

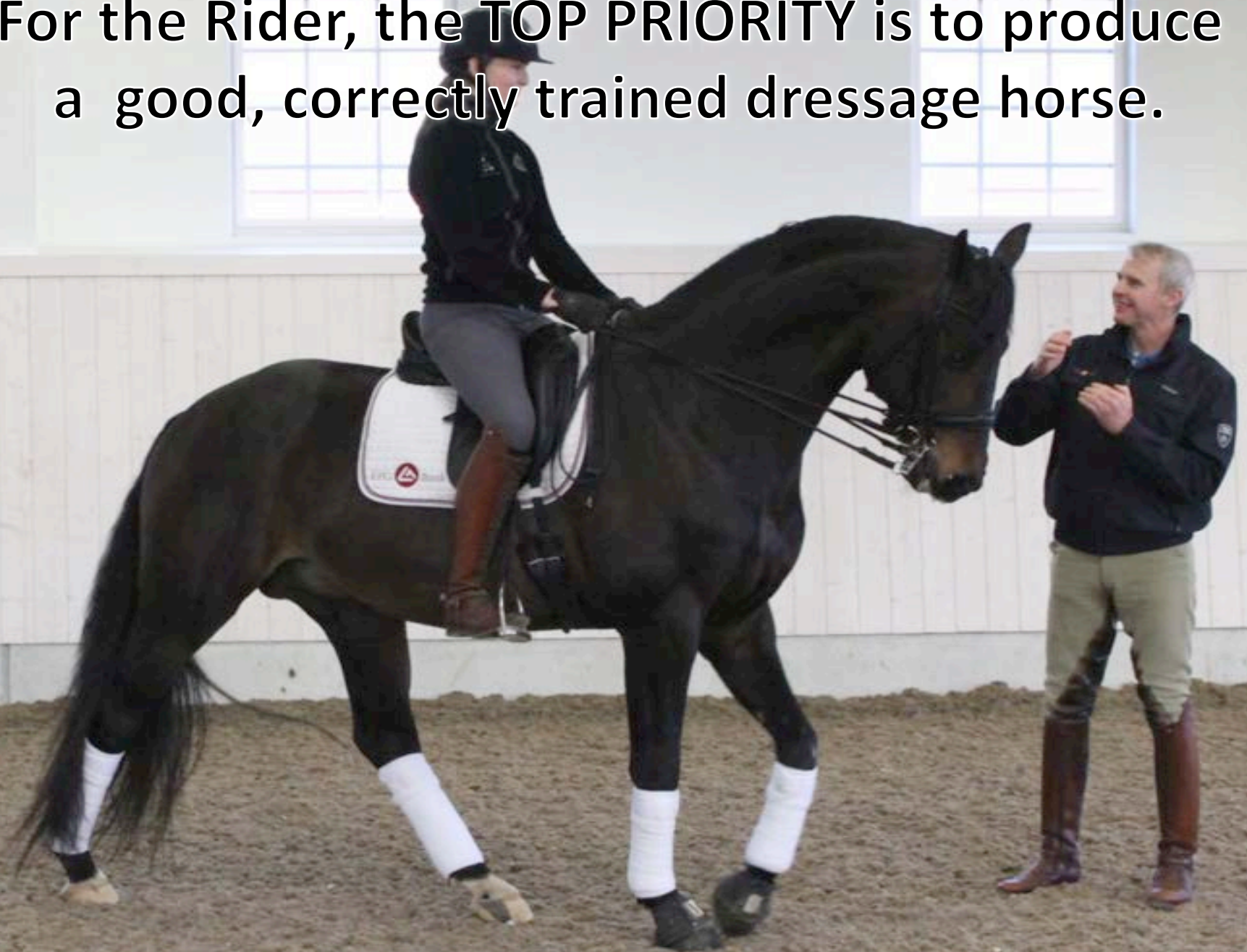


THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RIDERS AND JUDGES

FEI REGIONAL DRESSAGE FORUM
WILLINGA PARK, AUSTRALIA
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5* FEI DRESSAGE JUDGE

For the Rider, the **TOP PRIORITY** is to produce a good, correctly trained dressage horse.



Riders put in a huge amount of time, effort in their training as well as a huge expense.

It is their whole commitment and focus. It is in many cases their whole life



The Rider...

- Riders compete to test and evaluate their training, against their peers and under the watchful eye of a panel of professional experts
- Riders want to understand what judges are looking for and understand their marks.
- All riders want is an honest, transparent and correct assessment of their ride.



Communication..... Is the “lynch pin” of our sport

*Dressage judging is an assessment sport – based on set criteria

*Judges now more than ever have to be professional, know the job, be confident in their abilities.

*Most important of all JUDGE WHAT THEY SEE.

COMMUNICATION

- This may not be what the rider felt, or the trainer sees –because they are not 100% concentrated all the time

Riders, trainers and judges – all 3 groups are responsible to make our sport better, more understandable and open.

- To make this happen, we have to work together.

The riders want to get it right..... And SO DO The Judges



**The judge is responsible as Eric Lette pointed out....
“not only for the first horse in the class, but the last as well.”**



At World and European Championships and Olympic Games, it is the judges who “Make the Medals”



As you will see the judges task.....

Is NOT SO SIMPLE.....

To be a top dressage judge you need to be able to judge 40 horses a day, with tests requiring up to 37 decisions.



THE JUDGES DILEMMA

. Over the whole day that is approximately 1,480 separate, complex decisions.

Sitting in different positions, you will not, and can not, always have the same mark. It is not humanly possible.



Judging is not just about the rules

- What lies behind the judges ability to give the correct mark and remark?????



Judging is a special skill

- The Judge operates cerebrally(not emotionally)
- Is bound by criteria, method, standard and rules.
- Methodology of judging has a specific system – which separates the critic from the judge.
- The critic is not bound by criteria, method or standard. Merely expressing a personal preference.

Judging Skills

- Judges are required to do several things simultaneously
- They are trained until the process becomes easy and automatic.

1 tape
observe
s test

1 tape
monitors
basics criteria
evaluates
result

1 tape assigns a
word and number

1 tape
formulates
a comment

1 tape
monitors
extra's

1 tape
measures
issues
affecting
collective

THE 6 TAPES
RUNNING
TOGETHER.

Standards and parameters

- Standards - the FEI handbook, new judging assessment- competency based evaluation system (CES)
- Objective assessment....based on results acceptable parameters
- JSP
- Self monitoring by the judging team – 5% diff
- Not just about the technical and rules, about being able to see, absorb, know what it good, what is insufficient and everything in between
- Physically and mentally fit



THE JUDGES DILEMMA

WILL POWER/BAUMEISTER & TIERNEY

THE JUDGES DILEMMA

- In what has become one of the most cited papers in social science literature, Baumeister discovered that willpower has in fact a physical basis. The brain operates like a muscle:
- Willpower:-
 - is a form of mental energy and can be strengthened with practice and fatigued by overuse.
 - is fuelled by glucose, and it can be bolstered simply by replenishing the brain's store of fuel

THE JUDGES DILEMMA

- This could have been written as advice for today's dressage judges when they are judging.
- This article was a revue by a team of psychologist's at Columbia and Ben-Gurion Universities
- They reviewed more than 1,000 decisions made over the course of ten months by legal judges who took turns presiding over the parole board of an Israeli prison system

- THE JUDGES DILEMMA CONT.....
- On average, each judge approved parole for only about **1** of every **3** prisoners but researches found there was a striking pattern to the decisions of all the judges.
- The prisoners who appeared early in the morning received parole about **65%** of the time.
- Those who appeared late in the day won parole less than **10%** of the time.
- The prisoners were serving the same sentence for the same crime
-

THE JUDGES DILEMMA

- The odds favoured those prisoners who appeared first thing in the morning, midmorning after the judges had taken a break. Those who appeared just before the break, had only about **15%** chance of getting parole - about **1** out of **7**
- In contrast , the ones who came right after the food break, had around a **65%** chance- about **2** out of **3**.
- The same happened with lunch. Just before lunch the chance of getting parole was only **20%**, but right after lunch, more than **60%**.

THE JUDGES DILEMMA

"Judging is hard mental work" say the authors and we as Dressage Judges would agree.

The authors found "that as the judges made one decision after another, their brains and bodies used up glucose, that crucial component of willpower.

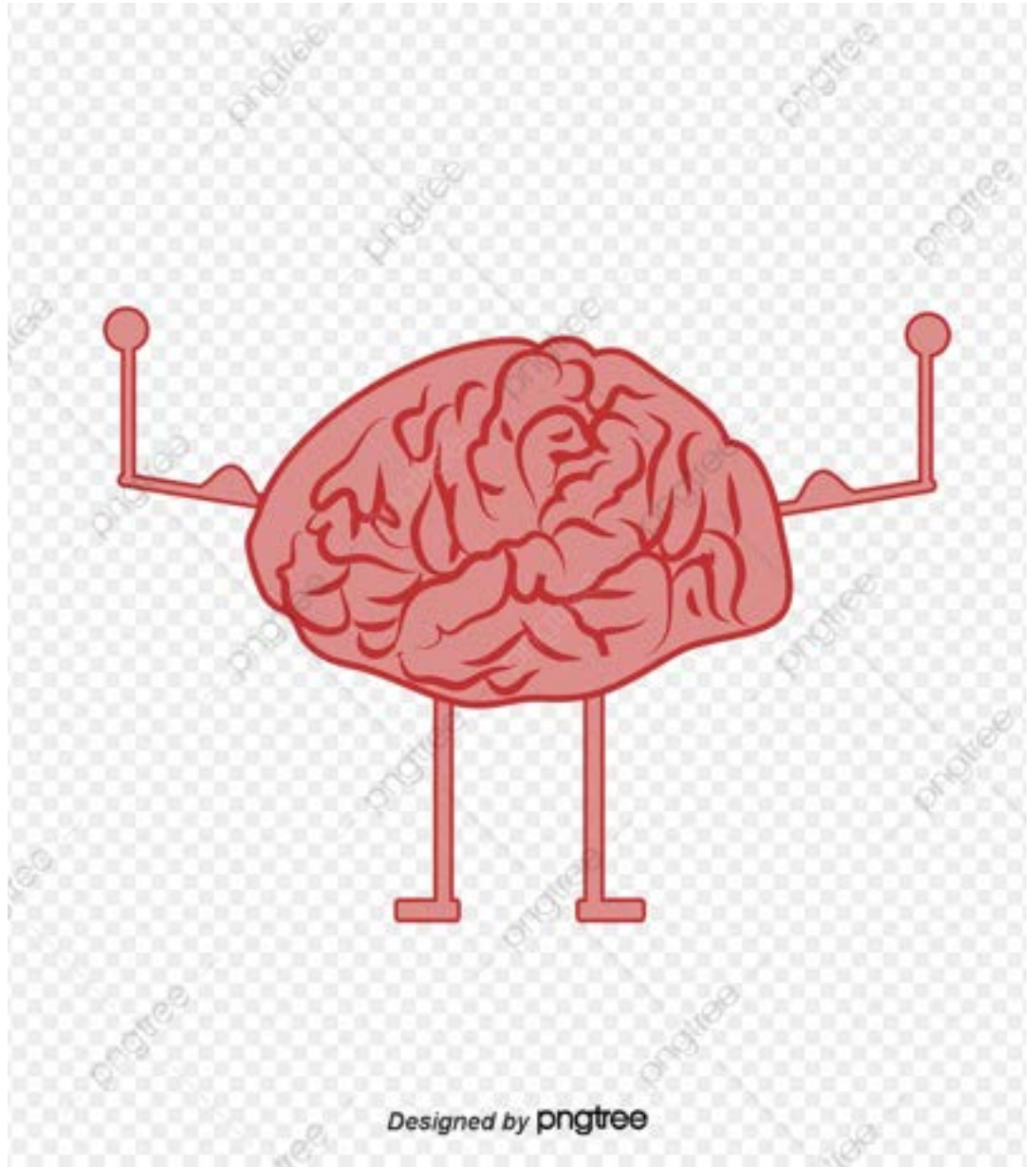


The brain like the rest of the body derives energy from glucose. So it was found that this restored willpower and restored the quality of decision making.



THE JUDGES DILEMMA

The authors found "that as the judges made one decision after another, the lack of glucose to fuel the brain could lead to “decision fatigue”



DECISION FATIGUE.....

Few people are aware of this sort of "decision fatigue" and researchers are now only beginning to understand why it happens and how to counteract it.

- You are not consciously aware of being tired but you are low in mental energy.



THE JUDGES DILEMMA

- These findings would suggest that to keep our decision making at optimum levels, we, as dressage judges not only have to be prepared to deal with any circumstances, but we also need to make sure we are physically fit, well rested, well trained.



What makes for Optimum decision making for Dressage Judges Today.....

1. Judges are now subject to an FEI CES, a Competency based Evaluation System- to keep judges contemporary

2. Judges results are studied by the JSP, Judges Supervisory Panel and thru the reports of the Foreign Judges

3. Self Monitoring by the judging team, where there is more than 5% difference in marks, then the judge at C must initiate a discussion

Can Optimum Decision Making be Improved for Judges?....Yes.

- More support from sport psychologists to develop and enhance the judges performance in such areas as:-
- Concentration – Systems in place to deal with distractions?
- Tasks - Where do judges need to focus, and direct attention?
- How to deal with stress - breathing /relaxation
- Motivation - goal setting
- Rest, energy, self confidence-thought control/focus
- Discussion - with experts in decision analyses (like the Australian cricket team)

- Decision analyses is a systematic, quantitative and visual approach to assessing and evaluating important choices confronting dressage judges.

This leads to

- Optimum Decision Making



Riders and judges need time at shows to discuss the relevant issues



More in-depth discussion with riders, trainers and judges.



**NO 1 PRIORITY FOR RIDERS
JUDGES**

To improve
communication,
all parties
involved must
have, and
promote, **mutual
respect** for each
other

This is vital



Judges and riders should have enough respect for each other to happily mix socially



The direction for dressage.....

- It is our job to ensure – even in the competitive environment and all its commercial influences ,that.....
- The direction of our sport is correct and the welfare of our friend “the horse” is paramount.



As a judge it is a privilege to have the “best seat in the house” ...and we must never abuse this trust.



Thank you

