

DRILL TEAM JUDGES SYMPOSIUM

Each year the California State Horsemen's Association Drill Team Program puts on a Judges Symposium that is open to everyone. The goals are to not only provide additional training for judges but also to make sure everyone is on the same page as much as possible.

If we can standardize what judges expect then teams can train accordingly. To reach those goals both judges and team representatives should be present.

Each year a different topic is discussed. Some past presentations have been lost unfortunately. Getting presentation on the web site will hopefully be a step to preserving presentations and make them available to everyone.

The Presentation for the 2017 Judges Symposium was "Difficulty", what goes into judging difficulty on the scoring category and what should teams focus on to improve their Difficulty scores.

DIFFICULTY

**What is “Difficulty”?
What factors do
judges consider when
determining your
“Difficulty” score. It’s
a lot more than you
think.**

What is Difficulty?

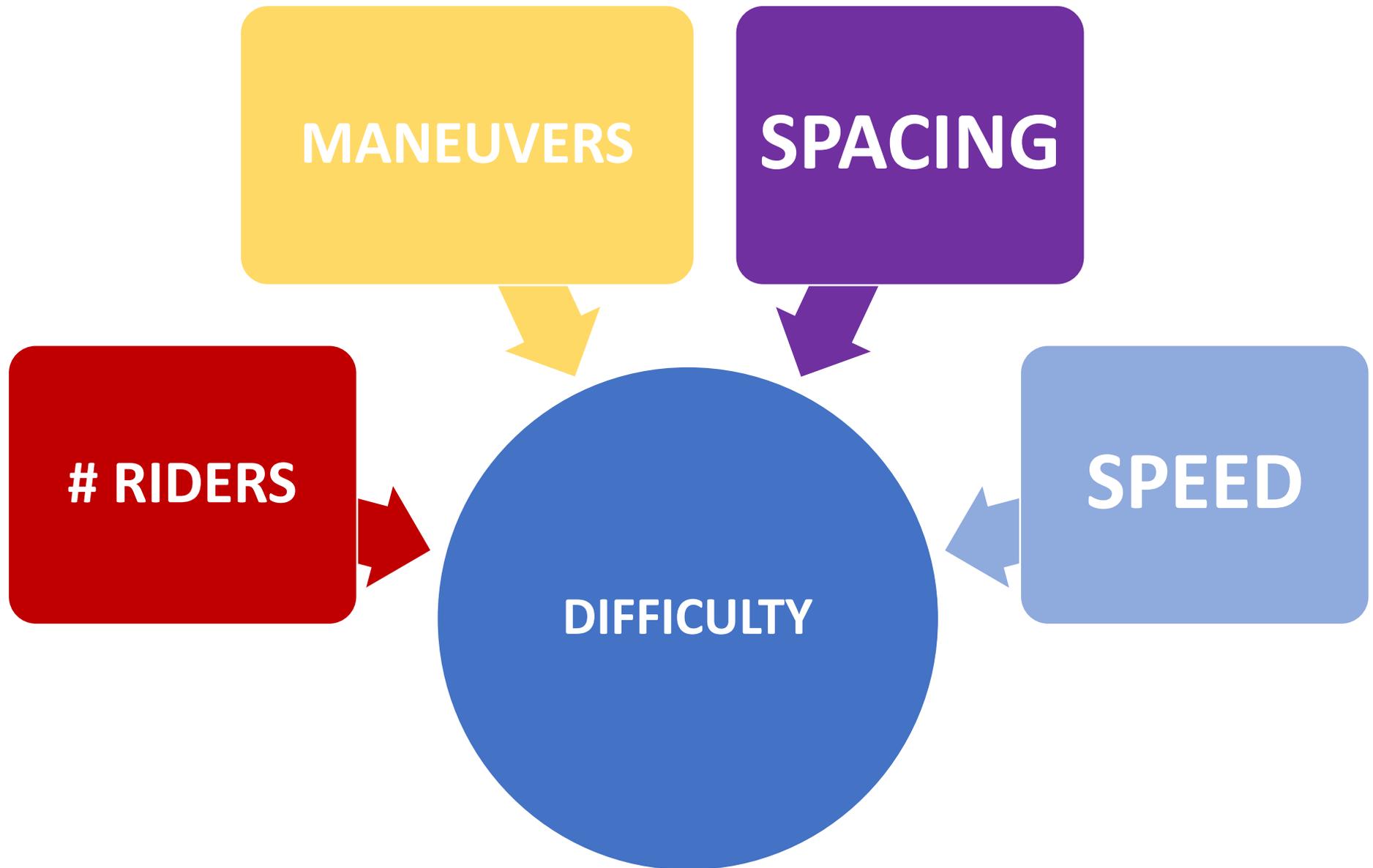
1) Four Factors of Difficulty

- Number of Riders
- Maneuvers
- Spacing
- Speed

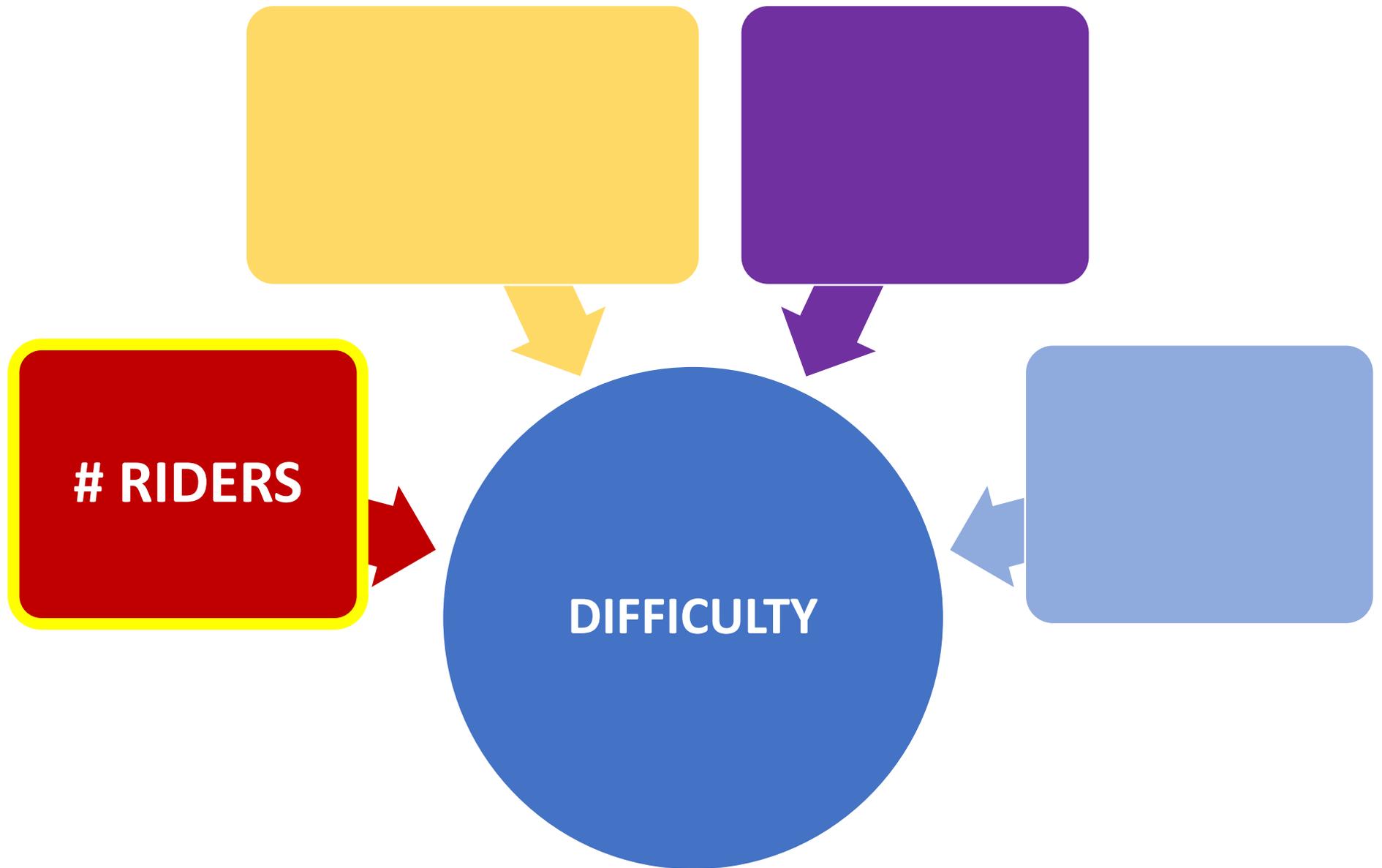
2) 3-S Triangle

3) Taking it to the Next Level

FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY



FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY



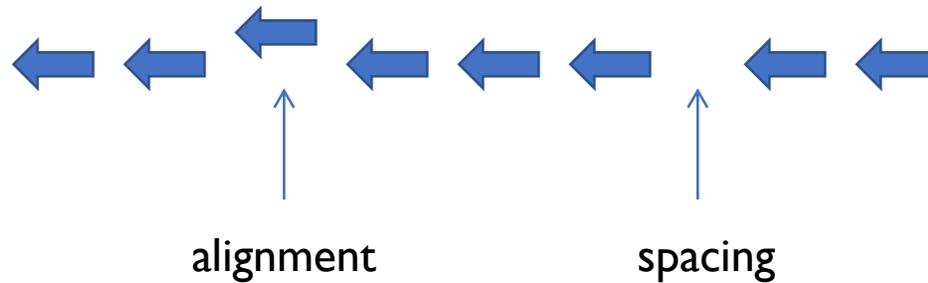
FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY

1) Number of Riders

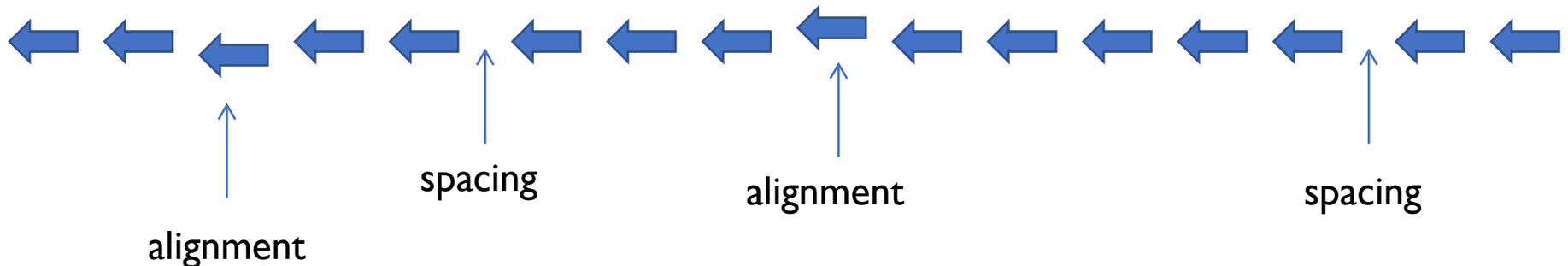
How many riders you have in the arena directly impacts the number of potential deductions you can receive. Competitive drill is about reducing the number of deductions.

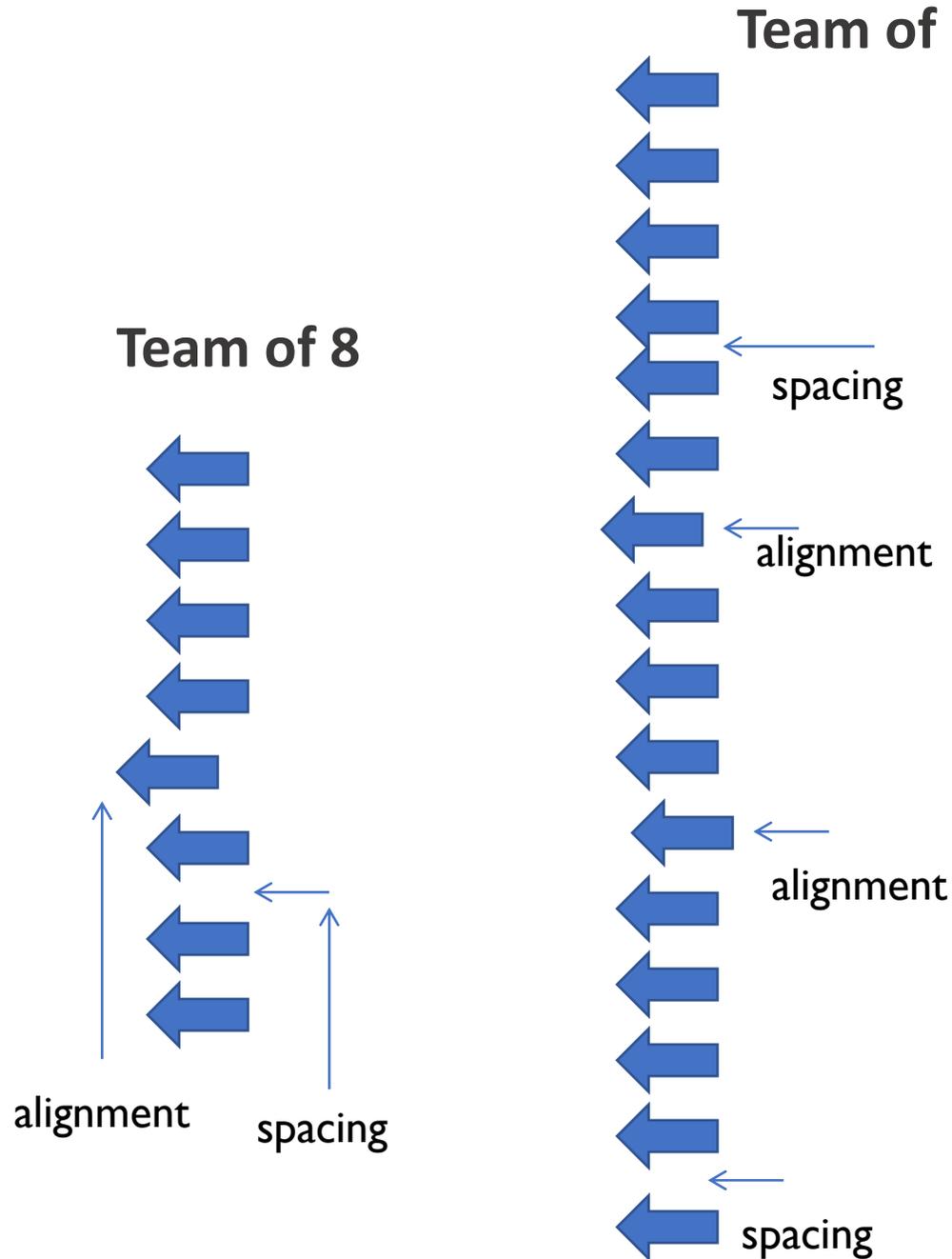
A team of 16 compared to a team of 8 has double the potential alignment and spacing deductions on every maneuver.

Team of 8



Team of 16





If everything done has twice the potential for deductions should that be considered into difficulty on every maneuver performed?

No, CSHA has you covered!

Extra Rider Bonus Points

CSHA .5 bonus point per rider over the amount of 7 riders to a maximum of 4 points to cover this for the entire drill.

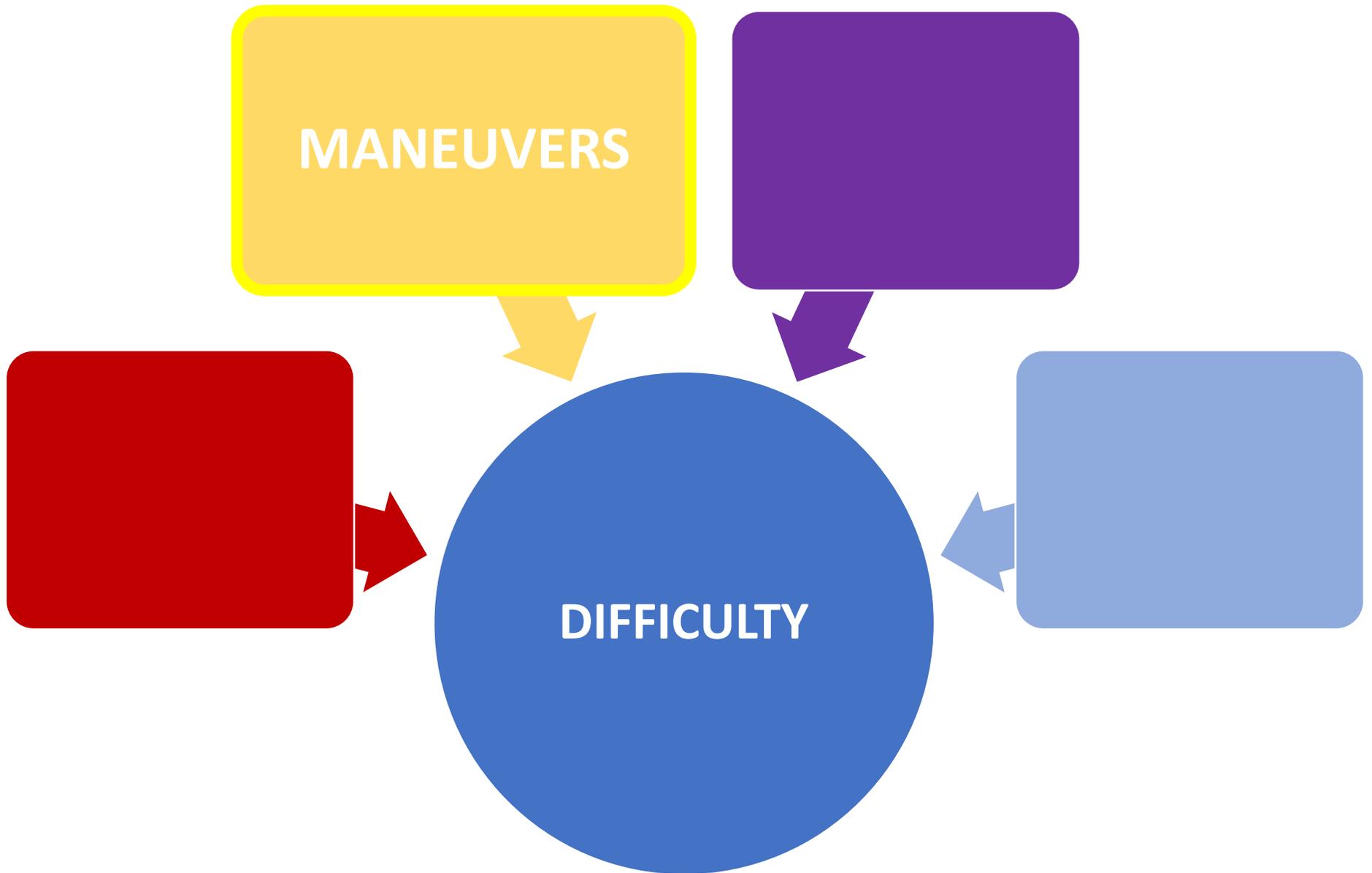
- Cap or Blind Bonus Points, it depends on your point of view?
- These bonus points allow judges to focus on the factors that are variable.

Everyone works hard at recruiting new riders in the off season, but this is how increasing your numbers will pay off.

- Increases Difficulty Exponentially
- Potential Showmanship Points
- Potential Overall Presentation Points
- Expanded Opportunity for Maneuvers

This leads us to the second factor in “Difficulty” which is ***Maneuvers***.

FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY



FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY

2) Maneuvers

3 Considerations for Maneuvers

- *Complexity, Variety & Uniqueness of Maneuvers & how they will Translate*
- *Expertise Necessary to Execute Maneuvers*
- *Flag Protocol*

a) Complexity, Uniqueness & Variety of Maneuvers & how they Translate.

Designing a well built drill is difficult in and of itself. The manner in which you construct it can assist your riders in executing a difficult drill.

A drill that flows easily while covering the bases of complexity, uniqueness & variety will increase not only your difficulty score but also your choreography score.

A well designed drill makes hard easier!

VARIETY MATTERS

- Maneuver Variety
- Unit Size Variety
- Arena Use Variety

Building Complex & Unique Sequences

Groups of maneuvers that build on one another to create a larger arrangement is one way to make complex drills easier to ride.

This is a “plug and play” approach which allows riders to learn and perfect series of moves that they learn to execute as a set.

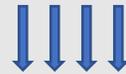
By developing complex sequences you can create entire new drills that are easy to learn quickly and have a short learning curve.

Building Complex & Unique Sequences

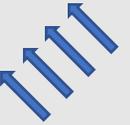
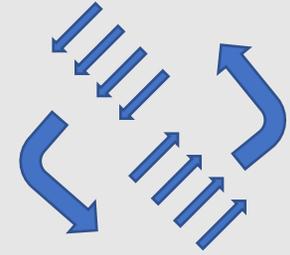
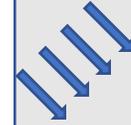
Think of a maneuver as one link of a chain, put together they build a strong chain that has continuity. Then chains are spliced together to form your drill.

Don't constantly reinvent the wheel. By learning to ride in sequences you allow your riders to perfect the skills necessary to ride sequences that are more complex and have increased difficulty.

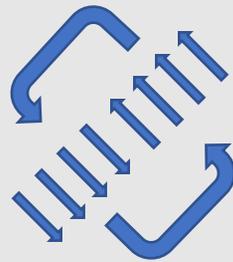
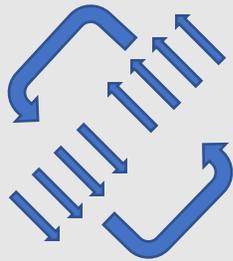
Here is an example of a very short sequence. Put together a catalog with an arsenal of sequences that you can pull out and quickly design an entire drill you know will work without ever having it tested by riders.



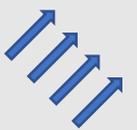
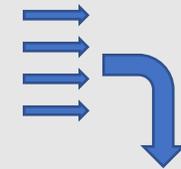
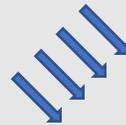
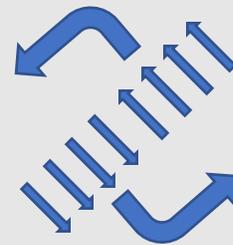
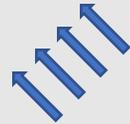
1/4 wheel around



Twin Single Spokes



1/4 wheel around



Back down center in 4's



Building Complex & Unique Sequences

You can ramp up the difficulty by adding horizontal spacing between riders or by picking up the pace.

Sequence development also cuts down on transitions. Fewer transitions makes a drill smoother. Sequence development also ensures that a drill will translate well in the arena.

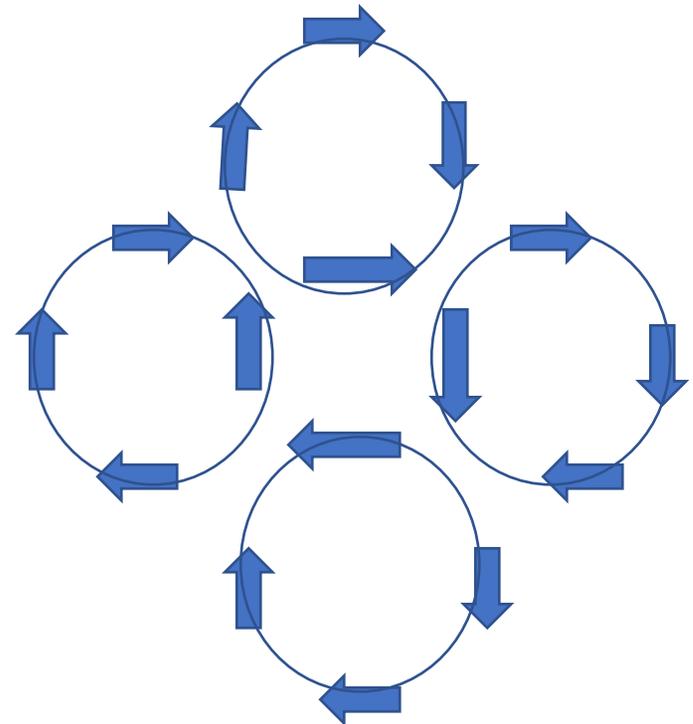
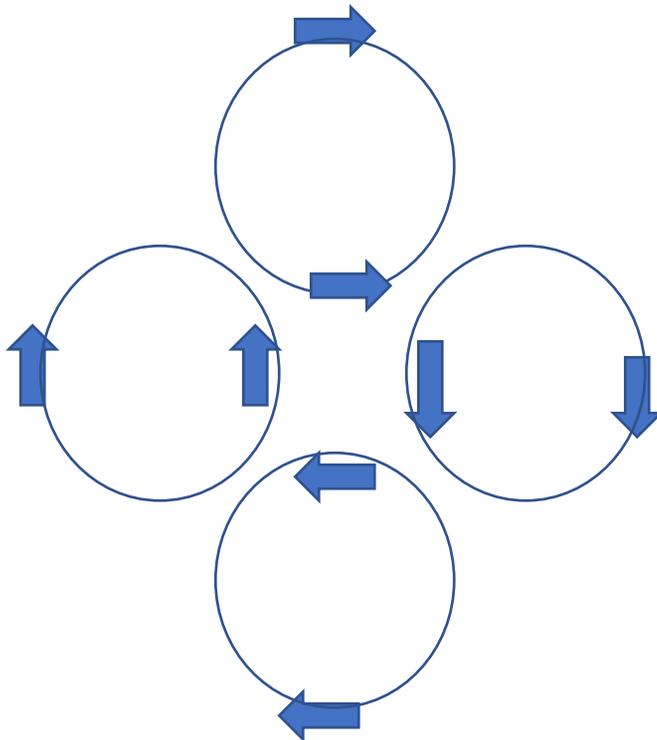
What is Maneuver Translation?

What do we mean by how maneuvers translates? A cloverleaf with a box in the center may be very difficult with a team of 8 riders but it does not translate well because it is too busy and the pattern cannot be defined by long enough lines.

Shoot the Moon is a perfect example of a move that translates well. The lines in and out of it are clean, long, and easy for the eye to follow. That is why you always get a positive response from spectators when you perform it even though you know it is a relatively simple drill to perform. It is up to the drill designer to find moves that are difficult and translate well. Fan maneuvers are an example, but only if executed well will you get the positive response and the difficulty points you seek.

*Complexity, Variety & Uniqueness of Maneuvers & how they will **Translate***

Cloverleaf with Box - 8 Riders vs. 16 Riders



Difficulty versus Choreography

WHAT was designed goes under *Choreography*

HOW the difficult maneuvers are executed &
HOW it translates falls under *Difficulty*

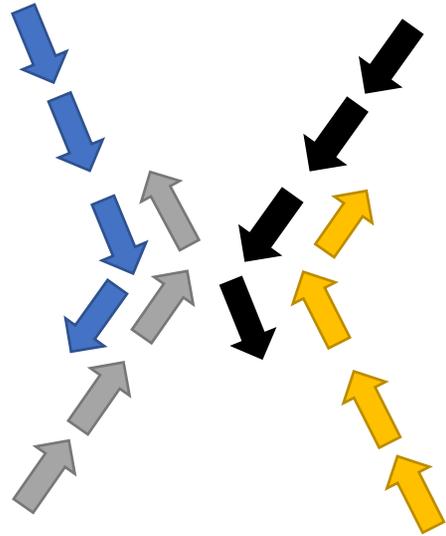
Designing a drill that makes it easier to learn and to perfect and a drill that translates well will improve your difficulty!

b) Expertise Necessary to Execute Maneuvers

The second thing to consider is the necessary expertise required to ride a maneuver, sequence or drill.

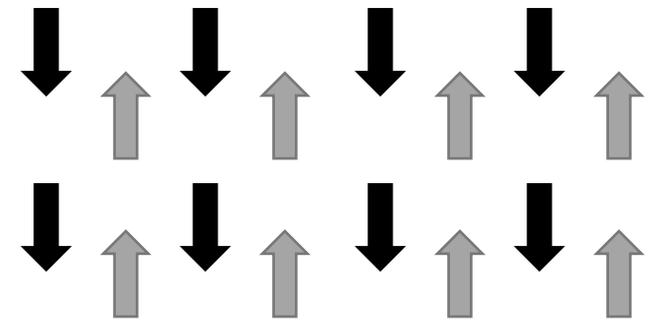
Do the maneuvers require intense individual skill by each rider? Does every rider need to watch spacing, alignment, adjust speed, track, switch leads, etc.

Shoot The Moon



Simple maneuver that doesn't require much expertise but decreasing spacing between riders adds difficulty, speed adds more.

Suicide Charge in Fours



More difficult maneuver that requires more from every rider. Spacing right to left, alignment right to left, vertical tracking, vertical alignment oncoming

b) Expertise Necessary to Execute Maneuvers

Be prepared for improvement – Be cognizant of maneuvers that you can easily switch up from a simple to a difficult version. This is particularly important for novice or intermediate teams when you want to increase difficulty as they improve but not significantly alter your drill.

Have A , B, & C, difficulty options scattered throughout your drill and as the season progresses ramp up the difficulty to keep them challenged.

It is also important to take complex choreography and make it look smooth and effortless. It is truly a skill to ride a complex, difficult drill and have the illusion of simplicity. The trained eyes of our judges know the difference but spectators often don't.

2) Maneuvers

c) Flag Protocol

The third consideration in Maneuvers is Flag Protocol. We include flag protocol under maneuver difficulty because designing a drill around a variety of flags (American, CA, Assoc., Club) while observing proper protocol is infinitely more difficult and restrictive than designing a drill using all Americans. Don't believe it? Just try it. Judges should reward the effort under the difficulty category as there are often offsets where they suffer in limitations in choreography or get dinged on flag protocol violations.

Note: Flag carriage and the execution of flag protocol is scored under "Flags".

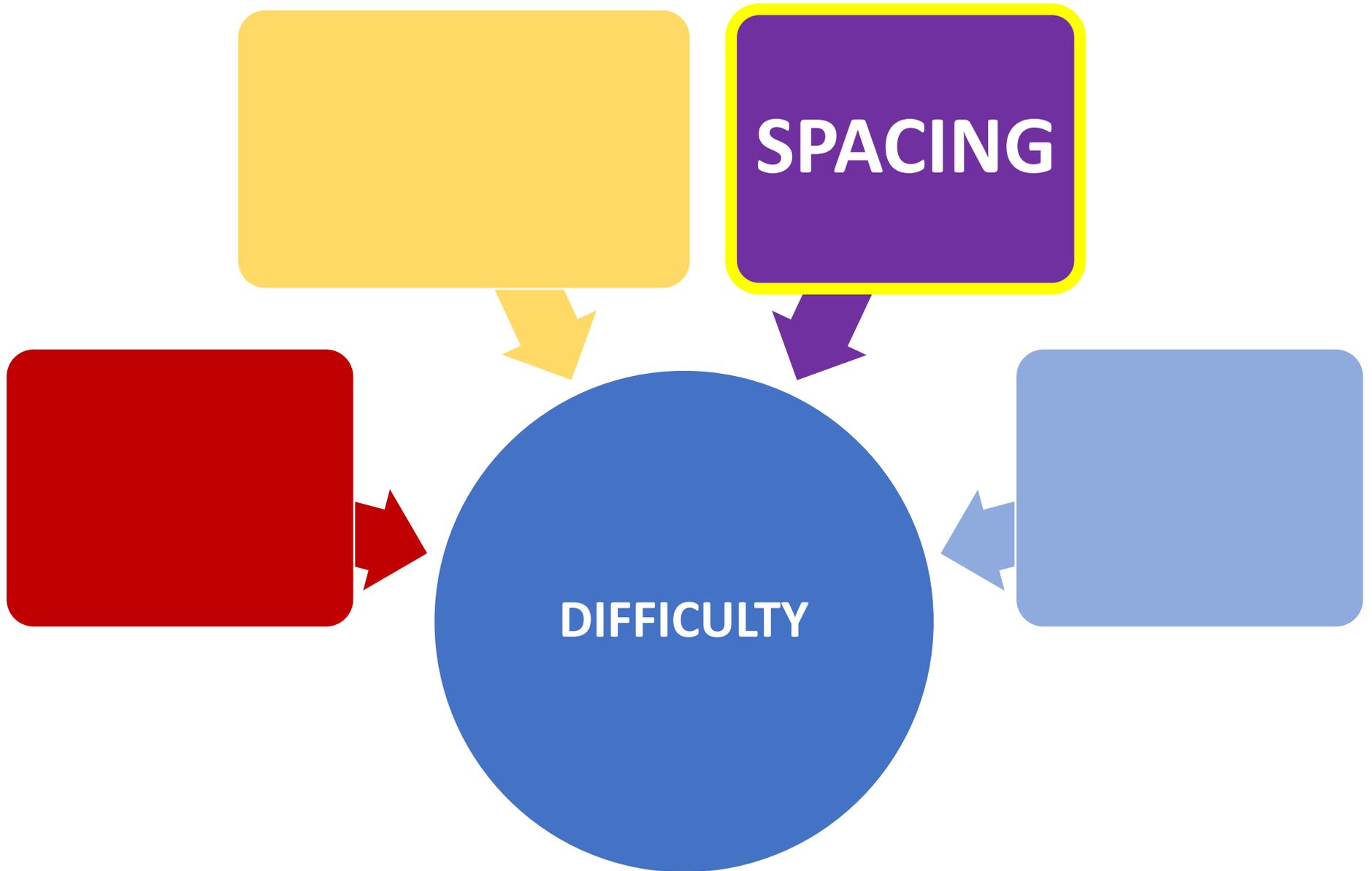
Designing an exciting drill when you always have to look off the right shoulder of the American flag and make sure there is no other flag there is always a challenge.

So why do we encourage the multi flag structure?

We do it to preserve the history of flag protocol and to underscore the importance of the American over all others. It takes skill, discipline, and we should take pride in its preservation.

Carriage of all Americans is a breathtaking sight no doubt. To be able to showcase both in a sport is important. Crowd appeal and protocol preservation both have a place in CSHA.

FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY



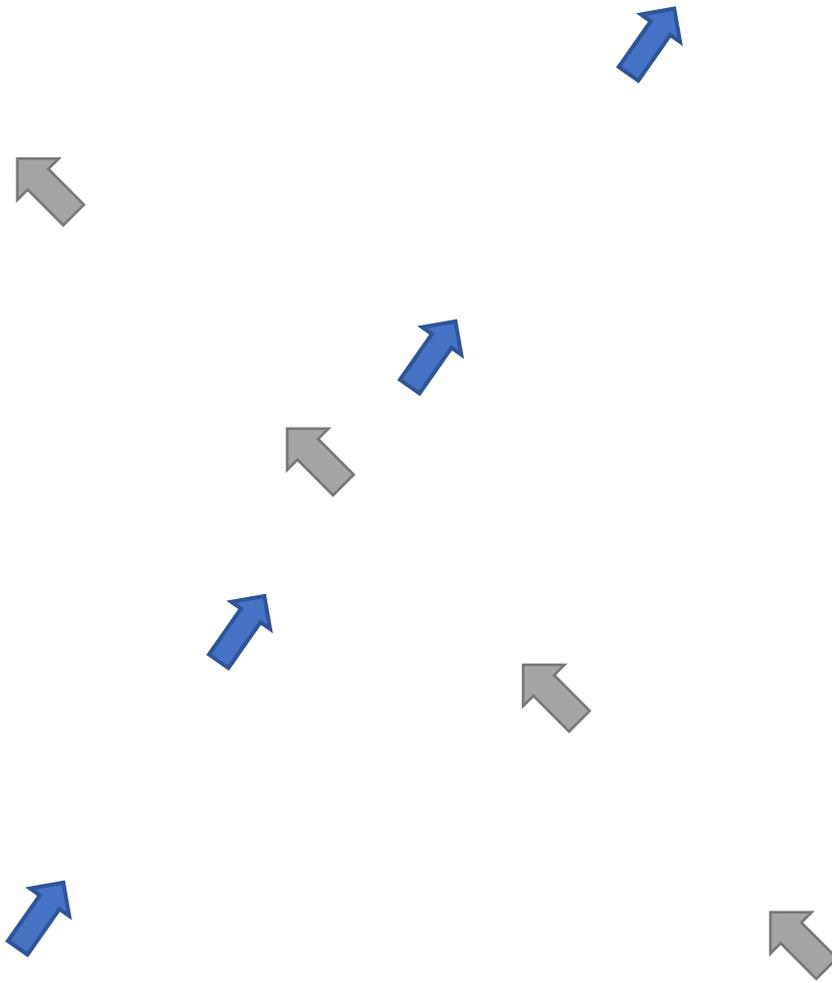
FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY

3) Spacing

Use the least amount of ***vertical spacing*** necessary to execute a maneuver safely.

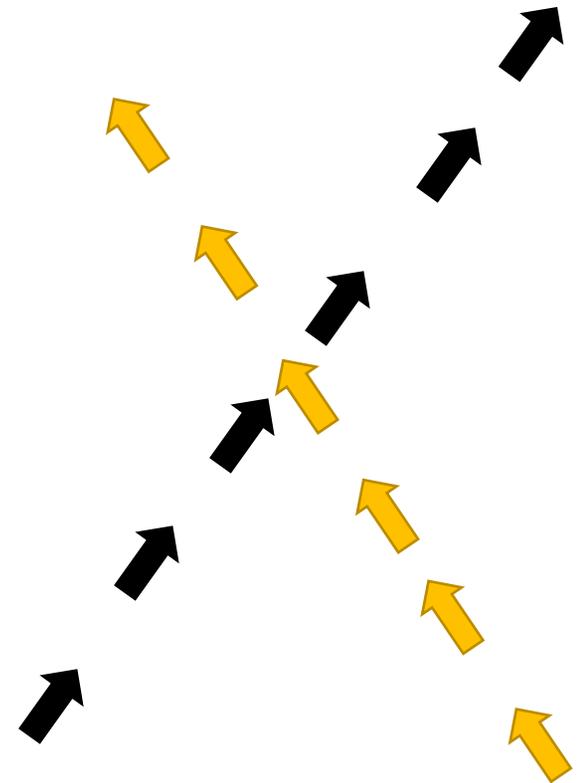
Incorporate increased ***horizontal spacing*** on abreast maneuvers to increase difficulty.

Increased Vertical Spacing



Novice Spacing

Decreased Vertical Spacing



Wow Spacing

Decreased Horizontal Spacing



Increased Horizontal Spacing



The greater the vertical spacing between riders, the less difficulty is involved. As spacing decreases, the level of difficulty increases, as does the danger. The opposite is true of horizontal spacing, increased spacing, increases difficulty.

Obviously it is a never ending balancing act in which you must consider the skill of every rider carefully.

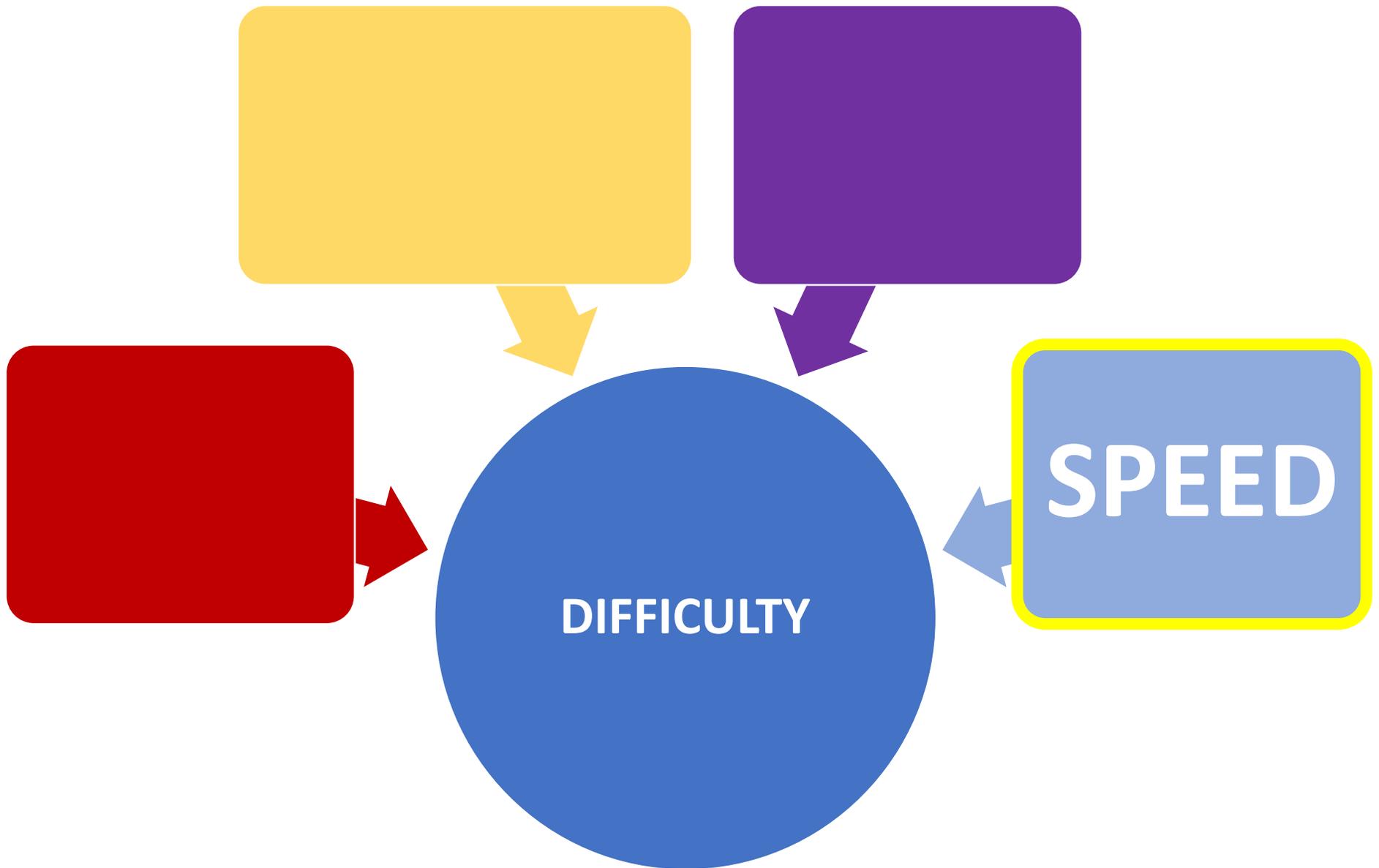
Your question always has to be “Is this spacing safe for my weakest rider”. Judges should reward teams that display spacing difficulty without jeopardizing the safety of the team.

Will occasional incidents occur? Yes, as things tighten up, a horse sneezes or decides to slow down to poop, right?

But a judge should be able to determine if a team is competent enough to ride with the spacing they are using.

Just as adjusting our spacing demands precision, so does the decision to increase a team's use of speed.

FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY



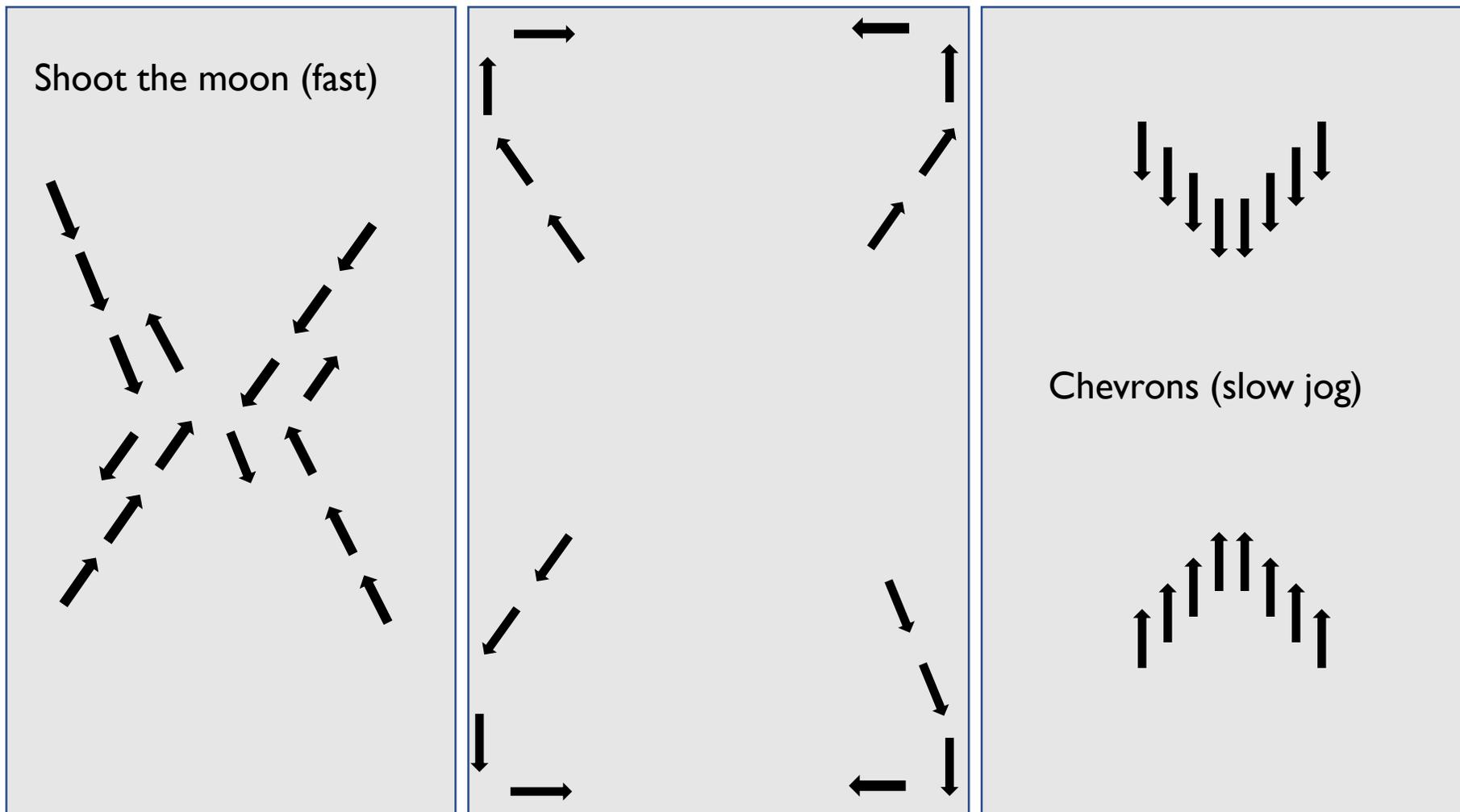
FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY

4) *Speed*

The use of *Speed Variance*
to enhance maneuvers

We define speed as the use of speed variance to enhance maneuvers. It is important to note that you should select maneuvers to increase speed on, not across the entire drill at once. By choosing simple maneuvers, or maneuvers you can simplify, to increase speed on you can stack the deck to success.

Avoid riding your drill at any one consistent pace, it is monotonous! You need the variance of speed in your drill to create visual interest, use it smartly & effectively. Change it up!



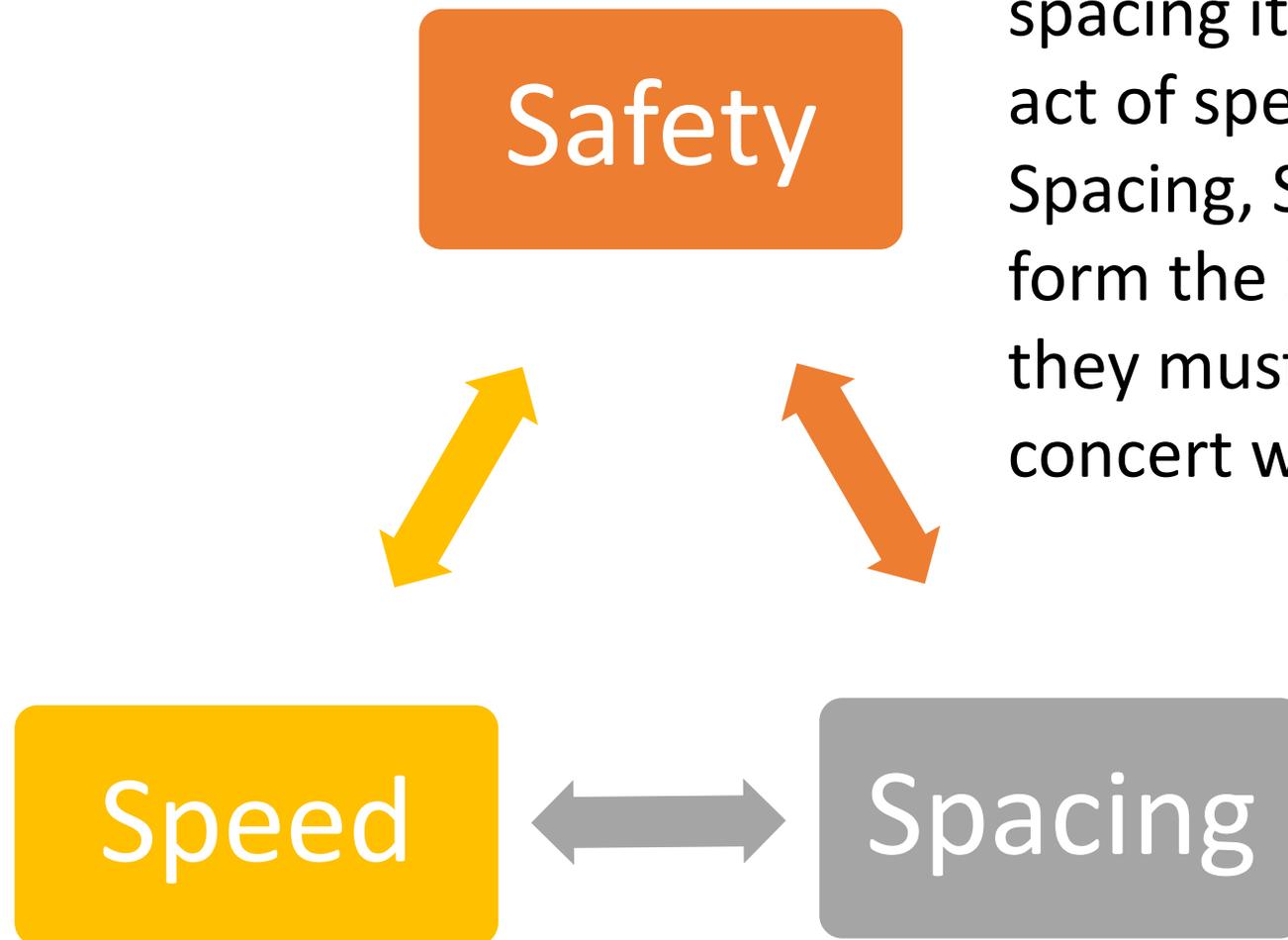
The greater the overall speed, the higher the overall difficulty but only if executed precisely and safely and in conjunction with a variance in speed for comparison.

Anytime riders all change pace together you increase the skill necessary to maintain consistent spacing.

Speed & Breaking Gaits, Drill Design, & Expertise at the Front

Breaking of gaits, drill design, and expertise at the front are all inter-dependent upon each other. Even though it is the back riders that have to break their gait it is the front that is at fault. The expertise needed by the front riders, and the communication between front and back, along with the drill design itself can prevent deductions for breaking gaits which falls under “Briskness”, but the ability of the team to increase and decrease speed to prevent it falls under difficulty.

3 - S Triangle



Riding any maneuver faster increases the difficulty, but as with spacing it is a balancing act of speed to safety. Spacing, Speed & Safety form the 3-S Triangle, they must always work in concert with each other.

It is the combination of all 4 factors we discussed that adds up to your difficulty score. These factors and all that goes into each one of them results in one little 15 point scoring category.

Keep this in mind for later when we discuss how many points you want to deduct for an accidental slip by one horse.

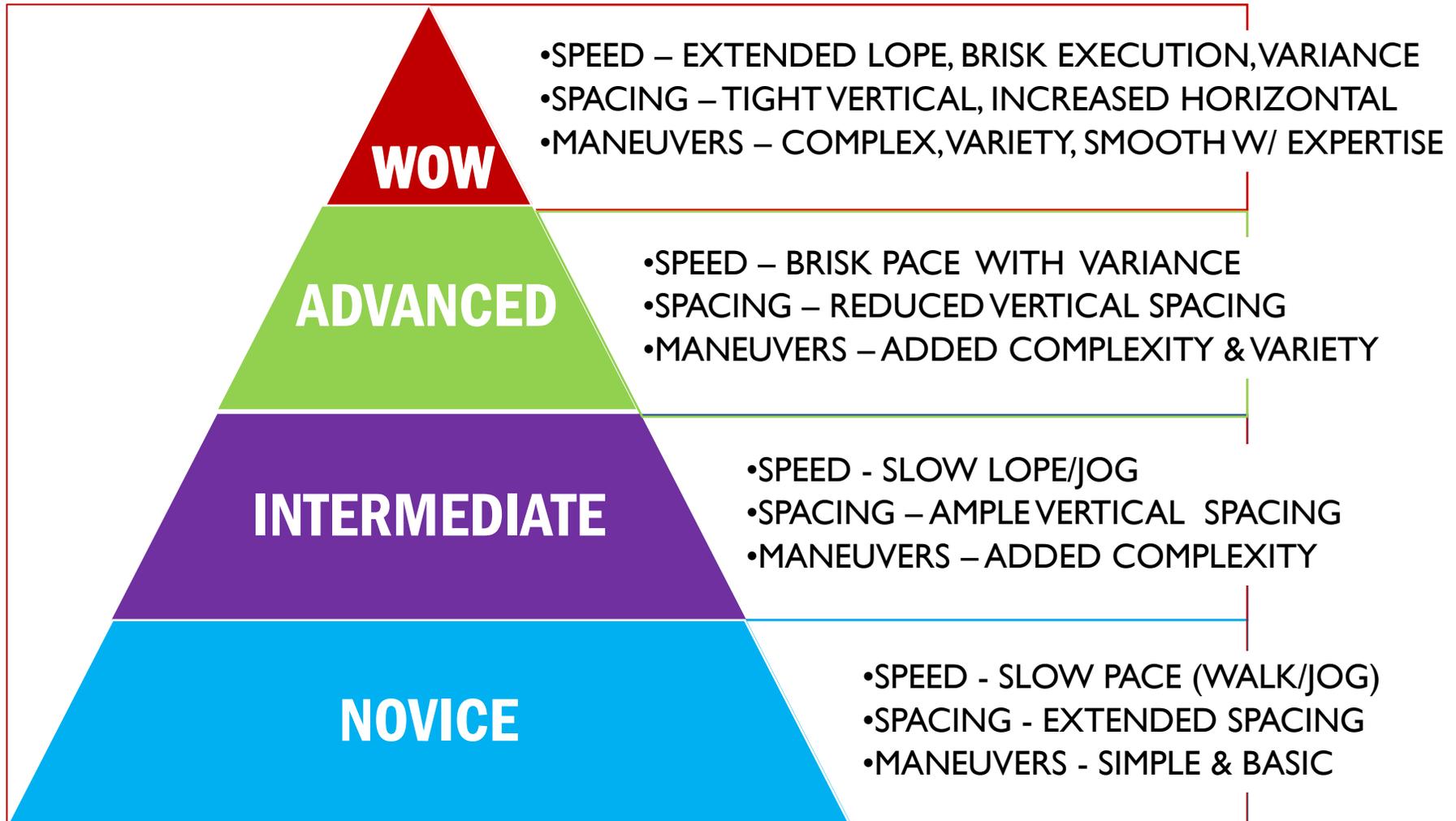
Some of these also cross over into other categories, precision, briskness, choreography, etc but as you can see from what we discussed there is a lot of decisions to be made by you and the judges to determine your difficulty level.

Let's discuss the level a team is at and how you go about stepping up the level of your team's performance and how these factors of difficulty play into it.

Let's take it to the next level!

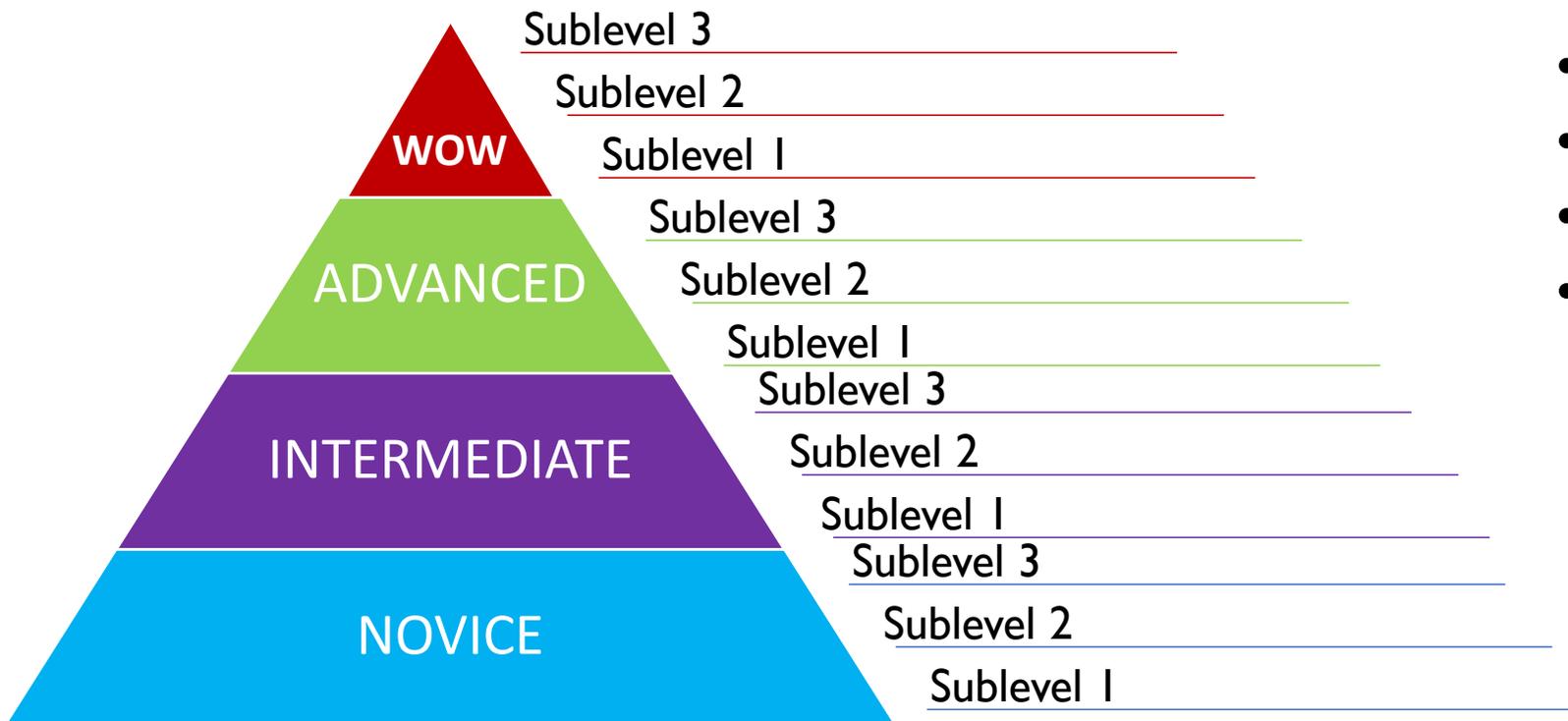
TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

FACTORS OF DIFFICULTY & SUBLEVELS WITHIN LEVELS



TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

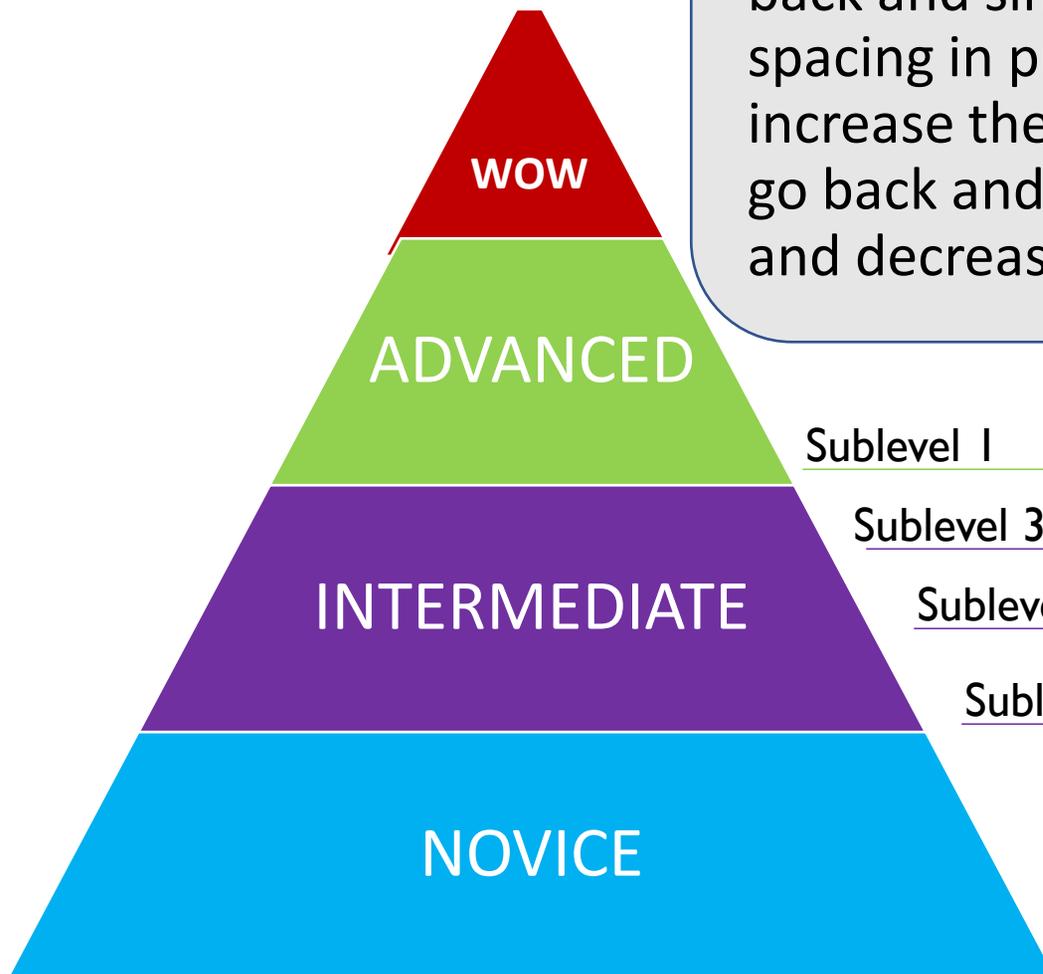
Within every level we have these 3 sublevels of speed, spacing, maneuvers & if you add riders to your drill during the season you increase the sublevels to 4 and it becomes sublevel 1. Otherwise sublevels can be in any order you choose. Step up a sublevel then master it with proficiency and consistency before moving up to next sublevel.



- **SPEED**
- **SPACING**
- **MANEUVERS**
- **# RIDERS ???**

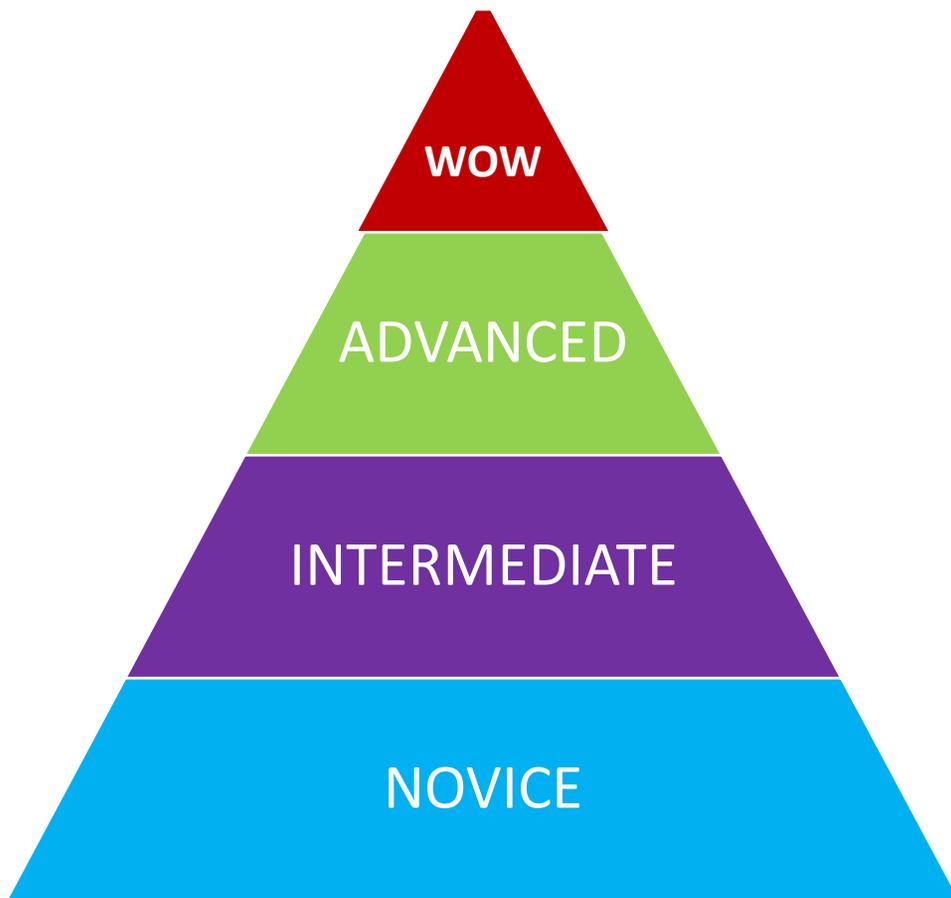
1 Step Forward – 2 Steps Back

Once we have consistently executed all 3 sublevels in purple we step up to level green and if choosing **Speed** as the first sublevel we will go back and simplify some maneuvers and increase spacing in purple level on moves you are going to increase the speed on. Once speed is perfected go back and reintroduce more difficult maneuvers and decrease spacing.



Sublevel 1 Speed
Sublevel 3 MANEUVERS
Sublevel 2 Spacing
Sublevel 1 Speed

Step it up

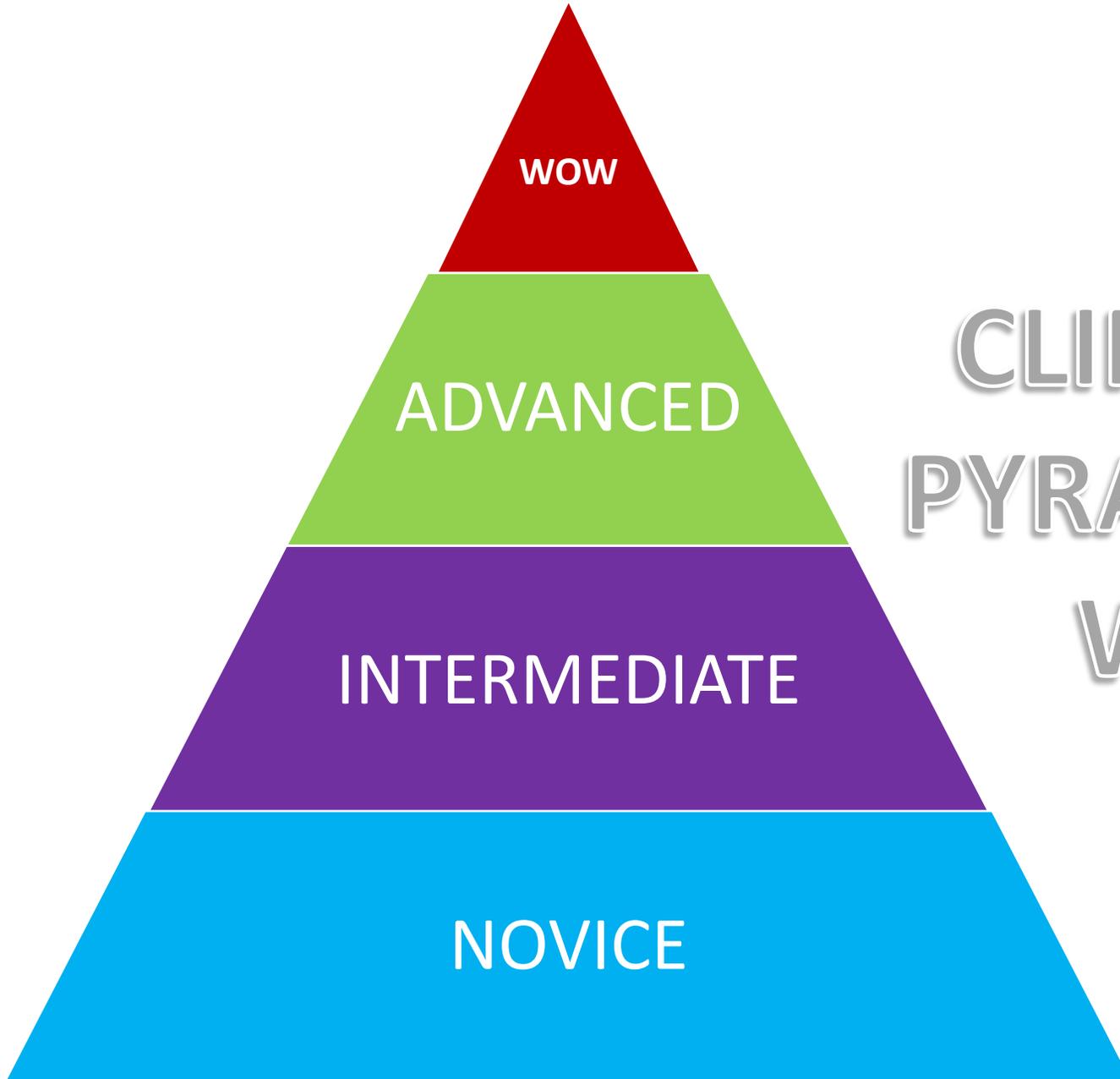


- Step 1- execute a simple choreography with increased spacing at the new faster pace.
- Step 2 - decrease spacing and execute at new speed with decreased spacing.
- Step 3 – execute at new speed with decreased spacing and added level of difficulty in choreography.

Each judge will have their own standards for levels, most of our team competing high point divisions in CSHA are in the upper intermediate to high advanced level. WOW performances are few and far between, throughout my 50 years in drill I have had the pleasure of watching only a handful.

A team must maintained their precision and smoothness that give the illusion of simplicity as they execute a program filled with difficulty. It is beyond simply a first place performance. It is a program on a whole other level and you will recognize it when you see it.

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL



CLIMB THE
PYRAMID TO
WOW