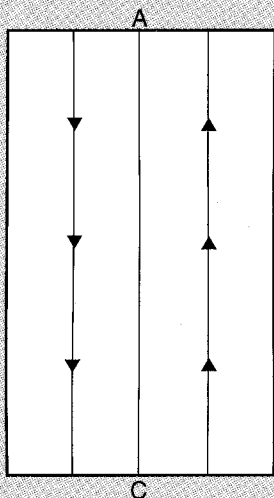


# FLYING CHANGES

To have a good flying change we need to have a good canter. It is the correct combination of balance and impulsion that makes it possible for the horse to do a correct flying change. The object of this article is to explain the work that we can do in order to develop this balance and impulsion. As I said in a previous article, these elements - balance and impulsion - produce rhythm, straightness, contact, collection and lightness. We must have the same good quality in the canter on both sides (straightness) or we are going to have problems with the flying changes, they will be late behind, crooked or with swinging hindquarters.

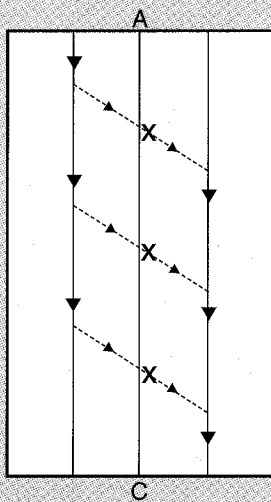
The half passes, and the counter canter, which is a very good exercise to develop suppleness and straightness, should be well established before starting any work towards the flying changes. The very first work that the horse must be comfortable doing is the transitions walk/canter and especially, canter/walk. The horse must maintain calmness, straightness and lightness. This proves that the balance and impulsion were maintained. We can ask the first flying change from almost all the exercises that I am going to explain. We should choose the one that gives us better quality from the point of view of balance and impulsion.

The following exercises are the ones from which we are going to ask the flying change.



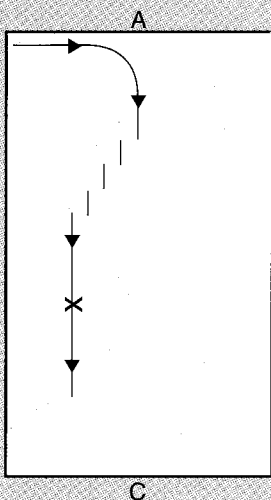
A) Taking the quarter-line of the arena and coming back on the other quarter line, keeping the horse absolutely straight, which proves that he is moving with the correct balance and

impulsion. When we feel that the horse is comfortable doing this exercise, we take the short diagonal from one quarter-line to the other, making a transition to the walk and another transition to the canter on the other lead between two quarter-lines.



We do this often, changing the place where we take the short diagonal, and doing this only when the canter on the quarter-line is absolutely straight. If you ride the exercise like this, when we are going to ask the flying change, the horse never becomes anxious, excited or nervous because we never take the short diagonal on the quarter line from the same place.

When the horse is comfortable and confident doing this exercise, instead of the transitions to the walk and to the canter, we ask for the flying change. If this flying change was good, immediately make a



transition to walk, and reward.

B) As I said before, the canter half-pass should be well established on both sides (straightness). From A or C, take the centre-line, and half-pass to the quarter-line. On the quarter-line go straight, make a transition to walk,

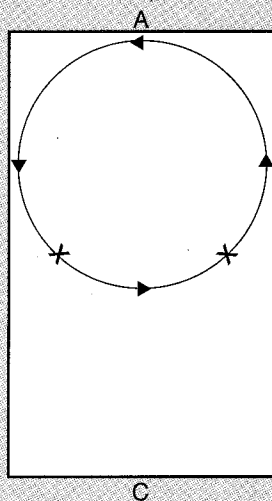
and another transition to canter on the other lead. During the half-pass, ride to improve the collection and impulsion of the canter.

When we are able to keep the horse very straight after the half-passes and the transitions to the walk and to the new canter are executed with good balance and impulsion, instead of these transitions we ask for the flying change.

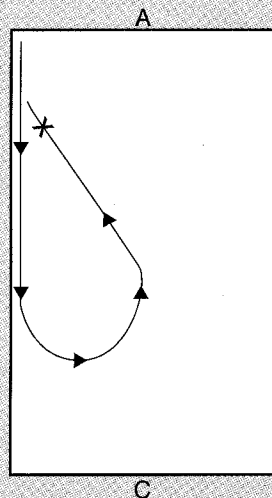
C) Transitions canter/walk and walk/canter on the twenty metre circle at A or C.

When you feel they are correct and with ease, we take the counter canter on that same circle, and just before touching the wall we make a transition to walk and another transition to true canter. When we have the horse doing this exercise showing good impulsion and balance on the transitions to the walk and to the canter, instead of this transition we ask for the flying change.

D) Again from A or C transitions canter/walk and walk/canter on the twenty metre circle, and also transitions from the ten metre circle in collected canter to the twenty



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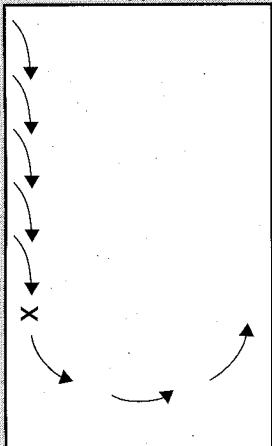
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**“What is important is to produce a good canter before asking the flying change. It is not enough just to have a flying change.”**

metre circle in medium canter. When we find this transition to be of good quality, we go straight from the second corner, and after the second letter, we make a ten metre half circle, we take the short diagonal to the wall, and just before reaching the wall we make a transition to the walk, and to the canter on the other lead. Again when we have the horse doing these transitions showing good impulsion and balance, we ask for the flying change instead of the transitions.

A



C

canter again. After a couple of these transitions, again from the renver on the counter canter, make a transition to the

walk, change the bend and take the true canter going to the twenty metre circle. When we feel the horse comfortable doing this work, instead of the transition to the walk, we ask the flying change, also going to the twenty-metre circle. Like always, if the flying change was good, we make a transition to the walk in order to keep the calmness and we reward. Before asking any flying changes, I think we should train the horse to do all these exercises, and choose the one that we feel gives us a better canter to make the first flying change. If any one fails, or the horse becomes anxious or nervous, we always have the others from which to choose.

Every time that we feel our horse becoming excited or anxious in any of the exercises explained, we should put the horse on the twenty metre circle and make transitions canter/walk/walk/canter, in order to establish the harmony and make the horse responsive to our half halt. Of course there are many other ways to teach the flying changes. These are the ones that I normally prefer. I didn't talk about aids, inside leg or outside leg or whatever. What is important is to produce

a good canter before asking the flying change. It is not enough just to have a flying change. We want one with expression, and this can only happen if we produce a canter with power and expression, which is the result of a good combination of balance and impulsion. I personally use the outside leg to keep the aids very simple, because I know that when

I am going to make flying changes every stride I don't have time to do too many things.

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