



Submission and Impulsion in Dressage

By Emmad Zagloul



Submission does not mean a truckling subservience, but an obedience revealing its presence through constant attention, willingness, and confidence in the entire behaviours of the horse as well as the harmony, lightness and ease he displays in the execution of the different movements. The degree of submission is also manifested in the way the horse accepts the bridle, with a light and soft contact and a supple poll, or with resistance to or evasion of the rider's hand, being either 'above the bit' or 'behind the bit' Respectively. Putting out the tongue, keeping it above the bit or drawing it up altogether, as well as grinding the teeth and swishing the tail are mostly signs of nervousness, tension or resistance on the part of the horse and must be taken into account by the judges in their marks for the movement concerned as well as in the collective mark for submission.

Impulsion is the term used to describe the transmission of an eager and

energetic, yet controlled, propulsive energy generated from the hind quarters into the athletic movement of the horse. Its ultimate expression can be shown only through the horse's soft and swinging back to be guided by a genetic contact with the rider's hand. Speed, of itself, has little to do with impulsion; the result is more often a flattening of the paces. A visible characteristic is a more pronounced articulation of the hind leg, in a continuous rather than staccato action. The hock, as the hind foot leaves the ground, should first move forward rather than being pulled upwards, but certainly not backwards. A prime ingredient of impulsion is the time the horse spends in the air rather than on the ground, in other words, an added expression within the paces, always provided that there is a clear distinction between the collected trot and the passage. Impulsion, is, therefore, seen only in those paces that have a period of suspension. ■

