

# Rider 6 Overview

Riders at Level 6 will demonstrate the ability to ride forward from leg to hand. They will be able to ride the horse forward with impulsion while maintaining rhythm, regularity and evenness of pace. The contact demonstrated will not impede the horse's desire to move forward and is beginning to create a "round" outline, particularly at the trot. Overuse of the hand and lack of leg will be penalized. The evaluator should give consideration to a candidate who is riding a horse as forward as the horse's ability allows without excessive speed.

Riders at this level are also beginning to learn some basic competition skills.

Riders should be able to maintain canter approaches on the jumping course, recognize the lead and execute changes of lead through trot in the recovery zone. Over fences riders can hold a contact to the fence, release over the fence and regain contact after landing.

Turn out of horse and rider at this level should be appropriate to the weather, however should be immaculate.

**Horse** turnout for Rider Level 6 must be as what would be expected for a competition. Horse is to be braided (by the candidate) and must be trimmed (i.e. ears, muzzle, fetlocks and bridle path). In the case of a horse that is dangerous to clip, the candidate must realize that although they will not fail because it is not done, that it will affect their overall turn out marks.

**Rider** turnout – hunt coat and riding shirt are **not** required. Shirts however must be well fitted, have collars, sleeves and be tucked neatly into breeches. Riders should wear a belt and the belt should be visible. Breeches and tall boots or jodhpurs with jodhpur boots and knee strap may be worn. Well-fitted half chaps are acceptable. Boots should be polished. Conservative traditional attire is expected. Riders at Level 6 will jump fences of 2'6" (0.75M).

Disobedience of a horse (i.e., refusal or run out, on its own) is not penalized, SO LONG AS the error and cause are identified by the rider and the rider is able to correct the disobedience. A fall of a rider and/or horse may or may not be penalized. If the fall is due to disobedience of the horse, a slip, or a horse tripping, then it is not penalized. If the fall is due to rider error, either in judgment or lack of balance and/or position, then the evaluator may penalize the appropriate category.

The desired arena size for jumping should now be 70 x 160 in order to facilitate a fair test for candidates. In the event that this is not at all possible, then the evaluator is to use their discretion in setting equipment to best evaluate the candidates.

## Rider 6 – Written Test

The written test is an important part of the candidate evaluation. Test organizers are encouraged to have the written tests completed well in advance of the riding evaluation.

The Rider 6 will be questioned on content from the Rider 6-8, 3-5 and 1-2 Manuals as well as the Stable Management Manual. They should be familiar with but not limited to: knowledge of teeth, wounds, types of shoes, saddle fitting, signs of health, wounds and care of wounds, principles of lunging, the training scale, setting gymnastics, conformation faults.

## Rider 6 – Practical Horse Knowledge

Turnout should be neat and workmanlike. Paddock boots, work boots, or riding boots are acceptable. Loose or baggy jeans or shirts are not acceptable. Neat sweat pants or slush pants over breeches are also acceptable. Hair should be tied back. Ball caps that cover the eyes are discouraged.

## Rider 6 – Lunging

The candidate will demonstrate clear knowledge of the suitability and fitting of tack and equipment including the appropriate use of side reins. The candidate should be competent in the lunging of a schooled quiet horse. Safe practice/procedure is of primary importance. Unsafe technique will be heavily penalized.

The Rider 6 evaluation is comprised of a written test, a practical horse knowledge component, a flat riding component, lunging component as well as a jumping component.

### Who May Examine Candidates?

#### English Rider Level 6-7-8 Evaluators

- ✓ By an accredited evaluator recognized by a Provincial Equestrian Association
- ✓ Must be a current certified EC Coach (not their own coach) with five years coaching experience and who has done a minimum of two training events (clinics or shadow evaluations, may include remote training options i.e.: skype) and is evaluated as ready to function in a testing role by their trainer evaluator. Training must be approved by the PSO, using an approved trainer evaluator.
- ✓ *Evaluators are approved only after they have attended training at a rider examiner training event, or as a shadow evaluator. They are accredited when the experienced or master evaluator training them is ready to approve their examiner status.*

## English Rider 6 – Evaluation Requirements

### A. Practical Horse Knowledge

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>A.</b>	<b>Practical Horse Knowledge</b>	
1	Apply Polo Bandage and discuss.	
2	Demonstrate fitting a running and standing martingale as well as breastplate.	<p><i>Riders should demonstrate the proper fit of running martingales, standing martingales and breastplates.</i></p> <p><i>Where possible tack should be fitted onto an unfamiliar horse.</i></p>
3	Demonstrate pulling a mane and discuss various restraint methods.	
4	General Impression: Presentation of candidate, overall confidence and awareness of safety.	

## English Rider 6 – Evaluation Requirements

### B. Riding Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>B.</b>	<b>Riding Phase</b>	
1	<b>Position:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Position at all paces in basic seat.</li> </ul>	
2	<b>Warm up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficient use of time allotment.</li> <li>Arena safety.</li> <li>Effectiveness of warm up.</li> </ul>	
3	<b>Figures (accuracy and shape) and Movements (evenness, smoothness of pace and evidence of bend):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circles: 15M in trot and canter – rhythm and impulsion.</li> <li>3-loop serpentine wall-to-wall in trot: bend, shaping of loops, forwardness of pace.</li> <li>Simple change on long diagonal – accuracy and smoothness.</li> <li>Non-progressive transitions.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Circles should demonstrate consistent bend, and rhythm. The candidate may not maintain consistent stride length and forwardness while on the circle but should do so on the long sides. Care should be taken to avoid a marked increase in the speed of the horse after riding the circle and returning to the straight line.</i></p> <p><i>Serpentine, at this level, should now demonstrate correct shape and definite changes of bend. Horse should be working forward through the serpentine. The rider should be able to recognize if some impulsion has been lost throughout the movement and discuss with evaluator if required.</i></p>
4	<b>Effectiveness:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency of rhythm and impulsion in all paces and movements.</li> <li>Ability to ride leg to hand and maintain contact .</li> </ul>	
5	<b>Flat Test:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall ability to produce a confident, well executed accurate ride appropriate to the level.</li> </ul>	
6	<b>General Impression:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant turnout and horse presentation.</li> <li>Correct mounting, dismounting and handling of the horse.</li> </ul>	

## English Rider 6 – Evaluation Requirements

### C. Jumping Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>C.</b>	<b>Jumping Phase</b>	
1	Candidates build and set stride of gymnastic line.	<i>Gymnastic line: Trot approach to cross rail, 18' (5.50 m) to 2'3 - 2'6" oxer, 21' (6.40 m) to 2'3" - 2'6" vertical. Distances may be adjusted to suit the length of the stride of the horses in the test.</i>
2	<p><b>Position:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gymnastics</li> <li>▪ Course</li> </ul> <p>(Maintaining correct position, focus on approach and recovery. Contact, release, contact after landing).</p>	<p><i>It is not mandatory that candidates bring animals with full 12' strides to the exam.</i></p> <p><i>Demonstrating correct position, the focus is now on control of approach and recovery.</i></p> <p><i>Riders can hold a contact to the fence, release over the fence and regain contact after landing.</i></p>
3	<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> (rhythm and straightness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gymnastics</li> <li>▪ Course</li> </ul>	<i>Jump a course of 2'6 jumps. The course should be done at canter including canter approach to the first fence. Rider should be able to recognize leads soon enough to be able to change the lead through trot in the recovery phase and not have it run over into the approach phase for the next fence.</i>
4	<p><b>Requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness of correct lead.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of the importance of riding turns.</li> </ul>	<i>Riders should be aware of the importance of the shape of the turn and the balance of the horse in the turns.</i>
5	<p><b>General Impression:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall confidence, safety, control; rider conduct – entire ride.</li> </ul>	

## English Rider 6 – Evaluation Requirements

### D. Lunging Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>D.</b>	<b>Lunging Phase</b>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of handler and horse tacked with proper fitting tack and equipment.</li> <li>▪ Understanding fit and use of side reins.</li> </ul>	<p><i>A suitably trained horse should be used. Horse to be presented with boots and bandages on all four legs, overreach boots, bridle, saddle and side reins. A lunging caveson, halter over bridle or Barnhum method is acceptable.</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge of fit and use of side reins.</i></p>
2	Safety and technique: control of circle size, use of body language, voice and confidence.	<i>Ability to keep horse active and moving forward, lunging on a circle that does not get too small or handler wanders. Effective use of voice commands and tone of voice. Safe technique.</i>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding of free forward movement and ability to recognize horse behind the bit or overbent.</li> <li>▪ Understanding need to change direction but not necessarily demonstrate.</li> </ul>	

# Rider 7 Overview

Riders at Level 7 should ride on consistent contact supported by the leg maintaining rhythm, suppleness contact and straightness. Riders are now aware of lateral and longitudinal suppleness and appropriate suppling exercises. They will be executing simple lateral movements at walk. They can lengthen and shorten stride at trot.

Riders at Level 7 should continue to demonstrate working trot and a true three beat working canter throughout the flat test. The Rider 7 should be able to identify the loss of true bend and true straightness by observing other horses.

It is important that evaluators compare each rider to the standard for the level and not to each other. Over fences the Rider 7 is effective although may not be mounted on horses that are suited to competition.

Turn out of horse and rider at this level should be appropriate to the weather, however should be immaculate. The horse and rider should be turned out as for competition, braided and clipped or trimmed according to the time of year.

The desired arena size for jumping should now be 70 x 160 in order to facilitate a fair test for candidates. In the event that this is not at all possible, then the evaluator is to use their discretion in setting equipment to best evaluate the candidates.

## Rider 7 – Written Test

The written test is an important part of the candidate evaluation. Test organizers are encouraged to have the written tests completed well in advance of the riding evaluation.

The Rider 7 will be questioned on content from the Rider 6-8, 3-5 and 1-2 Manuals as well as the Stable Management Manual. They should be familiar with but not limited to: lateral movements, conformation, foot ailments, pyramid (training scale) definitions, setting gymnastics and course, first aid care of the horse, anatomy of lower leg, aging a horse (teeth), rider well being, specialized tack.

## Rider 7 – Practical Horse Knowledge

Turnout should be neat and workmanlike. Paddock boots, work boots, or riding boots are acceptable. Loose or baggy jeans or shirts are not acceptable. Neat sweat pants or slush pants over breeches are also acceptable. Hair should be tied back.

The Rider 7 evaluation is comprised of a written test, a practical horse knowledge component, a flat riding component as well as a jumping component.

## English Rider 7 – Evaluation Requirements

### A. Practical Horse Knowledge

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>A.</b>	<b>Practical Horse Knowledge</b>	
1	Tail Bandage.	
2	Discuss and demonstrate fitting a figure 8 and flash noseband.	
3	Discuss their horse's feeding program in relation to its requirements.	
4	Discuss udder and sheath cleaning.	
5	General Impression: Presentation of candidate, overall confidence and awareness of safety.	



## English Rider 7 – Evaluation Requirements

### B. Riding Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>B.</b>	<b>Riding Phase</b>	
1	<b>Position:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Position at all paces in full seat with stirrups.</li> <li>▪ Position without stirrups in warm up.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Position at all paces on the flat. Riders should demonstrate solid position with upper bodies being on the vertical at all paces except rising trot. Lower leg should fall under the base of support and position should be consistently maintained.</i></p> <p><i>Position at all paces without stirrups. Position should be solid and balanced with no gripping of knees or falling behind or ahead of the motion. Rider may not be able to demonstrate the independent use of aids that they did with their stirrups.</i></p>
2	<b>Warm up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of warm up and critique of same.</li> </ul>	<p><i>During the warm-up time the evaluator may question the rider if the rider's program appears to be unclear, or to determine his/her comprehension of the warm-up.</i></p>
3	<b>Figures and Movements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Simple change on long diagonal – accuracy and smoothness.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate and discuss leg yield: centre line to quarter line at walk in warm up.</li> <li>▪ Lengthen and shorten stride at trot in warm up.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate and discuss half turn on haunches in warm-up.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Lengthen stride at trot should show a definite transition to some steps of a lengthen stride.</i></p> <p><i>Shorten stride needs to demonstrate a definite transition into a shorter stride than the horse's working trot.</i></p> <p><i>During the turn on the haunches movement, the horse should neither step backward nor forward.</i></p>
4	<b>Effectiveness:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to ride forward with consistent contact.</li> </ul>	
5	<b>Flat Test:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehension and critique of own performance.</li> <li>▪ Overall ability to produce a confident, well executed and accurate ride.</li> </ul>	
6	<b>General Impression:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicant turnout and horse presentation.</li> <li>▪ Correct mounting, dismounting and handling of the horse.</li> </ul>	

## English Rider 7 – Evaluation Requirements

### C. Jumping Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>C.</b>	<b>Jumping Phase</b>	
1	Candidates build and set stride of gymnastic line and course.	<p><i>The gymnastic should be cross rail, 18' (5.50 m) to a 2'6 – 2'9 oxer, 21' (6.40 m) to a 2'6 – 2'9 vertical.</i></p> <p><i>Riders are expected to jump a course of 2'9.</i></p> <p><i>The course should be fairly basic but should be of a medal type and will have 1) a related distance, 2) two changes of rein, 3) at least one individual fence, 4) a transition. Fences should be of competition type.</i></p>
2	<b>Position:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gymnastics</li> <li>▪ Gymnastic: Contact, and releases as requested by evaluator</li> <li>▪ Course</li> </ul>	<p><i>Riders will be authoritative on the approach and able to demonstrate stable, secure position through the line. Riders will approach straight, with the correct pace, and demonstrate good control in the recovery phase. <b>The distances may be altered to suit ponies and horses with small strides.</b></i></p> <p><i>Release through the gymnastic as described by the evaluator who should now be able to see a progression from the crest release toward the automatic or follow through (out of hand) release.</i></p>
3	<b>Effectiveness:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gymnastics</li> <li>▪ Course: Consistent rhythm and impulsion should be maintained.</li> </ul>	
4	<b>Requirement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Course: Critique of own performance.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Riders should be able to critique their course and evaluators should ask for feedback to see if riders do understand the concepts of jumping.</i></p> <p><i>Riders may use simple change of leads but it is important that they can explain why they are using simple changes.</i></p>
5	<b>General Impression:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall confidence, safety, control, rider conduct – entire ride.</li> </ul>	

# Rider 8 Overview

Riders at Level 8 are competent with sound English equitation skills and are able to recognize “true” quality of movement. Riders are beginning to ride the horse with impulsion and engagement. They have the ability to achieve consistent bend and straightness as required and can demonstrate the ability to control the outside shoulder. They can demonstrate the achievement of bend by the correct use of the inside leg and outside rein. The horses should be consistently “round” at all paces. They are able to identify basic training problems and offer options for their correction.

Over fences, the Rider at Level 8 will jump a medal type courses of 2’9 – 3’ (0.85-0.90M), with confidence and authority. The rider should be able to influence the horse in a positive fashion and improve its way of going. Evaluators should keep in mind at this level that some riders will never fit the classic equitation picture and when critiquing position, should consider if the position is affecting the horse’s way of going in a negative fashion. Evaluators should not penalize the candidate who **truly** understands their horse’s limitations.

Turn out of horse and rider at this level should be appropriate to the weather, however should be immaculate. The horse and rider should be turned out as for competition, braided and clipped or trimmed according to the time of year.

The desired arena size for jumping should now be 70 x 160 in order to facilitate a fair test for candidates. In the event that this is not at all possible, then the evaluator is to use their discretion in setting equipment to best evaluate the candidates.

## Rider 8 – Written Test

The written test is an important part of the candidate evaluation. Test organizers are encouraged to have the written tests completed well in advance of the riding evaluation.

The Rider 8 will be questioned on content from the Rider 6-8, 3-5 and 1-2 Manuals as well as the Stable Management Manual. They should be familiar with but not limited to: training scale and definitions, dental care, conformation (form to function), detailed parts of the horse, movement flaws, tack, unsoundness, setting courses.

## Rider 8 – Practical Horse Knowledge

Turnout should be neat and workmanlike. Paddock boots, work boots, or riding boots are acceptable. Loose or baggy jeans or shirts are not acceptable. Neat sweat pants or slush pants over breeches are also acceptable. Hair should be tied back.

The Rider 8 evaluation is comprised of a written test, a practical horse knowledge component, a flat riding component, lunging component as well as a jumping component.

## English Rider 8 – Evaluation Requirements

### A. Practical Horse Knowledge

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>A.</b>	<b>Practical Horse Knowledge</b>	
1	Apply shipping, stable, polo and first aid bandage.	
2	Discuss three methods of restraint and be able to demonstrate if asked.	
3	Teeth: Discuss and show evaluator, using a horse, the signs of aging in teeth.	<i>Knowledge of the number of teeth and the aging pattern of the incisors is needed at this level.</i>
4	Name and locate five sites of unsoundness.	
5	General Impression: Presentation of candidate, overall confidence and awareness of safety.	

## English Rider 8 – Evaluation Requirements

### B. Riding Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>B.</b>	<b>Riding Phase</b>	
1	<b>Position:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Position at all paces in full seat with/without stirrups in warm up.</li> </ul>	
2	<b>Warm up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of warm up and critique of same.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate and discuss the half-halt (in trot) as a preparatory aid.</li> </ul>	<i>Use of warm-up time. Evaluator may question if the rider's program is unclear, or to determine if rider knows their plan. The half-halt is a preparation to balance the horse before a change of direction, speed or pace. The rider must relax and release the contact when the horse is sufficiently rebalanced.</i>
3	<b>Figures and Movements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Circles 10M in trot and canter.</li> <li>▪ 3-loop serpentine wall-to-wall using simple changes.</li> <li>▪ Lengthen and shorten stride in canter.</li> <li>▪ Leg yield at walk and trot.</li> </ul>	<i>Simple change may have 3-5 steps of walk. The candidate needs to show a definite difference in the length of the canter stride from the working canter stride. Ideally with no increase in the speed. The shortened stride in canter needs to demonstrate a degree of collected canter steps. The leg yield at this level should demonstrate that the rider understands the concept and co-ordination of aids. The horse should move sideways while still maintaining the forward intent, rhythm, contact and suppleness. A horse that falls over the outside shoulder or who does not maintain a parallel position in relation to the "line" that it is moving on will be penalized. The horse should be straight with the exception of a slight flexion away from the direction in which it is moving.</i>
4	<b>Effectiveness:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to demonstrate consistent bend and/or flexion as required.</li> <li>▪ Ability to demonstrate some engagement and consistent round outline.</li> </ul>	
5	<b>Flat Test:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehension and critique of own performance.</li> <li>▪ Overall ability to produce a confident, well executed and accurate ride.</li> </ul>	
6	<b>General Impression:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicant turnout and horse presentation.</li> <li>▪ Correct mounting, dismounting and handling of the horse</li> </ul>	

## English Rider 8 – Evaluation Requirements

### C. Jumping Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>C.</b>	<b>Jumping Phase</b>	
1	Candidates build and set stride of gymnastic line and course.	<p><i>Setting up of course. Rider must have knowledge of distances and factors affecting distance. The rider must be able to set up a safe course. The course should be of a medal type and include:</i></p> <p><i>a) A combination;</i>  <i>b) A line of no less than 4 strides;</i>  <i>c) 2 changes of rein;</i>  <i>d) A roll back turn (fence 3 to 4);</i>  <i>e) A downward transition.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Depending on the discipline interest of the candidates, courses may be chosen to better reflect a hunter/jumper medal or an event stadium type course.</i></p>
2	<b>Position:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gymnastics</li> <li>▪ Course</li> </ul>	
3	<b>Effectiveness:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Course: Feel for distance.</li> <li>▪ Course: Use of correct track on the course and the ability to ride balanced through turns.</li> </ul>	
4	<b>Requirement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Course: Adding stride in the line.</li> <li>▪ Critique jumping form of another horse in the gymnastic phase.</li>   <li>▪ Course: Critique of own performance.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Riders must be able to critique the form of another rider's horse through the gymnastics. The rider should be able to discuss the horse's style and technique.</i></p> <p><i>The rider should be able to discuss the horse's style and technique.</i></p>
5	<b>General Impression:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall confidence, safety, control; rider conduct – entire ride.</li> </ul>	

## English Rider 8 – Evaluation Requirements

### D. Lunging Phase

No.	Requirement	Evidence
<b>D.</b>	<b>Lunging Phase</b>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of handler and horse tacked with proper fitting tack and equipment.</li> <li>▪ Understanding fit and use of side reins.</li> </ul>	
2	<p><b>Safety and Technique:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Control of circle size, use of body language, voice and confidence.</li> </ul>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding of free forward movement and ability to recognize horse behind the bit or overbent.</li> <li>▪ Understanding need to change direction but not necessarily demonstrate.</li> </ul>	

### Rider 6

*(Riders are now to be familiar with Rider 1-2 Manual, as well as Rider 3-5 and Rider 6-8 and Stable Management in Canada)*

Signs of ill health in horse(not colic)	Hydration
Front Leg Conformation Faults	Teeth – how many, wolf tooth
Five types of Wounds	Four steps to treating wounds
Reasons horse may be thin	Different types of shoes
Saddle fitting	Length of stride
Warmup of rider, horse	Types of jumps
Bit types – non snaffle	Reasons to lunge a horse
Suppling exercises for the horse	Classical training scale/pyramid

### Rider 7

*(Riders are now to be familiar with Rider 1-2 Manual, as well as Rider 3-5 and Rider 6-8 and Stable Management in Canada)*

Lateral Movements	Define phases of classical training scale/pyramid
Jump Identification	Gymnastic distances
Inform the veterinarian	Navicular/Laminitis – what it is, treatment, prognosis
Shoe clips and pads, winter	Conformation faults (know 5)
Lower leg structure	Teeth – terms
Signs of rider concussion	Types of martingales
Identifying horse to others	

### Rider 8

*(Riders are now to be familiar with Rider 1-2 Manual, as well as Rider 3-5 and Rider 6-8 and Stable Management in Canada)*

Define phases of classical training scale/pyramid	Flexion and bend
Gaits – types within	Teeth – age by incisors, annual care
Conformation faults	Know defective foot movements
Parts of horse full review	Unsoundness of front and rear legs (5 types each)
Factors setting jumps	Ground lines
Types of Nosebands	



## About the Rider – Levels 6-8

Riders in Levels 6-8 can be loosely described as being in the Learn to Compete general phase of the Long-Term Equestrian Development (LTED) model. This does not necessarily mean that they are competitive. Both competitive and recreational riders in these levels are consolidating skills, with the goal of accuracy and developing ability to train and work with their horse, self-monitor in between lessons, and acquire the physical and mental skills needed to ride effectively at an intermediate level.

Often, adult riders at these levels are seeking to perfect skill as a personal goal, and using occasional competition or the Rider Level tests as a benchmark for personal achievement. Younger or more competitive riders at these levels would be normally adding exposure to the competitive environment as an important skill testing experience. Some specific goals for a rider in these levels, as drawn from the LTED model are:

- Introduce participants to competitive experience – analysis and evaluation of performance, rules, ethics.
- Introduction of concept of setting competition goals.
- Foster healthy priorities in competition doing your best, sportsmanship, having fun, team-work with the support of crew and peers.
- Encourage competition in different disciplines with goal of balanced development in horsemanship and equestrian skills.
- Maintenance of involvement in other sports and conditioning modalities which favour transferrable abilities: flexibility, endurance, agility, rhythm, strength, speed and competitive focus.
- Self-awareness, goal-setting, managing stress, team-work mindset, solid training habit.
- Control of horse through micro movement, understanding biomechanics, training for performance.

Riders at this stage who are competing should still be more focused on training than on competition, with a ratio of training to competition time at approximately 80%/20%. In most sport, this phase is ideally experienced between the ages of 12-16 years when the human body is in a physical growth spurt ideal for developing endurance, speed and proprioception (12-15 yrs) and strength (15-18 yrs). A rider who may have missed that window chronologically, should still be paying close attention to the goals of this stage of development, and not be rushing into an over-emphasis on competitive involvement.

***To achieve the goals of Levels 6-8, riders will need to be riding several times a week.***

***They are also advised to continue with one or two non-equestrian activities to build and maintain the general athletic abilities required at these levels.***

Equestrian sport is classified as an early start, late development sport. There is no advantage to early specialization. Riders in Levels 6-8 may be beginning to identify preferred disciplines, but a well rounded training experience and exposure to different disciplines is still advisable at this stage as the best preparation for excellence later.

To achieve the goals of Levels 6-8, riders will need to be riding several times a week. They are also advised to continue with one or two non-equestrian activities to build and maintain the general athletic abilities required at these levels. Most youth may have such opportunities quite naturally through school, and may have to prioritize so that they have adequate time at the barn. Achieving the goals of Levels 6-8 requires both riding and general horsemanship skills which can only be acquired through time spent around horses and working with them, not just on their backs.

Adults at these levels may have the opposite challenge of lack of time for sufficient cross-training activity needed to develop the balance, co-ordination and stamina needed to make the best use of their riding time. As the technical skill levels increase in Levels 6-8, riders should be preparing themselves adequately to avoid injury and enjoy the experience of accomplishment that comes with the challenges presented.

Each age-category brings specific training challenges and opportunities. Riders need to work with their coach, support team and family to create training plans that will help them reach their goals.

### **Athletic Skills for Riders in Levels 6-8**

Assuming that the rider has read, practiced and mastered the material in previous levels, riders in Levels 6-8 should develop a very secure seat, effective and clear aids, and training habits that minimize risk of injury in the short and long term.

Balance is one of the most important skills in riding. It is the rider's ability to stay centred on the horse. Balance in riding, unlike balance standing on the floor, is dynamic. It is more like balance on a tightrope, or a surfboard. The surface under the rider is in constant motion, so balance depends on a low centre of gravity, softness in all joints, a good sense of positioning, and ability to respond rapidly with minute corrections. The rider in Levels 6-8 should begin to develop strong ability for independent aids: weight shifts, shoulder position, seat bones, thighs, lower legs, arm and hand aids applied as needed, and without creating involuntary tension elsewhere. The rider should be able to move one limb or set of limbs without setting off tension in the shoulders or back. They should be able to execute separate aids on each side of the horse.

While it seems complex, once a rider has mastered riding from a good seat, the other aids are extensions of the rider's seat and weight aids. Leg aids guide the horse and add energy, and hand aids guide the horse and assist with direction. Riders at this level should be riding first from their seat and body orientation, and not as if their heels and hands are to pull and push the horse.

Riders that find they are tensing up or getting mixed up, often need to go back to basic exercises to establish a solid seat (such as riding without reins on the lunge) until they restore the ability to maintain balance and position without tension.

Riders in Levels 6-8 should not be over-reacting with large and obvious movements, but able to respond to the requirements of their ride with relatively subtle and soft movements. Response in riding is a little like pairs dance or work on a trampoline. It is understood that the rider is constantly both in reaction to the movement of their training partner, as well as pro-active in guiding the horse. In the training pair, the rider is responsible for leadership whether they realize it or not. Apparent need to apply forceful aids is often a good clue that the rider is shutting the horse's natural movement down in some way. An example could be a rider that feels they need to kick or employ heavier spurs, without realizing that they are shutting the horse down by gripping on his mouth as they balance on the reins instead of in their seat.

Balance in motion, or dynamic balance requires the rider to use their core muscles to control their seat, spine and upper body, and keep their centre of gravity aligned as closely as possible with the horse's centre of gravity at all times. A supple but secure seat is an important aid for riding with balance. For the rider to use their seat, hands and legs effectively and independently, the rider must first allow their seat to move with the horse, lift their eyes to look ahead, lengthen their spine without tension and breathe into their lower ribs. (Refer to the description and exercises in the Rider Level 3-5 Manual for more information on this point.) Riders need to activate the deeper core muscles in their hips and back, while maintaining a soft readiness in other muscle groups.

Young riders may not have the maturity to be aware of all of these elements. Their riding coach or other conditioning coach or support team member should be able to use exercises which help the young rider achieve the same results. Athletes can sometimes improve or master a skill through a better cognitive awareness of the elements involved. Other times, they are better to feel the movement or result first. It is important for the coach, rider and parent to understand different learning styles, and approach the skill acquisition through as many different styles as possible.

By Levels 6-8, all riders should be learning to have good feel, both for the moments that are working well, and the signs of issues needing to be addressed. Riding at these levels requires a great deal of subconscious response to multiple stimulæ. The rider cannot always be conscious of everything that is going on at the same time. There may be times in the rider's program when it is appropriate to break a movement down into its components and re-establish the basics before proceeding. For the higher levels, seeking coaching at least occasionally from coaches in different disciplines would be ideal.

## Using the Seat

It is ideal if the seat, hand and leg aids are used independently.

This means that they can be used at the same time, but cue and control different parts or movements of the horse. Most horses are more comfortable when their centre of gravity is directly under the rider's centre of gravity so a slight shift of the rider's seat to one side cues the horse to also shift its

weight to that side. Subtle weight shifting can be purposefully used to cue for lateral movements, lead changes or turns. While shifting their weight in this manner, the rider must keep their seat 'moving with the horse' so the horse does not lose its balance or forwardness.

**A supple but secure seat is an important aid for riding with balance.**

The rider's seat can also affect the horse's movement longitudinally. By using the core muscles to allow and control more movement of their seat, the rider can activate the horse to either lengthen the stride or do an upward transition. Using the core muscles to lessen the movement of their seat allows the rider to cue the horse to shorten its stride or do a downward transition. Using their core muscles to stop the movement of their pelvis and hold the neutral position allows the rider to cue the horse to halt. A smooth and balanced halt can be accomplished in this manner. The rider's spine must remain supple while limiting the movement of their seat as stiffening the back or seat may cause the horse to stiffen as well.

Once the rider has the desired gait or length of stride they must keep their seat movement the same so the horse's movement also remains the same. This is referred to as 'following the horse'. Effectively, the rhythm of the horse and of the rider should be synchronized with the rider not ahead of or behind the horse, but with the horse so that the rider is leading and positively influencing the horse's rhythm, cadence and degree of impulsion and collection.

### **Unbalanced Position**

Problems with a rider's balance can often be detected by examining their equipment. Considerably more wear on one side of their saddle, boots, breeches, gloves or half chaps, or uneven sweat-marks under the saddle pad can be an indication of the rider sitting more to one side or using one side of their body more than the other. The rider's lack of straightness may cause a visible discrepancy in the thickness of the rider's saddle panels. Other causes of decreased rider balance or straightness can be detected by observing the horse. If the horse is consistently less willing to take one lead, swaps leads, cross canters, drifts to one side or is crooked, the rider may not be straight or in balance with the horse. The horse is often blamed for these problems, but the rider's lack of balance could be at fault. Carefully observing the rider from the back and front as well as the side is necessary to determine if this is the case. Causes of the rider's lack of straightness or balance may include:

- Weakness of the core muscles
- Too much or too little joint mobility
- Other muscle strength, flexibility or coordination imbalances
- Pain anywhere in the body, whether riding or not
- Bad riding habits
- Body structure
- Previous injuries, including concussions
- Saddle fit

## Rider Injuries

Riders sustain a variety of injuries similar to other athletes. Back, pelvis and groin strains are common. One of the most severe of the injuries is **concussion**. Concussion is another term for **traumatic brain injury or TBI**. TBI's are caused by the brain hitting the inner walls of the skull. This may occur with very rapid changes of head movement (whiplash) or with a blow to the head. If a rider sustains a blow to the head or experiences whiplash they should seek medical attention immediately. Under no circumstance should they ride at that time and they should refrain from physical or mental exertion until a medical professional clears them to do so.

The symptoms of a TBI are varied and the following are examples:

- Loss of consciousness (even briefly)
- Memory loss (of events before, after or during the traumatic event; verbally repeating themselves)
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Interrupted thought processes
- Emotional fluctuations
- Decreased balance or physical coordination

These brain injury symptoms most often resolve within 7-10 days.

Even if the symptoms are mild the rider may still be at increased risk for falls if they are not carefully assessed before they return to riding. Once the symptoms have resolved, brisk walking, cycling or light jogging should be attempted before returning to riding.

The long-term consequences of a TBI are significant and the effects of multiple head traumas will accumulate and potentially worsen with each incident. Careful management under medical guidance is necessary to minimize the future risks.

## Integrated Support Team

The integrated support team (or **IST**) is made up of the people that assist the athlete with improving their skills and their ability to perform well. Each member of the IST has a different skill set and contributes to the overall health and performance of the athlete. The coach is a member of this team. Examples of other potential members are sport psychologists, physiotherapists, athletic therapists, conditioning coaches, personal trainers, nutrition consultants, exercise physiologists, massage therapists, osteopaths and chiropractors. Communication between the members of the IST is extremely important in order to help the rider train and perform better. It is also important that riders recognize that they are athletes and utilize the expertise of IST members to help improve their riding.

Riders in Levels 6-8 should be sharing their training plan they have developed with their coach, with their other support team members. They should also be sharing their ground training plans and other therapy plans with their riding coach.

# Equine Canada's Comprehensive Program for Rider Development

## Objectives

To create a national program that offers levels of achievement for all riders from recreational to competitive. The program encourages riders to ride, learn and enjoy the equestrian sport, and promotes a continuous and progressive path of learning towards safe and knowledgeable horsemanship. The program encourages participants to continue learning in the sport by offering various attainable levels of achievement that are recognized by certificates. The English Rider Level 1-10 program is a preparation for future Equine Canada certified instructors and coaches. This program will compliment programs offered by riding schools across Canada and provide guidelines to coaches and instructors.

The EC Rider Level program provides NCCP certified Instructors and Coaches a complete and progressive program of instruction to their students. This program is also an important component to aid in the continued promotion, development and recognition of qualified instructional programs and will compliment the national stable registry system as it is developed.

In addition to providing a national standard recognized from coast to coast, this program offers enough levels to maintain the interest of a rider over an extended period of time. For example, the young student starting riding at age 8 can potentially participate in the program for a number of years. This program also meets the needs of achievement and goals for the adult rider.

**Note:** *This program is also tailored for those riders who seek to further their riding skills on the flat but who may not wish to continue over fences. Therefore, the option opens at Rider Level 3 to take either the full riding phase or only the flat phase. This option is continued through Rider Levels 4-10.*

If a candidate elects not to do the gymnastic/jumping phase at a particular level, and has indicated this choice on their application form prior to the test, the evaluator is only to mark the flat phase of the riding test.

Candidates, who have elected to complete solely the flat phase of evaluation, will be issued a certificate of achievement stating that it is for the flat phase.

## **Candidates intending to pursue their instructor or coach levels should carefully consider the following:**

Those candidates who wish to attain their instructor certification must successfully pass either the full riding OR the flat phase at Rider 6.

The Practical Horse Knowledge/Written/Lunging Phases must also be completed. If an instructor candidate wishes to teach over fences then the candidate would be required to complete the full Rider 6 exam.

Those candidates who wish to attain their Competition Coach certification will need to ensure they complete full rider levels up to and including Rider 8.

## **History and Schedule of Development**

At the National English Coaching Committee meeting in January 2003, Jill Barker, Nova Scotia Master Course Conductor, was tasked to develop a pilot program within a four year timeframe.

In 2003, the initial program was developed and a pilot program was run at the Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers – a full-fledged riding school with adult and junior programs with certified instructors and coaches. By 2004, a draft of the Rider Level program was presented to the National English Coaching committee. Concluding the presentation the initial Rider Level program received approval as a pilot program for selected riding schools across Canada. The program was met with great enthusiasm by instructors/coaches, students, parents and evaluators.

Valuable feedback was obtained during the pilot phase and the program was revamped.

In February 2005, the National English Coaching Committee approved the program as a national program in transition until March 31, 2007.

In February 2007, Rider Level 1-8 was approved as a national program. Revisions and changes are to occur every five years thereafter.

In 2009, Rider 9 and 10 were first piloted in Halifax.

The Rider Level Program has been met with enthusiasm across the country and the number of equestrians participating grows yearly.

The 2012 revised Rider Levels reflect a number of exciting developments. The program now complements the LTED – Long Term Equestrian Development Plan that has been a joint venture between Equine Canada and Sport Canada.

Our resources continue to expand – this revision provides riders with an awareness of themselves as athletes and how to become more aware of their physical body's needs.

# Whom May Evaluate English Rider Levels

**Quick reference March 2014**

## English Rider Level 1-2

- Must be an Equine Canada current certified Instructor or Coach who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- May be evaluated by own current certified Instructor or Coach who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- *May be evaluated by a single evaluator.*

## English Rider Level 3-4

- Must be an Equine Canada current certified Coach who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- May be evaluated by own current certified Coach who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- May be evaluated by current *IOB with Jump Module (if not their own students)* who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- *Note: If candidates are NOT doing the Jump Module, then a current IOB may evaluate (not their own students)*
- *May be evaluated by a single evaluator.*

## English Rider Level 5

- Must be an Equine Canada current certified Coach who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- Evaluators may not evaluate their own students.
- *May be evaluated by a single evaluator.*

## English Rider Level 6-7

- Must be an Equine Canada current certified Coach who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- Evaluators are approved only after they have attended two training events. One may be a classroom presentation of the levels and one event must be to shadow a Rider Level evaluation completing their own set of marking papers to the satisfaction of the Mentor Evaluator (who is a transitioned evaluator at that level). The candidate evaluator may shadow two evaluations as an option.
- Evaluators may not evaluate their own students.
- *May be evaluated by a single evaluator.*

## English Rider Level 8

- Must be an Equine Canada current certified Coach Level 2, Competition Coach Specialist or High Performance Coach who is trained to evaluate the rider levels.
- Evaluators are approved only after they have attended two training events. One may be a classroom presentation of the levels and one event must be to shadow a Rider Level evaluation completing their own set of marking papers to the satisfaction of the Mentor Evaluator (who is a transitioned evaluator at that level). The candidate evaluator may shadow two evaluations as an option. It is highly recommended that the evaluator be mentored by a Competition Coach Master Evaluator for this level.
- Evaluators may not evaluate their own students.
- *May be evaluated by a single evaluator.*

## English Rider 9-10

- Must be an Equine Canada current certified Coach Level 3, Competition Coach Specialist or High Performance Coach, one of which to be discipline specific according to elective of candidate
- *Must be evaluated by two evaluators*

**Transitioning from Old System - If an evaluator was approved in the old system to evaluate at any level, they need only be current and presented with the new paperwork in a training event to be eligible to evaluate the same levels in the new system; except where additional training is noted.**

### Note:

1. *All evaluators must have had a full overview of the Rider Level Program 1-10 presented to them prior to any testing. The list of approved evaluators is to be maintained in the provincial office and all evaluation organizers must use a current approved evaluator.*
2. *Please contact your Provincial Equestrian Federation/Council for additional information on clinics in your region. Failure to do so in advance of the testing date may jeopardize a candidate's results.*
3. *With each revision released, evaluators must attend a provincially approved review to establish a new provincial list of approved evaluators.*

**DO NOT JEOPARDIZE A CANDIDATE'S RESULT BY NOT BEING A CURRENT APPROVED EVALUATOR, OR BY NOT USING THE MOST CURRENT TEST SHEETS, FORMS AND WRITTENS.**