



The Ins and Outs of the IBOP TEST

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For the purpose of monitoring the aptitude and quality of the population of Friesian horses, the KFPS needs some assessment criteria. The Stallion Inspection and breeding days, which are held in all parts of the world, are the most commonly known benchmarks. Less known are the ABFP and IBOP tests. Of these two tests the IBOP has gradually won in popularity and importance, so let's take a closer look at this assessment tool.

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The abbreviation IBOP is short for 'Instelling Bruikbaarheid Onderzoek voor Paarden en Ponys' (Institution Utility Examination Horses and Ponies). It is a test aimed at establishing an objective assessment of a horse's natural aptitude and suitability for a specific use. The test will give the owner a good perception of the horse's aptitude as a dressage, driving or show driving horse. The IBOP can be an alternative route to obtain a Star declaration and is a condition for awarding permanent Crown or Model predicates.

Another function of the IBOP is the gathering of data of individual horses, which will give the KFPS more insight into the breeding value of the horse in question and its ancestors. The breeding value is a blueprint of the horse's genetic aptitude. Breeding values are a means to compare the breeding value of individual horses to the average genetic aptitude of all horses within the Studbook. Horses with more than average IBOP scores for the riding test will have a relatively high breeding value as a riding horse. There are three different IBOP tests: dressage under saddle (riding test), driving dressage (driving test) and the carriage test (show driving test).

PREDICATES

Everybody is free to enter a horse for an IBOP test in order to gain a clear understanding of the horse's sport aptitude for

a particular discipline. In the past few years, however, the IBOP has become a reassessment tool for Star declaration or is used to determine a horse's eligibility for permanent Crown or Model declaration.

Stallions, geldings and mares with a minimum age of 3, whose movement at inspections was found to be insufficient for a Star declaration, can be selected for ABFP or IBOP testing by the judges. This situation applies to horses that have met the Star criteria for exterior but have not shown sufficient movement in hand. In these cases the IBOP offers the horse a second chance to show its aptitude and suitability for riding or driving, giving it another chance to obtain the Star declaration. The IBOP must be completed by the end of the calendar year following the inspection and participation is limited to two attempts per year.

PERMANENT CROWN/MODEL

Taking part in an IBOP to secure the Star declaration is a great second chance, but is not obligatory. For permanent Crown or Model predicates, however, the IBOP or ABFP test is mandatory. Star mares can be declared Preliminary Crown and 7 year-old and older Star mares can become Preliminary Crown or Preliminary Model. Seven year-old and older Crown mares can become Preliminary Model. In the Netherlands, the designation of these predicates takes place during the Central Examination. Outside the Netherlands, breeding days are the chosen moments for designation of predicates. For permanent Crown or Model status the mare must have completed an IBOP or ABFP test.

The difference between ABFP and IBOP

Within the KFPS there are two examinations to obtain the IBOP and the ABFP. ABFP stands for 'Aanleidend en Utility Test for Friesian Horses). The ABFP and IBOP have differences.

The ABFP test is used for 3-to 5-year old mares and of 3- and 4-year-old offspring of young, approved 7-year-old and older horses and is not a progeny test.

The IBOP lasts no longer than the duration of the IBOP rider. The ABFP test takes place over a period of 1 year and will be collectively trained and assessed by a consistent impression of a young stallion's offspring as a factor to the designation of the Star, Crown or Model.

BLUEPRINT IBOP TESTS

The format and assessment criteria of the riding, driving and carriage test have been laid down in the General Regulations IBOP which can be found on the KFPS website. In any part of the world, these tests are subject to the regulations as defined by the KFPS. A description of the tests as well as an explanation of the assessment criteria can also be found on the website.

Outside the Netherlands, the IBOP tests are usually ridden at breeding days and judged by the inspection judges. All IBOP tests must be ridden with just one combination in the ring. After the test is finished, the combinations of the IBOP riding test are expected back in the ring in groups of two or three. At the request of the judges the participants may be asked to re-ride one or more parts of the test.

ASSESSMENT BARS

It should be noted that the tests have been designed in such a way that the judges can assess a horse's sport aptitude for any of the disciplines with the help of the assessment bars. The tests are not about assessing the rider's or driver's talent. Horses that are competing at relatively high levels will not necessarily automatically achieve high scores in their IBOP tests. Correct presentation of horses is a key ingredient.

The IBOP tests are judged on the basis of assessment bars. The same assessment bar is used for the riding and driving test. The walk, trot, canter and self-carriage/balance are each counted twice. Additional scores are given for suppleness, transitions and impulsion. To some extent, the show driving test has its own specific assessment criteria, in which the walk is weighed

Herman Smit

During his working life, Herman Smit has been a crop farmer. This line of work left him ample opportunities to be active in the field of equine sports as well as breeding. He has been actively involved with several studbooks and is still continuing to do so. Starting as a rider, he has progressed from course designer and organizer to being a trainer, coach and jury member. It was just by coincidence that Herman Smit became involved with the KFPS performance tests. Right through to this day, he is known for his contribution to the set-up and implementation of, in particular, the IBOP test. Herman Smit organizes courses and seminars about the IBOP and is generally considered to be an expert in this field.

once, but the scores for trot and use of the foreleg in trot are counted twice. The use of the hind legs is also weighed once and self-carriage/balance are counted twice. Additional scores are given for front, suppleness and impulsion.

SCORING

Each element in the assessment bar will be given a score ranging from 0 to 10. The maximum score for each test stands at 110 points. For the Star declaration a horse must reach an IBOP (or ABFP) score with a minimum of 6.7 for the basic gaits. The minimum allowed score for one of the basic gaits is a 5. Performance requirements for the Crown and Model predicates are higher. For permanent Crown or Model declaration the IBOP score must be a minimum of 77 points. The average score for basic gaits must be a 7. The Crown or Model predicate cannot be awarded if the horse has scored lower than a 6 for any of the basic gaits.

CERTIFICATES

Anywhere in the world, the assessment of the IBOP test will be carried out by two qualified jury members who have been appointed by the KFPS. The judges' findings will be documented on a certificate. When the test is finished, the head of the jury will communicate the outcome to all parties concerned. All IBOP results will also be publicized in the PHRYSO and on the KFPS website.

PREPARATIONS

The owner of the horse is free to decide who will train and ride the horse during the IBOP test. People should decide beforehand in which discipline they wish to take part. For Friesian horses, dressage and driving are not too much apart. Horses that do well in the riding test usually do well in the driving test too and vice versa. A show driving test is evidently altogether different.

As said before, the IBOP test does not concentrate on the rider's or driver's abilities, but focuses on the horse's natural aptitude for a specific use. To show its natural aptitude to the best of its advantage, a horse must be relaxed. Riders and drivers are there to help the horse achieve this, in the same way as runners do who present the horse in hand at inspections. Please keep this in mind when preparing your horse for the IBOP test. ♡

test a horse's aptitude and suitability for a specific use:
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The ABFP test is used for 3-to 5-year old mares, geldings and stallions, and specifically for the first crop of 3- and 4-year-old offspring of young, approved Friesian breeding stallions. The IBOP is mainly for 4-year-old and older horses and is not a progeny test.

The IBOP lasts no longer than the duration of the test and the owner is free to choose both trainer and rider. The ABFP test takes place over a period of five weeks, during which the horses stay at one location and will be collectively trained and assessed by an established team. This way it is possible to generate a consistent impression of a young stallion's offspring. For both tests the outcome can be a contributory factor to the designation of the Star, Crown or Mode predicate.