

“Only as good as the weakest link!”

Limiting Factors of Peak Performance

Horse	Rider
1. Conformation – <i>most important: hind leg conformation and how head & neck attach to body</i> 2. Soundness 3. Temperament 4. Gaits - Kyra only likes horses to have 15-20 cm overstep in walk to be collectable - Extended trot = expensive trot - Canter improves with strength and training	1. Soundness (<i>back pain comes from weak abs</i>) 2. Temperament 3. Clear goals - Ambition - Commitment - Financial situation

Important factors for <i>Horse</i>:	Important factors for <i>Rider</i>:
- Vet - Physio Therapist - Feed - Shoeing	- Trainer, sponsor, coach, federation - Fitness, tone (not strength) balance, coordination - Mental training – never better than physical tone - Level of skill

External Factors:	
- Facilities - Stabling - Arena, good footing	- Transportation - Turnout - Equipment

Competition Attitude

1. *Preparation* – use every show as a rehearsal for the next level
 - She doesn't school entire tests often at home. Train parts at home, canter one day, extensions another, sequences at the right place in arena
2. *Nerves* – the more confident you are at home doing movements the less nervous you'll be at shows
3. Goal setting
4. *Calculate* your average score, and then figure out what it will take to drop the lowest score. This way, you don't put greater expectations on yourself at important shows because you should only work to do a little better than you average
5. *Arrive* at show – don't worry about what everyone else is doing, you have no influence on others, only on *yourself*
6. *Warm-up* check out warm up environment, consider weather
 - Kyra arrives 3 hours before class, checks out environment, lays down to rest, and goes over test movements at least 3 times mentally
 - Warm up should be a confidence booster for both horse and rider
7. *Rider* is her own worst enemy
8. *Test Ride* every step. Always focus on what's happening but do not pay attention to score boards, audience or judges when showing
9. *Feedback* - should sit down and mentally rehearse very good tests and make notes about how it felt, what went right; video feedback is very useful for rider
10. *Disappointment* is often caused by over expectations. The horse doesn't know if one show is more important than another.

Kyra's General Notes:

- Kyra's horses are hand walked ½ hour before mounting, then she rides 45 minutes and an assistant cools the horse down 20 minutes. Then in the afternoon, the horse is walked 1 hour.
- When schooling, Kyra goes up and down the training pyramid so that she does not school one movement repeatedly. She will work on all elements relating to the movement.

Symposium, Day One: Kyra

4. Upper body weight goes down to hips and legs hang from hips
5. If horse is slow to turn, use outside leg forward near shoulder
6. If horse anticipates a turn, like a corner, halt in the corners until he starts to concentrate on the rider
7. Don't be quick to ride the neck down, otherwise you will be riding the brake all the time
8. When horse falls one way, then do a turn away from that direction to get horse to carry itself
9. Horse has to carry rider's weight on the place where the withers meet the back
10. Never put leg on and squeeze – only quick spurts with lower leg, otherwise horse will want rider to carry him
11. Keep hip just behind wither – flexion point
12. Need to feel equal weight on both hips
13. Pull abs in and then push your guts against your abdominal wall
14. Look straightforward, not to the inside of the circle because hips will become unbalanced.
15. For riders who are collapsed over the inside ribcage/hip, look to outside of circle
16. Don't turn head in turns, only eyes
17. Horse's back bounces riders' butt like a ball – will get often air time between butt and saddle
18. When horse is heavy, use elbows not fingers to get him to soften. Once he's through then can use fingers
19. Imagine someone pushing on triceps forward and rider pushes back; that's how you should ride the reins
20. Let seat bones bounce – bear down happens in hip joint
21. Leg has no power when it's behind your hip (too far back). Leg is most powerful when it is directly under rider's hip
22. For the horse that wants to take over in leg yield, do walk transitions in the middle of the leg yield to quicken the hind legs
23. When horse gets strong in under neck or pushes out behind, fix it with turns not reins – imagine that rein is attached to the under neck, not mouth
24. Kyra holds curb rein under pinky and bridle between the ring & middle fingers – the traditional way to hold reins puts too much curb action pulling down. She also likes the 3 in 1 method with both curb reins in the outside hand working like side reins
25. Focus on sending the horse's withers where you want to go, not his head-steer like you're steering a bus
26. You want small collected steps, *not slow*
27. When horse pushes against hand, the back is sagging and so hind leg needs to be activated
28. When riding, imagine hamstrings get heavy and fall to the ground
29. When horse spooks, ride a reverse with the haunches going toward the scary thing. Also when the hind legs are crossing, the horse can't brace them in fear. Can use this in show arena if you ride on the inside track
30. Try to sit on the same spot on the saddle so that you don't go forward and back with your seat
31. Horse should feel like he grows in front into canter transition
32. Exercise: walk/pirouette with 2-3 canter steps interspersed

33. When teaching passage/piaffe in hand, start with front legs and get them to flex all the way at elbow, weight should shift to leg on the ground and start teaching on the spot, like Spanish Walk
- Horse needs to learn to balance weight on 3 legs on ground when learning to lift a leg on the spot
34. Learning Zones – comfort, stretch, stress
35. Changes: 3 strides to do single change
- Stride 1 prepare and engage back with outside leg
 - Stride 2 move inside leg back
 - Stride 3 change
 1. Need to be able to pressurize horse within series of changes.
 2. Quality of canter needs to be same after change as before.
 3. When horse anticipates changes, don't punish or make a big deal of it, just pressurize him more

Pressurize and Release

- Don't let horse run away – even in walk. Comes from being flight animal
- Don't try to lift horse in passage – he has to lift himself (think: *rein back*); stay in middle of saddle in changes, even if horse tries to toss you to the side. Only use lower leg when you feel the back is sagging
- Think of holding reins as if they were a strap around horse's neck. If you pull too hard to one side, the strap will simply rotate around
- Rider's center of gravity has to stay in the same place especially in canter
- **** Horse has to carry rider **** not the other way around
- Teach piaffe and passage at the same time so that they don't get too good at one. Kyra focuses on the transition between them and works harder on the weaker one

Day Two

Coming soon!