

LEG YIELDING

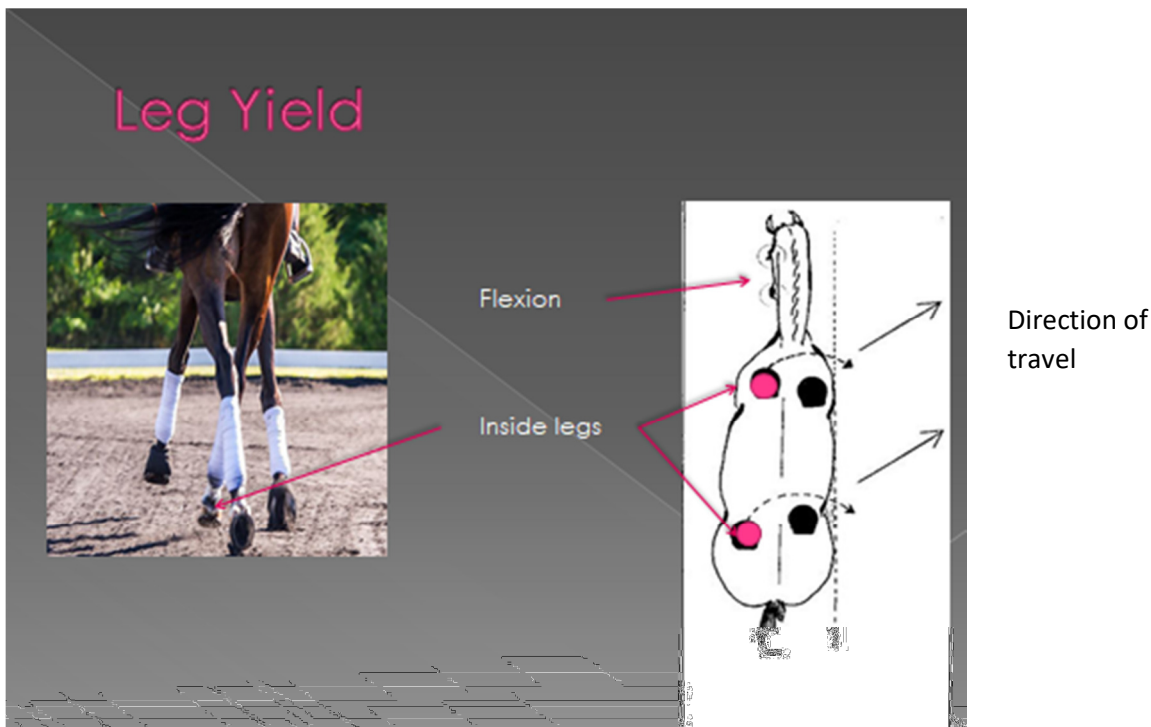
Leg yielding seems to be one of those exercises that confound both riders and judges.

As a competitor I have had the comment 'needs more neck bend' and as a judge I see many variations of the requirements. So I thought I would put pen to paper and clarify.

Leg yielding is a FORWARD sideways movement that helps develop looseness in the horse. For the horse, Leg yielding develops the understanding of the sideways pushing leg aids and for the rider it helps to develop the required coordination of the aids.

Leg yielding can be performed along the wall in the early stages, but in the dressage test it is performed from the centre line out or from the outside track towards the centre line.

The horse should remain straight, more or less parallel to the long side with only a small amount of flexion at the poll. The flexion is away from the direction of travel-so horse is flexed to the right but moving to the left or vice versa. There is **no bend** through the body. The inside legs step evenly in front and across the outside legs. The rhythm remains the same throughout.



COMMON FAULTS

Too much neck bend – probably the most common problem. The rider creates neck bend and the horse 'jack knives' through the shoulder and the horse falls across with the quarters trailing. As a judge I would like to see the rider go forward and re-position, at least this shows that the rider understands what has happened.

Hind quarters leading – far less likely to happen, but not unheard of. Again the rider needs to recognise and correct by riding forward.

Rider/Horse shows lack of understanding and is unable to travel sideways

In all the cases above, the rhythm and balance will alter which may lead to disturbance in the harmony.

TEST REQUIREMENTS

Novice 2.2

RI Half circle left 10m sitting trot

XK Leg yield right sitting trot (horse is flexed to the left moving away from the left leg)

Looking for maintenance of balance in the half circle, clearly riding straight along centre line then leg yield moving forward sideways from X to K. The C judge will only see this from behind and can really see the straightness and crossing of legs, the side line judge should be able to see the flexion and frame of the horse.

The second leg yield movement is towards the C judge so both judges will have a good view of the movement

Novice 2.3

KX leg yield right sitting trot (horse flexed to the left)

X circle 10m left (sitting trot)

X circle 10m right (“)

XH leg yield left sitting trot (horse is flexed to the right)

This is a complex movement and is a real test of riders preparation

Flexion left needs to be established out of the corner at K, the leg yield needs to be completed a little before X so as to have a balanced start for the circles. In a less supple horse, one way will tend to flow much more easily.

On completion of the first circle the horse should be straight on centreline for 2 to 3 steps during which time the horse is upright and the change of flexion and bend for the 2nd circle is fluid. After the 2nd circle the horse is straightened but flexion maintained leading into the leg yield from X to H.

This movement gives the judge to really compare the quality of the leg yields. Sometimes when first leg yield finishes and the rider moves onto the first circle too much neck bend leads to the shoulders falling out on the circle.

For high marks, the rhythm and balance must be maintained and the circles need to be evenly and symmetrically placed on the EB line.

I hope this helps to confirm everyone understanding – hope you get to see lots of 10s!

Sue Chandler