

Why Do



Quadrille?

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The three or more horses trot in tight formation, one seemingly drawn behind the other like a train, each following the track of the one ahead. As the riders increase their focus, the patterns became more complicated. Now in pairs, the horses trot towards each other, slipping past at the last moment, as though threading a needle.

This style of riding is called quadrille, and it is as exciting for the riders as it is for the audience. Founded on a noble history, modern quadrille riding is an art form that dates back to the pageantry of the early royal courts of Europe.

A Rich History

Originally known as horse ballets, the quadrille developed in France from a dance of the same name. Quadrilles historically numbered in multiples of four that performed complicated patterns and maneuvers, and were accompanied by music often written specifically for these gala performances. Eventually, these horse ballets evolved into the elaborate equestrian festivals known as carrousels. One can only imagine the impact of such events in the days before the technological revolution.

Down through the years, quadrilles became an integral part of the performances of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna. The Riding Hall was completed in 1735, and remains today as an elegant statement of these baroque horse ballets. Along with his famed waltzes and polkas, Johann Strauss wrote many compositions for the quadrille.

Quadrille has played a role in Europe's cavalries such as the Hanover Cavalry School in Germany. Today, we still have the beautiful performances of the Cadre Noire of The French Riding Academy at Saumur. In more modern times, the Canadian Royal Mounted Police Force has become very famous for its beautiful musical ride.

The Tradition Continues

Riding clubs and schools all over the world have reserved regular times for their members and students to enjoy the fun and camaraderie of quadrille riding. At the turn of the twentieth

century, the New York Riding Club located in Central Park provided quadrille riding once a week. This was not only enjoyed as a recreational activity, but was also very popular with the spectators that came to watch.

The recreated German School Quadrille, which performed at the closing ceremonies of the 1972 Olympics at Munich, revived interest in quadrille in Germany. Today, many German riding clubs perform special quadrilles for holidays. As an established sport in Europe, quadrille riding sees strong rivalries between riding clubs. In Holland, a series of compulsory tests are performed by quadrilles of eight. The tests increase in difficulty, corresponding to the levels of the European dressage tests. Teams of four also compete in musical freestyles, and the annual championships are immensely popular with spectators.

The Challenge of the Americas, which features several quadrille teams of six, has become an annual event glamorously performed under the lights. Established in 2002 as a fund-raiser for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, it has entertained thousands at its Wellington, Florida venue.

Fantastic Benefits

The value of quadrille riding is very well recognized. Quadrille riding furnishes a way to have fun with horse in the company of fellow riders. This can be especially valuable in areas and seasons when outdoor riding is not possible. At large riding clubs where indoor and outdoor spaces are at a premium, quadrille can be the perfect answer. The very nature of the activity requires that riders sit up, look and ride. In addition, the challenge of being part of a group performing intricate figures provides a very special exhilaration and enjoyment to the individual participant.

The education of quadrille horses is equally impressive. They learn to stay in line at the various paces, as well as balance and rate themselves. They learn to pass other horses and to be passed without protest, to go at the speed their riders choose regardless of what the horses around them are doing, and to leave the group promptly on command. Dressage show horses, which normally

perform alone and may sometimes be difficult in a warm-up ring with other horses, can at an early age become used to behaving in company.



STEPHANIE ALVORD PHOTOGRAPHER

The Hot Trots (Adriane Alvord, Hayley Galloway, Cara Goode, and Celia Lee) exhibit fine lateral alignment and

Riders also learn to relax in competition. As part of a group, they are anonymous, so there is less of a problem with the “solo on stage” element that can interfere with many riders’ focus. In quadrille riding, one learns to concentrate on the job at hand, and the carry-over into individual dressage competition is quite remarkable.

Thanks to quadrille, the dressage rider entering individual competition can be totally familiar with all the ring figures and how they should be ridden, which eliminates much stress. The horse and rider have learned invaluable communication skills and nothing comes as an unfamiliar surprise.

Quadrille riding is fun, and it is a wonderful learning experience for both horse and rider.

Forming the Group

Organizing a quadrille team may seem complicated, but anyone who has ever taught a group riding lesson or has coordinated friends for a trail ride, already has all the organizational skills he or she needs to get started. It is important that the riders on a team share the same goals, be it just for fun or as a competitive team.

As for the four-legged team members, the most

important quality in a good quadrille horse is that it gets along with other horses (this isn’t the sport for highly self-protective or defensive animals). Next, the horse needs to have gaits that can be adjusted to those of his partners. Color and size are of less importance.

A matched team is pleasing to the eye, but few teams have the luxury of finding matching horses that meet the other criteria as well.

The Membership

There are several categories of members from novice to advanced, with the performance criteria usually going to the lowest common denominator. If it is a new quadrille team, everyone will be learning the dynamics of working in a group at the same time. However, if new riders are joining an established group, it is advisable to have a separate practice session(s) to teach them the basics of group riding: control, correct execution of figures, patterns and spacing. In this way, new members who do not yet have the knowledge or experience to ride with an established quadrille will have the opportunity to learn independently of the group and prevent possible frustration for themselves and the experienced members.

Some quadrilles charge yearly membership dues, which helps to cover the cost of communications such as newsletters and other administering of the Quadrille. Also, asking for dues shows that there is an expected commitment from the riders.

Members need to understand that other costs may be expected too. Matching outfits, tack, saddle pads, brow bands, and leg wraps make for a great presentation of the group and become an added expense. Trailering, stabling and other performance or competition related expenses, as well as instructor fees for special practices and even arena fees may sometimes be incurred.

Commitment to the Group

The fun of quadrille riding comes from working together to produce something really beautiful with horses. Quadrille creates camaraderie, team spirit, feelings of accomplishment and progress toward becoming a better, more effective rider, as well as producing a more obedient and attentive

horse.

In making the decision to work in a quadrille team, it is essential to realize and remember that members are not only deciding to do something enjoyable, but they are making a commitment to other people. Each rider must intend to take it seriously enough to set aside time for practice sessions. Furthermore, there is an obligation to participate in any competitions or exhibitions the group may organize.

A lot of general enthusiasm (“Oh, yes, that sounds like fun”), followed by not showing up at practices makes it impossible for the group to plan. This will lead to the ultimate failure of the entire project!

Members of the team need to take the time to memorize the ride. It is embarrassing, sometimes even dangerous, for someone to go off in the wrong direction or do the wrong thing. Each rider needs to be as knowledgeable as the leader regarding the test.

This brings us to the other kinds of commitments needed. Each rider must be attentive, patient, aware of horse “body language”, in good physical condition, willing to work hard, and absolutely have a good sense of humor. Also, as the group begins to practice, a member may find certain figures, movements or transitions difficult. As a responsible member of the team, that rider should practice these things on her own. The improvement will be a real asset to the group and to the rider as well.

When everyone accepts these responsibilities, the team will become first rate. Then, everyone will not only have had fun, but will be proud and successful.

Practice Locations

There are many points that must be considered when determining sites. One of the most obvious is the distance that the team members must travel to make practices. Another is the arena itself, especially the quality of the footing. If the team plans to compete or to do demonstrations, a standard 20 x 60 meter dressage arena will be necessary. If the team plans on using music, it

would be helpful to have a sound system, or at the very least, have power available to plug in any sound equipment.



KATHY WYLAND PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior team The Riding Company (Anna Collins, Julianne Veach, Tkeisha Phelps, Jessica Smyth) performs an oblique with good lateral alignment. The horses range from pony to 17h.

Most likely, everyone will be trailering in and out for practices, which means there must be ample parking. If anyone intends to be staying several hours or overnight, stabling must be taken into account as well.

To protect property owners, managers and quadrille members, each rider should sign a liability release form. Naturally, everyone should use proper equipment and attire as well as an ATSMSEI certified helmet, with all being in good condition. If needed, insurance coverage should be arranged.

Special Personnel

As it is in other sports, there are key positions needed for a team’s success. In quadrille they are the coach, director, file leaders and manager.

The coach is the heart of the team. Not only is this individual necessary to help with technical issues, but also to direct the group. The coach may be one of the quadrille riders, but more commonly is the ground person who calls the test, checks the spacing, alignment and synchrony of the team, and is generally in charge of keeping performance on track during practices or at a competition. The

coach must possess certain traits, including the ability to speak in a loud and clear voice. More importantly, he or she must be a first rate observer and a leader who is willing to entertain suggestions when they arise. Working with a team is challenging, and the coach must be able to make corrections without seeming critical.

On Command

Quadrille commands are in three phases: the description of the maneuver (preparatory command), a brief pause to give the riders enough time to prepare their horses, then the command to execute the maneuver. This may be a vocal “ho” or a whistle. If the director gives the command, a whistle or a head nod must be used, since verbal communication is not allowed during a competition. As the team increases in its experience and proficiency, it may develop its own “shorthand”.

Sample Preparatory Commands

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| - Walk | - Half circle to centerline |
| - Trot | - Half circle to track |
| - Canter | - Reverse half circle |
| - Halt | - Down centerline in pairs |
| - Circle | - Down centerline single file |
| - Right turn | - Crossover |
| - Left oblique | - Thread the needle |

The standard tests may be called at a show. If the team knows the test well, however, the coach may turn over the responsibility of signaling the execution command to the director (see On Command). As it is with the position of the quarterback in football, the director orders the team when to execute a maneuver. The director should take over this task during practices so that he or she is very comfortable with the job before the show. The director’s role is essential for quadrille freestyle, since the test must be committed to memory (not called) and the team must rely on the command to execute from someone on the team.

File (column) leader is the head of a line, either when the entire team is in a file, or when the team

splits into columns. These leaders are pacesetters, so it is essential that they be able to find a steady speed that the rest of the file can handle. It is important that they do not cut corners or let their horses speedup, which would result in the file rushing to keep up.

The manager or secretary handles the paper work for the team, organizes the practices, corresponds with members, and makes the arrangements for competition or performances. This job requires someone who is efficient and organized, and it may or may not be held by one of the riders.

Building A Team

Quadrille riding demands that horses learn to accept each other in close quarters, so it is essential to allow time when introducing the horses to this kind of work. Common sense should be the order of the day and safety should always come first.

Timid horses will take a while to relax. The mere presence of some very aggressive or dominant horses may cause others to be worried when in close proximity. Any horse that kicks has no place in quadrille.

The First Meeting

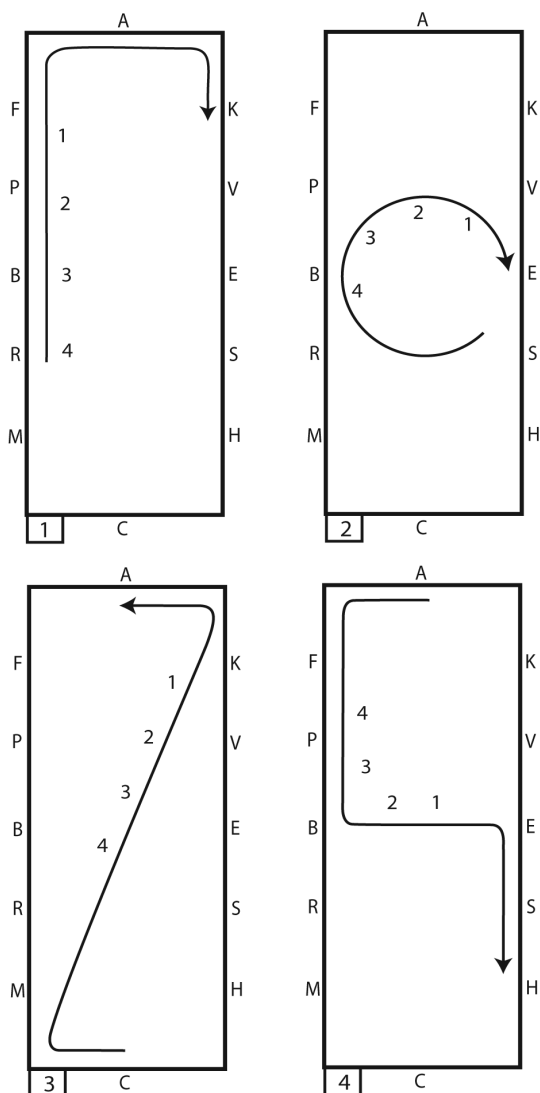
Before the new team rides together for the first time, it would be beneficial to hold an organizational meeting to set some ground rules such as determining where and when the team will practice, deciding who will serve as coach or ground person, attending to any forms or waivers, selecting the team’s name and official colors and, most importantly, setting the team’s goals. Goals can help to generate enthusiasm and to cement team members’ commitment. Appropriate goals are realistic in terms of members’ skill levels, schedules, and practice frequency.

Set a schedule of regular practices, times, and intervals. Once a month may be fine for a “just for fun” team, while weekly sessions may better suit a team interested in competition. Determining a practice schedule that works for four busy riders may take some negotiation.

With your team’s organization in place, it is time

to get to the “nuts and bolts” of learning how to ride quadrille. A combination of unmounted and mounted practice sessions usually works best. In unmounted sessions, riders can learn quadrille terminology, movements, and patterns; study the competition tests; listen to freestyle music; and watch instructional videos. Then you can put your theoretical knowledge into practice in your team’s first walk through.

Whether a team is just beginning to learn basic movements and patterns, or is ready to start learning the tests, the value of practicing on foot cannot be stressed enough. This allows the team members to solidify their understanding of the pattern without worrying about their horses. It also helps prevent the horses from anticipating the moves because of over repetition.



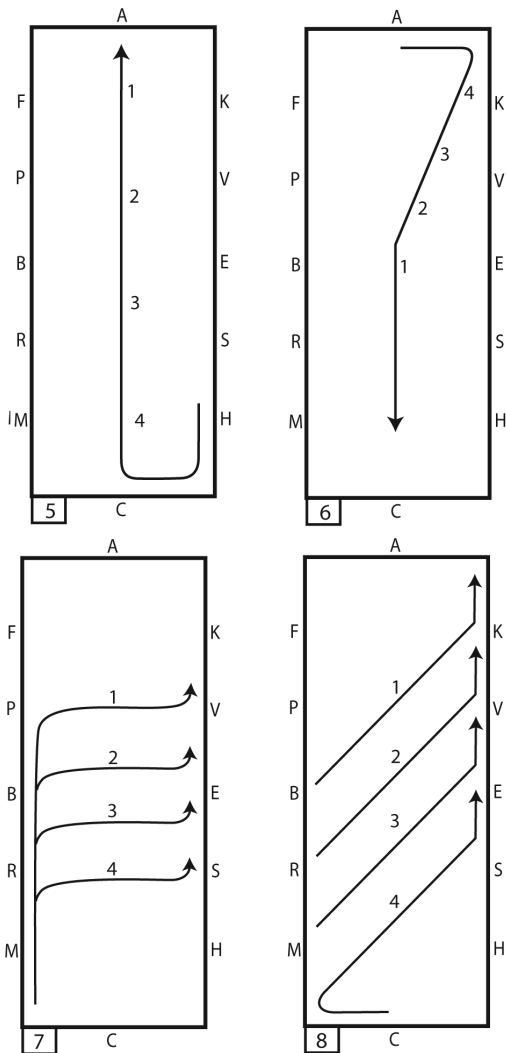
After horses and riders have warmed up individually, it’s time for group introductions. If the horses are not already acquainted, spend some time riding and standing beside one another. Give new horses enough space around them so that none of them feels encroached upon. When everyone seems comfortable, form a single file and walk on a large circle in the center of the arena. Don’t ride up the tail of the horse in front of you, and don’t worry about accurate geometry or identical spacing at this point. Just walk together on the circle until the horses are working in a relaxed and cooperative manner. Then try riding single file around the perimeter of the arena. Repeat the entire exercise in the opposite direction. When the horses can walk together calmly, try the exercise at the trot. (Diagrams 1, 2, 3, 4)

When all is going well, return to the walk and do some of the patterns in diagrams 5 & 6. Once the riders and horses are comfortable, the patterns may be executed at trot.

This is a good time to reinforce the use of proper terminology. When riders are moving in a follow-the-leader fashion, they are in a column or file. When each member executes the same move simultaneously, they are working individually. If a figure is to be performed in file, the command is always preceded by the word “Column” or by a file number if the riders are split into two lines. When the figures for a column command are performed at one specified place with everyone following the lead horse, the “Ho” is omitted.

The right turn across the arena (diagram 7) is a good figure for starting individual work. Once the command is given, the riders simultaneously turn their horses to the right, off the rail, and guide them straight across the arena. Upon reaching the rail on the opposite side, they each turn left, slotting back into their line again. This move requires the building blocks of spacing, alignment and synchrony. The column must have equal longitudinal spacing on the rail before the turn and after returning to the rail on the opposite side of the arena. It must show good even lateral spacing when riding abreast across the arena; it must have synchrony so they all turn at the same time; and it must exhibit good lateral alignment by keeping the riders’ bodies lined up as viewed from the end of

the arena. This exercise needs to be practiced to the left as well as the right. (See Be SASsy on page 9)



The oblique is a move similar to a turn across the arena, except the crossing line is at about a 45° angle rather than perpendicular to the long side (diagram 8). It can be executed to finish on the opposite rail or on the centerline. Start at the walk before proceeding to trot.

After the first mounted practice, team members will have a good sense of their own and their horses' strengths and weaknesses. Horses and riders should not be rushed. Progress is expected to take place in a step-by-step manner. A knowledgeable coach can give appropriate exercises and "skill drills" to help ensure a successful and rewarding experience for all involved.

Training Sessions

Every session begins with a warm-up. This time should focus on three elements. The first two are aimed at the individual horse/ rider team, and center on (1) suppling the horse as well as (2) working on the rider's seat and position and effective use of the aids. The third focus is on creating harmonious partnerships with other horses/rider teams.

Once the quadrille team is ready to come together, it can begin reviewing the basic drills from the first mounted sessions. As the team becomes more calm and cohesive, training can move forward at a quicker pace, and the team warm up drills may be at a further point along the continuum. At first though, it is always good to stick with the fundamentals.

Safety in Numbers

Keep your team's riders and horses safe by adhering to the following guidelines.

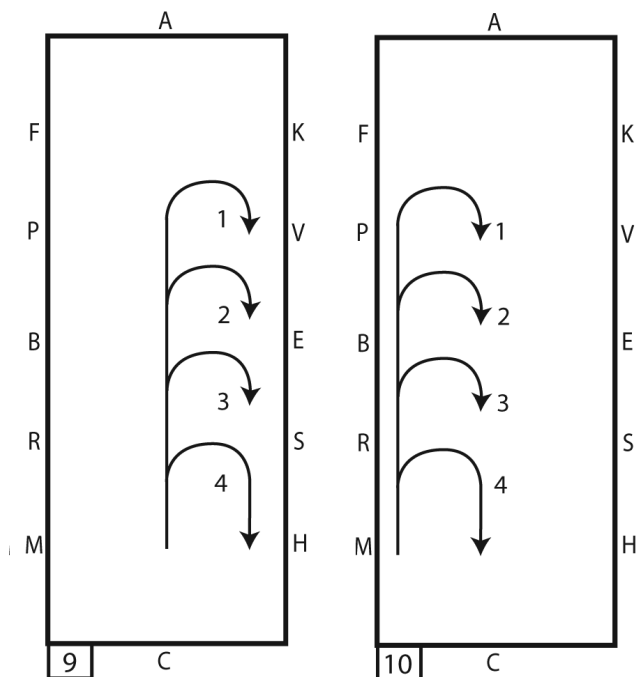
- *Know the facility's rules.* Stables may require protective headgear.
- *Maintain your distance.* Never ride up on another horse's tail.
- *Signal before passing.* Let another rider know that you intend to pass her horse. When you pass, allow sufficient room so you do not crowd the horse. Always pass on the inside, closer to the center of the ring.
- *Watch your speed.* If you are riding at a slower gait, stay to the center of the arena. If you plan to stop, move toward the center. Failure to do so creates a hazardous condition.
- *Pass left to left.* When you approach an oncoming horse (moving in the opposite direction as you), pass left hand to left hand, as you would when driving a car.
- *Pay attention.* Monitor what is going on in the arena. Don't be so absorbed in your own riding that you tune out the other activity.
- *Monitor your horse's body language.* Don't let him intimidate or kick another horse. Keep tabs on the other horses in the arena as well.

Some basic exercises may incorporate the use of cones. For instance, riding down the centerline

itself is not a figure, but it is essential to quadrille. Just finding the centerline is often hard enough, and keeping the horses aligned one behind the other on the centerline will take some practice. Making a lane with pairs of cones helps riders judge the distance from the rail to their path on the centerline. Horses that drift are often helped to stay straight when ridden through the lane.

Once the centerline has been practiced, riders can begin turning onto it from the track. The turn can be an oblique from the track onto the centerline, or it can be the arcing curve of a half circle. The centerline is also the limit line of individual circles, which are always 10 meters.

Both the circles and half circles are beautiful figures to watch, but are difficult figures to perform well. The size and shape of the curve must be consistent among the riders, whether the horses are long-bodied or compact, supple or stiff. Placing pairs of cones on the correct arc can show both the horses and the riders where they need to be, and can enable the riders to feel what they need to do with steering the horse. Riding the half-circle from the centerline onto the track varies the routine and is often easier because the railing defines the width of the figure. (Diagram 9)



The commands for the family of half-circles can sometimes be confusing. The simple command,

“Half-circle; ho” with no further description such as “onto the centerline” could be confused with a half-circle which combines with an oblique to return to the track. Half-circles can also be ridden starting from the track and arcing to the centerline (diagram 10).

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The basic figures of circles, half-circles, turns across the arena, and obliques can be used to either divide a ride or bring pairs back together. They can be combined in an endless variety of ways to create fascinating and flowing patterns for a quadrille performing at even the most elementary of levels.

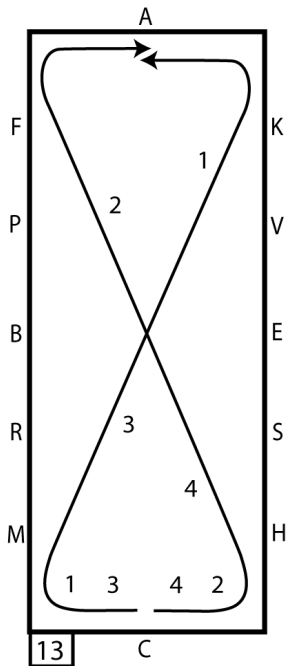
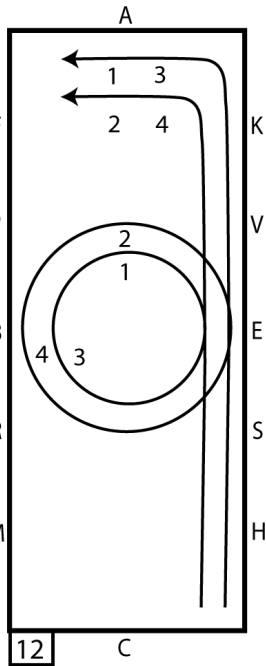
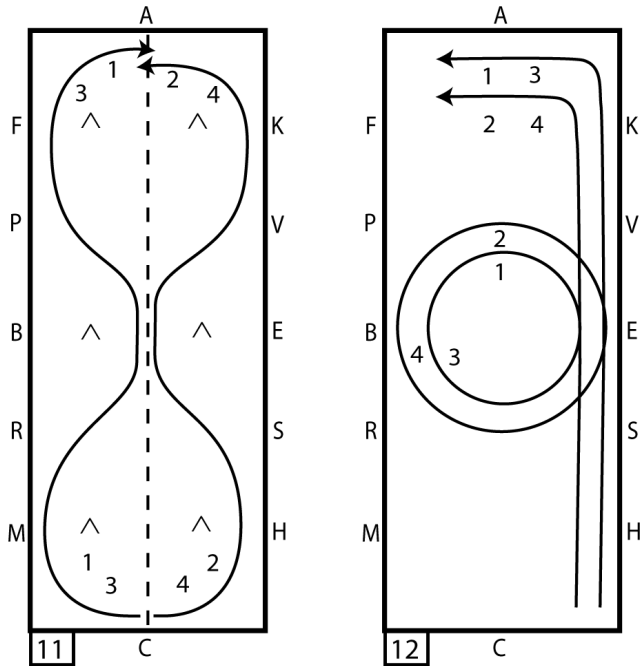
After all the horses are relaxed and obedient while trotting in single file, it’s time to consider doing some work in pairs. When pairing horses, it might be beneficial to team inexperienced horses with those that are more experienced, such as pairing an older schoolmaster with the young horse.

The two most worrisome scenarios for the horses tend to be close work in pairs and meeting/passing head-on. To help overcome these challenges, use the following exercises which are specifically designed to address these issues.

It is advisable to start with lots of space between horses and work only at the walk. It is also wise to put the inexperienced horse on the inside of the track so he won’t feel trapped against the wall or rail.

Begin with the pairs walking side by side on the centerline toward C. Split at C. The pairs make an hourglass figure starting from the corners then

moving toward X (diagram 11). As the horses briefly meet and then pair for a few strides, be sure to generously praise them. The pattern may be repeated with different partners so horses and riders get used to the work. Cones (indicated as ^ on the diagram) may be placed in strategic locations in order to aid the riders' understanding of the geometry of the patterns.



The 20-meter circle, as seen in diagram 12, is an excellent figure to use when setting a comfortable pace for all the horses and in

establishing good spacing.

Once the horses and riders can work together calmly, widen the distance between the riders and repeat the patterns at the trot. All trot work needs to be slow and quiet.

A third basic exercise addresses the challenges of passing both side by side and in a thread-the-needle pattern (diagram 13). Again, always begin at the walk, advancing to the trot only when the pattern is confirmed and safe.

When two opposing lines meet at the end of the ring, the command to be given is, "Pass left to left," which means the line of riders going around the ring to the left, (counter clockwise) stays on the rail, while the other line passes to the inside. This is the same as driving a car in oncoming traffic. It is a good idea to have it understood ahead of time that the columns would *always* pass left to left unless otherwise instructed.

Once the horses can work comfortably in pairs, riders should spend a few minutes during their warm-up time practicing this next skill. The pairs should work around the perimeter of the ring, making sure they are secure at the walk before proceeding to trot. It takes a little practice to learn to stay together through the corners and change of gait. Communication between partners is necessary. For example, before moving from walk to trot, one rider should quietly say to her partner, "Ready to trot—one, two, three, *now*." The outside rider sets the pace and determines the size of figures. Outside riders must accelerate on circles and in corners, and the inside rider shorten the stride so the pair remains side by side. When changing rein, the new outside rider becomes the leader at the beginning of the diagonal.

Riders may choose to start walk and basic trot work in pairs, then separate to complete warming up their horses in their more advanced movements, especially if the rider anticipates any resistance.

Canter work may be tried only when all horses can be easily regulated at the trot. It is critical that distance is kept until the horses are comfortable with each other. Only then can the distance between them be decreased. This work should be reserved for later sessions.

Most quadrille work is done at the trot—walk is too slow and canter is much more difficult to rate. While riders in sitting trot are more pleasant to watch, it is not required in Introductory through First Level tests.

Be SASsy

A precisely performed quadrille is thrilling to watch. You know it when you see it, but you may not be able to identify what makes the quadrille look so exact. The answer is spacing, alignment and synchrony.

Spacing

When riding in a single file, the spacing between each horse is called *longitudinal spacing*, and it is one of the most visible aspects of quadrille riding. Longitudinal spacing is considered the distance between *riders' torsos*, not the distance between horses. For safety reasons, choose a greater distance at first (6 – 10 meters). In time, the distance can be shortened.

Each rider needs to learn to identify and maintain the desired longitudinal spacing. One method is to look between the horse's ears when spaced correctly. The rider should identify what part of the horse she sees in front of her (say, his hocks) and then strive to keep that body part "in the frame."

Remembering that it is the space between the riders that needs to remain even, the spaces between the horses may vary slightly depending on their sizes and conformation. In general, the unit of measure is usually one horse's length between horses. Sometimes this looks great, but sometimes it seems too open and closer spacing

may work better. The cardinal rule of spacing is not the distance itself, however, it is how that distance is consistently maintained throughout the maneuver. Whatever the distance chosen, it must be a safe one for the team.



The Ladies of Wyndam Oaks (Jaralyn Finn, Linda Crivelia, Leslie Hensley) exhibit excellent longitudinal spacing & alignment.

Another essential part of longitudinal spacing is determining how to maintain the appropriate spacing if the file will be splitting (odd and even numbered horses are turning in separate directions). The space for the "missing" horses must be maintained so that the horses all slip right back

into place when they come back together. To figure out this distance, have the horses in line. Now remove the "even" numbered riders so, the "odd" numbered riders can check the distance to the horse in front. The process can be repeated by removing the "odd" numbered riders out of line, so the "evens" can also check the distance.

Lateral spacing refers to the distance between riders when side-by-side as in pairs or fours. When choosing lateral spacing, safety is of primary importance. Tighter spacing looks better and is more easily maintained, but the right distance to choose is the one comfortable for all of the horses.

Once the horses are at ease working side by side, one exercise that pairs can use to hone their accuracy for both lateral spacing and alignment is to carry a dressage whip held between them. One rider holds the handle end, the other, the tip. This defines a distance that the riders must maintain. If they also concentrate on keeping the

whip at a right angle to the plane of their torsos, they will gain skill in keeping lateral alignment as a pair. This can be a fun, and funny exercise!

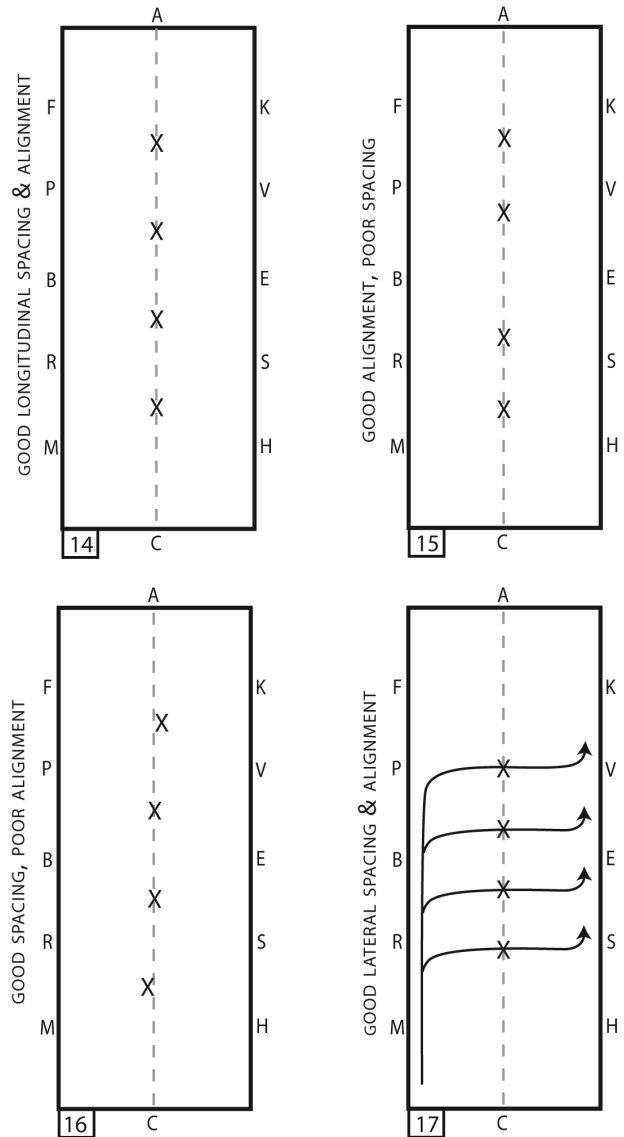
Alignment

When riding in single file, *longitudinal* or *column alignment* refers to how well the riders stay in line behind the lead rider. Without the support of the rail, it is often easy for horses to shift left or right when they are on the centerline. One way to check longitudinal alignment is to have the coach or ground person stand at C and observe the riders as they proceed in single file from A toward C. The coach, or in a competition the judge, should only see the lead rider. The team should practice turning down the centerline from both directions.

Lateral alignment comes into play while riding in pairs or four abreast. In correct lateral alignment, the riders' torsos are aligned when viewed from the side. The drill to practice lateral alignment starts by forming two files on opposite long sides with each traveling toward A. They turn down the centerline as they meet at A, form pairs at D and then divide left and right at C so the drill can be repeated. The coach can assess the team's lateral alignment by standing at B or E. As each pair passes X, only the rider closest to the coach should be visible.

A more advanced exercise for practicing lateral alignment is for pairs to ride around the perimeter of the arena, occasionally changing direction. The coach stands on the outside of the arena, and each time a pair passes a letter, the coach should see only the outside rider.

This exercise is more complex because the outside rider must lengthen her horse's stride through the corners and turns while the inside horse shortens her stride so that the two remain laterally aligned. Once back on a straight line, both horses return to their original pace.



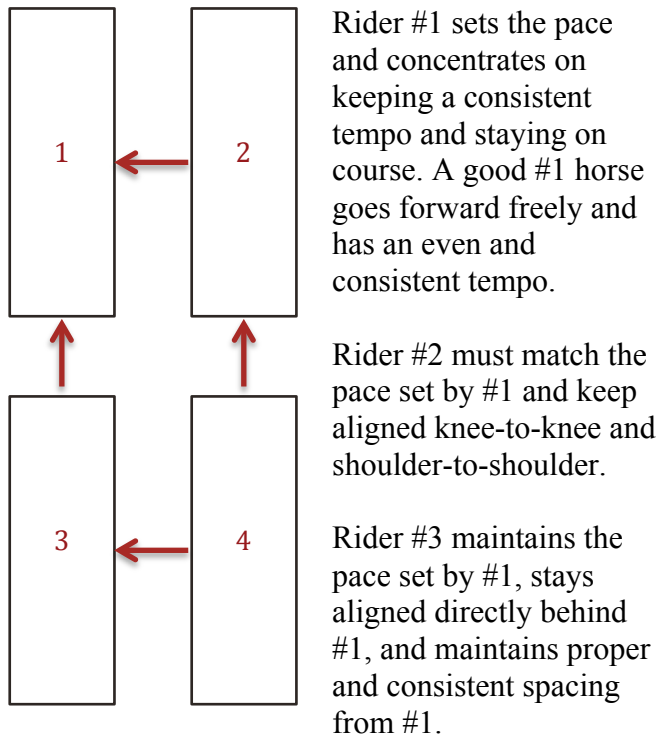
Synchrony

Synchrony is the uniformity with which the horses initiate and complete turns, begin and end circles, execute transitions, and so on. A more advanced skill, synchrony can begin to be developed after the riders are able to maintain spacing and alignment with some degree of accuracy.

Exercises to practice synchrony may be as basic as walk-trot transitions. With the team members walking in single file, the coach gives a preparatory command, such as "File, prepare to trot." Then the coach says, "Ready, and trot!" The goal is for the riders to execute the first step of trot simultaneously at the moment the coach says, "Trot."

Spacing, alignment and synchrony separate the ordinary quadrille from the extraordinary. They take time to master, but are well worth the effort.

Who Follows Whom?



Rider #4 has the biggest challenge. Rider #4 must maintain the pace set by #1, stay aligned directly behind #2, and stay aligned knee-to-knee and shoulder-to-shoulder with #3. The #4 horse should be easy to lengthen and shorten.

When in pairs, the outside rider sets the pace. In addition, the outside horses on any circle, turn, or bending line must lengthen stride somewhat in order to maintain position.

The configuration in this diagram shows good longitudinal and lateral spacing and alignment.

USDF Quadrille Compulsory Tests

When your team is quadrilling like a well-oiled machine, you'll probably start itching to show your stuff, either at an exhibition or in competition. If competition is your goal, here's a primer on what to expect.

There are two types of quadrille tests, standard and freestyle. They respectively equate to the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) standard tests in the dressage competition and the United States Dressage Federation (USDF) Freestyle tests. Most teams begin competing by riding standard tests that are written for four horses, but can be ridden by two or more horse/rider combinations. The standard tests require movements that show a team's ability to maintain even spacing and to execute synchronous turns, patterns, and transitions while maintaining alignment. Each element of the test is scored in terms of spacing, alignment and synchrony (SAS), as well as collective marks that are given in five categories: Spacing, Synchrony and Alignment, Impulsion, Submission, and Performance as a group, which carries a coefficient of 2.

Standards in Quadrille Competition

In 2007 the USDF quadrille tests marked major changes in competitive quadrille. The quadrille was changed from the small arena to the full sized dressage arena, but more importantly the tests were aligned with the USEF levels in both required movements and naming of the levels.

The quadrille levels are now referred to as Training, First, Second, and Third Level. The walk-trot test is called Introductory. Each level has specific quadrille guidelines and a stated purpose, which includes a reference to the USEF test criteria of that level. The purpose statement also clarifies the quadrille expectations of each level.

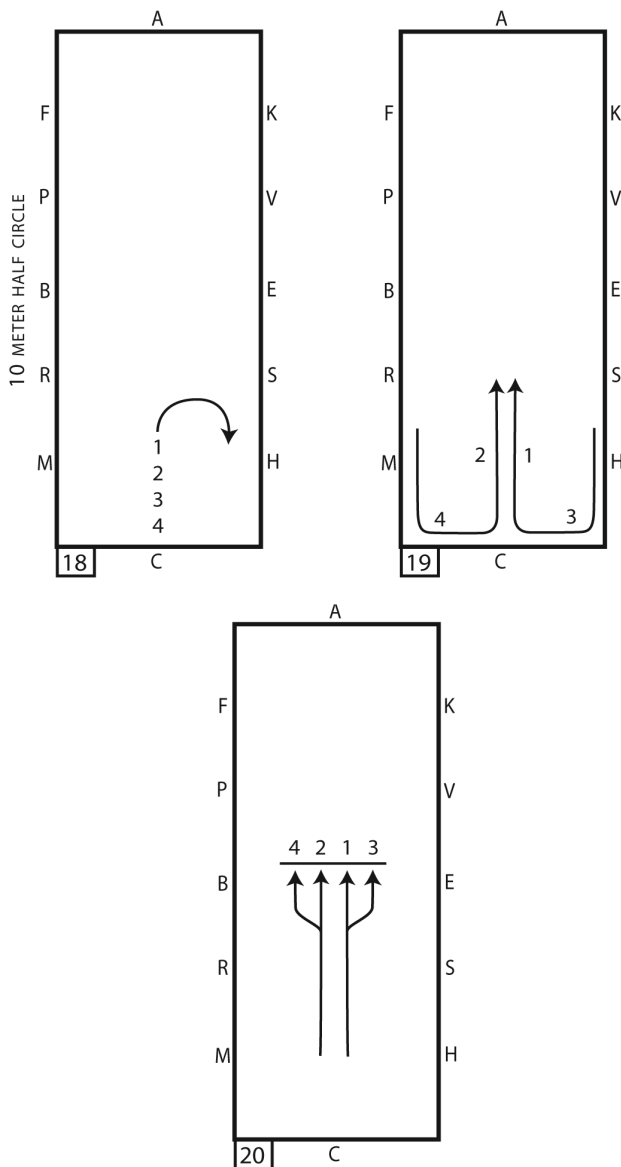
The front page of the quadrille test sheets also includes "Tips for Judges" and "Tips for Management," which should provide some instant information to those unfamiliar with quadrille.

Another feature is a specified entry pattern. This ensures that any ring will be suitable, regardless of its location or the width of the entry gate at A.

Members of quadrille teams enter the gate in single file and are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 according to their order of entry. The team rides a prescribed entry pattern, which is the same at every test level. As the rider reaches L, each performs a 10-meter

half-circle, with the odd numbers going to the right and even numbers going to the left. As numbers 1 and 2 approach each other at A, they turn down centerline as a pair, and then continue as a pair to X where they halt. Numbers 3 and 4 will turn down centerline as a pair, continue as a pair, then split to become four abreast for the halt and salute (see diagrams 18 -20). This entry pattern is not judged.

The highlights of the test can be seen in Standard Test Overview on page 21.



Tips for Quadrillers

Each quadrille member should be able to perform the USEF dressage tests at the desired level. Unless the quadrille team is highly skilled, it is advisable to compete at one level below the USEF test competency, because quadrille riding demands a high level of submission from the horse and accuracy from the rider. Doing so will help boost confidence, enjoyment of quadrille competition, and the chance of success.

The compulsory quadrille tests are complex and attractive. They have been designed to keep the horses in close formation, even in the large arena. They also provide a good place to school and show a dressage horse without compromising his training for the regular USEF classes. As herd animals, horses learn to love working in a group.

The quadrille tests are available at www.usdf.org. Quadrille score sheets include both text and diagrams.

USDF also provides free online resources. You can find Quadrille information by searching for Quadrille tests and *Quadrille Rules and Guidelines* at www.usdf.org

The Quadrille Freestyle

Quadrille freestyle is an artistic program that allows for a large variety of choices in choreography and music selection. It is always exciting for a team to compete or exhibit with a program that is unique to them.

Understanding the Score Sheet

The score sheet is divided into Technical Execution and Artistic Impression, with each worth 50%. The six technical categories and their coefficients are Required Elements – Technical Execution (3), Spacing (2), Synchrony and Alignment (2), Impulsion (2), Submission (2), and Performance as a Group (2).

The artistic categories and their corresponding coefficients are Choreography (5), Choice of Music and Interpretation (4), Harmony of Presentation (3), and Team Appearance (1).

Choreography encompasses many aspects including design, balance, use of space, changes of direction, changes of gait and pace, and creativity, as well as including degree of difficulty.

There are no minimum times for any of the test levels, but there is a five-minute maximum for Introductory and six-minute maximum for all others through Intermediate. Grand Prix has a seven-minute maximum. Anything performed after the time limit has elapsed will not be scored, and one (1) point will be deducted from the total if the time limit is exceeded by more than 10 seconds. Timing starts from the move-off of the lead horse or pair after the initial halt and salute and ceases at the final salute.

Choreographing the Freestyle

One of the debates among those who work in quadrille freestyle is whether or not the music or the choreography should come first. Some believe the music should be edited first and the choreography designed within its framework. Others believe that it is more important to design interesting choreography the group can perform successfully (making the most of the large coefficient for choreography) and worry about editing the music later. Regardless of preference, there are still basic principles that apply.

The first thing is to *determine the level* at which the team will compete. As stated earlier, the team will usually perform best at the lowest common denominator. For more information on this topic, see “Tips for Quadrillers” above.

The next point is to *know the mandatory elements*. The rules mandate that the quadrille freestyle contain the identical requirements as the individual musical freestyle test of the same level exclusive of canter lengthenings. These requirements are listed on the quadrille freestyle score sheet.

Unlike the individual Freestyle though, teams are not required to include each movement, figure or transition on both hands. This does NOT apply to gaits, as trot and canter must be shown on both hands (walk is not required on both hands). Any movement included in the freestyle program must

be performed by all members of the team. Let’s say a First Level team is working in pairs and performs a leg-yield, with the odd numbered horses going to the right and the even to the left. This configuration would fulfill all requirements. That is true because every team member has executed the required movement and it was performed on both the right and left hand, even though only half the team was on the right rein and half on the left.

It is also important to understand the concept of *above the level*. The team will not be permitted to include movements above the level the team is showing. Doing so will incur a penalty of four points from the total points. Permitted and forbidden elements are clearly listed on the score sheet.



KATHY WYLAND PHOTOGRAPHER

The Quad Squad (Marilyn Rickman, Debbie Cervenka, Patty Ruppel, and Marily Reese) gets read to do a pass through.

Challenging combinations, pace changes or transitions of permitted elements are allowed. An example would be Third Level team members performing canter extension, which is permitted but not a requirement. This kind of difficulty should only be attempted if it is safe and can be executed well.

Once the choreographer understands what can and cannot go into the dance, he or she can begin the actual design. Like the standard tests, the team must enter the arena in a single file. Other than that, the team may employ any pattern it chooses, and halt in any configuration it wishes. There are only two stipulations. One is

that everyone halts and salutes facing the judge at C, and the other mandates that the configuration does not exceed 30 seconds from the time the last horse enters the arena and ends at the halt. The final halt and salute also must have all members facing the judge at C.

The body of the routine can be quite complex and create an exciting kaleidoscope effect that can employ side-by-side, in-line, mirror image, and even scattered staging. For the novice choreographer, the task may seem daunting, but the hardest part is really taking the first step.

The choreographer should not exclude her own experience. In the section Building a Team (on page 4), we noticed that after the riders were accustomed to performing basic quadrille techniques and figures (circles, oblique, etc.), the coach could spontaneously call out various patterns for the riders to follow, much the same way as a caller would do in square dance. This is actually improvisational choreography, and is a strong foundation for building a more complicated dance.

That knowledge can be expanded by becoming familiar with all the standard tests for Quadrille and all the standard dressage tests from Training Level through Grand Prix. What emerges is a sense of how movement flows in the arena. This understanding can help spark other inventive ways to manipulate horses in the arena. On top of that, an interesting pattern from a standard test might be able to be adapted for quadrille, or a particular pattern could be altered slightly to be more interesting. Another way to get inspiration is to watch live performances or videos of other quadrille teams.

It is very important to carefully graph the patterns out on paper first, making sure to either number or color code each rider so that their placement in the arena is clear at all times. This does not mean that changes won't occur. Sometimes the most carefully planned patterns need to be altered, or even better, an exciting idea might pop up during a practice.

Once the planning is done, it is safest to go through the choreography in an unmounted

session. When the riders are confident of what they are doing, the choreography can be tried in a mounted session, making sure to always start at the walk first. It is important that each team member commits the freestyle to memory, as rules prohibit it from being called. A whistle may still be used as the signal to execute a move.

Music Selection

Music surrounds us and merely requires that we are aware of it. A good place for team members (or whoever is in charge) to start is with their personal collections of music, but it is also good to enlist friends in the search. Colleges may also have music libraries and listening areas to use. Internet, traditional and subscription car radio stations, traditional and online music stores, and other online sources such as YouTube are also great avenues. Instrumental music is preferred, however the use of vocals (oohs and aaahs) and a limited amount of lyrics are acceptable.

While studying the music, the listener should pay attention to the beat. To avoid purchasing a song that cannot be used, imagine what it would be like to ride to the music. Is the speed too fast or too slow for the trot? For the canter? If so, dismiss it. If it feels close, it can be purchased as a prospect. In individual freestyle, it is important to exactly match the beat of the music to the footfalls of the horse, but that is not the case in quadrille freestyle, since all horses will not always be moving at the exact same tempo (rate of repetition of the horse's steps or strides). A good plan is to determine the average tempo of the horses on the team and match the music's tempo to that.

Canter tempos fall in a narrow range, and quadrille freestyle would most likely use music between 95 and 100 beats per minute (bpm). Trot tempos can be far more varied though, and it might take a bit more doing to make it work. As a rule of thumb, start music in the 145 – 155 bpm range. For ponies and small horses the range may go to 165 and canter to 105 bpm. If the music is outside those ranges, or it is in the range but just does not look right with the group, it may be possible to alter the tempo to better reflect the way the team moves (see Editing on page 13).

The music should not just suggest the right tempo for the various gaits, it should also present a program. Either the instrumentation should be the same, or the selections should be connected by genre (jazz, classical, folk, rock, pop) or theme (children's music, Broadway, salute to an artist). This puts the program on the right track for sounding like an integrated composition rather than a compilation of miscellaneous pieces.

Interpretation

Once the music is adjusted to suggest the tempo of the team's gaits, the first step toward interpretation has already occurred. There are also other forms of interpretation the team can employ to further give its quadrille freestyle a dance-like quality.

Orchestras have a large range of sound, called dynamics. Powerful movements like extensions can be well expressed during a crescendo (building up) or a forte (loud or powerful) sequence, and softer movements like circles or serpentines during soft or gentle sequences. Occasionally, there is even something unusual in the music that suggests a movement, like a leg-yield or half-pass.



USDF ARCHIVE PHOTO

Uvas Valley Quadrille Team (Marie Forsell & Jane Escola in foreground and Jackie Breschneider & Pam Gilpin) shows how a quadrille works in nairs.

Not all music is performed by full orchestras, however, so if the team chooses Rock & Roll or selections by a small combo, the same dynamic range may not exist. In this case interpreting the musical phrase is the most effective tool to employ. Simply put, this means that when there is a change in the music, there is a change in the

move being done. Because changes do not need to occur at the letter, there is plenty of leeway for permitting interpretation.

Interpretation can occur in two forms in the quadrille freestyle. One of them is when everyone performs the same element at the same time at a particular place in the music, let's say doing a simple change at a point in the music that seems to say, "change here." There are instances when the entire group is not always initiating a move at the same time, however, such as it might be in a leg-yield, half-pass or extension. In these cases, the best way to show interpretation is for the *lead* rider or *lead* pair to initiate the move on the new musical phrase.

In a perfect world, the quadrille freestyle would have music that allows for interpreting through both dynamics and phrasing. For an example, as the phrase changes, there is also a big cymbal crash followed by a forte sequence and, right at the onset of that crash, the first rider begins an extension. Getting that effect requires good planning and practice, but it is the stuff that causes goose bumps.

Editing

Whether the decision has been made to piece the music together first or wait for the choreography to be underway, the music will need to be edited. With the expansion of computer use and good software, many people choose to do it themselves. In a Quadrille, it is likely that someone in the group is a do-it-yourselfer or knows someone who can do it for the team. Regardless of who the editor is, software will be needed.

There are a number of programs fulfilling a wide range of needs and they can be found in a number of places. Computer stores, computer magazines, online search engines, and instrument music stores can be investigated to find a suitable program. Free, downloadable programs work, but are limited in their scope. If the group's needs are simple, this may be enough, though.

The more features a software program offers or the better its processing capabilities, the more

expensive it is likely to be. For instance some programs offer audio only and have as little as two tracks, while others offer audio and MIDI, unlimited tracks and have a multitude of plug-ins. At the very least, the software should be able to take music directly from a CD (“ripping”), edit, change tempos, and convert the final composition to WAV in order to burn a viable, show-worthy CD. MP3 formats are good for personal listening devices but inadequate for performance needs and burning a CD, which is the official rule requirement.

Good editing has very distinct features. It has a clean sound, avoids long fade-ins, fade-outs or cross-fades between parts, and it never has an abrupt cut. The bottom line is that there should be nothing in the final composition that is distracting to the ear.

Sometimes it is worth it for the team to share the cost of hiring a professional. Professionals already own their own equipment, are knowledgeable about their software (no learning curve), and have experience to more quickly do a quality job.

On With The Show

Judging The Quadrille

While it is true that the basic principles of dressage make for the best performance, it would be very difficult for four horses and riders to perform “as one,” especially at the lower levels. Moreover, horses on any given team may not all be at the same level of training. Therefore the three *primary* considerations on each movement of the compulsory tests, as well as quadrille freestyle presentations, are spacing, synchrony and alignment. (See SASsy on pages 9 - 11)

Spacing refers to how evenly the teams keep the distance between each other both longitudinally and laterally. Synchrony is the timing of turns, circles, transitions, crossovers, and pass-throughs. It is judged on how the team starts and finishes together, as well as how they remain uniform throughout the

maneuver. Transitions from one gait to another are also a measure of synchrony. Alignment simply means how the rider’s *bodies* are lined up from side and front. This criterion is most exposed when the horses move down the center of the arena (longitudinal alignment) and when the team crosses the arena (lateral alignment).

These three considerations make up the base score for each numbered section in the body of the test. Secondary considerations that might affect the score are Impulsion and Submission. All these categories are repeated again in the Collective Marks. Alignment very often is dependent on synchrony, so in the Collective Marks these two are scored together.

Performance as a Group is the last of the Collective Marks, and the only one that carries a coefficient of 2. For high marks in performance, the riders should work as a well-rehearsed ensemble and no single rider should stand out. Furthermore, the horses should be compatible and at ease with each other in close quarters. While it is important for the team to present itself in a unique, attractive turnout that contributes to the feeling of a unified group, the most important basis for the score is the security and harmony with which the test is performed.

Competition Management & TD’s

USDF currently recognizes five compulsory tests for Quadrille Introductory, Training, First, Second, and Third. These tests may be obtained from the USDF website store. Rules and Guidelines are also available free online, as well as being a part of the Competition Handbook.

There are no prerequisites for entry into Quadrille competition and members do not need to be USEF or USDF members unless they are competing in another recognized classes at the same show. Quadrille team members tend to be from various training levels, so it would not be uncommon to have a Third Level rider participating in a Training Level Quadrille.

No special arrangements are necessary for a Quadrille team’s entrance into the competition

arena, since the team is mandated to enter in single file. Music may be used for the compulsory tests, but it is mandatory for Quadrille Freestyle. Time should be allotted for the team to test its music. Quadrille Freestyle may be offered at all levels from Introductory to Grand Prix, even though the standard tests only go to Third Level. Score sheets are the same for all levels, so it is important to mark the appropriate box on the scoresheet with the level at which the team will be competing. The judge will need this information.

The warm-up arena will be affected by the addition of a Quadrille team, and if there are two or more Quadrille entries, the impact will be even greater. Competition organizers should alert the paddock steward to be aware of the situation and to remind teams that whistles should *not* be used in the warm up area. It is also recommended that all competitors be aware. A notice to them at their check-in such as, “Warm-up area may be more crowded than normally encountered due to the Quadrille class,” would be sufficient.

Freestyle, Pas de Deux, and Quadrille are great crowd-pleasers and show management should try to encourage these classes. They are a great way to draw spectators and, consequently, sponsors. If these are not offered as a competition class, they could be used as lunch, dinner, or post-dinner enjoyment. Schooling shows and off-season gatherings also provide great platforms for costumed classes.

Team Member Responsibilities

A number of established dressage shows are adding Quadrille classes to their Prize Lists. There are some points of etiquette that must be addressed so Quadrille teams remain welcome additions to show schedules.

The first step to competing in a show is to fill out the *entry form*. Designate one member of the team (usually the team manager or secretary) to organize this phase. She will need to fill in the entry form, to collect fees, to be responsible for all members signing the release forms and order any supplies, such as shavings, that may be necessary. The entry form must clearly state the

team’s name, level of competition, all the team members’ (and their horses’) names, and the information for the team’s point of contact.

Rules of Etiquette

- When walking, always ride off the track so faster moving horses can have the rail.
- Never stop along the rail to talk to anyone. If you need to stop for any reason, or if you are having a discipline problem, get off the rail and move toward the center. Sudden stops can cause an accident.
- Do not suddenly cut in front of another horse.
- For traffic moving in opposite directions, passing is done left to left; for traffic moving in the same direction, pass as you would in a car (left hand to left hand).
- **DO NOT PRACTICE WITH A WHISTLE IN THE WARM UP AREA.**

Be sure to ask if the show will have a sound system on which you may play your music. If not, ask if you may bring your own. Remember, you must be able to have power ringside. If you must use extension cords, make sure they are run in a way that will not create a safety hazard. In cases where the team is performing an exhibition at an event that does not have a dressage arena, the team may not only need to bring its own sound system, it may also need to bring an arena (or at the very least cones), a way to measure the area, and the personnel to set it up. In these cases, a team member may want to go to the site in advance to make sure the space will be adequate.

On the day of the show, the first order of business is to check-in with the show office to let them know the team is on the grounds. The team should be aware of any special warm-up rules. If it appears that the warm up area will be crowded, the team may need to be creative. Team members may warm up individually or in pairs, adding

group work before the team is next to go. Check out the grounds ahead of time. There may be an alternative area where you can at least walk through the patterns.

If stabling, unload the horses quickly and promptly, then park the trailers in the designated area. This allows for a good traffic flow so others may come in behind. Do not use supplies that do not belong to you. If you are short on what you ordered, the stable manager will be more than glad to help. Be sure to keep your area neat.

Quadrille develops many good qualities in its riders, especially spatial awareness, sharing that space with others, and the ability to be flexible. With these skills intact, show situations should present no unusual challenges. Quadrille is new to many venues however, so teams need to remember that they are ambassadors for Quadrille. They should remain positive and courteous regardless of any circumstances that may present themselves.

Above all, always show good sportsmanship. It takes many people to run a show whether it is volunteers, secretaries, technical delegates, sponsors and so on, and saying “Thank you” is wonderful way to cap off the show experience.

Resource List

- USDF Quadrille Rules, Guidelines and Definitions
- USDF Quadrille Tests
- USDF Connection articles by various contributors

Rules and tests can be found at www.usdf.org

Glossary

* Judging criteria listed on the score sheets for standard or freestyle quadrille tests.

*Alignment

Occurs in two directions; in a column/file or laterally.

- *Column Alignment:* Whether single file or in pairs, refers mainly to centerline work. Alignment should be such that the judge can see only the first rider or riders (in pairs).
- *Lateral Alignment:* Mainly seen when riders turn individually from the long side and go across the arena. The judge should be able to see only the nearest rider when alignment is good. It is the riders' bodies that are aligned, not the horses' heads.

*Balance

Fairly even use of right and left rein work.

Beat

Underlying pulse of the music.

*Choreography

Arrangement of gaits, paces, movements, figures, transitions, combinations, and patterns that comprise a program.

Cloverleaf

A figure formed when riders are coming in pairs from opposite direction on the centerline, and at the quarter markers (ten meters from each end of the arena) perform individual 10 meter circles, making the E-B line the center between the circles.

Cohesiveness

The music is linked by genre, theme or orchestration.

Column or File

Used interchangeably to describe riding one behind the other, either single file or double file (in pairs).

Combination

A direct connection of any movement or figure with another movement or figure.

*Creativity

Elements are combined in imaginative ways; interesting or uncommon lines or patterns are used; not test-like.

*Degree of Difficulty

The horse/rider team successfully performs a single element or a combination of elements in a way that exceeds the requirement of the standard test of the same level.

Dressing the line

A term borrowed from the military, it means to make the line straight and even. When a team is dressed right, they are aligned with the person who is furthest to the right. Today we prefer to use the word Alignment.

Dynamics

Variations in the intensity of sound.

Editing

Music has a smooth flow; there are no abrasive cuts, transitions, or fades.

Elements

The basic components that may be included in freestyle choreography. Elements are movements, figures, and transitions.

Fan Formation

When coming down the centerline in pairs for a salute, the second pair splits, and the riders fan out to come up along side of the center pair.

Genre

Category of music marked by a distinct style such as jazz, Baroque, rock, etc.

*Interpretation

Choreography reflects the dynamics and phrasing of the music.

Lyrics

The use of words in a song.

Movement

- Test movement: a section of the test to be evaluated with one score on a scoresheet.
- Dressage Movements: leg-yield, rein-

back, shoulder-in, travers, renvers, turn on haunches, half-pass (trot or canter), flying change(s), pirouette (walk or canter), piaffe, and passage.

For the purpose of the current Quadrille Freestyle tests, *forbidden movement(s)* refers to Test Movement.

Oblique

An angular line of travel from the centerline to the side or from the side to the centerline or opposite side of the arena, as opposed to straight across.

Pass through

Pairs approaching each other, making sufficient room to allow one horse to pass between the approaching two horses.

Pattern

Geometric design formed in the arena when movements, figures and transitions are combined.

Phrasing

The way sequences of notes are grouped together to form units of melody; the expression of musical sentences.

*Rhythm

- In music, the repeated pattern or grouping of musical beats
- In dressage, the characteristic sequence of footfalls and phases of a given gait.

*Spacing

There are two kinds of spacing; longitudinal (or columnar) and lateral.

- *Longitudinal Spacing:* Refers to distance between riders when riding single file, or pairs when riding in column. Exact distance is not specified-experienced teams can use nose-to-tail spacing, while beginning teams may prefer more distance; essential that it is uniform throughout each movement. Spacing may be changed from movement to movement, depending on the gait or the pattern.

- *Lateral Spacing:* Refers to the spacing between two or more riders when approaching the judge head-on, especially in the salutes. It would also apply in individual turns across the arena, and would be easiest seen by the side judge.

Style

Distinctive and identifiable form used in artistic expression.

*Suitability

The music matches and expresses the horses and their gaits.

*Synchrony

Refers to all riders turning or making their transitions at the same moments, such as left and right individual turns; left and right individual circles and half circles, etc. Everyone must start and finish at the same time.

*Tempo

- In music, the speed of musical beats.
- In dressage, the rate of repetition of the horse's stride.

Test-like

Directly repeating a combination or pattern from the standard test with no variation; lack of creativity.

Theme

A distinct, recurring and unifying quality or idea.

Thread The Needle

A movement in which riders coming single file from the corners of the arena cross each other's paths alternately on the centerline.

*Use of arena

Utilizing the dressage arena space in its entirety; distributing the elements throughout the arena.

Vocal

The human voice used as an instrument.

Level	Gaits	Requirements	Purpose
Introductory	Walk & Trot	Work in pairs; synchronous turns (four abreast, single file, individual 10 meter half-circles), Demonstrate spacing, alignment and synchrony.	Submission. Confidence enough to easily work in file, pairs, and individual movements at walk and trot; maintain spacing, alignment and synchrony.
Training	Walk, Trot & Canter	Canter 20-meter circle in file. Confirmed canter leads and reasonably well balanced.	Confirm requirements of USEF Training Level tests; work in file and individual moves at all gaits; work in pairs at walk and trot; maintain spacing, alignment and synchrony.
First	Walk, Trot & Canter	Leg-yield, 10 meter circle at trot, lengthen stride at trot, 15-meter circle at canter.	Confirm requirements of USEF First Level tests; work in file and individual moves at all gaits; work in pairs at walk and trot; maintain spacing, alignment and synchrony.
Second	Walk, Trot & Canter	Shoulder-in, haunches-in, medium trot, individual 10-meter circles at trot and canter, counter canter, simple changes.	Confirm requirements of USEF Second Level tests; work in file and individual moves at all gaits; work in pairs at walk and trot; maintain spacing, alignment and synchrony.
Third	Walk, Trot & Canter	Shoulder-in, half -pass at trot and canter, flying changes of lead, medium trot and canter, turns on the haunches, 10-meter circles at trot and canter.	Confirm requirements of USEF Third Level tests; work in file and individual moves at all gaits; work in fours at walk and trot; maintain spacing, alignment and synchrony.



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© United States Dressage Federation
4051 Iron Works Parkway,
Lexington, KY 40511
[\(859\) 971-2277](tel:8599712277) • www.usdf.org