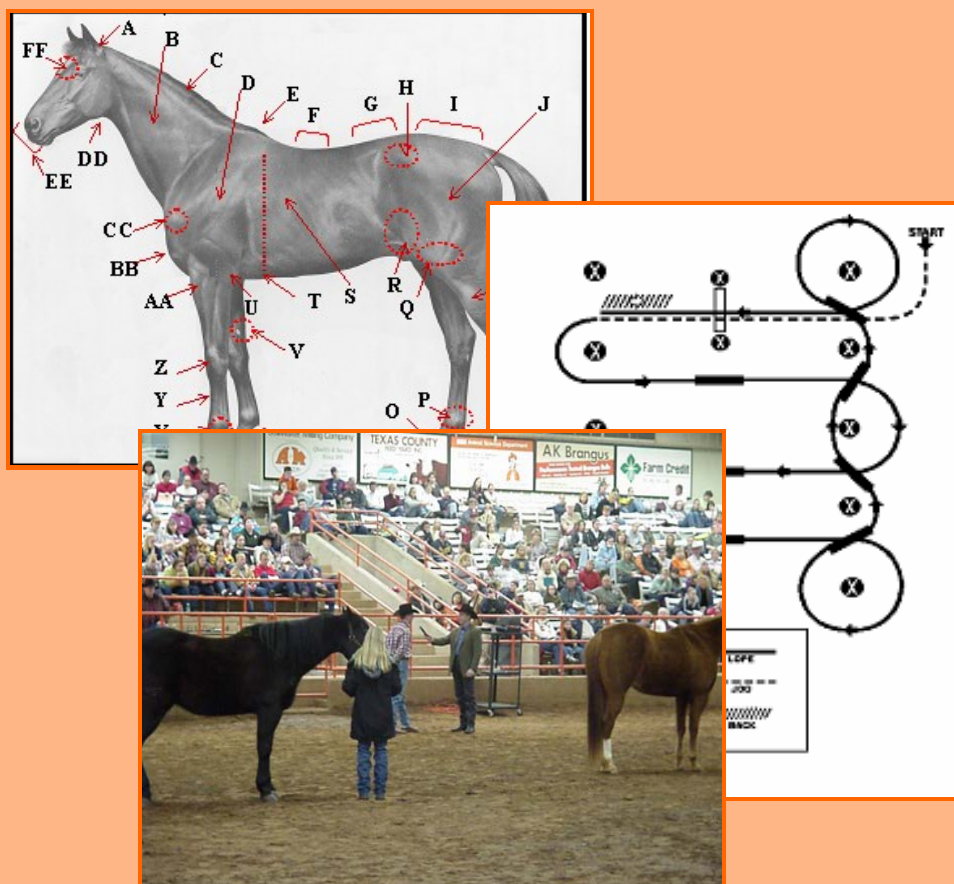


OKLAHOMA STATE 4-H HORSE JUDGING GUIDE



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Suggestions for Building Successful Youth Judging Programs

Judging programs are an instrumental part of the educational process of youth involved in the horse industry. Youth, parents and volunteer leaders are interested in judging programs for many reasons. The reasons youth are interested and the reasons that adults are interested in involving their youth may differ in priority. The key to success is being able to develop a program that meets the motivational needs of both groups.

Motivation of Youth:

- Being Part of a Team
- Positive Reward for Making Decisions
- Socializing with Friends and Peers
- Going New Places
- Learning about a Sport of Interest
- Expressing their Points of View

Motivation of Educators:

- Developing a Youth's Decision Making Skills
- Interpretation skills
- Analyzation skills
- Oral communication skills

Most youth enjoy going new places, socializing with friends and peers, having their opinions accepted, and receiving awards. Those with horse interests naturally enjoy learning skills that better their horsemanship ability and technical expertise about horses. As expertise and experience are gained, the desire to compete can increase.

While many youth like to compete, contests are but one format for youth to learn. Activities such as field trips to horse farms, and horse shows and games that develop technical skills provide different formats for learning and are popular with youth. These activities should be low-stress, informal, short duration and non-competitive.

Successful leaders and coaches personalize their teaching methods, and as such, will have certain techniques they emphasize to teach youth. Regardless, all coaches should incorporate the following teaching philosophies.

- Give the youth a clear goal by identifying the ideal animal or performance. Make comparisons emphasizing the positive attributes of the individual as compared with the ideal. By doing so, the class requirements and optima will be established.
- Build on the youth's expertise in a step-wise fashion. Develop organized systems that start by breaking down class requirements into a small number of major areas of assessment. Increase youths' depth of knowledge about the categories as they become more experienced and familiar with the class activity.
- Let youth "learn by doing". Allow youth to try, provide assistance when youth ask for help, and then let them try again. Give them the opportunity to find the answers by experience rather than simply trying to memorize what is told to them.
- Promote discussion. Informal discussion helps youth integrate information while promoting the confidence to develop oral reasons. Also, youth will learn from each other when discussing and reviewing, and youth enjoy having positive feedback when they express their opinions.

"We've learned that those with judging experience have the personal skills essential for job readiness. Employers can train graduates to meet the specific technical skills of their businesses much more easily than the personal skills necessary for excellence in the workplace. They seek out students with judging experience."

Suggestions for Successful Judging

1. Stay current with judging standards. The need to supply clear, objective information as to what is required has made rulebooks and judge's schools invaluable aids to judges and exhibitors alike.
2. Categorize the class requirements into several main areas of judgment, i.e. balance, muscle, structural correctness and quality when judging conformation. By doing so, decisions will be based on correct judging standards, and judgment will consider all the points of emphasis.
3. Identifying the ideal will help you organize the different criteria identified for placement and "measure" individuals based on their representation of the ideal.
4. Judge positively. Comparing the 'good' of each individual's performance to the ideal will help to prioritize and weigh the importance of differences.
5. Learn, through proper practice, how to quickly assess the horse's conformation or performance. By doing so, you can pay attention to all participants and all parts of the performance. This will allow for informed decisions on the overall merit of exhibition. This ability will also help to efficiently evaluate all individuals in the class, and guard against 'missing' part of the class or part of an exhibitor's performance.
6. When viewing classes, position yourself so that you are evaluating the exhibitors from the same viewpoint (angle and distance). This technique will increase objectivity. When judging halter classes, your most objective comparisons are made when standing at least 20 to 30 feet from the horses. On rail classes, allow the exhibitors to give you the same view when measuring quality of movement, mannerisms and functional correctness. Many judges will stand near the center

of the arena, one third of the way off one of the side rails and view the farther side rail when judging group rail classes. When judging individual pattern classes, position yourself in the area that gives you the best view of the entire performance.

7. Keep your attention on the class while it is in session. Distractions that divert your attention away from the class will cause you to miss part of the performance. Develop methods to lessen the need for notes, and do not make notes until the performance is over, or at some time when evaluation needs are small, i.e. during a change of direction or as horses line up at the end of rail classes.
8. Maintain a level of confidence that requires you to do your own work. Do not let other judges, exhibitors or spectators influence your decision.
9. The judge's card is the final record of placement. It is difficult at best, or more times impossible, to correct number or placement errors once the card has been completed. Emphasize to youth the importance of correctly marking their final placing cards. Errors such as omitting an exhibitor or misnumbering can easily occur. However, they are inexcusable.

"There is no substitute for practice when it comes to judging. But just showing up and guessing wastes time and doesn't get you ahead."

It starts with knowing what to look for, learning from rule books and judging materials, watching classes, and not being afraid to ask questions when someone is around to help you.

Most of all it takes a lot of dedication"

General Support Needs for Conducting a Contest

Judging contests provide individuals with the opportunity to judge halter and performance classes consisting of at least four horses in a class. The number and type of classes will vary between contests. The current standard is to provide four to six halter classes and four to eight performance classes. Some guidelines for organizing contests include:

General Needs and Support

1. Facilities

An arena is needed with adequate size for both halter and performance classes (at least 100' X 200' is recommended). A room large enough for the tabulation crew in close proximity to the oral reasons area will also be needed. Additionally, facilities may be needed for a coach's meeting and awards program. Reasons rooms or areas will be needed for each reason classes. These areas need to be near each other, and clearly identified.

2. Horses

The most difficult challenge to contest organizers is organizing placeable classes of quality horses to judge. After it has been decided which classes (and breeds) will be included, the contacts must be made to insure at least four horses for each class will be available. Contest classes should have enough variability to be readily placeable.

3. People

Individuals are needed to serve as group leaders, timekeeper, announcer, card runner(s), class organizers inside and outside the arena and tabulators. Official judges that are knowledgeable in the breeds to be judged, and have experience as a member or coach of a judging team should be confirmed well in advance of the contest. Equal consideration should be given to the selection of qualified reasons takers.

4. Awards

It is customary to give awards to the top teams and individuals in placing, reasons and overall categories. The type of awards depends on the interests of the program organizers, and should not be totally dictated by sponsors.

Normal Conduct of a Contest

Contests begin by having youth place a series of classes. The judging classes are divided into halter and performance. All the performance or all the halter classes may be conducted first. After the classes are judged, youth are given a small amount of time, approximately 30 minutes, to prepare oral reasons.

Performance classes are judged from the stands. An official calls the gaits and conducts the class via the announcer. Halter classes are judged in groups in the arena. It is customary for more than one class of horses to be shown at halter in the arena at the same time to allow smaller groups for better viewing of halter classes. Contestants are positioned to the side of the horses, approximately 20 to 30 feet from the class, and the horses are repositioned so contestants can see different views.

Suggested Halter Views:

Side view-2 minutes

Front view-1.5 minutes

Hind View-1.5 minutes

Travel-walk and trot, preferable so youth can observe movement from the front, rear and side

Side (or $\frac{3}{4}$ angled) view for close inspection-1 minute for each $\frac{1}{2}$ of the group

Side view 1-2 minutes

Oral reasons are given on several of the classes. The number of oral reasons depends on the contest. Usually at least two to as many as six different classes are identified as 'reasons classes'. Contestants are informed if a class is being considered for oral reasons before the judging of that class. It is customary for the youth to take notes on all potential performance reason classes before the final selection of reason classes is made.

Youth are divided into smaller groups to prepare and give oral reasons. Each of the smaller groups will start with a different set of reasons, and then rotate to a new set until all have been given. By doing so, all the reasons can be given during the same time period by rotating the groups around the reason takers. A reasons order rotation system must be developed and remain in effect so all youth are given the same amount of time to prepare each set of oral reasons.

Developing an Oral Reasons Order for a Contest

Developing an order for oral reasons can be confusing. The goal is to move contestants through a series of oral reasons in a timely fashion. Usually, a minimum of 30 minutes is given between the time a member gives each set of reasons. This minimum is not an issue with larger contests, as group sizes cause much longer times between 'sets'.

The easiest way to conduct reasons is to have a different reason taker for each reasons class: If four reasons are given, four different reason takers are provided. Each reason taker is responsible for scoring the entirety of a single class.

Teams are assigned team numbers. Contestants within a team are further assigned a contestant number or letter. For example, team one contestants would be identified as 1-A, 1-B, 1-C or 1-D. The letters identify the contestant within team one. (Numbers can be used rather than letters, i.e. team one contestants would be identified as 1-1, 1-2, 1-3 or 1-4.)

If four sets are to be given, divide contestants into four groups, identified by contestant 'number' or 'letter'. All reason takers score reasons at the same time. The variance is which group is presenting reasons to a specific reasons official during each 'round'. The order of contestants within a group remain the same throughout the rounds, and the order is usually randomized within a group. Randomizing allows for a different team order within a contestant reason group. Otherwise, team one is followed by team two, etc. throughout all four groups.

Assigning 'Cuts' for Scoring Placing of Classes

A four-horse class will have three pairs: a top, middle and bottom. Officials will place the horses in a class, and then assign "cuts" between pairs. Cuts are assigned to give a weighted penalty for misalignment of horses with the following scale.

- 0 Assigned when the two horses in a pair tie such as a case of both disqualifying in a class.
- 1 Horses are extremely similar; no real obvious reason why one should be placed over the other; or, both horses have numerous faults and none supersedes the others.
- 2 Horses are very close, but one has one or two qualitative or quantitative advantages over the other.
- 3 Horses are of similar quality, but there is a logical placing in favor of one horse.
- 4 Horses are not of similar quality; one horse has several decided advantages.
- 5 Large number of extreme differences between horses; placing is obvious on first glance and careful study not required for the placing.
- 6 Horses are not even comparable; a difference reflective of a champion quality horse or performance versus a horse or performance that is not of show quality.
- 7-10 Differences reflective of a world-class halter horse versus an extremely conformationally incorrect horse; or a world-class performance versus a disqualified performance.

Reasons Matrix : Four team members identified as Contestants A, B, C or D Presenting Four Sets of Reasons

	<u>Round One</u>	<u>Round Two</u>	<u>Round Three</u>	<u>Round Four</u>
<u>Reason Group A</u>	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
<u>Reason Group B</u>	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 1
<u>Reason Group C</u>	Class 3	Class 4	Class 1	Class 2
<u>Reason Group D</u>	Class 4	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3

Calculating Placing Scores

There are several tabulation programs that are designed to calculate scores based on the 'Hormel System' of assigning scores based on a possible 50 points per class.

Some tabulation programs have constraints of four animals in a class and a total of 15 points of cuts in the class. This constraint ensures that there will not be negative scores when a four-horse class is placed completely backward of the official when a possible 50 points is used as the perfect score. There are computer programs and downloadable 'apps' that can be used to calculate judging contest class placing scores. Regardless of source, the program should use the 'Hormel' system of calculating scores. This system may be *hand-calculated* by following the steps in the examples below.

Write down the official placing and the cuts along with the contestants placing.

Example #1: Official Placing 1 v 2 v 3 v 4

Cuts 3 2 4

Contestant's Placing 2 - 3 - 1 - 4

In this example, the official placing resulted in the horse identified as 1 first place, 2 as second place, 3 as third place and 4 as fourth. There is a 3 point cut between the first and second place horse, a two point cut between the second and third place horse and a four point cut in the bottom pair.

1. Compare the contestant's first place horse to each of the other horses in the class. A penalty (cut) will be assessed whenever the contestant's ranking of the first place horse differs with its official ranking.

Begin with the comparison of the contestant's first place, 2, and the contestant's second place, 3. Even though the official placing has these two horses placed differently in the class, the ranking between the two horses are the same in the officials and the contestant's placing. As such, there are no deductions.

Next, compare the contestant's first place, 2, and the contestant's third place, 1, with the official. The official places 1 over 2, so there is a deduction. The deduction is 3 points, as this is the total number of cuts between the 1 and 2 in the official ranking.

Then compare the contestant's first place, 2, and the contestant's last place, 4, with the official. The official places 2 over 4, so there is no deduction of points.

So far the total number of deductions is 3 points.

2. Next, compare the contestant's second place with those ranked below it (3 over 1 and 3 over 4). The contestant has placed 3 over 1. The official places 1 over 3, and there are a 3 and a 2 point cut separating the two horses in the officials.

Total deduction for that placing is 5 points.

Then compare 3 over 4. That ranking is correct according to the official, therefore no point deduction.

So far the contestant has accumulated 8 total point deductions.

3. Next, compare the contestant's third place horse with the horse placing below it (1 over 4). The ranking is correct according to the official, so no points are deducted.
4. Finally, add the penalty points together and subtract from the maximum possible score. In a class of 4 individuals, the maximum score is usually 50. In this example, the contestant incurred a total of 8 penalty points for a total of 42 for the class.

Additional Examples of Calculating Placing Scores

Official Placing 1 V 2 V 3 V 4

Cuts 3 2 4

Contestant's Placing 2 3 1 4

In this example, there is a 3 point cut between the first and second place horse, a two point cut between the second and third place horse and a four point cut in the bottom pair.

1. Compare the contestant's first place horse to each of the other horses in the class. A penalty (cut) will be assessed whenever the contestant's ranking of the first place horse differs with its official ranking.

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Then compare the contestant's first place, 2, and the contestant's last place, 4, with the official. The official places 2 over 4, so there is no deduction of points.

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4. Finally, add the penalty points together and subtract from the maximum possible score. In a class of 4 individuals, the maximum score is usually 50. In this example, the contestant incurred a total of 8 penalty points for a total of 42 for the class.

Official Placing 2 V 4 V 1 V 3

Cuts 2 4 1

Contestant's Placing 3 1 4 2

(3 over 1) Incorrect: 1 point deduction

(3 over 4) Incorrect: 1 and 4 point deductions

(3 over 2) Incorrect: 1, 4 and 2 point deductions

(1 over 4) Incorrect: 4 point deduction

(1 over 2) Incorrect: 4 and 2 point deductions

(4 over 2) Incorrect: 2 point deduction

Total penalty deduction: 25 points

Class Score: $50 - 25 = 25$

The Need for Oral Reasons

In the competitive judging environment, major emphasis is placed on learning to evaluate horses. However, successful judging programs place equal importance on students learning to organize and defend their reasons of placing the class. The combined process of placing horses and orally defending those placings teaches students to be objective, honest and fair in their approach to evaluating the class. Also, this process will discourage student judges from giving opinions which are based merely on personal likes and dislikes, and encourage them to present defensible judgments based on current standards of the horse industry.

Another major purpose for giving reasons in judging contests is to offer an opportunity for students to learn how to think, organize thoughts and speak confidently about those thoughts in a refereed environment.

Giving reasons helps individuals to judge in a more organized fashion. Giving an organized set of reasons will the inexperienced analyze horses point by point and think in comparative terms.

Taking Notes for Oral Reasons

In a judging contest, students are often present their oral reasons several hours after they actually judge the class. Notes enable youth to prepare a more accurate and detailed set of reasons. These notes are only a preparation aid and should not be used during the actual reasons presentation. Brief, understandable notes that are relevant to the class criteria serve as a memory aid. Most judges will use less notes as they become more experienced and more developed in their memory skills. Note taking should not interfere with the observation of the class. Notes should be taken after you have studied the class and observed the differences between the individuals. Individual pattern classes require scores and brief notes be taken following each horse. With practice, each person will develop their own method of taking notes. Some use symbols and shorthand methods to save time. Notes should contain the class name and the class placing at the top of the note page.

Individual descriptions of horses serve as memory aids. Notes should be organized to support the format of oral delivery. As such, notes should be organized so pairs of horses are compared.

Organization of Oral Reasons

There are several acceptable variations of organizational formats for oral reasons. The basis for organization is comparisons of pairs of horses. In a four-horse class there is a top pair (1st and 2nd place), a middle pair (2nd and 3rd place) and a bottom pair (3rd and 4th place). Each pair is discussed in terms of comparable advantages of the top placing horse to the bottom placing horse in the pair. From that basis, additional items are added to help assist the clarity, depth and interest of the presentation.

1. **Opening Statement:** The opening statement should include the name of the class and the placing. It also should contain a descriptive overview of the class.
2. **Top Pair:** The top pair placing should be stated and followed by the use of comparative advantages of the top individual as compared with the 2nd place individual. The most relevant points of comparison should be stated first in general terms, and following statements should support the opening comparison statement in the pairs. Any criticisms of the top placed horse may be given as a transition into the pair, or as a transition into any grants or advantages that the 2nd horse has over the first place horse.
3. **Middle pair:** The same format as the top pair, only this comparison should be restricted to the 2nd and 3rd place horses.
4. **Bottom pair:** The same format as the top pair, only this comparison should be restricted to the 3rd and 4th place horses.
5. **Concluding statement:** Styles vary from those who prefer to redefine the placing to simple, short concluding statements such as 'Thank you'.

Oral Reasons Style: *Beginning Format*

Younger or inexperienced youth should begin with the basic framework of reasons. This framework is built upon to develop formats that promote the individual's strengths and the coach's preference. Use of transition statements and additional criticism statements increase the level of difficulty of presentation.

Opening Statement: Using descriptive terminology, identify the placing and name of the class.

Top Pair: State the most important placing criteria that was different, i.e. balance in halter or manners in western pleasure. (May be a combination of more than one placing criteria). Using comparative terminology, provide examples of how the main criteria was greater for the top placed horse in the pair as compared to the bottom horse in the pair. Follow this with a comparative grant of the bottom horse of this pair over the top horse if applicable.

Middle Pair: Same organization as the top pair as applied to the second and third place horses.

Bottom Pair: Same organization as the top and middle pairs as applied to the third and fourth place horses. Following any grants, criticize the last place horse using descriptive terminology.

Closing Statement: Finalize the reasons by giving a concluding statement of placing or closing remark such as 'Thank You'.

Oral Reasons Organizational Grid for Beginning Style

Class Name and Placing:

Identifying Markings

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Top Pair Placing

Most important placing criteria for placing first over second

Comparative Advantages that apply to the most important criteria

Grants of second over first

Middle Pair Placing

Most important placing criteria for placing second over third

Comparative Advantages that apply to the most important criteria

Grants of third over second

Bottom Pair Placing

Most important placing criteria for placing third over fourth

Comparative Advantages that apply to the most important criteria

Grants of fourth over third

Criticism of last place horse

Oral Reasons Style: *Experienced format*

Opening Statement: Should contain a statement of placing and an obvious description of the class; should be very direct and designed to fit each particular class. *"I placed this class of Yearling Fillies 1-2-3-4, starting with the highest quality, nicest balanced filly in 1 and ending with the least feminine, lightest made in 4".*

Criticism of the Top Horse: No matter how good of an individual the first place horse is, all horses can more nearly represent the ideal in certain areas. So, begin by stating an obvious criticism using descriptive rather than comparative terminology which identifies the main deficiency of the first place horse as compared to the ideal individual. *"Although 1 could have tracked straighter from behind when asked to trot, I nonetheless placed 1 over 2 in the top pair."*

Top Pair:

Miniature Opening Statement: Should be a general reason why 1 is placed over 2; again, it needs to specifically fit this pair of horses. Select terminology from the primary selection criteria for that class (Halter: Balance, Quality, Structure, Muscling and Travel). This should be one sentence by itself. *Example: "One is not only higher quality, but also more nicely balanced."*

Qualify Your Placing of 1 over 2: Use specific, comparative terminology ("-er" on the end of word) to substantiate higher quality and nicer balanced. *Qualifying terminology should be given in order of relevancy. If the point did not influence the placing, don't talk about it.*

Grant 2 over 1: Again, in comparative terms, specify where and how 2 is better than 1. In a very close pair, there may be as many grant terms as initial reasons for 1 over 2. In very obvious placing you may have only one or even no grant terms that are applicable. *Example: "I admit the sorrel with two hind socks is ..." or "finding no major advantages for 2 over 1".*

Criticize 2: A specific description (not comparative) of the individual. *"However, as 2 is thick necked and short hipped, I placed the sorrel second."*

Transition into Intermediate Pair: Use words like "even so" and "still yet" to make a smooth transition into the next pair. *Example: "Even so, in my intermediate pair, I placed 2 over 3."*

Intermediate Pair:

Miniature opening statement

Qualify your placing of 2 over 3

Grant 3 over 2

Criticize 3

Transition into final pair

Bottom Pair:

Miniature opening statement

Qualify your placing of 3 over 4

Grant 4 over 3

Criticize 4

Closing statement: You have the option of restating the class name and placing or saying, "Thank you".

Suggestions for Presentation of Reasons

1. **Organization and Delivery Earn Credit.** Your score will be higher if your reasons are interesting and easy for the official to follow. Organize your comparison into sentences that flow a few terms together, rather than stating each in a separate sentence. This will decrease wordiness and help your reasons flow.
2. **Present A Visual Image of the Class.** Your reasons should clearly describe the class so that the listener can form a visual image of the horses as you speak. Your goal is to paint a visual image of the class that agrees with what the reasons taker saw. Therefore, always state the most important points first so the official can follow your selection process. If you present the horses in an unorganized fashion or talk about irrelevant points, the reason taker will become confused or disinterested and the result will be a lower score.
3. **Use Voice inflection and flow.** When presenting your reasons, you should pause at commas, periods and pause even longer for new paragraphs. Volume differences can help define important points and increase the listener's interest.
4. **Quality Is More Important Than Quantity.** Higher reason scores are given to those with impact. In other words, those who can say the most with the least amount of words are given credit. Don't add words and phrases that are redundant or have no impact on the placing of the class. For example, instead of saying "number 2, the bay horse", say "the bay" or "2". Reasons must be given within a two-minute time limit and most contests will assess penalty points for going overtime. The average time for a set of reasons should be around 1 minute and 30-40 seconds or even shorter for younger, less experienced judges.
5. **Finish Strong.** Always prepare your reasons in their entirety before making revisions. This will prevent you from spending too much time on the top pair and then tapering off during the intermediate and bottom pair.
6. **Practice, Practice and More Practice.** Remember, the only way to develop a smooth, confident and conversational set of reasons is PRACTICE!

Some Common Errors in Delivery of Reasons

1. **Number Switching.** Either talking a different placing than what was turned in on your card or simply misstating a number.
2. **Misuse of Gender Terms.** This is obviously a major error in halter classes, but is common in performance classes where gender is not relevant.
3. **Wordiness, Lying or Including Unimportant, Irrelevant Information.** This usually happens when your reasons are too long or when you forget what you were going to say and fill in with the first thing that comes to mind. Try to visualize the horses and recall what they did rather than memorizing your reasons.
4. **Switching Between Past and Present Tense.** You can talk reasons in either past or present tense, but you should never switch tense during the set. For example, "The bay *is* nicer balanced and heavier muscled. 1 *had* a long sloping shoulder, shorter back in relation to length of underline and *has* more bulge of muscle in the forearm and gaskin".
5. **Sounding Indecisive.** If you are not sure of something, don't include it in your reasons. For example, "1 *may* have been a higher quality mover" or "2 *is a little* nicer balanced". Remove the words 'may' and 'a little'.
6. **Including Personal Opinion.** Never say, "I thought", or "I liked".
7. **Poor Stance or Position.** When presenting your reasons, stand 5-10 feet away from the official and avoid unnecessary or distracting movements. Try to maintain eye contact or look at the official's forehead throughout your reasons.
8. **Lengthy.** Reasons must be given within a two-minute time limit. Most sets should be organized to complete delivery within one minute and 45 seconds.

"Becoming skilled at oral communication and comfortable with presenting oral reasons requires repetitive practice. Practice by reading sample sets of reasons out loud by yourself. Practice by giving reasons to others. Practice by giving reasons in front of a mirror. Record and listen to or watch your practice set of reasons."

Evaluating Reasons

There are several major points that should remember when evaluating a set of reasons.

1. **Organization:** Reasons should be organized and systematic. The basic approach is the comparison of animals in three pairs: the top pair, the middle pair and the bottom pair. The focus should be placed on why one animal is placed over another animal within each pair, and should be given in a comparative fashion.
2. **Accuracy and Relevancy:** Telling the truth is the foundation for a set of reasons. Reasons should reflect the actual differences in the pair and should consist primarily of those points of comparison that were significant. In other words, stay on the important issues within the pair. Talking about insignificant or irrelevant points is discouraged.
3. **Terminology:** When comparing one horse to another, terminology should always be comparative and relate to the two horses in the pair. Descriptive terminology may be used to a limited extent in the opening statements and to describe faults of an individual.
4. **Presentation:** Oral reasons should be presented in a poised, confident and convincing manner, but they should never convey arrogance. Loud, boisterous delivery, as well as shy, timid unconvincing presentations are discouraged. Rather, reasons should be presented in a confident, yet relaxed, pleasing and conversational manner. The use of correct grammar is also a must.

While good presentation is important, it must be combined with organization, accuracy, relevancy and proper terminology for a good score. Reasons should be given in two minutes or less.

With experience, presenters will develop certain styles or speech and presentation that supplement the ability to promote interest of a reasons official. Individual styles can increase clarity of expressing technical information and provide uniqueness. Individual styles should maintain the standard organizational scheme of grouping into pairs and use of acceptable terminology and grammar.

Scoring Reasons

The total number of reasons given in a contest will vary. Usually, youth will give two to four sets, collegiate four to six sets in a contest. As with placing, the standard is 50 total possible points for each set of oral reasons.

General groupings of reason scores follow:

0 - 25 *No effort, appears lost or unable to communicate, or higher score but used notes.*

25 - 35 *Presentation follows acceptable organizational scheme, minimal to moderate evidence of knowledge of class procedures and judging criteria, large degree of irrelevant and inaccurate reasons and terms, presentation ability minimal to moderate or higher score but used notes.*

35 - 40 *Presentation follows acceptable organizational scheme, moderate to commanding evidence of knowledge of class procedures and judging criteria, minimal to moderate degree of relevancy, accuracy and variation in terminology, presentation ability moderate to commanding or higher score but used notes.*

40 - 45 *Presentation follows acceptable organizational scheme, commanding evidence of knowledge of class procedures and judging criteria, moderate to commanding degree of relevancy, accuracy and variation in terminology, presentation ability commanding.*

45-50 *Presentation follows acceptable organizational scheme, commanding evidence of knowledge of class procedures and judging criteria, commanding degree of relevancy, accuracy and variation in terminology, presentation ability commanding.*

Use of notes

The penalty for using notes during oral delivery of reasons will vary from a minimal point deduction, i.e. 10 points, to score of 0 for the reasons set. Some 'beginner' contests may have less penalty for use of notes. Because of the variation from contest to contest, policies should be relayed in contest materials prior to start of the contest.

Basing Evaluation on Class Objectives

Horse judging contests will have a variety of halter and performance classes. Official placings are determined by an official(s) with knowledge of current standards for judgment as established by organizations hosting the contests. Contests without established, detailed standards will refer to organization standards that do, i.e. The American Quarter Horse Association Rules and Guidelines for Shows.

Rule books contain information describing the legalities and purpose of the class and criteria of judgment that supports that purpose. There are usually three to five main criteria that can be identified within a class description. Scoring systems and supporting statements that detail the main criteria will also be identified throughout the text of established rule-books.

Additionally, organizations prepare judging guides, visual materials and practice class materials to assist in explanation of the current standards. Current standards are updated annually. As such, routine review of rule books and judging materials is important for success in placing classes and oral reasons of judging contests.

Scoring systems will identify credits and debits of performance quality based on the components of the class's criteria or procedure. In addition, errors in performance will be given quantifiable penalties which are deductions from the score obtained from performance quality.

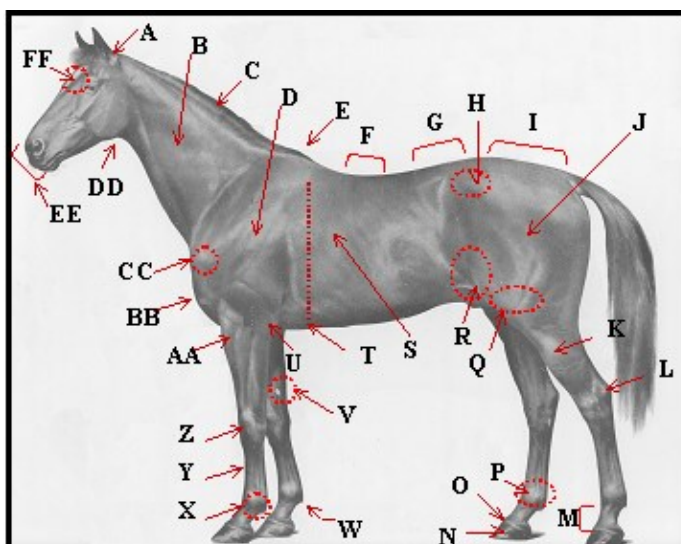
Judging Halter

Halter class is defined as a class where the horse is judged based upon its conformation. Conformation is defined as physical appearance resulting from the arrangement of muscle, bone and other body tissues. Rating conformation depends upon objective evaluation of a well-mannered horse with appropriate breed and sex characteristics, balance, structural correctness, refinement, degree of muscling and movement.

Balance is the single most important characteristic among all breeds. Balance relates how well the size and shape of the various body parts blend together, and is influenced almost in entirety by skeletal structure. Skeletal structure refers to proper shape and alignment of bones so movement and the potential for performance are increased. Breed characteristics allow for different emphasis of the remaining traits, as some breeds are naturally more muscled than others. Refinement mainly refers to the shape, trimness, and attachment of the head and neck. Muscling refers to both the quantity and appearance of muscle. Movement soundness and quality are evaluated at the walk and trot.

Conformation is one of the largest influences to performance. As such, halter class standards should stress the relationship of conformational attributes that enhance athletic performance. Before judging halter, you should be able to identify the anatomical points of conformation.

Anatomical Points of Conformation

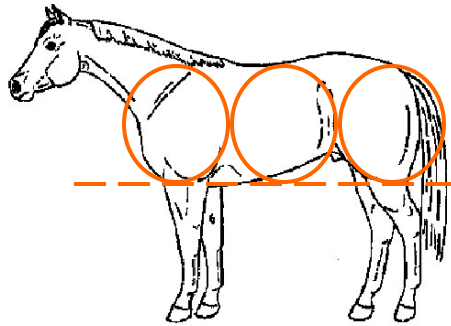


- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| A POLL | Q STIFLE |
| B NECK | R FLANK |
| C MANE OR CREST OF NECK | S THORAX OR BARREL |
| D SHOULDER | T HEART GIRTH |
| E WITHERS | U ELBOW |
| F BACK | V CHESTNUT |
| G LOIN | W ERGOT |
| H POINT OF HIP | X FETLOCK OR ANKLE |
| I CROUP | Y CANNON |
| J HIP | Z KNEE |
| K GASKIN | AA FOREARM |
| L HOCK | BB CHEST |
| M PASTERN | CC POINT OF SHOULDER |
| N HOOF | DD THROAT LATCH |
| O CORONET BAND | EE MUZZLE |
| P FETLOCK | FF FOREHEAD |

Judging Criteria for Halter Classes

Balance

Balance refers to how proportionate the parts of the horse's body are with one another. Balance will aid in quality of movement and maneuverability. A horse can be divided front to back and top to bottom to determine balance. From the profile, balance is seen as the division of the horse's body into three approximately equal sections: 1.) Point of the shoulder to an imaginary vertical line straight down from the withers; 2.) From the withers to the midloin; 3.) Midloin to the rear of the horse. Length of neck will also determine balance. A horse should be approximately equal in length from withers to heartgirth and length of heartgirth to the ground.



Indication of Balance: Three portions of the body (shoulder, middle and hip) are equal in length and depth, and distance from withers to bottom of the heartgirth is equal with distance of bottom of the heartgirth to the ground.

Muscling and Substance

The ideal horse is described as a balanced athlete that is uniformly muscled throughout. Muscling aids in the athletic ability of the animal; therefore, horses should have adequate muscling that appears long (muscle development extends to attachment points) and well defined. However, once a horse has adequate muscling, more is not necessarily an advantage. Areas to detect quantity and quality of muscling from the side view include the forearm, shoulder, hindquarters, stifle and gaskin. From the front view, muscling is observed in the chest, pectoral, shoulder and forearm. From the rear view, muscling is observed in the lower hip and stifle, and the gaskin. Substance refers to the body capacity of the horse in terms of width and depth of body, height and size and shape of bone.

Quality

Sex character refers to those conformation traits that define the appearance between the sexes (mares, geldings and stallions). Type refers to the overall body style and conformation unique to a specific breed. These traits can jointly be referred to as an indication of quality. A nice "profiling" horse is one that combines balance and quality to a high degree. Quality is the overall refinement of the animal. Quality is most easily seen in the head and neck area, but can also be detected in the size and shape of bone and the overall aesthetic value of the individual from the profile. Quality indicators of the head include the length of the face from eye to muzzle, size of eye and ear, and size and shape of muzzle, nose and jaw. Quality indicators of the neck include size and shape of throatlatch, length and shape of neck and the neck to shoulder attachment.

Structure

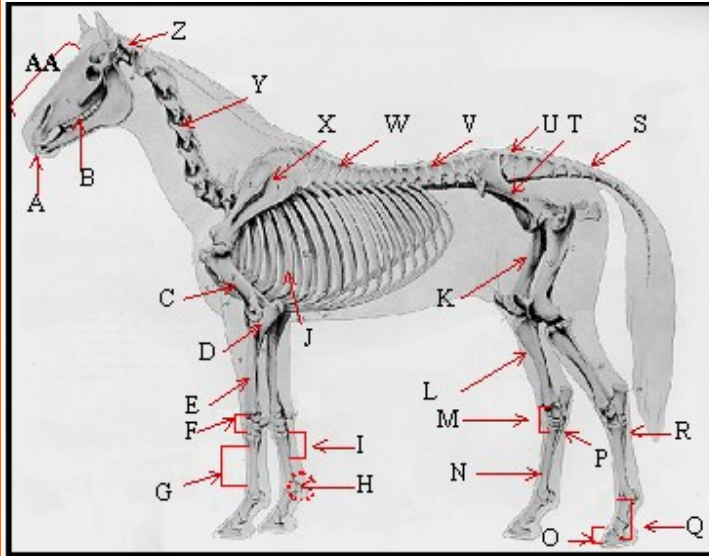
Unsoundness is any deviation in form or function that interferes with the serviceability or usefulness of the horse. Unsounds are most common in feet and legs and occur more frequently in those horses with poor skeletal structure. Correct alignment of bones is essential to maintain the serviceability of the horse. Bone alignment from the forearm to the fetlock, or the hock to the fetlock should be relatively straight in regard to joint alignment when the horse is standing with the feet squarely under the body. Ideally, the knees should be set in the center of the leg with the cannon bone placement directly under the center of the knee. Further, the cannons should be short and strong leading into clean fetlock joints. Also, the pastern should be adequately sloped to receive concussion from movement. Hooves should be well rounded, and roomy with a deep open heel.

Travel

The way a horse travels is commonly referred to as its "way of going". A horse's legs should move in a straight path. Misalignment of skeletal structure causes the horse's footfall path to swing inward or outward. Stride length should be balanced front and rear with a distinct cadence and straight footpath.

Structure of the Skeletal System

The skeletal system provides the basis for all the judging criteria for conformation. The angle and length of the large bones of the shoulder and hip influence balance and movement. The visual estimation of volume, depth and length of muscle is influenced by the length of bone and the angle of joints of the body and upper leg. Structural soundness and movement depend on correct alignment of bones. Quality, breed and sex characteristics are influenced by length, width and angles of attachment of bones.



A INCISORS	N THIRD METATARSAL
B MOLARS	O DISTAL PHALANX
C HUMERUS	P METATARSALS
D ULNA	Q PROXIMAL AND MIDDLE PHALANX
E RADIUS	R FIBULA
F CARPAL BONES	S CAUDAL VERTEBRAE
G THIRD METACARPAL	T PELVIS
H PROXIMAL SESAMIODS	U SACRUM
I METACARPALS (2ND AND 4TH)	V LUMBAR VERTEBRAE
J RIBS	W THORACIC VERTEBRAE
K FEMUR	X SCAPULA
L TIBIA	Y CERVICAL VERTEBRAE
M TARSAL BONES	Z ATLAS (1ST CERVICAL VERTEBRAE)
N THIRD METATARSAL	AA SKULL
O DISTAL PHALANX	

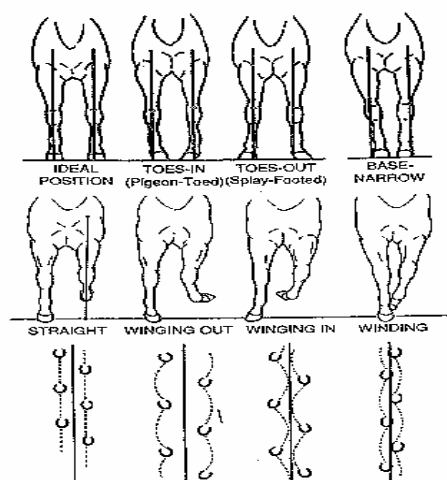
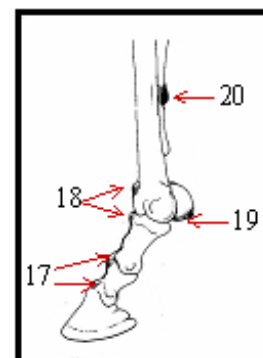
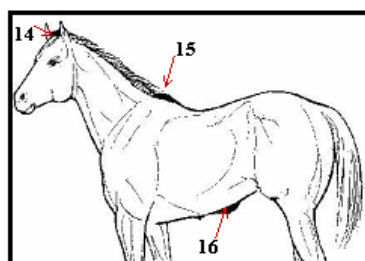
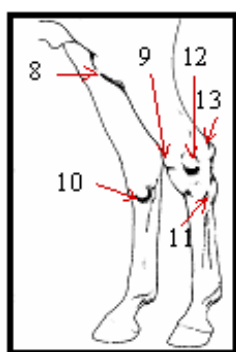
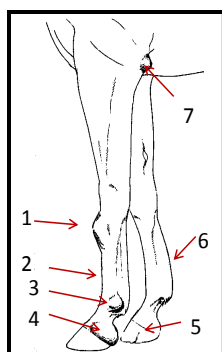
Unsoundnesses and Blemishes

Horse owners refer to various defects as blemishes or unsoundnesses. A blemish is an injury or imperfection that affects the horse's value but not its serviceability. A small abrasion or unnoticeable wire cut might be considered a blemish. Unsoundnesses are injuries or abnormalities that affect the use or serviceability of a horse. It is hard to distinguish between the two, as a defect may not affect a certain use for a horse. Yet, for another use the horse may be unsound. A horse may be unsound at the time of an injury and later only has a noticeable blemish that doesn't affect soundness.

Rule books for most organizations will define attributes of soundness, usually by the appearance of the horse's stride while moving. Judgment of unsoundness is usually done with the horse moving at a trot. Criteria may vary between breeds and sports. A common statement refers to noticeable shortening of stride and exaggerated head movement while the horse is at a trot. This movement quality may be due to a temporary soreness such as from a bruised sole or from a more permanent condition such as joint or bone injury. Regardless of cause, temporary or permanent, horses exhibiting the stated characteristics of movement are deemed 'unsound' with the usual penalty of disqualification.

Locations of Conditions that Relate to Unsoundness

1. Carpalitis or popped knee: inflammation of the knee
2. Bucked shin: inflammation of the front side of the cannon bone
3. Wind puff: distension or overfilling of the fluid sacs located around the pastern or fetlock joint
4. Sidebones: cartilages located along the sides of the foot, above the coronary band toward the bulbs of the heels abnormally ossify or change into bone
5. Quarter Crack: a split in the hoof wall along the side or quarter area of the hoof. Cracks in the hoof wall can occur all along the hoof, from the toe to the heel.
6. Bowed tendon: a strain or tear of the flexor tendon(s) that travel along the back of the cannon bone
7. Capped elbow or shoe boil: soft, flabby swelling caused by an irritation of the elbow
8. Stifled: displacement of the patella bone of the stifle joint
9. Bog spavin: overfilling of the joint capsule resulting in swelling on the front surface of the hock joint
10. Bone spavin: abnormal growth on the inside upper end of the hind cannon bone and bones of the hock
11. Curb: enlargement of the ligament on the rear of the leg just below the hock
12. Thoroughpin: slight swelling of the tendon sheath along the hock joint
13. Capped hock: enlargement at the point of the hock
14. Poll evil: inflammation on the poll area usually from bruising
15. Fistulous Withers: inflamed withers from bruising or infection
16. Umbilical hernia: a protrusion of an internal organ through the naval area of young foals
17. Ring bone: abnormal growth on the pastern bones
18. Osslets: inflammation on the fetlock joint
19. Sesamoiditis: inflammation of the proximal sesamoid bones located at the back of the fetlock joint
20. Splints: inflammation of the splint bones causing abnormal bone growth



Leg Conformation and its Effect on Movement

The amount of concern for abnormal alignment of structure of feet and legs will depend on the degree of the deviation and location. Movement quality will decrease and incidence of unsoundness will increase as deviation from the normal increases. Also, deviations originating on the upper leg and knee are generally considered more serious than deviations below the knee as long as they are similar in degree. Small deviations of stance toward the outside of the body when viewed front and rear generally are considered less serious than deviations toward the inside of the body.

Examples of Terminology for Advantages in Conformation

General Appearance

- More balanced
- Higher quality
- Nicer profiling
- More refined
- More feminine, masculine
- Heavier muscled
- More structurally correct

Balance

- More proportional
- More even in height from hips to withers
- More nearly level topline or withers to croup
- More balanced from end to end or top to bottom

Head

- Higher quality
- More shapely
- Smaller
- More refined muzzle
- More chiseled
- Shorter from eye to muzzle
- Larger appearing eye
- Wider from eye to eye
- Wider forehead
- Shorter ear

Throatlatch

- Thinner in the...; Cleaner in the...
- More refined

Neck

- More refined
- Longer; Thinner; Cleaner
- Longer, thinner neck that tied in higher at the withers and the base.
- Attach higher in the shoulder
- Tied in higher at the base

Shoulder

- Longer, more sloping
- Greater length and slope to the
- More correctly angled
- Wider from shoulder to shoulder

Heartgirth and Body

- Deeper in the...
- Greater depth of....
- Wider in the floor of the chest

Muscling

- More heavily muscled
- Longer, smoother muscle pattern
- More prominence of muscling
- More separation and delineation to muscle pattern

Muscling - Front

- More prominence to the pectoral region
- Greater amount of pectoral muscling, tying in lower to the forearm
- Wider from shoulder to shoulder

Muscling - Side

- More bulge to the forearm and gaskin
- Greater circumference to the...
- Longer in the lower one-third of the hip
- Higher expression of muscling in the (shoulder, hip) that carried down into a larger (forearm, gaskin)
- Longer, lower tying
- More definition of muscling

Muscling - Rear

- Wider from stifle to stifle
- Wider through the center of the stifle
- More bulge to the inner and outer gaskin

Croup and Hip

- More correctly turned over the croup
- Leveler over the croup
- Longer hip or croup
- Deeper through the

Structure

- Stood more structurally correct
- Stood straighter
- Straighter through the knees
- More symmetrical in the knee
- Cannons more centrally located beneath the knees...
- Stood straighter from knees to toes
- Straighter down the hock when viewed from the side (rear)
- More correct angle to the hock
- Straighter through the hock

Tracking

- Straighter
- Truer
- More correct
- Less lateral movement in the knees and hocks
- Showed more freedom of movement
- Freer moving
- More balanced in the stride length front and rear

Topline

- Shorter, stronger back
- Shorter across the top as compared to a longer underline
- More powerful topline
- Shorter backed
- Shorter back in relation to a longer under line

Example Halter Reasons One

I placed this class of Aged Geldings 1-2-3-4, starting with a pair of more balanced, heavier muscled geldings in 1 and 2, and ending the class with the lightest muscled, most structurally incorrect in 4.

Although 1 could be thinner in the throatlatch, I placed 1 over 2 as the blaze-faced sorrel is a more structurally correct and higher quality gelding. 1 is straighter through the knees and toes when viewed from the front, and is straighter down the hock when viewed from the side. Additionally, 1 is shorter faced and is wider from eye to eye.

I understand 2 is thinner and cleaner in the throatlatch, and wider through the center of the stifle as compared with 1, however as he toes out when viewed from the front, I left him second.

Moving to my intermediate pair, I placed 2 over 3. The bay is a more balanced, heavier muscled gelding that stands on more substance. 2 has a longer, more sloping shoulder, is shorter across the topline as compared to a longer underline and is more nicely turned over the croup. Furthermore, the bay is wider across the chest, and a deeper hearted gelding that shows a greater circumference to the forearm and gaskin and is also wider through the center of the stifle.

I will concede 3 is straighter through the toes when viewed from the front and tracks truer, but as he is less balanced and lighter muscled, I left him third.

And finally, in the bottom pair, I placed 3 over 4, as the chestnut is higher quality and more structurally correct. Three has a longer, thinner neck that ties in higher to a longer, more sloping shoulder, and is more even in height from hips to withers. Furthermore, 3 has more slope to the pasterns and a more correct angle to the hock when viewed from the side.

I realize 4 is wider and flatter between the eyes, however as the smaller made sorrel is the most structurally incorrect, narrowest made, and lightest muscled gelding of the class, I placed him fourth. Thank you.

Example Halter Reasons Two

Sir,

Starting with the individual that best combined quality and muscling and ending with the poorest profiling, I aligned the Two-year-old mares 1-4-2-3.

It was 1 over 4 in my top pair as the sorrel was the highest quality mare in the class. She was shorter from eye to muzzle with a brighter, kinder eye and a more erect ear. To compliment this, she was thinner through the throatlatch and had a cleaner neck that tied in higher at the base.

Now I realize that 4 was heavier muscled, however as she was long from eye to muzzle and lacked refinement, I left her third.

Nonetheless, I still found her above 2 in my intermediate pair as the bay was heavier muscled. From the profile, she was more expressive in the muscling of her shoulder, which carried down into a larger circumference of forearm. Additionally, she stood on more substance of muscle being wider from shoulder to shoulder and stifle to stifle while having a more bulging inner and outer gaskin.

I realize that 2 was shorter backed. But, as she was short statured and lacked definition of muscle, I left her third.

Even so, it was balance and structural correctness that placed her above 3 in my final pair. The blaze face sorrel not only had a longer, leaner neck but was also deeper hearted and longer hipped. Moreover, she was straighter from knee to toe and hock to heel.

I will admit that 3, the palomino, was more correct in the turn over her croup; however, I left her last as she was the poorest profiling mare being long from eye to muzzle, shallow hearted and short hipped. Thank you.

‘Keep in mind that in a typical contest, a particular reason official may listen to 50 to 100 sets of reasons on the same class. To score in the upper ranges, delivery, accuracy and relevancy, and organization must be exceptional. Your appearance and mannerisms should enhance an image of confidence and appreciation for the listener’s attention. The ability to deliver reasons in an exceptional manner takes a lot of practice, and step-wise improvement. Very few people have a natural desire to communicate in a stressed environment. It is a skill that develops over time, and a skill that is very useful for a successful life.’

Evaluating Western Pleasure

The primary selection criteria for the Western Pleasure class are: Manners and Willingness, Functional Correctness and Quality of Movement.

A good pleasure horse has a free-flowing stride of reasonable length in keeping with his conformation. He should cover a reasonable amount of ground with little effort. Ideally, he should have a balanced, flowing motion, while exhibiting correct gaits that are of the proper cadence.

The quality of the movement and the consistency of the gaits are major considerations. He should carry his head and neck in a relaxed, natural position, with his poll level with or slightly above the level of the withers. He should not carry his head behind the vertical, giving the appearance of intimidation, or be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance. His head should be level, with the nose slightly in front of the vertical, having a bright expression with his ears alert.

He should be responsive yet smooth in transitions. When asked to extend, he should move out with the same flowing motion. Maximum credit should be given to the flowing, balanced and willing horse that gives the appearance of being fit and a pleasure to ride.

Faults to be penalized include wrong leads, excessive speed, breaking gait, excessive slowness, slow transitions, touching the horse or saddle with the free hand, head carriage too high or too low, nosing out, over flexing, opening the mouth, stumbling, short, choppy strides, tight reins, or excessively long reins.

Example Terminology for Advantages in Western Pleasure

Functional Correctness

- Fulfilled the requirements of the class more by (maintaining gait, taking correct leads)
- More functional in the leads
- More efficient in maintaining gait

Head Carriage and Head Set

- Steadier and more consistent head carriage (set)
- Head carriage more nearly parallel with the ground
- More correct head set, showing more flexion at the poll

Terminology continued

- Head set more nearly perpendicular to the ground
- Traveled more nearly in frame throughout the class

- More desirable head carriage Leveler from poll to wither

- More relaxed and natural at the poll Leveler framed

Walk

- Freer, more forward moving

- More relaxed

- Freer in his shoulder

Jog (in addition to walk terms)

- More distinct

- Slower cadenced

- More deliberate

- More collected at the jog

- Cleaner

- Softer

- Freer

- Longer strided

- Showed a more definite 2-beat jog

- Squarer, 2 beat jog

- More cadenced

- Flatter kneed at the jog

- Moved with knees and hocks closer to the ground

- More balanced in stride length front and rear

Lope (in addition to walk and jog terms)

- More fluid

- Deeper hocked

- Placed his hocks more underneath his body

- More distinct, 3-beat lope

- Showed more drive and impulsion at the lope

- Showed more collection, driving off the hocks more

Mannerisms

- Calmer

- More relaxed

- Quieter

- More alert

- More accepting of cues

- Required less deliberate or obvious or visible cues

- More willing

- Quieter, steadier

- More consistent

- More attentive to the rider

- More responsive in the upward (downward) transitions

Example Western Pleasure Reasons

I placed this class of Western Pleasure 4-3-2-1, starting with the highest quality mover in 4, and ending with the most functionally incorrect in 1.

Although 4 could be quicker in the upward transitions, I placed 4 over 3 in the top pair as the bay was freer and more distinct at the jog both directions, and was more collected at the lope. In addition, 4 was slower cadenced at both the jog and lope, especially when moving to the right.

I realize 3 moved from both the jog and walk into the lope more quickly, but I left him second as he was a less distinct and cadenced mover.

Even so, responsiveness placed 3 over 2 in my intermediate pair. The sorrel was more willing as evidenced by responding more quickly to the rider's cues. 3 was quicker and more efficient in both the upward and downward transitions and was more attentive with the ears, as well as quieter with the tail throughout the performance. Furthermore, 3 showed more flexion at the poll and backed faster and freer when asked.

I admit 2 was more distinct at the jog, but I left him third, as he was much less responsive and willing.

Nonetheless, 2 placed over 1 in the bottom pair, as the palomino was simply a higher quality and more functionally correct mover. 2 was more cadenced and deliberate at both the jog and lope, showing greater collection both ways on the rail. Moreover, 2 maintained the jog when going to the right, and was more efficient at picking up the correct lead while traveling to the left.

I could find no major advantages for 1 over 2. The chestnut placed last because he was the least broke, evidenced by breaking gait at the trot, missing the left lead and consistently requiring excessive amounts of cueing. Thank you.

Evaluating Hunter Under Saddle

The purpose of the hunter under saddle horse is to present or exhibit a horse with a bright, alert expression, whose gaits show potential of being a working hunter. Therefore its gait must be free-flowing, ground covering and athletic.

Hunters under saddle should be suitable to purpose. Hunters should move with long, low strides reaching forward with ease and smoothness, be able to lengthen stride and cover ground with relaxed, free-flowing movement, while exhibiting correct gaits that are of the proper cadence.

The quality of movement and the consistency of the gaits are major considerations. Horses should be obedient, have a bright expression with alert ears, and should respond willingly to the rider with light leg and hand contact.

Horses should be responsive and smooth in transition. When asked to extend the trot, or hand gallop, they should move out with the same flowing motion. The poll should be level with, or slightly above, the withers to allow proper impulsion behind. The head position should be slightly in front of, or on the vertical.

Entries shall be penalized for being on wrong lead, or wrong diagonal at the trot; quick, short, or vertical stride; excessive speed; excessive slowness; failure to take the appropriate gait when called for; head carriage too high or low; over flexing or excessive nosing out; stumbling, failure to maintain light contact on the horse's mouth; breaking gait; tossing of head; consistently showing too far off the rail.

“Western Pleasure and Hunter Under Saddle are ‘rail classes’ where horses move together in a group. Rail classes rely on judges to weigh the differences of judging criteria without a quantified scoring system. Pattern classes have scoring systems that quantify performance quality and faults. Pattern classes such as reining, trail and western riding have very detailed scoring systems that require knowledge of specific penalty values for different faults. Other pattern classes such as western horsemanship group horses into scoring areas based on movement quality and number of faults incurred.”

Example Terminology for Advantages in Hunter Under Saddle

General

Better suited to purpose; More suitable for purpose

Walk

Freer, more forward moving; Freer in his shoulder
More relaxed

Trot

Longer strided; Flatter kneed; Farther reaching
Freer moving; More extended; More sweeping

Canter

More fluid
Deeper hocked
Placed his hocks more underneath his body
More distinct, 3-beat canter
Showed more drive and impulsion at the canter
Showed more collection, driving off the hocks more
Longer strided, flatter moving in the knees and hocks
Lower, longer strided
Showed greater extension while moving flatter and lower over the ground

Movement

Softer hoof to ground contact

Terminology (cont'd)

Moved with more reach from his stifle
Moved with more forward motion
Longer strided; Longer, more ground covering stride
Bolder moving horse that showed more length of stride at the trot and/or canter
Showed greater extension of stride
Flatter, freer mover
Brisker moving horse that showed greater extension of stride
Was flatter in their knees and hocks, moving lower to the ground
Moved out in a longer, lower frame

Manners/Functional Correctness/Head Carriage

Calmer; More relaxed; Quieter
More alert; More accepting of cues
Required less deliberate or obvious or visible cues
More willing; More consistent
Was quieter and calmer throughout the performance
More attentive to the rider, looking straighter through the bridle
More responsive in the transitions
More responsive
Was ridden on a more desirable amount of contact

Example Hunter Under Saddle Reasons

Sir, I placed the Hunter Under Saddle 1-2-3-4, starting with two more suitable to purpose horses in 1 and 2, and ending with the ill mannered, less suitable in 4.

I realize that 1 could be somewhat smoother in downward transitions; however it is his advantage in responsiveness and movement that places him over 2. The chestnut is more mannerly, being quieter and more mindful of the bit, while also being quieter with the tail. Furthermore, 1 moves with a more consistently cadenced, forward moving trot when moving to the left. I admit 2 more willingly moves into the trot from the canter; however, as he is less consistent at the trot, and mouths the bit, I left him second.

Moving to the intermediate pair, I placed 2 over 3, as the brown is better suited to purpose. 2 is a bolder moving horse, showing greater extension of stride and moving in a flatter, lower frame at both the trot and canter. In addition, 2 responds more quickly to the rider in both the upward and downward transitions.

Admittedly, 3 is more accepting of the bit. But I left him third as he is short strided and elevated in his frame.

Even so, it is 3's advantage in manners that places him over 4 in the bottom pair. 3 is quieter with the bit and requires less obvious aides and cues from the rider. Additionally he performs with a more pleasant expression while being ridden on a more desirable amount of contact.

I grant that 4 is more forward moving and freer at the walk. Nonetheless, this bay places last as he travels with excessive speed at the canter. Further, 4 requires excessive handling from the rider, thus making him the least suitable hunter in the class. Thank you.

Evaluating Western Horsemanship

The western horsemanship class is designed to evaluate the rider's ability to execute, in concert with their horse, a set of maneuvers prescribed by the judge with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence, and maintaining a balanced, functional and fundamentally correct body position. The ideal horsemanship pattern is extremely precise with the rider and horse working in complete unison, executing each maneuver with subtle aids and cues. The horse's head and neck should be carried in a relaxed, natural position, with the poll level with or slightly above the withers. The head should not be carried behind the vertical, giving the appearance of intimidation, or be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance.

Example Western Horsemanship Reasons

Starting with the most complete horse and rider combination and ending with the least consistent, I placed this class of Western Horsemanship 4-3-2-1.

I realize that my class winner could have ridden her horse on a looser rein at the jog; however, it was 4's added advantage in body position and pattern precision that placed her over 3 in my top pair. Four had a deeper, more relaxed seat while being squarer in her shoulders and tighter with her lower leg. Additionally, she was smoother and more prompt through the transitions and quicker when pivoting.

I grant that 3 rode with lighter contact. Still, I left her second as she was somewhat loose in her seat and incorrect in her upper body. Nevertheless, as 3 was more correct in his body position, I placed him over 4 in my middle pair.

Three was straighter from hip to heel and used fewer visible cues through the lead changes. Furthermore, he had greater knee contact and was more correct in his hand position throughout the class.

I recognize 2 backed her horse straighter and quicker. However as her leg was too far forward and was slow to pivot, I left her third.

Even so, it was 2's obvious advantage in functional correctness and responsiveness that placed her over 1 in my bottom pair. She was more correct in maintaining the prescribed gait through the first maneuver. 2 also used more subtle rein cues which allowed for smoother, sharper lead changes with less resistance from the horse.

I will admit that 1 was more correct in both her upper and lower body position, however, as the girl on the grey broke gait at the lope and was delayed in the lead changes, thus making her the least correct, I left her last. Thank You

Example Terminology for Advantages in Western Horsemanship

Pattern and Horse

More precise, prompt in execution of

More responsive, more willing, more alert

Completed pattern with less faults

Moved with more cadence

Backed straighter, quicker, or with less resistance

Stopped more correctly, quicker, promptly, or straighter

More correct, smoother, prompt, straighter or flatter in lead changes

More correct, smoother, prompt, precise, straighter with transitions

Horse appeared more relaxed

Moved with less anticipation to cues or willing

Horse performed with less obvious cueing or direction from the rider

Horse and rider worked more in unison, completing the maneuvers of the pattern with more ease and precision

Rider Position

Seat: Deeper, more balanced, more correct, more relaxed

Hands and arms: Quieter, lighter, more supple, maintained more consistent rein length, more direct line of contact with the horse's mouth, steadier contact with the bridle, straighter from the elbow down the reins, straighter through the wrist, hand and rein contact.

Upper body: Head and/or shoulders more correctly aligned with seat and legs, more vertical from shoulder to hip, straighter through the shoulders, more relaxed, squarer through the shoulders.

Lower body: More leg contact, more knee contact, steadier lower, upper leg, more correctly positioned leg (foot), tighter with the lower leg, heel down further or toe pointed straighter.

Evaluating Hunter Hack

The purpose of hunter hack is to give horses and opportunity to show their expertise over low fences and on the flat. The hunter hack horse should move in the same style as a working hunter. The class will be judged on style over fences, even hunting pace, flat work, manners and way of going. The poll should be level with, or slightly above the withers, to allow proper impulsion behind. The head should not be carried behind the vertical, giving the appearance of intimidation, or be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance.

Hunter hack is judged predominantly on the fence work. Scoring systems are designed to place horses in groups of how well fence work was performed, with top scores relating to an excellent performer and good mover that jumps the fences with cadence, balance and style without incurring faults. Faults on the rail include wrong leads, excessive speed or slowness of gait, break of gait, failure to take cage and moving out of frame with too high or low of head carriage, or to forward or behind with the head set.

Example Hunter Hack Reasons

I placed the Hunter Hack 1-2-3-4, starting with the horse that best combined the fence and rail work to the highest degree and ending with the least broke hunter in 4.

Although, 1 could have jumped more near the center of each fence, I nonetheless preferred the gray as 1 showed more interest in the fences and met them more correctly in stride. Furthermore, 1 pushed off his hocks more effectively providing more drive over the fences while being more even and horizontal in his forearms and tightly tucked in the lower leg. 1 showed less resistance to the rider down the line and on the rail by being quieter with his mouth and tail.

I realize the bay was longer strided at the trot, however as 2 was looser in the knee position over the fences, and was less responsive to the rider requiring more handling, I left him second.

Still, I preferred the movement and fence work of the dark bay to 3 in my intermediate pair. 2 moved out with a longer, more reaching stride having more freedom in the shoulder and stifle. The bay worked with more impulsion from the hindquarters and thus, was more distinct at the canter. As well, 2 took a more appropriate number of strides between the fences.

I grant 3 approached the first fence more nearly in the center of the rail, and was tighter in the knees on the first fence. However, as the black was shorter strided, taking an extra stride between the fences and ticked the second fence, I placed 3 third.

Even so, in my bottom pair manners, willingness and correctness place 3 over 4. The black was more responsive to the rider, more willing and freer from refusals.

Additionally, 3 remained straighter when approaching the first fence, maintained the canter between the fences and changed to the correct lead after the second fence. On the flat, 3 required less handling and traveled with a more level head set.

I agree 4 was flatter, more forward moving at the canter. However, as the chestnut was the least broke, most dangerous jumper who broke gait between fences, had a run out on the second fence, and was handled excessively on the rail, I placed 4 last.

Example Terminology for Advantages in Hunter Hack

Safer
Guided more willingly
Freer moving
More evenly paced
Approached the fences more in stride
Has a more cadenced stride and approached the fences with more rhythm
Jumped the fences more ideally in stride
1 rounded his back and jumped with more symmetry than 2
Incurred fewer knockdowns or refusals
Was more obedient than 2
Accumulated fewer faults
Covered the course with a longer, freer stride
Exhibited more manners, being more obedient and responsive to the rider
Approached the fences with more drive from behind and a lower more sweeping stride
Cantered straighter to the center of each fence
Jumped more centered between the standards
Was more evenly paced in both the approach to and the departure from each fence
Exhibited a more correct jumping form, lifting the knees and hocks more efficiently over the fences
Tucked his knees tighter and more evenly
More effective in folding his knees and hocks
Was flatter in his forearms over the fences
Was more even in his foreleg position over the fences
Was more correctly arced over the fence rail
Jumped with the knees more evenly tucked under the body
More forward moving when approaching the fences
Was smoother and more forward moving in approaching the fences
More correct in the point of departure, pushing off more evenly with the hind legs
Showed more interest in the fences
Approached the fences in a more relaxed manner
Pushed off his hocks more effectively providing more drive over the fences
Jumped with hocks positioned more evenly under the body
Remained on a straighter line between the fences

Evaluating Western Riding

The primary selection criteria for the Western Riding class are: Quality of Lead Changes, Movement and Mannerisms. Western Riding is the performance of a sensible, well-mannered, free and easy moving horse. Horses individually complete a prescribed pattern that is designed to score the ability of the horse to change leads.

Scoring systems are detailed in rulebooks. Incomplete or incorrect lead changes are penalized. Individual maneuvers within the pattern are scored positively or negatively.

The horse will be judged on quality of gaits, change of leads, response to the rider, manners, disposition, and intelligence. The horse should perform with reasonable speed, and be sensible, well-mannered, free and easy moving.

Credit shall be given for and emphasis placed on smoothness, even cadence of gaits, and the horse's ability to change leads precisely, easily, and simultaneously both rear and front at the center point between markers. The horse should have a relaxed head carriage showing response to the rider's hands, with a moderate flexation at the poll.

Horses may be ridden with light contact or on a reasonably loose rein. The horse should negotiate the pattern in an easy fashion, neither diving into nor rushing through the markers. The horse should cross the log both at the jog and the lope without breaking gait or radically changing stride.

"Western Riding is all about lead changes. To judge correctly, you have to know the penalties incurred when lead changes are out of the desired location of the pattern. Penalties are deducted from the overall maneuver score which is the sum of all the credits or debits of how well the horse moved through the individual parts of the pattern."

Example Terminology for Advantages for Western Riding

Lead Changes

More Simultaneous (Refers to a horse that changes both front and hind leads together)

Flatter (Refers to a horse that does not prop or elevate his front end while changing)

Freer more forward moving

More Precise (Refers to a horse that changes leads in the correct location between the markers)

Ran a more precise pattern

More fluid lead changer or fluid in changes

Changed more centrally or precisely between the cones

More evenly cadenced in changes

Maintained a more consistent stride through the changes

Changed more in stride

Movement

Western Pleasure movement terms are appropriate

1 is more alert and brisk at the jog taking the log more in stride

2 is more alert and distinct at the jog and makes a cleaner more correct pass over the log

Required less shaping or obvious cueing or positioning from the rider prior to his changes

More evenly cadenced

Manners and Disposition

Western Pleasure mannerism terms are appropriate

1 is more attentive to the rider executing the upward transitions quicker and quieter

2 is more responsive to the bit backing straighter and quicker when asked.

3 is more willfully guided over the entire pattern executing quieter more simultaneous lead changes

Showed the most control and precision

Ran a more precise and controlled pattern

Was more precise, controlled and responsive throughout the pattern

More correct on the pattern

Showed less hesitation prior to the log or prior to the changes

Example Western Riding Reasons

Sir, I placed the Western Riding 1-2-3-4, starting with the smoothest and most precise lead changer in 1, and ending with the most functionally incorrect in 4.

Although, 1 could be flatter in the first line side change, still in the top pair I placed 1 over 2 as the sorrel is more responsive and smoother throughout the pattern. 1 changes more nearly in the center of the cones down the line. Furthermore, 1 is more evenly cadenced from start to finish and backs more readily when asked.

I realize 2 is quicker and quieter in the transition to the lope, but received too many penalties for changing early down the line to be placed higher.

Moving to the intermediate pair, I placed 2 over 3, as the bay is a higher quality mover and is smoother and flatter in the lead changes. 2 was more forward moving at the jog and lope, and changed more simultaneously and in cadence than 3.

I admit 3 changed more precisely on the first and fourth line changes; however, 3 lacked the quality of movement and lead change of 2.

Finally in the bottom pair, I placed 3 over 4, as the chestnut is more functionally correct, having completed all the changes prescribed in the pattern. In addition, 3 cleanly crosses the log at the lope.

I have no obvious advantages of 4 over 3. The blaze-faced sorrel is the most penalized horse, having failed to change behind when moving left to right on the cross changes, and rolling the log when crossing at the lope. 4 also received a penalty for completing an extra lead change between the log and the stop. Thank you.

Evaluating Reining

The primary selection criteria for judging the reining class are: Mannerisms and Discipline, Pattern Accuracy and Degree of Challenge. Horses individually complete a prescribed pattern that is designed to score the ability of the horse to rein. Scoring systems are detailed in rulebooks. Quality of performing the individual maneuvers within the pattern is scored positively or negatively. Additionally, incomplete or incorrect maneuvers are penalized.

To rein a horse is not only to guide him but also to control his every movement. The best-reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and dictated to completely. Any movement on his own must be considered a lack of control. All deviations from the exact written pattern must be considered a lack of/or temporary loss of control and therefore a fault that must be marked down according to severity of deviation. Credit will be given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of performing the various maneuvers while using controlled speed.

Example Terminology for Comparable Advantages in Reining

Manners/Discipline

- More controlled
- Settled more readily
- Performed with a more cooperative attitude
- More willingly guided
- Quieter and calmer
- Showed more response and obedience to the rider
- Less cueing from or resistance to the rider

Pattern Accuracy

- Was more precise, controlled and responsive throughout the pattern
- Ran a more precise pattern
- Ran a more precise and controlled pattern

Challenge

- Quicker
- Faster
- Ran a more aggressive and controlled pattern
- Challenged the pattern, running harder, sliding further in the stops, spinning faster
- Challenged the pattern to a higher degree of difficulty

Lead Changes (In addition to terms in Western Riding)

- More correct by being more simultaneous
- More prompt and efficient
- Exhibited more natural, effortless lead changes
- Changed leads with less obvious cues from the rider

Spins

- Faster and flatter in the spins
- Was more correct in the spins

Spins

- Flatter, lower, Faster
- More correct in maintaining the hind pivot foot
- More correct in the stopping points of the spin
- Smoother and more level in the spins
- Showed more acceleration in the spins

Rollbacks

- Rolled over the hocks more correctly
- Rolled back harder and cleaner over the hocks
- Loped out of the rollbacks more correctly
- Quicker, snappier

Back

- Backed more readily, showing more flexion at the poll
- Backed faster and freer
- Backed faster and with more ease

Circles

- Showed more size and/or speed variation in the circles
- Ran more correct and precise circle
- Ran rounder circles
- Circled with a more correct arc to the body
- More willingly slowed to small circles
- Ran harder, more challenging large circles
- More symmetric in circles

Stops

- Stopped harder and slid further
- Dropped (hocks) deeper into the ground
- Deeper and longer stopping horse
- Stopped harder and slid further, staying more relaxed on the forehand
- Was a harder stopping horse, staying in the ground longer

Example Reining Reasons

Sir, starting with a pair of individuals that best combined finesse, speed, and agility, I aligned the reining 3-4-2-1.

In my initial pair of bays, it was 3 over 4 as 3 simply ran the more demanding and aggressive pattern. He carried this advantage into his rundowns which allowed him to develop more speed and drop down harder into the ground causing him to have longer sliding stops.

I realize that 4 did back faster and settled more readily; unfortunately he was short and restricted in his stops, so I left him second.

Despite this, it was 4's degree of difficulty and pattern precision that separated him from 2 in my intermediate pair. The bay maintained a lower center of gravity during the spins, and maintained a more stationary hind pivot foot while crossing over more efficiently up front. Along with this, he was faster spinning and also more correct in the stopping points of his spins. I realize that 2 showed more size and speed variation of large and small circles, but I left him third as he scored lower mainly because he received two half-point penalties for over spinning in both sets of spins.

Nonetheless, it was 2's advantage in functional correctness that placed him over 1 in my final pair. The dun was simply more correct in completing the prescribed pattern.

Finding no obvious grants of 1 over 2 and as the dun received a score of zero for backing greater than 4 steps between the spins, I left him last.

Thank You.

"Reining has one of the most detailed scoring systems of all classes. Penalty values will range from 1/2 to 5 point deductions, and each maneuver has several specific ways to incur penalties. This can be confusing at first glance. It will take time and studying to feel comfortable with assessing penalties."

Evaluating Trail

The primary selection criteria for evaluating a trail class are: Obstacles Scores, Mannerisms and Movement. Horses are to perform through a course of obstacles.

This class is judged on the performance of the horse over the obstacles with emphasis on manners, response to the rider, and quality of movement. The performance over each obstacle is scored positively or negatively. In addition, penalties are assessed for incomplete or incorrect performance through obstacles. Credit will be given to those horses negotiating the obstacles with style and some degree of speed, providing correctness is not sacrificed. Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to the obstacles and capability of picking their own way through the course when obstacles warrant it, and willingly responding to rider's cues on more difficult obstacles. Scoring systems are outlined in rulebooks.

Example Terminology for Comparable Advantages in Trail

More correct performer
More precise in the pattern
Less penalized, more functionally correct
More nicely mannered, willing, less resistant
More penalty free
Performed a quicker, cleaner pattern
More carefully picked his way through a cleaner pattern
Freer of hits and ticks
Freer of knockdowns
Negotiated the obstacles with a greater degree of speed and precision
More correct in performing the prescribed lead/gait in left/right lead (1st or 2nd set of) lope over(s)
Performed the obstacles with greater speed and authority while remaining cleaner
More responsive and willing performer
Required less handling/guiding through the obstacles
Required less cueing from the rider while negotiating a cleaner pattern
Was quieter and more responsive to the rider
Showed less hesitation when entering the (box, chute, bridge, etc.)
Performed the obstacles quicker
Was more attentive to the rider/obstacles
Showed greater interest in the obstacles
Smoother and more precise when negotiating the obstacles

Example Trail Reasons

Sir, I placed the Trail class 1-2-3-4, starting with the most responsive and willing horse in 1, and ending with a pair of poorer mannered, less broke horses in 3 and 4.

Although, 1 could be cleaner over the logs, still in the top pair I placed 1 over 2, as the bay performs the pattern in a more willing manner. 1 responds more quickly while backing through the “L” and while sidepassing. Furthermore, 1 is quicker in picking up a more cadenced, controlled lope and is more alert and precise while crossing the bridge.

I realize 2 is cleaner over the logs at the jog, but 2 incurs a penalty for stepping off the bridge, and moves with too much hesitation through the obstacles to be placed higher.

However, I placed 2 over 3 in the middle pair, as the sorrel is simply more penalty free over the trot over and lope over logs. 3 incurs several one point penalties for hitting logs on the lope-over, and a 3 point penalty for breaking to a walk on the trot overs.

Admittedly, 3 crossed the bridge more precisely, and is less hesitant in entering the L and moving over the logs. Regardless, I left him third as he received several penalties for hits and ticks on several of the obstacles.

3 places over 4, the brown, in the final pair as 3 completed all the prescribed obstacles. 3 maintained an appropriate position with the gate, allowing for the rider to maintain control of the gate until the obstacle was completed.

I realize that 4 was more willing in the ‘back thru’. Regardless, as the brown refused to work the gate three times, which resulted in disqualification, he must remain last.

Ranch Riding

The purpose of Ranch Horse Pleasure horse should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse. The horse’s performance should simulate a horse riding outside the confines of an arena and that of a working ranch horse. This class should show the horse’s ability to work at a forward, working speed while under control by the rider. Light contact should be rewarded and horse shall not be shown on a full drape of reins. The overall manners and responsiveness of the horse while performing the maneuver requirements and the horse’s quality of movement are the primary considerations.

Class Requirements

Each horse will work individually, performing both required and optional maneuvers, and scored on the basis of 0 to 100, with 70 denoting an average performance. The required maneuvers will include the walk, trot, and lope both directions; and the extended trot and extended lope at least one direction; as well as stops, and back. Three optional maneuvers may include a side pass, turns of 360 degrees or more, change of lead (simple or flying), walk, trot, or lope over a pole(s); or some reasonable combination of maneuvers that would be reasonable for a ranch horse to perform.

Ranch Riding – Gait Evaluation

The overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be as those described in GAITS (AQHA rule-book), with an emphasis on forward movement, free-flowing, and ground covering for all gaits. Transitions should be performed where designated, with smoothness and responsiveness.

Posting at the extended trot is acceptable.

Touching or holding the saddle horn is acceptable.

Ranch Riding - Apparel and Equipment

No hoof polish.

No braided or banded manes or tail extensions.

Trimming inside ears is discouraged.

Trimming bridle path is allowed, also trimming of fetlocks or excessive (long) facial hair.

Equipment with silver should not count over a good working outfit. Silver on bridles and saddles is discouraged.

It is suggested competitors use a breast collar and a

“Ranch Riding is the fastest growing class in AQHA competition. Real working ranch horses compete in this class, but so do reiners, cutters, ropers and even trail riding horses.”

Ranch Riding - Scoring System

- +1.5 Excellent (WOW!)
- +1 Very Good (Good speed variation, v. smooth transitions, v. good mover, v. responsive)
- +1/2 Good (Some degree of agility, smooth transitions, good mover, responsive)
- 0 Average (Correct, no speed variation, lacks agility and style, average mover)
- 1/2 Poor (Incorrect maneuvers, some resistance, lacks smoothness, rough transitions)
- 1 Very Poor (Excessive resistance, excessive handling, very rough transitions)
- 1.5 Extremely Poor (Oh no!)

Ranch Riding - Penalties

One (1) point penalties

- Too slow/per gait
- Over-bridled
- Out of frame
- Break of gait at walk or trot for 2 strides or less
- Split log at lope

Three (3) point penalties

- Break of gait at walk or trot for more than 2 strides
- Break of gait at lope
- Wrong lead or out of lead
- Draped reins
- Out of lead or cross-cantering more than two strides when changing leads

when changing leads

- Trotting more than three strides when making a simple lead change
- Severe disturbance of any obstacle

Example Ranch Riding Reasons

I aligned the Ranch Riding 1-2-3-4, starting with the most responsive and ending with the heavily penalized.

Although 1 could have been somewhat cleaner when trotting over the logs, I placed him over 2 in my initial pair. The bay was by far the more consistent of the two, being more responsive to the rider's aids and cues. In addition, 1 was faster spinning and smoother in his maneuver transitions.

I realize that 2 was the better mover of the pair; but, unfortunately, the buckskin was slow and resistant in the spins, so I left him second.

Moving on to my intermediate pair, I easily found 2 over 3 as 2 was a higher quality mover, being flatter through the knee and hock. Furthermore, the buckskin moved with a more free-flowing and ground covering stride at the trot while showing greater extension.

Yes, 3 worked with less visible cueing from the rider; however, as the sorrel was rough when negotiating the log and was extremely uncollected, I left him third.

Nevertheless, in my final pair I still found 3 over 4 as 3 was more penalty free. The sorrel was more willing and attentive to the rider while more correctly completing the maneuvers. In addition, 3 was more functionally correct by more promptly picking up and maintaining the correct lead and gait through the circles.

“ Horse judging can be more challenging than other livestock judging activities as you not only judge conformation, you also are responsible for a variety of performance classes each with specific standards and criteria. On the other hand, it is this diversity of classes that make it more interesting.

The intent of youth judging goes beyond the training for a potential useful and profitable career skill as a professional horse show judge. It is a skill that will improve the management and use abilities of horse owners, especially those that exhibit their horses.

Moreover, the personal developmental skills that are gained will influence the ability to relate to others. The ability to objectively analyze situations and the experience of making decisions in a competitive environment will improve relational and decision-making skills. Understanding the need to organize and identify the criteria for judgment will improve your clarity and effectiveness of making decisions.

Also, communication skills developed informally and formally through judging contests will allow you more comfortable and effective delivery of information to and from others.

Success with judging requires a long-term commitment to improvement, and acceptance that improvement is a step-wise process that allows for small gains at a time. Perseverance and the ability to set and achieve long-range goals have far reaching implications on future personal and professional success.”

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