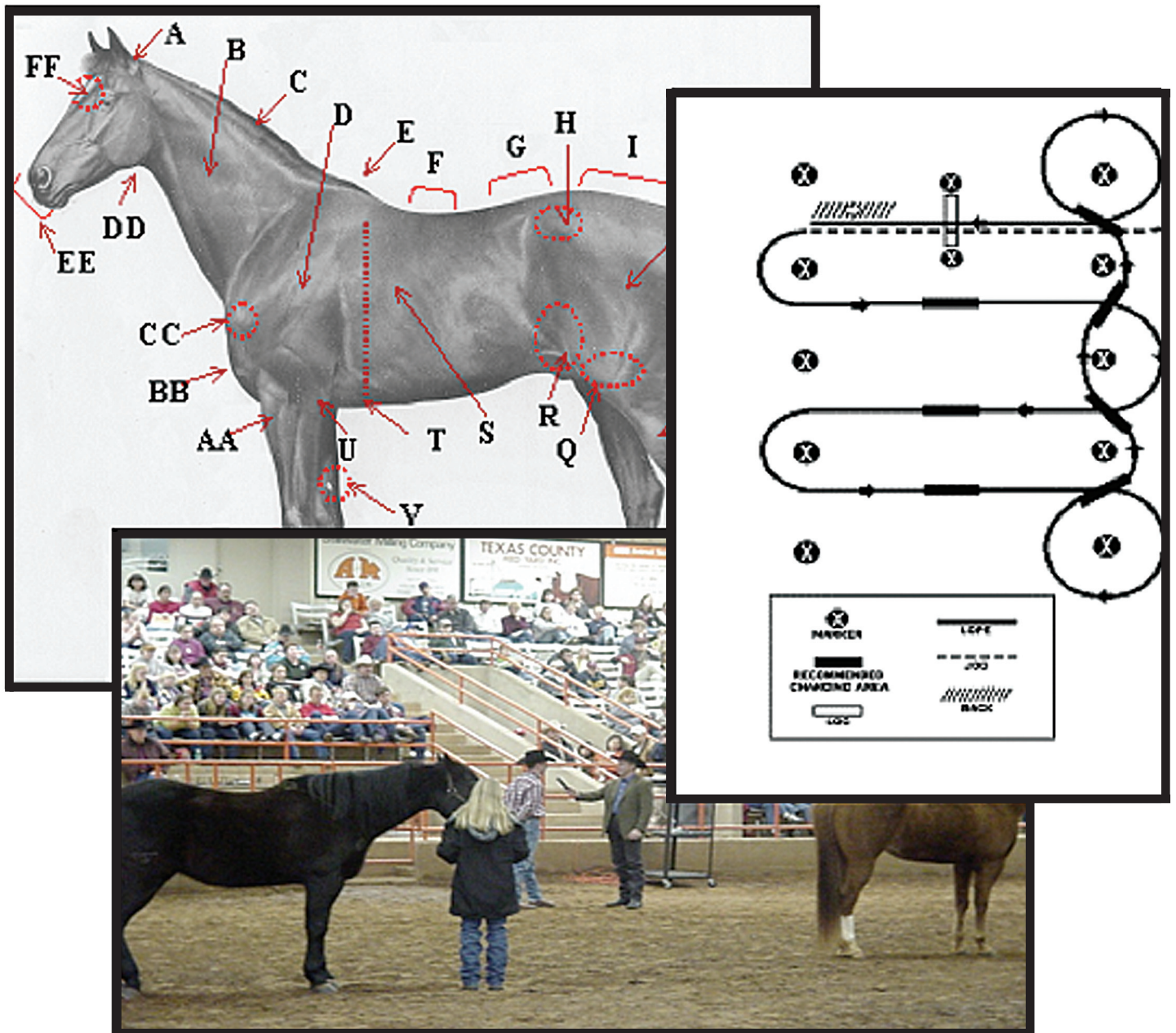


# OKLAHOMA STATE 4-H HORSE JUDGING GUIDE



Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service  
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources  
Oklahoma State University  
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## Suggestions for Building 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.

1. 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 optimum will be established.

2. Build on the youth's expertise in a step-wise fashion as they become more accomplished. 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.
3. 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.
5. 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.

## 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. Judging 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 of 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.

## **Conducting a Judging 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.
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 ensure 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 selected as early as possible. 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 judging 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 25 to 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. If there are more potential performance reason classes than the number of reasons that will be given, it is customary for the youth to take notes on all of them 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.

## **Computing Placing Scores**

### **Description of Cuts**

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 Not all tabulation programs allow a 0 cut; 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 conformational incorrect horse; or a world-class performance versus a disqualified performance.

### **Calculating 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.

Scoring can 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	2	3	4
	$\sqrt{\phantom{0}}$	$\sqrt{\phantom{0}}$	$\sqrt{\phantom{0}}$	
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.

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.

#### Example #2

Official Placing  $2 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 4 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 1 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 3$   
Cuts  $2 \quad 4 \quad 1$

Contestant's Placing 4 - 2 - 1 - 3

Start with the contestants first place horse and compare its ranking over the individuals placed below it to the official placing. Then compare the contestant's second and third place horses to those ranked below them as follows:

- (4 over 2) Incorrect: 2 point deduction
- (4 over 1) Correct: no deduction
- (4 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- (2 over 1) Correct: no deduction
- (2 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- (1 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- Total penalty deduction: 2 points
- Class Score:  $50 - 2 = 48$

#### Example #3

Official Placing  $2 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 4 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 1 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 3$   
Cuts  $2 \quad 4 \quad 1$

Contestant's Placing 4 - 2 - 3 - 1

- (4 over 2) Incorrect: 2 point deduction
- (4 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- (4 over 1) Correct: no deduction
- (2 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- (2 over 1) Correct: no deduction
- (3 over 1) Incorrect: 1 point deduction
- Total penalty deduction: 3 points
- Class Score:  $50 - 3 = 47$

#### Example #4

Official Placing  $2 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 4 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 1 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 3$   
Cuts  $2 \quad 4 \quad 1$

Contestant's Placing 1 - 2 - 4 - 3

- (1 over 2) Incorrect: 4 and 2 point deductions
- (1 over 4) Incorrect: 4 point deduction
- (1 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- (2 over 4) Correct: no deduction
- (2 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- (4 over 3) Correct: no deduction
- Total penalty deduction: 10 points
- Class Score:  $50 - 10 = 40$

#### Example #5

Official Placing  $2 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 4 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 1 \begin{smallmatrix} - \\ \mathbf{v} \end{smallmatrix} 3$   
Cuts  $2 \quad 4 \quad 1$

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:  $50 - 25 = 25$

## 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 that 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 help the inexperienced analyze horses point by point and think in comparative terms.

### **Taking Notes**

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. Several different note-taking grids have been developed to help organization of notes (Figure 1).

CLASS NAME AND NUMBER	
<b>HORSE 1 DESCRIPTION</b>	
HORSE 1 POSITIVE QUALITIES	HORSE 1 NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS
<b>HORSE 2 DESCRIPTION</b>	
HORSE 2 POSITIVE QUALITIES	HORSE 2 NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS
<b>HORSE 3 DESCRIPTION</b>	
HORSE 3 POSITIVE QUALITIES	HORSE 3 NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS
<b>HORSE 4 DESCRIPTION</b>	
HORSE 4 POSITIVE QUALITIES	HORSE 4 NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 1. One way to organize notes for a reasons class.**



## 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 (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place), a middle pair (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place), and a bottom pair (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place horses.
4. Bottom pair: The same format as the top pair, only this comparison should be restricted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place horses.
5. Concluding statement: Styles vary from those who prefer to redefine the placing to simple, short concluding statements such as 'Thank you'.

## Style A: 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 (Figure 2).

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

*Top Pair: Using **comparative** terminology, provide the advantages of 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: Using **comparative** terminology, provide the advantages of the top horse in this pair as compared to the bottom horse in this pair. Follow this with a comparative grant of the bottom horse of this pair over the top horse of this pair if applicable.*

*Bottom Pair: Using **comparative** terminology, provide the advantages of the top horse in this pair as compared to the bottom horse in this pair. Follow this with a comparative grant of the bottom horse of this pair over the top horse of this pair if applicable. 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'.*



Class Name and Placing:

---

Identifying Markings

1

2

3

4

---

Top Pair Placing

Comparative Advantages

Grants

---

Middle Pair Placing

Comparative Advantages

Grants

---

Bottom Pair Placing

Comparative Advantages

Grants

Criticism of last place horse

---

**Figure 2. Oral reasons organizational grid for style A.**

**Style B. Format for Experienced Youth (Same as Style A with additional parts) (Figure 3)**

*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: Although, we started the class with this individual, we realize she could more nearly represent the ideal in certain areas. Therefore,*

*we state an obvious criticism using descriptive not comparative terminology. "Although, the buckskin could be/have ... , 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.*

Class Name and Placing:

---

Identifying Markings

1  
2  
3  
4

---

Criticism of top horse

Top Pair Placing

Comparative Advantages

Grants

Criticism of second placed horse

---

Middle Pair Placing

Comparative Advantages

Grants

Criticism of third placed horse

---

Bottom Pair Placing

Comparative Advantages

Grants

Criticism of last place horse

---

**Figure 3. Oral reasons organizational grid for style B.**

*Example: "One is not only higher quality, but also nicer 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 you're 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 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 accurately 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 Correct Grammar.** When presenting your reasons, you should pause at commas, periods, and pause even longer for new paragraphs. This will allow the official time to follow your thought process and to visualize your placing of the class.
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!
  - Practice reading sample sets of reasons.
  - Practice giving reasons to other people.
  - Practice giving reasons in front of a mirror.
  - Practice giving your reasons using a tape recorder or video recorder.

## **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 and should be avoided.
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.

## Scoring Reasons

There are several major points that the student judge should remember when organizing a set of reasons.

1. Accuracy: Truth is the primary consideration in a set of reasons.
2. 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.
3. Relevancy: Reasons should reflect the actual differences in the pair and should consist primarily of those points of comparison that were significant in the placing of the pair. In other words, stay on the important issues within the pair. Talking about insignificant or irrelevant points is discouraged.
4. Terminology: When comparing one horse to another, terminology should always be comparative. Descriptive terminology may be used to a limited extent in the opening statements and to describe faults of an individual. Comparative terminology lists are included in following sections. By using comparative terminology, the student is relating the horse to

the horse placed above or below. It will also aid in keeping main points in mind. The top horse in the pair may be well balanced, heavily muscled, and structurally correct, but it is of little concern unless the top horse is more nicely balanced, heavier muscled, and more structurally correct than the bottom horse of the pair.

5. 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.
6. Rather, reasons should be presented in a confident, yet relaxed, pleasing and conversational manner. The use of correct English is also a must. While good presentation is important, it must be combined with accuracy, organization, relevancy, and proper terminology for a good score. Reasons should be given in two minutes or less.

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

- 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, and presentation ability commanding.
- 45-50 Presentation follows acceptable organizational scheme, commanding evidence of

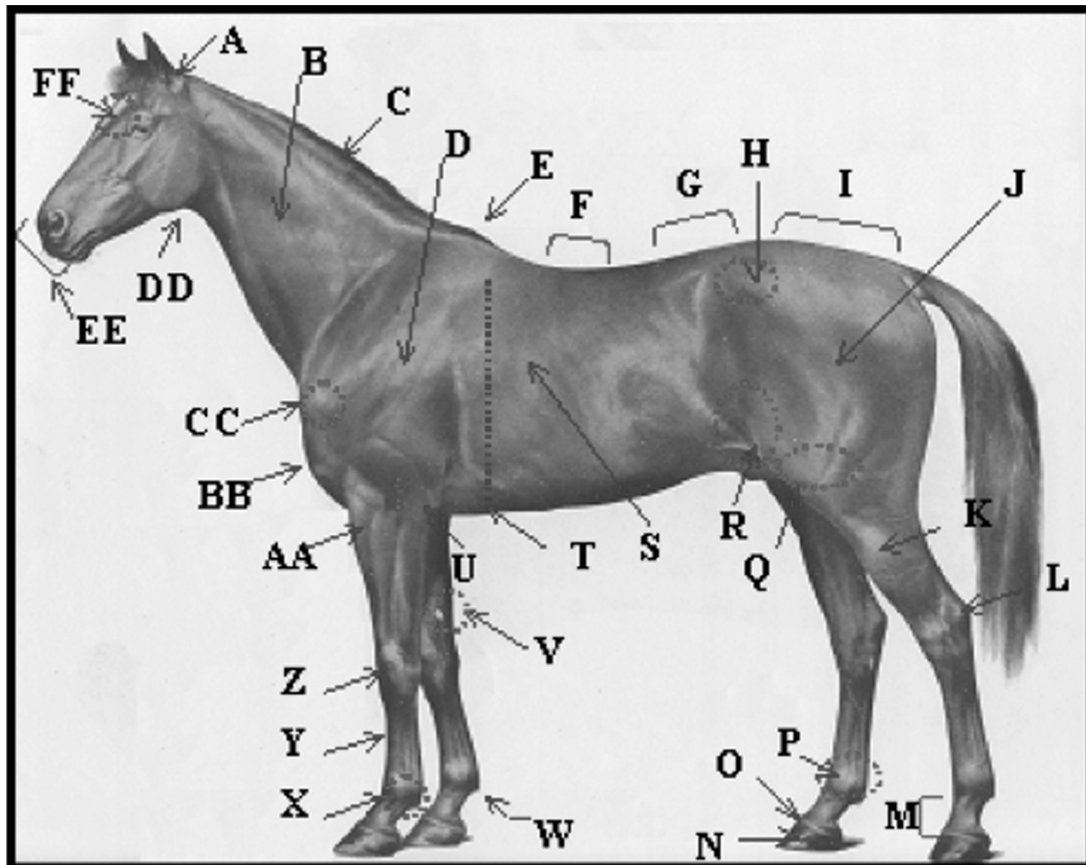


knowledge of class procedures and judging criteria, commanding degree of relevancy, accuracy and variation in terminology, and presentation ability commanding.

## Judging Halter Classes

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 (Figure 4). Rating conformation depends upon objective evaluation of breed and sex characteristics, balance, structural correctness, refinement, and degree of muscling. 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



- A POLL
- B NECK
- C MANE OR CREST OF NECK
- D SHOULDER
- E WITHERS
- F BACK
- G LOIN
- H POINT OF HIP
- I CROUP
- J HIP
- K GASKIN
- L HOCK
- M PASTERN
- N HOOF
- O CORONET BAND
- P FETLOCK
- AA FOREARM
- BB CHEST
- CC POINT OF SHOULDER
- DD THROAT LATCH
- EE MUZZLE
- FF FOREHEAD

- Q STIFLE
- R FLANK
- S THORAX OR BARREL
- T HEART GIRTH
- U ELBOW
- V CHESTNUT
- W ERGOT
- X FETLOCK OR ANKLE
- Y CANNON
- Z KNEE

**Figure 4. Conformation points of a horse.**

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. 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.

### Balance

Balance refers to how proportionate the parts of the horse's body are to 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 (Figure 5).

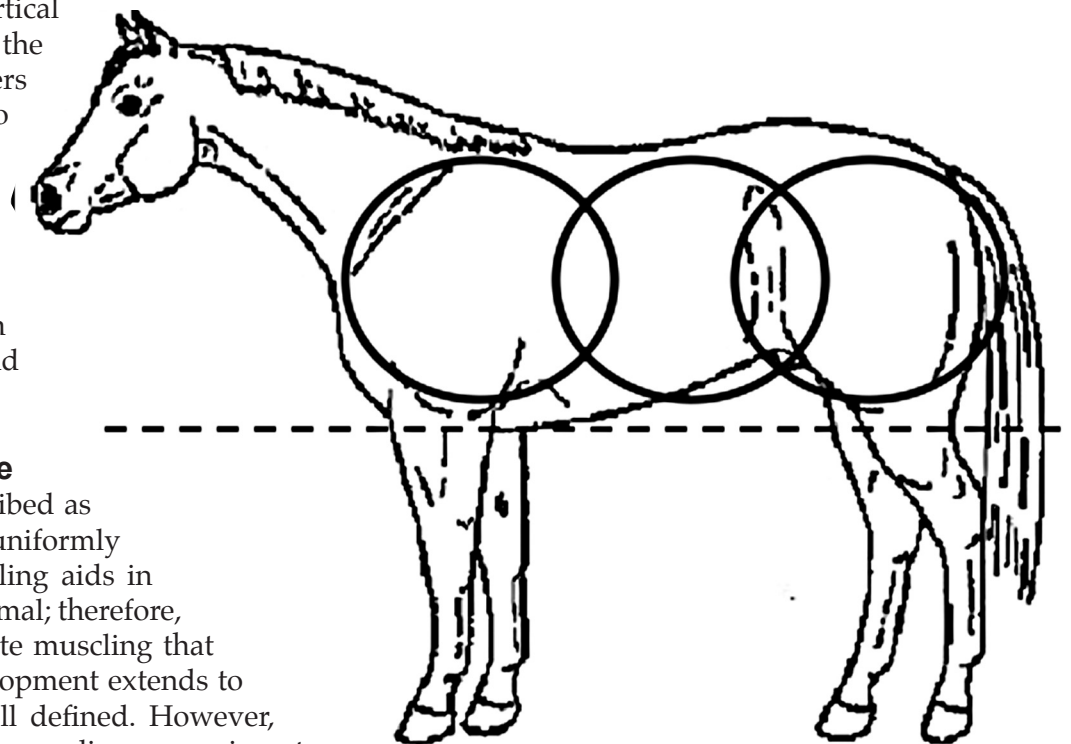
### Muscling and Substance

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, stifle, and the gaskin. Substance refers to the body capacity of the horse in terms of width and depth of body and height, 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.

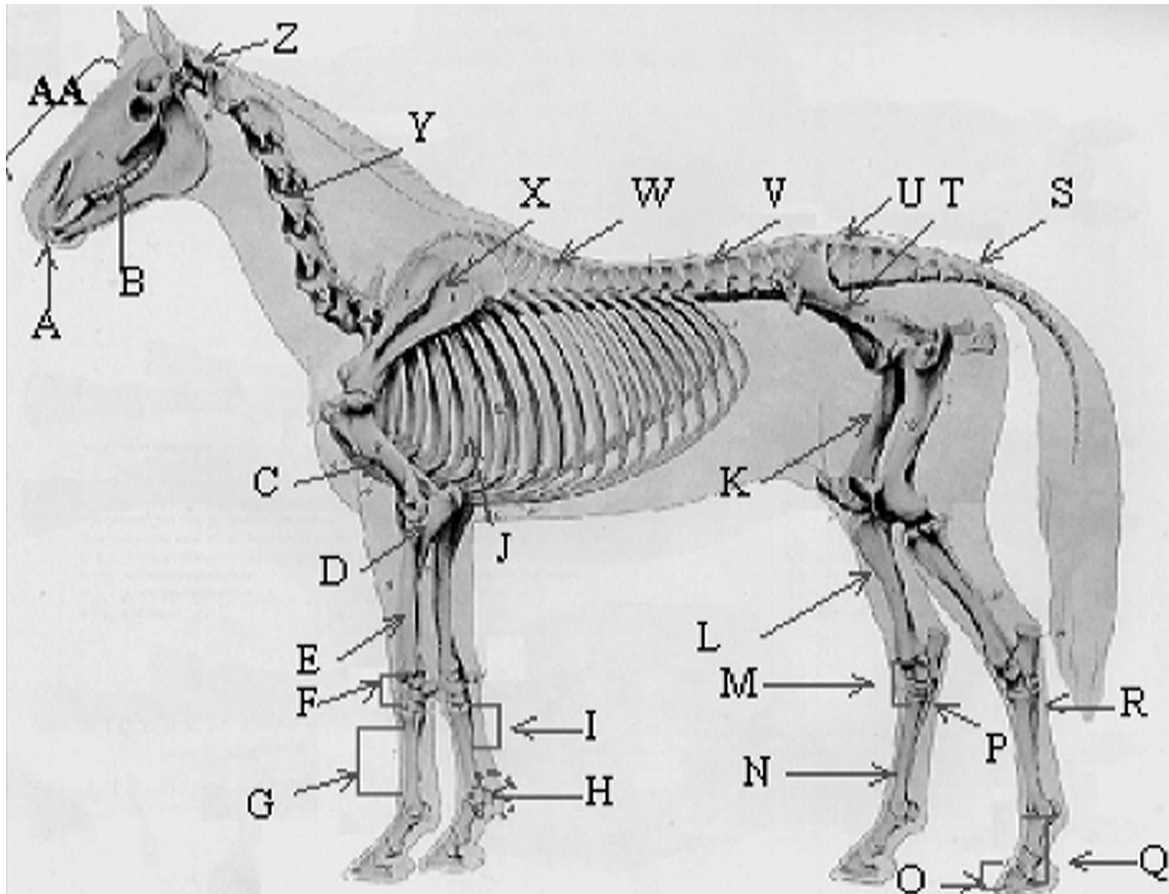


**Figure 5. Balance Indicators:** Three portions of the body are equal in length and depth, and distance from withers to bottom of the heartgirth is equal with distance of bottom of the heartgirth to the ground.

## Structure

Unsoundness is any deviation in form or function that interferes with the serviceability or usefulness of the horse, and should be considered when placing a horse (Figure 6). Unsoundnesses 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.



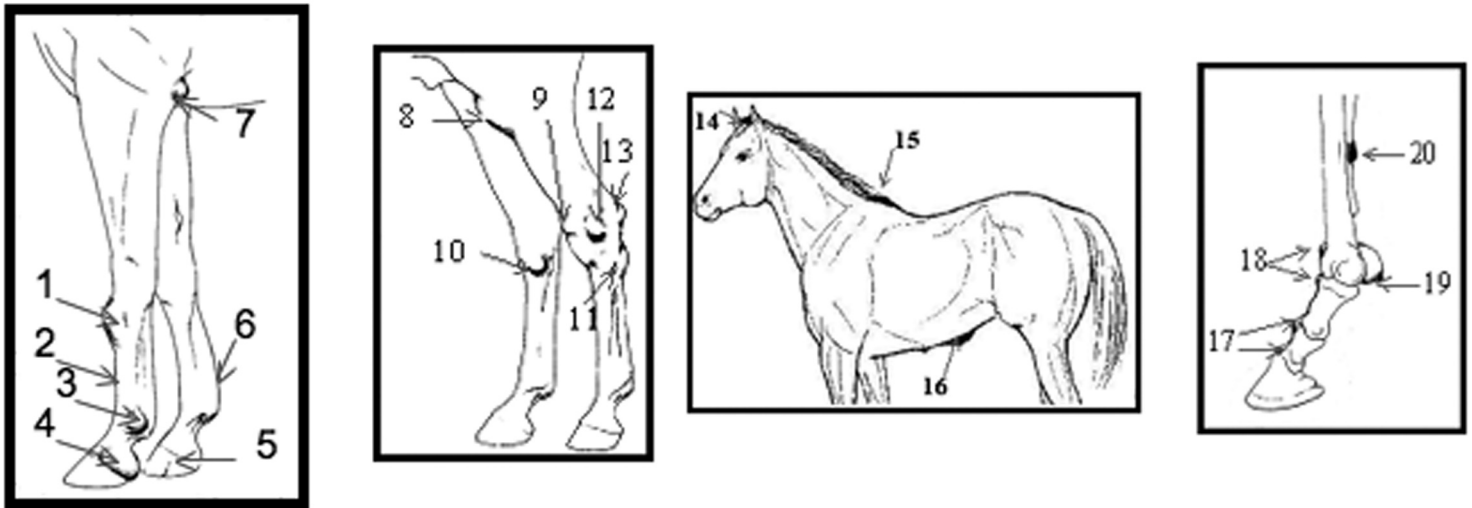
- |   |                           |         |                                |
|---|---------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|
| A | INCISORS                  | N       | THIRD METATARSAL               |
| B | MOLARS                    | O       | DISTAL PHALANX                 |
| 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) |
|   |                           | AASKULL | SKULL                          |

**Figure 6. Structure of a horse.**

## 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. For another use the horse may be unusable. At the time of an injury, a horse may be unsound, but later only has a noticeable blemish that does not affect soundness (Figure 7).



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

**Figure 7. Locations of some conditions that may cause unsoundness.**



## 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. This should be considered a structural fault when it interferes with the horse's normal way of going (Figure 8).

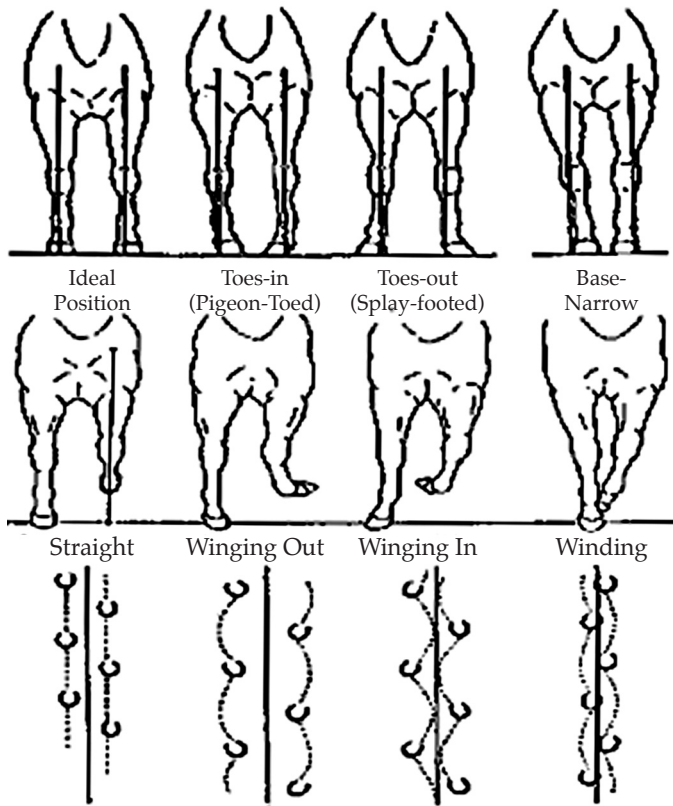


Figure 8. Travel of a horse.

## Terms for Comparative Advantages for Halter

### General Appearance

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

### 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
- Brighter eye
- 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
- More slope to the..
- Greater length and slope to the
- More desirable slope
- More correctly angled

## Heartgirth and Body

- Deeper in the...
- Greater depth of....
- Deeper hearted, wider chested...
- Wider in the floor of the chest
- Wider from shoulder to shoulder

## Substance

- Wider, deeper bodied...
- Deeper hearted, wider
- Deeper in the heart girth
- Taller, wider

## Muscling

- More heavily muscled
- Showed more muscling throughout
- Longer, smoother muscle pattern
- More prominence of muscling
- Separation and delineation to muscle pattern
- More definition of muscling

**Muscling - Front**

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

**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  
Greater length of

**Structure**

Stood more structurally correct  
Stood straighter

**Knees**

Straighter through the knees  
More symmetrical in the knee  
Cannons more centrally located beneath the knees...  
Stood straighter from knees to toes

**Toes**

Stood straighter through the toes

**Hocks**

Straighter down the hock when viewed from the side (rear)  
More correct angle to the hock  
Straighter through the hock  
Stood straighter

**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

**Transition Words**

Although  
Furthermore  
Even so  
Nevertheless  
I admit (concede, agree, realize, am aware)  
However  
Moving to  
Therefore  
Coming to  
Understand  
Concede  
Moreover  
Additionally  
Also  
Even so  
Unfortunately  
And

**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 a wider chested, 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 do realize that 4 was heavier muscled, however as she was long from eye to muzzle and lacked refinement, I left her second.

Nonetheless, I still found her above 2 in my intermediate pair as the bay was more modern in her profile and 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.

## **Judging Performance Classes**

There are several different performance classes that you may be required to judge in a contest. You should check each contest's rules to determine which may be offered and which might be potential reasons classes, as well the requirements and scoring procedure for each class. Rulebooks have details on class requirements and judging standards.

### **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. The pleasure horse should be shown with a reasonably loose rein, and should execute responsive, smooth transitions when asked. When asked to extend, the horse should move out with the same flowing motion, but with a definite lengthening of stride. The best western pleasure horse combines these attributes into a balanced and willing performer that would be 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, overflexing, opening the mouth, stumbling, short, choppy strides, tight reins, or excessively long reins.

## **Terms for Comparable 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
- 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 jog  
and 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
- Was quieter and calmer throughout the  
performance
- More attentive to the rider, looking straighter  
through the bridle
- More responsive in the upward (downward)  
transitions
- More responsive
- More responsive to the aids and cues given by  
the rider
- Quieter with the ears, tail, and/or bit

## **Example Western Pleasure Reasons**

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

Although 1 could be quicker in the upward transitions, I placed 1 over 2 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, 1 was slower cadenced at both the jog and lope, especially when moving to the right.

I realize 2 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 2 over 3 in my intermediate pair. The sorrel was more willing as evidenced by responding more quickly to the rider's cues. 2 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, 2 showed more flexion at the poll and backed faster and freer when asked.

I admit 3 was more distinct at the jog, but I left him third, as he was much less responsive and willing.

Nonetheless, 3 placed over 4 in the bottom pair, as the palomino was simply a higher quality and more functionally correct mover. 3 was more cadenced



and deliberate at both the jog and lope, showing greater collection both ways on the rail. Moreover, 3 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 4 over 3. 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.

## **Hunter Under Saddle**

The primary selection criteria used to evaluate the Hunter Under Saddle class are: Manners and Willingness, Quality of Movement, and Functional Correctness. 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.

## **Terms for Comparable Advantages in Hunter Under Saddle**

### **General**

- Better suited to purpose
- More suitable for purpose

### **Walk**

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

### **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 collection, driving off the hocks more
- Showed greater extension while moving flatter and lower over the ground

### **Movement**

- Softer hoof to ground contact
- Moved with more forward motion
- Moved with more reach from his stifle
- 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
- Was freer moving in the shoulder and haunches
- 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 Set and Carriage**

- Calmer
- More relaxed
- Quieter
- More alert
- More accepting of cues
- Required less deliberate or obvious or visible cues
- More willing
- Quieter, steadier
- More consistent
- Was quieter and calmer throughout the performance

More attentive to the rider, looking straighter through the bridle  
 More responsive in the upward (downward) transitions  
 More responsive  
 More responsive to the aids and cues given by the rider  
 Quieter with the ears, tail, and/or bit  
 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 aids 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.

### Hunter Hack

The primary selection criteria used to judge the Hunter Hack class are: Manners and Willingness,

Way of Going, and Jumping Style. 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. Horses shall be credited with maintaining an even hunting pace that covers the course with free-flowing strides. Preference is given to horses with correct jumping style that meets fences square, jumping at the center of the fence. Unsafe jumping and bad form over fences, including twisting, shall be penalized whether the fence was touched or untouched. Incorrect leads around the ends of the course and cross cantering shall be penalized, as well as excessive use of a crop. Fences in a line should be taken in the correct number of strides or be penalized. Any error that endangers the horse and/or its rider, particularly refusals or knockdowns, shall be heavily penalized. Faults to be scored accordingly during the rail work include being on wrong lead, excessive speed or slowness at any gait, break of gait, failure to take gait, head carriage too low or high, nosing out or flexing behind the vertical, opening mouth excessively, or stumbling.

### Terms of Comparable Advantages in Hunter Hack Fence Work

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 arched 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  
 Required less adjustment to take the fences  
 Took the fences in a smoother, more stylish manner  
 Performed at a more desirable hunter pace  
 Was scopier over the fences  
 Jumped the fences with a higher degree of collection  
 Was more controlled over the fences  
 Remained straighter when approaching the fences  
 Was more square in the departure  
 More correctly worked the fences with the appropriate number of strides  
 Remained on a straighter line between the fences

### 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.

### 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, and 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, and 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.

## **Terms for Comparable 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

## **Combination of Terms**

1 is freer more forward moving at the lope and thus performs flatter more simultaneous line side changes (or crossing changes)

2 is more distinct at the jog, takes a more impulsive stride at the lope and travels more in frame throughout the pattern. Furthermore, 2 is more precise in executing both sets of crossing changes and in addition is more correct in approaching and thus cleaner in the lope over the log. (If the horse below ticked or hit the log.)

3 is freer more forward moving traveling more in frame by maintaining a more consistent and level topline at all three gaits. Further, 3 performs flatter more precise 4th and 5th lead changes

4 is more functionally correct in maintaining the correct gait throughout the pattern

## **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.



## **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. After deducting all faults against execution of the pattern and the horse's overall performance, credit should be given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness, and authority of performing various maneuvers, while using controlled speed which raises the difficulty level and makes him more exciting and pleasing for an audience to watch.

## **Terms of Comparable Advantages for 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 a faster spinning horse, staying looser and freer on the front end while maintaining a more stationary pivot foot
- Was more correct in the 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***

- Performed rollbacks in a more correct and willing manner
- Rolled over the hocks more correctly
- Smoother and more correct in the rollbacks
- 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
- Responded more quickly to the rider, backing faster and freer

### ***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
- Exhibited more controlled, ideal stops
- Dropped (hocks) deeper into the ground
- Dropped (hocks) squarer into the ground
- Deeper and longer stopping horse
- Performed longer sliding stops
- Stopped harder and slid further, staying more relaxed on the forehand
- Was smoother, longer stopping

Dropped the hindquarters deeper in the ground  
while staying more relaxed in the front end,  
allowing a more correct sliding  
Was a harder stopping horse, staying in the  
ground longer

### **Example Reining Reasons – One**

I placed the Reining 1-2-3-4, starting with 1 who best combines control and challenge of pattern and ending with the most resistant, most penalized, least controlled in 4.

Although, 1 could be more precise in finishing the spins to the right, 1 still places over 2 in the top pair. The bay runs more symmetrical, faster large circles, and is more willing to slow to the small circles. 1 is also more precise in the lead change of the figure 8, changing more simultaneously.

I admit 2 is more correct in finishing the spins to the right; but places second as he shows less speed variation in his circles and run-downs to the roll-backs and stop. 2 further incurs a 1 point penalty for delaying the lead change of the figure 8.

Even so, 2 places above 3 in the middle pair, as the sorrel is much more responsive and willing to the rider. 2 is more symmetrical in the circles, and was more willfully guided to both rollbacks and the stop. 2 completes the spins more precisely. Even though 3 more efficiently changes leads in the figure 8, the small bay places third for mouthing the bit excessively and for being resistant and hesitant in the roll backs.

Still yet, pattern precision placed 3 over 4 in the bottom pair. 3 receives less maneuver penalties, is more willingly guided and completes the pattern with a more pleasant attitude.

Finding no obvious grant of 4 over 3 and as 4 receives a 5-point penalty for kicking out while requiring excessive handling from the rider, I left him last. Thank You.

### **Example Reining Reasons – Two**

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 do 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 2 strides between the spins, I left him last.

Thank You.

### **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 will be 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.

### **Terms of Comparable Advantages for Trail**

Was more able to work through the obstacles  
with fewer ticks and rubs  
Had fewer ticks and rubs  
Negotiated a more fault-free course  
Showed more interest in the obstacles  
Worked the course with more speed without  
sacrificing carefulness  
Required less cueing and guidance  
Was more easily positioned and guided through  
the elevated logs

Was more willing to complete the required obstacles  
 Showed more expression through the bridle while working on a looser rein  
 Was a more willing performer  
 Worked the obstacles with less anticipation  
 Jogged with more balance through the serpentine  
 Was more evenly cadenced through the serpentine (jog overs, lope overs, etc)  
 Traveled (jogged, loped) cleaner over the logs  
 Turned within the box more efficiently  
 Approached the obstacles with a more pleasant manner  
 Was cleaner when entering the box (negotiating the spoke)  
 Backed more efficiently throughout "L"  
 Crossed over more effectively both front and rear when sidepassing  
 Worked the obstacles with less anticipation  
 Jogged with more balance through the serpentine  
 Maintained the jog more correctly in the serpentine, etc.  
 Picked up and maintained the correct lead throughout the lopeovers  
 Met the logs more correctly in stride  
 Worked the course with a higher degree of difficulty  
 Jogged more nearly centered over the ground poles  
 Any western pleasure movement or mannerisms terminology is appropriate

### 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, but as he received several penalties for hits and ticks on several of the obstacles, I left him third.

3 does place 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 through.' Regardless, as the brown refused to work the gate three times, he must remain last.

### Showmanship/Horsemanship and Equitation Classes

Many contests will include showmanship, horsemanship, and equitation classes. These classes are designed to evaluate the exhibitor'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. Exhibitors are required to perform a prescribed pattern. Patterns are scored, one-half based on the overall appearance of the rider/showman and horse, and one-half on the performance of the pattern. The ideal pattern is extremely precise with the exhibitor and horse working in complete unison, executing each maneuver with subtle aids and cues. Details on scoring systems are provided in rulebooks.

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