

Does Linear Scoring Lead Into A Sport Index?

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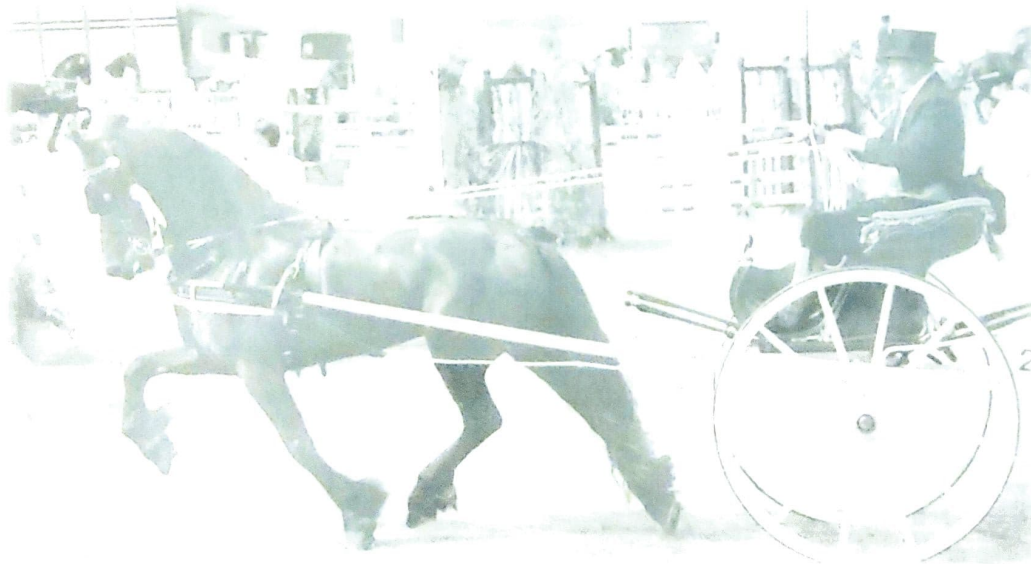
The Friesian Horse Studbook, FPS, is researching the connection between exterior and sport aptitude. The first part is the search for a connection between linear scoring and the ABFP tests. Then the stallion sport indexes that are in the works will be covered.

At the age of three or four years old, a mare receives a linear score at an inspection. On that day, a moment in time is recorded of the exterior and the movement. The judging data is entered into the computer and processed annually into the indexes of the studbook stallions. The owner receives a copy of the linear scoring form in the mail. He/she can use the information on the stronger and weaker points of the mare when choosing a stallion.

Before, the KWPN breeders had to wait for a reliable sport index of a stallion until he was at least ten years old. After all, only then can the data of the 4 to 6 year old offspring of the stallion be published. Now the breeders can also choose from the expected sport indexes; data for the younger stallions of 4 years old and parents that don't have offspring yet. Back to the multitude of data that has meanwhile been stored in the treasury of the FPS.

A Noble Head Does Not Produce a Better Walk

After almost 1,300 ABFP tests, a computer was used to process the obtained scores. The big question is: Is there a connection between certain exterior characteristics and the movement and



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The Treasury of the Studbook

Of all judged Friesian horses, about 10% are presented for an ABFP test where movement and aptitude for riding, driving and/or show driving is tested. The KWPN Dutch warmblood breeders' data shows a clear connection between the animals that scored well in an aptitude test (EPTM: Eigen Prestatie Test Merrie-Individual Achievement Test Mare) and their eventual sport achievements. If this would also prove to be strongly related for our Friesian horses than we would have less time to wait for the data on the passing on of sport characteristics.

sport aptitude of a horse? In addition to the rating of breed characteristics, such as expression of the head, hair and color, there will also be a scoring of characteristics that are expected to influence the purpose of the horse and the length of use of the Friesian horse. Everyone can see that a steep shoulder limits the use of the front leg. But whether a long forearm improves on the roominess of the trot cannot be judged right off the bat. The marks for the exterior characteristics on the linear scoring form are combined with the ABFP test data to see if those may

LINEAR SCORING, cont.

render certain positive connections. We call that correlation. Do you think, for example, that the characteristic "expression/head," the first characteristic on the scoring form of your mare, has any positive relation to the trot and the riding test of her ABFP test? Unfortunately, a horse with a noble head turns out not to show a better trot or canter in the ABFP test. The riding test was also not performed better than average. Not all data that came out of the comparison are legible for the average aficionado and breeder. To find the interesting information amidst the avalanche of data we put the facts in three columns. Across in the first column means a good correlation. The second column is for characteristics with an average correlation and the last column is for little correlation. We also differentiated between the maximum, optimum, and lower-bar data. When it concerns the maximum characteristics, when a noble head is more desired than a less noble head, we use the maximum term. For the so-called optimum characteristics, when the middle (25) and/or the box next to it (20 or 30) is most desirable, both characteristics are mentioned. The correlation has been marked with the underscored characteristic. These optimum characteristics have been highlighted with gray in the index. Lastly, the lower-bar data are listed, where the judges give a rating (from 0 to 10) for the characteristics: breed type, conformation, quality of legs, walk and trot. In the latest edition (June 2004) of the linear scoring form, it's indicated which score is most desirable. For you as an owner, it is pointed out that the middle column, with a score of 25, is not always the most desirable score for every characteristic.

Translation and Explanation

Not everybody excels in reading and analyzing indexes. Therefore, the facts and conclusions that are sufficient are here in brief. If you own a Friesian horse that is rated 30, 35, or 40 for a vertical neck on its scoring form, you stand a good chance that this same horse scores high for the trot, driving test, show-driving test, and willingness to work in the ABFP test. It's the same the other way around. A horse with a more horizontal neck (a score of 20, 15 or 10) will have a bigger chance to get a low mark for trot, driving test, show-driving test, and willingness to work at the ABFP. For a horse with a sloping shoulder (a score of 30, 35 or 40) you can expect high marks for the categories trot, canter, riding test, driving test, and willingness to work. It is a shame that the characteristics - width of the loin, shape of the croup, and length of the croup - offer predictions that are of little use. A horse with a long gaskin muscle (a score of 30, 35 or 40) will most likely score well in the trot and the show-driving test, which is hopeful.

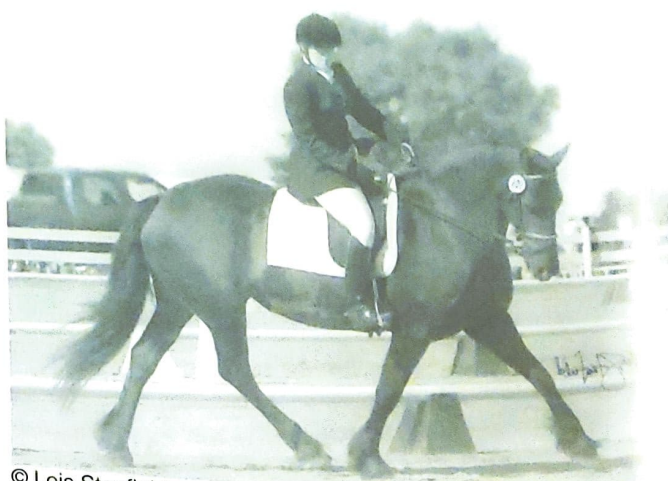
Connection Lead Line and Test

At the inspections it's often questioned whether the walk in a triangle and the little trot around in hand, provides the judges with enough information. After all, at home during practice, without any tension, stress or a slippery arena, most horses do great? Still, the judges obtain enough information from a few moments in time, because during the ABFP test (with multiple

test points) the observations are not much different. Better yet, there is even a good correlation between the walk and trot performed in hand (the inspection "on the lead line") and the performances during the ABFP test. Even the length of the walk and the expression of the walk (weak or powerful) in hand provides information about the canter during the test. Perhaps it goes without saying that the walk will provide little information about good or bad show-driving tests, on the other hand. Because we also want to preserve the specific breed characteristics with the breeding of the Friesian horse, there is less opportunity to improve on other characteristics. After all, the more characteristics we want to take into consideration, the slower the genetic progress will be. Yet the breed type has a good correlation with the aptitude for most of the sport characteristics that are measured with the ABFP test. Exceptions are the walk and the canter that have an average correlation with the breed type. The latter is shown in the lower part of the index.

For Those Who Want to Look Beyond Breeding

Making progress is not just the objective in the sport of sailing. As breeders we also want to achieve results as quickly as possible. Now that it is clear that with the data of the inspection-in-hand to make good predictions about sport aptitude, we can pose the question, "What is the added value of an ABFP test?" It turned out that the data of the tests provide lots of extras, just like the large sail on a sailing boat. In one of the next Phryso's the data will be matched up with the stallions. In spite of clear connections between exterior and the ABFP test it has become evident that a number of stallions can create surprises. The soon-to-be published overview will explain to you why the linear scoring form cannot quite reveal everything of a stallion's expected sport index.



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Lower Bar Score
Breed type
Conformation
Quality of legs
Walk
Trot

