of independents or uncoordinated aids. The horse moves forward purposefully and will likely track up.

Demonstrate Aids

Aids are correctly applied but may not yet be sufficiently coordinated or strong enough to produce the desired response in the horse. Demonstrating use of the aids requires an appropriate response from the horse.