



# 2011 Morgan Horse Judging School Handbook

*Provided by:*

**The American Morgan Horse Association, Inc.**  
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# AMHA/USEF JUDGES' SCHOOL

*For more information, including written materials and videotapes, about various Morgan disciplines, contact:*

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**USEF Licensed Officials Department • 4047 Iron Works Parkway • Lexington, KY 40511**

*For information about upcoming AMHA Judges' Schools, copies of The Morgan Horse Judging Standards, AMHA membership, or a list of Morgan shows in any region, contact:*

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## Recommended Reading

*Below are books recommended for reading in order of preference, with the first book listed being the top priority, etc.*

Adams, O.R., *Lameness in Horses*, 3rd edition, Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1974

Edwards, Gladys Brown, *Anatomy and Conformation of the Horse*, Dreenan Press Ltd., Croton-on-Hudson, 1980

Crabtree, Helen K., *Saddle Seat Equitation*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, 1970

White-Mullin, Anna Jane, *Judging Hunters and Hunter Seat Equitation*, Arco Publishing, Inc., New York, 1984.

Rossdale, Peter D., *The Horse*, J.A. Allen & Company, Ltd., London, 1975.

Rooney, James R., *The Lame Horse: Causes, Symptoms and Treatment*, A.S. Barnes and Co., Inc., Cranbury, NJ, 1974.

# Purposes & Objectives of Morgan Horse Seminars

*by Dr. Albert Lucine, Jr. M.D.*

On behalf of the AMHA, I take pleasure in welcoming you to this seminar, one of a series that has been presented annually. All who are interested in the Morgan horse (breeders, owners, trainers, youth, etc.) are welcome to attend these seminars and to participate in the open discussion. The major portion of the seminar is open to all, but, of necessity, certain segments have been specifically designated to allow judges and non-judges to separately question the speakers on specific subjects.

The purposes and objectives of these seminars are quite simply: (1) to expose each of you to specific and individual characteristics of the Morgan that contribute to the Morgan being recognized as a distinct breed; (2) to assist each of you, veteran and neophyte judge alike, in looking for and recognizing these characteristics in the Morgan horses you are called upon to judge; and (3) to assist you in assimilating this information to better enable you to judge Morgan horses according to the standards approved by the AMHA.

The purposes and objectives, or goals, of these seminars may indeed be quite simply stated, but attaining these goals is a much more complex undertaking. Let us review some of the background or history of the activities that resulted in these seminars.

For too many years, one of the major concerns among those who have exhibited and bred Morgan horses has been the lack of uniformity of judging in the show ring. Horses winning under one judge might not win under another judge a short time later. Horses winning in one area might not win in another area of the country. One of the Morgan's major attributes was and is, in part, responsible for this lack of uniformity in judging, its versatility! We have all seen the Morgan show horse as a saddle or harness horse (either park or pleasure), as a western pleasure horse, a working stock horse, a trail horse, hunter, roadster, carriage horse, etc. Most of us use our Morgans as our personal pleasure horse on our trails at home. These uses certainly substantiate the use of the phrase "The Morgan Horse, America's Most Versatile Breed." We can be justifiably proud of the

Morgan's versatility, but we must realize with this versatility, particularly if Morgans were bred for a certain specific function, comes lack of uniformity, type, conformation, and way of going. Another major contributing factor to this lack of uniformity was the fact that the members of the Morgan Horse Club did not make the decision to operate the American Morgan Horse Register as a closed register until about 1947. Nevertheless, the present Morgan is a testimony to the prepotency of Justin Morgan and his descendants.

As the AMHA went through a period of revitalization in the early 1970s, the Board of Directors turned its attention to this problem. An attempt would be made to document standards of type, conformation and way of going for the Morgan horse, standards that had and would continue to stand the test of time.

These standards were developed by the Judging Standards Committee, and this monumental work was unanimously adopted by the Board of Directors in 1973. However, adoption of the Standards alone would do little to aid the Morgan. The task of disseminating and presenting this information to all Morgan judges was now before the Board. Thus was born the idea of Judging Seminars, sponsored by the AMHA. A format which resembles, in part, that of other breed seminars could be rapidly adopted. Moreover, it was believed it would be of great value to expose not only the judges but also the exhibitors and breeders to these adopted standards since in order to have true acceptance of the Standards they would have to be accepted by all who aspire to these goals; i.e.: the judge, breeder, exhibitor, and all Morgan lovers. For this reason, the decision was made to open the seminars to other than judges alone, a unique decision at that time.

The Judging Standards as published became the academic theory, the seminars became the classroom presentation, and the show ring and breeding farms became the proving ground for the theories presented.

All who have observed the Morgan in recent years must recognize an increased uniformity of type, conformation, and way of going that has taken place in a relatively short period of time, a tribute in part to the never ending work of the Judging Standards Committee.

“The Morgan Horse—America’s Most Versatile Breed”! Wasn’t this phrase exemplified by the very makeup of the initial Judging Standards Committee? Chairman Dr. C. D. Parks, Pennsylvania; Robert Brooks, Connecticut; Harold Childs, Vermont; Phyllis Cox, Massachusetts; John Lydon, Pennsylvania; Dr. S. Robert Orcutt, Massachusetts; Doris Ryan, Illinois; W. Dayton Sumner, Pennsylvania; and Prof. L. V. Tirrell, New Hampshire. These committee members are known to most of us, and we can easily recognize their different personalities, uses of their horses, training and showing methods, and different breeding programs. I believe in reviewing their work it is most important to remember that these individuals, with all their differences, agreed on standards for the Morgan horse without major compromise, agreed on Standards that are of value to all Morgan enthusiasts, and have been accepted by the Morgan community.

I can think of no better way to express the purpose and objectives of these seminars than to quote from the introduction to the initial Judging Standards pamphlet published in 1973.

“The members of this committee agreed unanimously on the material presented here. Some thought more strongly than others on certain points, but there was no major compromise.

“The philosophy involved: There must be one recognized standard for judging the Morgan horse. There is sufficient variation within the breed to make possible the selection of horses better suited than another for a particular purpose. To be shown in the ring, a horse should be a show horse, regardless of what class or section he is shown in. We put him in competition before the public because we think he is a superior individual worthy to represent the breed.

“Judging is the art of establishing a fixed image of the ideal representative of the breed in one’s mind and relating the individuals in each class to this mental image.

“It is our purpose to put the image of the ideal Morgan in the minds of the judges, breeders, trainers, and exhibitors so that we will all be working toward the same goal.”

# Ethics

by *The Honorable Richard M. Givan*

A code of ethics includes: Formal law, moral concept and accepted customs of behavior. FORMAL LAW is the statutory and case law by which society is officially governed. This law falls into two categories: Acts which are malum in se (bad in themselves), and acts which are malum prohibitum (bad because they are prohibited). For example, to lie, cheat or steal are acts which are bad in themselves. To drive on the wrong side of the road is bad because it is prohibited by law. MORAL CONCEPT is, of course, embodied in the formal law but extends beyond in that many acts which are not prohibited by formal law are considered by many to be immoral. For example: Refusal to aid a person in distress, refusal to take back goods and return the purchase price, or failure to disclose defects as in a "Horse Trade."

ACCEPTED CUSTOMS OF BEHAVIOR include such things as courtesy, mode of dress, manner of speech, and cleanliness.

No organized society can exist without some degree of ethical consideration.

From general ethics necessary to civilized conduct have evolved specific codes of ethics for various groups and professions.

For example, doctors begin practice by taking the Hippocratic Oath. Lawyers take a similar oath addressed to their obligation to the public.

In recent years the practice of the adoption of a code of ethics by specialized groups has become more widespread. This is brought about by a combination of need for controlling the general membership and a need for guideposts for those entering that particular field of endeavor.

A standard of ethics invariably covers the entire field of law, moral concepts, and accepted customs of behavior.

While a code of ethics invariably covers the entire field of law, moral concepts are accepted custom of behavior.

While a code of ethics is important to participants, adherence is essential to a majority of governing officials. Judges have the responsibility of following and enforcing the accepted ethical code. They must refrain from deviation based upon personal likes or dislikes or personal philosophy. Once one acting in an official capacity begins to reshape the rules according to his own philosophy, the entire system begins to crumble.

Personal conduct of leadership is, of course, of extreme importance. No system is stronger than the fiber of its leaders. However, it is not enough that personal conduct is in fact within the code of ethics. Leadership must at all times maintain not only the letter of the code, but also the appearance of proper conduct. Thoughtless conduct which, no matter how innocent, will cause observers to doubt the integrity of the leader, will destroy public confidence which is essential to harmony and respect for the system and its leaders.

It is, of course, impossible to prevent unreasonable accusations of impropriety. However, a judge must at all times conduct himself in such a manner as to demonstrate an unbiased and objective attitude. A judge has an obligation to so conduct himself that at any time an objective observer would have no reasonable doubt as to his integrity.

This is accomplished by:

- (1) Thorough study and complete knowledge of the subject matter.
- (2) Easy working knowledge of all rules general and local.
- (3) Open, forthright demeanor.
- (4) Courteous, pleasant attitude.

Nothing is more unbecoming than arrogance and lack of consideration. Among the knowledgeable, arrogance and rudeness are recognized as a cover-up for incompetence or a feeling of inadequacy. To the casual observer, it breeds contempt and is seldom mistaken for ability, although such is the intent of the arrogant or rude judge.

Next to overt dishonesty, arrogance and rudeness are the most offensive breaches of ethical conduct.

A judge must exhibit the highest standard of integrity at all times and avoid decisions arrived at by influence, bias, or ignorance.

Note that it is considered unethical to purport to be a judge unless one endeavors to be informed to perform such duties, including a thorough knowledge of the rules of the USEF and CHSA and class specifications.

Ethics require that a judge isolate himself from exhibitors and handlers. It is your duty to report any improper approaches by exhibitors to the steward or show management.

Most persons are aware that judges have many friends among those who show horses. Reason also leads to the knowledge that the recognition of and conversation with these friends would not indicate influence or bias; however, the highly competitive nature of shows makes it extremely important that the judges avoid not only actual influence or bias, but what an emotionally charged exhibitor might interpret as the appearance of influence or bias.

In summary, ethical conduct demands that you inform yourself to the best of your ability before attempting to judge a show. Be honest and unbiased, be courteous at all times, report improper conduct of exhibitors and be prepared to enforce all rules at all times against all exhibitors. Courageous action in this regard at the moment indicated will mark you as a person with knowledge and integrity. Even if a so-called friend is involved, you will not only lose by failing to act. Remember, a true friend wants you to be honest, nothing more. Those who expect favoritism are not friends. If allowed to have their way they will destroy you and be among the first to condemn you when you are attacked.

An ethical judge is honored by his contemporaries and enjoys the satisfaction of a job well done. One who is unethical is dishonored and finds all gains to be temporary. Success turns to ashes in his hands.

Remember, it is easier to succeed than to fail.

# Ethics As They Relate to Judges, An Exhibitor's View

by Albert A. Lucine, Jr., MD

It is difficult to think of a field in which the acceptance and use of an ethical/moral standard plays a more important role than in the field of judging horses. I would like to review some definitions of the words "ethics" and "moral."

## **ETHICS:**

- Derived from the Greek word "ethos," the manner and habits of men.
- The study of standards of conduct and moral judgement, moral philosophy.
- The system or code of morals of a particular philosopher, profession.
- The rules or principles which govern right conduct.

## **MORAL:**

- Relating to, dealing with, or capable of making the distinction between right and wrong in conduct.

## **ETHICS:**

- The systematic study of the nature of value concepts, good, bad, right, wrong, etc., and of the general principles which justify us in applying them to anything; also called moral philosophy.

Organized society exists with the aid of formal law supplemented by moral or ethical standards. Many of the laws or rules by which a society, profession, or group conducts itself cannot be formally recorded, the written rule cannot govern or cover all situations. Yet more and more, it appears we pass rules and regulations in an attempt to control the behavior of those who do not conform to a moral or ethical standard. I believe this is evident today in all levels of government and all professions and groups.

Let me repeat, it is difficult to think of a field in which the acceptance and use of an ethical and/or moral standard plays a more important role than in the field of judging horses. Consider the following: a physician, although he may legally treat a member of his family, will usually not treat a family member with a serious illness for fear his personal feelings and emotions may prejudice or influence his medical judgment; a trial judge will disqualify himself from

hearing a case in which he has a personal interest. Compare these two relatively simple situations where members of a profession exclude themselves because of personal interest or emotions to the following: Picture the dilemma that faces a horse show judge with almost every class he adjudicates; 20-30 horses to complete the class, one or two by his own stallion (the foundation of his family's breeding program for the past ten years), one or two horses from his breeding program that he trained and sold (including a filly out of his favorite show mare that he expected to be the next Grand National Champion, but had to sell this year to make a profit), one or two kids in open classes whom he had as equitation students for about five years, and there is good old Charlie Professional, who taught him almost everything he knows, riding his great new show horse, there's Jim Trainer who has a red hot prospect for the \$25,000 horse he wants to sell, and there's Joe Manager who manages that prestigious horse show he's always wanted to judge. By the time I list all the possible conflicts of interest, the class will be judged and out of the ring.

There is no substitute for a judge's integrity and ethical standards, as there is absolutely no way we can pass rules to govern all the above conditions! Nor can we exclude all horsemen, trainers, veterinarians, etc., from judging our horses. The butcher, baker, and the candlestick maker are of very little use to us in the center ring. Those of us who are interested in horses and particularly interested in exhibiting in horse shows are a very small segment of our society. It is inevitable the judge, whoever he or she is, will be known to many of the exhibitors and will face many of the conflicts of interest mentioned above. Broad guidelines as to how a class is to be judged can be established, but the main criteria we must rely on is the integrity and ethical standards of our judges.

Foremost, a judge must be able to live with himself; to know, in his opinion, his placings are inherently correct. In order to accomplish this, he must have a thorough knowledge of the rules governing the show, a thorough knowledge of the standards for the breed and for the specific classes he will be judging, and he

must be consistent in his placings and decisions. Without these qualities, he cannot approach judging the class outlined above with confidence, nor can he turn in his card and be able to live with himself. His failure to possess these qualities will soon become evident to exhibitor and show management alike. Consistency in your placings will, in my opinion, quickly point out your integrity and your degree of knowledge of the standards.

If one is to judge one of the highly competitive three or four-day Morgan shows with classes of twenty to forty entries, a clear mental image of the standard for each type of class is of primary importance. Any judge only recently exposed to Morgans would do well to observe one or two of our larger shows before attempting to judge one of these shows, unless he is unusually qualified or experienced. Too often, an inexperienced judge can “get lost” at our larger shows if he or she has only been exposed to shows with two or three Morgan classes a day, and about four to eight entries in each class. By going over his head and accepting an invitation to judge a show for which he is not sufficiently experienced, a judge will only serve to confuse himself and distort the mental image he must rely upon. I believe this will cause the inexperienced judge to compromise his own standards. If this mental image is distorted, might the judge not attempt to solve his dilemma by looking at riders, not horses, for example? A judge can best serve him or herself and the horse world by adequately preparing himself for each step he takes along the way to judging the Grand National Morgan Show.

One cannot forget your acceptance as a “good judge” is dependent not only upon the horses you pin, but also upon the manner in which you conduct yourself both inside and outside the ring. In the ring, each judge must develop for himself a system of recall that works for him. This can be a mental or some type of visual marking system. This system must give you sufficient information to enable you to compare your mental image of the ideal Morgan to the horses in the ring and properly pin the class. It must be foolproof, nothing can be worse than to leave your winner in the center of the ring during a workoff and then lose him when you place the class. The manner in which you observe each horse performing in the ring will do more than anything else to demonstrate to each

exhibitor that “he’s getting a fair shake.” If the exhibitor feels you have not looked at his horse, there is no way you can convince him that you gave him a fair shake; and actually, that is all the exhibitor is really asking! Remember, as you approach each horse, as you are marking your judge’s card, as you are apparently staring at the ringmaster; the eyes of all exhibitors and spectators are upon you, judging whether you know what you are doing and whether you care.

As mentioned, the Morgan show world is a very small world indeed. While on the show grounds, you are certainly going to meet friends and associates of long standing who are also exhibitors. Certainly your greeting to them should be warm and friendly, but please do not enter into long conversations in public. I am not aware of any judge’s action more open to criticism than carrying on a lengthy conversation with an exhibitor. Remember, there are more losers than winners, and they all assume you are talking about that exhibitor’s horses, even though you know you were talking about politics or the weather. In some USEF divisions, I understand judges are invited and expected to attend exhibitor parties; at the present time, I believe it is the opinion of most exhibitors that you should not attend such functions. Possibly you might attend an unusual function or celebration of the show committee. During the show, any discussion you might have with an exhibitor regarding your placing of his horse must be carried out with the permission of the show steward and must be brief; again, a prolonged conversation lends itself to criticism even though there may be no basis for such criticism. Do not forget that regardless of how good your placings are in the ring, whether or not you are accepted by many exhibitors will also depend on your conduct outside the ring.

Exhibiting horses is a very emotional undertaking for the individuals and often the family involved. We all know of families who are proud of their work together, and particularly proud of the manner in which their child or children have responded to the many challenges they face in getting a horse into the ring. Whether this becomes a pleasant and rewarding experience contrasted to an unhappy, bitter experience may be directly related to the degree of competence, excellence, and integrity you possess as a judge.

I have a patient who years ago gave up showing horses in favor of racing so that her animals are judged against a clock, not by an individual who may be unethical or whose knowledge is not sufficient for that level of competition. In recent years, some have observed an increase in the number of entries in open jumper classes at shows while entries in the working hunter division are decreasing. Does this possible trend reflect the same view as my patient wanting to be judged by a system (i.e. knockdown and out, or a clock) rather than by an individual who is exposed to all types of pressure? If this is a real observation, one could easily deduce the future of the horse show industry could be directly related to the competence, integrity, and ethical standards of our judges.

We have all heard it said the future of the show industry depends on better public relations, making our product attractive to spectators and the general public, and also attracting corporate sponsors. I suggest the future may be directly related to what you place upon your judges card. As the cost of exhibiting our animals increases, there will undoubtedly be increased competition for our recreational dollar. If I place two horses in a trailer and haul them half-way across the country to the Grand National, and leave that show believing I did not get a fair shake, it will certainly be a long time before I make that trip again. I may listen to my neighbor who has been trying to get me interested in buying a boat for several years.

I believe one of the most difficult tasks we may ask someone to do is judge a horse show. As mentioned, the number of potentially conflicting situations are many, and the pressures can be great. For years, I have felt every exhibitor should help manage a horse show in order to become familiar with the problems faced by show management. As much as I would like to suggest every exhibitor judge a class to become familiar with the problems faced by a judge, I wouldn't dare as the great majority would not be up to that task. The Judges Seminars are open to exhibitors as well as judges, and they have done a great deal to make all concerned with the exhibition and judging of horses familiar with each other's problems.

A judge, by preparing himself properly, becoming familiar with the rules of showing, the standards of the breed, the requirements for specific classes, by conducting himself in the ring in a manner that instills confidence in the exhibitor of his ability, and by maintaining the highest personal ethical and professional standards, can withstand the pressure to which he is exposed and can make the showing of horses a very exciting, stimulating and rewarding experience for all involved.

# Ethics for Horse Show Judges

by Gail Lampe

## The Important of Horse Shows and Who Should Judge Them

The horse industry, including horse shows, is a big business today and here are a few facts to prove it.

1. The horse industry in the United States is a \$25.3 billion business based on economic activity associated with 6.9 million horses and 7.1 million people who work with them. This information was announced in December 1996 by James Hickey, the president of the American Horse Council.
2. The American Horse Council in 1996 stated the horse world has a total impact of \$112.1 billion on the United States gross domestic product, which makes it greater than the motion picture services, railroad transportation, furniture and fixtures manufacturing industry, and the tobacco product industry.
3. The equine population is higher today than at any time since the U.S. cavalry ceased to be a fighting force between World War I and World War II.
4. In 1996, according to the American Horse Council, 1,974,000 horses are used in the show ring and 3.6 million people participate in showing horses.
5. The American Horse Shows Association stated that in 1995 there were more than 14,000 sanctioned horse shows. In addition, there were thousands of local unsanctioned events.
6. According to the Hampton Classic Horse Show statistics, each horse that travels to a major horse show is accompanied by an average of 2.5 persons, each of whom spends approximately \$150 per day while on the road.
7. According to an American Horse Shows Association survey in 1996, horse shows generate \$223 million per year.
8. In addition to the economic impact that horses have made, many believe there is a spiritual one as well. Charles DeKunffy said, "Riding improves the personality of an individual, causing new virtues to emerge while strengthening old ones. The life of an equestrian involves one's personal inner life and values, and one's ethics and character traits."

The preceding facts make us realize the important of horse shows. The expertise of the person adjudicating these shows determines whether or not the show will be successful. It is necessary, therefore, for us to do some soul searching to come up with an answer to the following questions: who should judge our horse shows?

We could have a pool of "professional judges" from which to choose when selecting someone to adjudicate our shows. They would be full-time horse show judges and would not actually train or show horses. Baseball has full-time "professional" umpires and basketball has full-time referees. Why should horse shows be any different? Or *should* we be different and hire trainers to judge our shows who are actively showing themselves? I personally feel that the latter is a better choice, because while those who are no longer showing, or those who never did show, *might* be less likely to be "political," they also are less likely to be knowledgeable. In the horse show world, judges almost have to have "been there, done that" to be respected enough for trainers, breeders, and owners to want their opinion.

The famous Olympic Dressage rider Alois Podhajsky wrote, "Apart from his keen gift of observation and the integrity of his character, the judge *must* possess profound knowledge of riding. The judge must have a precise concept of training... the judge himself must be or have been a rider... however, for the sake of fairness it should be admitted that even an outstanding rider cannot by his achievements alone be proved qualified as a judge."

Why do horse trainers want to judge their peers and fellow horse trainers? Some feel that they have a life-long commitment to the horse industry and they feel a responsibility to give something back to the industry through judging. Others feel that judges have more power over what happens in the industry than anyone else and they want to have a part in influencing the future. They want to improve and perpetuate the breed of their choice. They want to pass on a legacy of quality horses and outstanding show ring performances to the next generation.

There are excellent programs for licensing and educating judges today and there are many ethical rules by which judges must abide. Therefore, I believe our current trainers have the tools to be extremely capable judges and it is unnecessary to create a pool of “professional” judges to adjudicate our horse shows.

## Ethics for Horse Show Judges

Webster defines ethics as “the science of moral values and duties; the study of ideal human character and actions.” Captain Gerald Milburn states: “Ethics are your personality. Ethics are what you are. Ethics are who you are.” Milburn goes on to say, “Behavior is the most important part of judging ethics. Most of the people we come in contact with will only see us for a very short period of time. Human nature is fickle and does not look beyond the surface in many cases. The impression we leave usually relates directly to the behavior we execute.... We all practice some form of ethics, either good or bad. We usually form our ethical ideals based on our knowledge of accepted practices. Sometimes this knowledge comes from actual experience, sometimes this knowledge is learned through seminars or lectures, and sometimes ethics are learned from the written word. The truest form of ethical knowledge comes from the trail and error method of actual participation. In other words we learn from our involvement and our own mistakes. There things tend to leave a lasting impression on our future ethical behavior.”

How do ethics apply to horse show judging? This is a question that everyone desiring a judge’s card should ask himself or herself before attempting to become licensed. In general, a code of ethics includes formal law, moral concept, and accepted customs of behavior. Ethical consideration is necessary for an organized society to exist. Rules and regulations are passed in an attempt to control the behavior of those who do not conform to a moral or ethical standard. Specific codes of ethics have evolved from general ethics to support various professions. The adoption of a code of ethics by specialized groups has become more widespread in recent years. This has been brought about by a need to control the general membership as well as the need to set guidelines for those entering the field. However, many of the laws or rules by which a profession or group conducts itself cannot be formally recorded, because the written rule cannot anticipate all situations.

Judges have the responsibility to follow and enforce the accepted ethical code. They must refrain from any deviation based upon their personal likes or dislikes. According to Richard Givan, “if a judge, when acting in an official capacity, begins to reshape the rules according to his or her own philosophy, the entire system will crumble.” Horse show judges must put the interests of the sport above their own and then possess the character to make impartial decisions and to stand by them.

Jim Brown stated that “there is no way one can separate responsible horse show judging from integrity. A good judge must maintain the highest level of intelligence, confidence, honesty, ethics, sincerity, and integrity, plus a complete and thorough knowledge of rules governing the classes he or she attempts to judge.” A judge must have the courage to stand by his or her convictions. According to the United States Equestrian Federation rule book, a judge serves three interests: his own conscience, exhibitors, and spectators. A judge should follow the motto, “To thine own self be true.” The judge must make it clear to the audience that the best horse wins. Good judging depends upon correct observance of the fine points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose described by the conditions of the class.

A horse show judge should conduct himself or herself in a manner that demonstrates an unbiased and objective attitude. Due to the extremely competitive nature of horse shows, it is not only vital that the judge actually be honest, but he or she must also give the *appearance* of avoiding influence or bias. Justice must not only be done, but must always be seen to be done. While it is impossible to prevent accusations of impropriety, a judge can reduce criticism if his or her demeanor demonstrates:

1. A complete knowledge of rules governing the show
2. A thorough knowledge of the standards for the breeds that will be presented
3. A courteous, pleasant attitude
4. Consistency in placings
5. Relatively quick decisions so the show does not “drag” on forever; a practical sense of the time schedule
6. A sincere interest in each horse that enters the ring
7. Appropriate dress; business like, but practical

8. Promptness in starting each session on time
9. The ability to judge with dispatch, without appearing to be in a rush to get “the whole thing over with”

A horse show judge must at all times abide by the highest standards of integrity and avoid decisions arrived at by outside influences, bias, or ignorance. Richard Givan states that “beyond overt dishonesty, arrogance and rudeness are the most offensive breaches of ethical conduct.” Arrogance and rudeness are generally a cover-up for incompetence or feelings of inadequacy. Other judges, when overfaced in their judging tasks, might become defensive or self-righteous. The flip side of the coin is the judge who feels so overly proficient that he or she shows signs of obvious boredom while in the center of the ring. Often judges do not realize just how easily they display their ambivalence to the exhibitors. Judges must keep their irritable or negative attitudes to themselves no matter how long the day is dragging out, how bad the horses are, how poor the facilities are, or anything else that might be disturbing them. A judge must smile and go on, come rain or shine, and at an outdoor show sometimes this is difficult.

The various breed organizations have created detailed guidelines as to how certain classes should be judged. The judge must follow these to the letter. Any judge, if he or she does the necessary homework, can be “technically” correct. This is vital, because one can rest assured that the exhibitors will be quick to reprimand a judge whenever a rule is violated.

It is imperative that a judge give the appearance of being interested in each and every horse that is exhibited. Showing horses is very emotional and no exhibitor wants to feel ignored, no matter how lousy his or her horse is. Remember, the exhibitor could be a “backyard” type who thinks his or her “pet” is the greatest horse on earth. The judge must be courteous enough to at least look at the horse without allowing the world to know that he or she is thinking it is the worst horse in the world. It is important to the exhibitors that they feel as though they got a “fair shake.” They want to be assured that their horse was looked at, even if the judge knew from the moment the horse came through the gate, he did not have a prayer of earning a ribbon, not even an earth-toned one. Norm Dunn said that “thousands of dollars and many hours have been expended prior to

presenting a horse to a judge, and the judge accepts a tremendous responsibility when agreeing to evaluate another person’s horse.”

Broad guidelines as to how a class should be judged can be established, but the main criteria we must rely on is the integrity and ethical standards of our judges. A judge who dresses, acts, and performs the responsibility with dignity, will create an atmosphere of respect and trust. This must be apparent both in and out of the show ring.

A judge is not there to decide right from wrong, but rather to give an opinion as to who is the best horse or rider in relation to the others in the class. Past performances do not matter, only the “here and now” are to be considered.

Judging consists of making a careful analysis of each horse, measuring him against a standard commonly accepted as the ideal. As a judge, one must have a clear mental picture of that “ideal” for each class adjudicated, then be able to evaluate each entry against it. Each judge will have personal preferences within the framework of the standards. Nigel Hallings believes that while all judges are basically looking for the same thing, it should be remembered that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and judges will have different priorities and will attach importance to different areas. This is desirable and this is why we have humans judging shows rather than computers. However, a judge is open to criticism if it becomes apparent that he or she has set idiosyncrasies. A judge’s decision not only affects the outcome of a given class on a given day, but that decision will also affect how the trainers train their horses and what type of horse the breeders will breed for in the future. The breeders and trainers will try to please the judge because they love the almighty blue ribbon, so in reality, the judges set the standards. That is a responsibility for a judge to take very seriously.

The various breed associations have their own individual rules. The following are excerpts from several different handbooks. The 1997 Appaloosa Handbook states, “Each judge should refrain from using his or her official status to further one’s own personal or financial purpose.” The Buckskin handbook requires that “judges shall act and speak on a high professional level so as to neither offend nor bring discredit to the judging profession. Such level

of professionalism is to be maintained at all times whether or not judging a show. Judges shall represent the Association at all times in an honorable manner. Judges shall not show favoritism to an individual nor prejudice against an individual based on color, creed, sex, age, physical handicap, personal relationship or country of origin when judging a class. Judges shall refrain from using strong or abusive language at any time on the showgrounds. Judges shall not smoke or chew tobacco while a class is being judged. Smoking and chewing is permissible between classes providing there is no delay in the judging schedule. Judges shall not partake in any alcoholic beverage on the day of the show until at least the completion of the show, and then only after leaving the show arena. A judge shall refrain from conversing with any person regarding the show, if it is known that such a person has partaken of alcohol during the day." The Palomino handbook states that "on the day of the show, judges should not visit the stables or exercise areas, examine or have in their possession a catalog, discuss the merits of the horses to be judged, or talk at length with those who may be exhibiting under them. No judge shall judge an approved Palomino show while intoxicated." The American Horse Shows Association states in their rule book that "any official found guilty of cruelty to a horse or have killed, abandoned, mistreated, neglected or otherwise abused a horse... may have his or her license revoked. A judge must order from the ring any unruly horse or one whose actions threaten to endanger other exhibitors or their entries. A judge may not discuss with an exhibitor the purchase, sale or lease of any horse during a competition at which he is officiating." (1996, p. 75-76)

The various organizations that sanction horse shows have implemented rules governing their shows that will remind the judge to act in an ethical manner. It is my opinion that 99 percent of the judges intend to be ethical, but once in a while they fail to be aware of everything that might *appear* to be unethical.

## Do's and Don'ts for Horse Show Judges

George Milburn Created the Following Ethical Questions for Horse Show Judges:

1. *Is it ethical to judge a show where you know almost everyone participating?*

**Answer:** Depends on the individual judge and how that individual handles the situation. It

should not be a problem for a competent judge. Just do your job, no more no less.

2. *Is it ethical to use a friend or acquaintance in a class placing?*

**Answer:** Why not, if the person's horse deserves to be used. It should not make any difference either way. You are judging the performance or conformation of a horse not the individual—if you are unable to distinguish, you better reconsider your judging status.

3. *Is it ethical to be indecisive about which horse to use and continue to work the class on and on, attempting to catch a mistake?*

**Answer:** Don't look like you are having trouble deciding. Judging is about decisions. You should make your decision and move on. Know what you want and make your decision, that is what you are there for. Self confidence is a must for anyone who intends to judge horse shows.

4. *In a multi-judge situation, is it ethical to use different horses than the other judges?*

**Answer:** Of course, you see what you like. You see it from a different perspective. Use your convictions and stick to your decisions if you feel that they are valid. Do not be intimidated by what the other judges are using.

### The Following is a List of Don'ts for Horse Show Judges from Don Burt:

1. Do not accept a job you are not qualified for.
2. Do not be a houseguest of an exhibitor just prior to the show.
3. Do not spend time in the barn area during the show.
4. Do not talk to exhibitors in the ring.
5. Do not judge people (except in equitation classes); judge horses.
6. Do not attend social functions during the show unless invited and accompanied by a steward or other official.
7. Do not judge according to applause.
8. Do not acknowledge friends in the grandstand. (They just might own the horse who is winning).
9. Do not take judgment advice from the ringmaster.
10. Do not drink alcoholic beverages in public, and preferably not at all during the show.
11. Do not be disrespectful to an exhibitor due to lack of knowledge on his part.

## Guidelines for Horse Show Judges

1. Judging is physically and mentally taxing. The judge must have a fresh and rested mind and body each day. (No partying with exhibitors the night before!)
2. Being qualified is a must before a judge accepts a judging job. A judge should make sure to be informed about all the different types of classes the show includes. Judges should be honest and inform the show manager if there are classes they are not comfortable judging.
3. A judge should devote full attention to the class and should not write down a lot of notes for later discussions with exhibitors. A judge is not conducting a clinic; rather he or she is deciding that horse A is better than horse B. It is OK at the end of the day not to remember each and every horse and *why* they were placed the way they were.
4. A good judge does not try to beat a good horse on a minor fault just to prove how important he or she is on a given day. The influence of a judge should be constructive; therefore, the judge should commend what is good, as well as condemn what is bad.
5. A judge should communicate with the announcer and ringmaster before the show to make sure they are qualified to do their job without further coaching. Sometimes the local Kiwanis club president, who so generously volunteered his time to the show, has never seen a horse show before.
6. A good judge is a diplomat and is a professional when dealing with exhibitors and show management. A judge should never downgrade other judges.
7. A judge should not share his or her every thought with the ringmaster, who might be so excited about his newfound knowledge that he runs back to the stabling area and shares it with the exhibitors as soon as the show is ended.
8. A judge should not continually make small talk, joke, and laugh during show performances.
9. A good judge enjoys judging.
10. A judge should talk to exhibitors only after they have received permission from the steward, and only when the steward is present for the conversation. This will prevent other exhibitors from crying "politics."

- When exhibitors view another exhibitor or trainer having a conversation with a judge, they often assume the judge is being influenced by the person talking to him or her, especially if that exhibitor wins a class later on in the day. Perhaps they were only taking about the weather or a recent football game, but they will never be able to convince the ribbonless exhibitor of that. Under the rules of *most* associations, it is certainly permissible to greet exhibitors if you met them on the way to and from the ring, but you should not engage in a long conversation, no matter what the subject is.
11. A good judge becomes familiar with the arena, the announcing system, and local procedures before the first class.
  12. A judge should develop one's own technique for judging and stick with it.
  13. A good judge must have an organized mind to be able to sort out the horses in a given class; from top to bottom, one against the other, and all against the desired standard.
  14. Capable judging includes good bookkeeping.
  15. A judge must possess good health and a great amount of physical stamina. A judge does not have time to attend to personal physical needs. The judging assignment commands 100 percent of the judge's thoughts and energy.
  16. A qualified judge earns respect as a result of consistently demonstrating proper judicial temperament.
  17. A good judge remains isolated from friends who are exhibitors. Exhibiting horses is a very emotional experience, and it is very important that a judge avoid what a disturbed exhibitor might interpret as the appearance of influence or bias. A judge's conduct outside of the ring is just as important as tying the right horses while inside the ring. A judge must do all that is possible to make decision making look objective, or people who own show horses will switch to race horses, where the first horse to cross the finish line wins. Or maybe they will switch to golf or tennis. Not only is the judge's reputation at stake, but so is the sport of showing horses. By adhering to the highest professional standards and personal ethics, judges can make showing horses an exciting and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

# Suggested Code of Ethics for Judges

## I. Rapport With Exhibitors

- A. Courteous and pleasant.
- B. Consideration for each horse shown.
- C. USEF Article GR804.13  
*"No one shall approach a Judge with regard to a decision unless he first obtains permission from the Show Committee, steward or technical delegate who shall arrange an appointment with the Judge at a proper time and place. No exhibitor has the right to inspect the judge's cards without the judge's permission."*

## II. Conformity To Accepted Professional Standards Of Conduct

- A. Do not accept dinner or party invitations from exhibitors just prior to or during show.
- B. Dress appropriately for occasion.
- C. Be on time.
- D. Review USEF Morgan rules, class specifications, and USEF general rules for judges prior to show.

## III. Formalities With Show Management

- A. Confirmation of judging assignment to include:
  - 1. Date(s) of show.
  - 2. Time and number of sessions per day.
  - 3. Number of classes and divisions to be judged
  - 4. Fees
- B. Send travel data (arrival time, departure time and mode of travel) to show management.

## IV. Liaison With Ringmaster and Announcer

- A. Discuss procedures of judging with ringmaster preliminary to show.
- B. Furnish pattern of "work outs" in writing for equitation classes, stock horse classes, etc., so announcer can give clear instructions to exhibitors.

## V. Additional suggestions

- A. Have a quick step, sharp eye and a forthright demeanor.
- B. Keep in mind ideal of uniformity of type, conformation, and way of going.
- C. Success and stability of show depends much on:
  - 1. Consistency in placings.
  - 2. Relatively quick decisions so show does not "drag."
  - 3. Sincerity and integrity of judgement.
- D. USEF Article GR1040.1  
*"Good Judging depends upon a correct observance of the fine points and the selection of best horses for the purpose described by conditions of the class. A judge serves three interests: his own conscience, exhibitors and spectators. He should make it clear that the best horses win."*

# USEF Guidelines for Licensed Officials

There is increasing concern about the way licensed officials are viewed in our sport. The following guidelines were developed by the USEF Licensed Officials Committee.

While we take for granted that inappropriate or openly prejudicial behavior is wrong, it is equally important to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Since 1991, 4,000 new USEF members have joined USEF. Some new members may not be aware of the traditions of our sport. It is important to educate the newcomers, and as officials, to set high standards of conduct.

Our sport has always been a “cut above” when it comes to sportsmanship and accepting decisions handed down by show officials. On very few occasions over the years have we seen shouting or physical displays of emotions which seem to be an everyday occurrence in other sports.

The following guidelines should serve as a reminder to uphold the traditions of the show ring.

1. A few officials have blatantly disregarded the performance of horse and rider in favor of friends, associates, clients or would be clients. This hurts our sport and the reputation of all officials. Officials who take their assignments light-heartedly and continually “cut-up” in the judges chair must understand that exhibitors have elected to show in front of them and are entitled to their sincere and undivided attention. It is inappropriate for judges to continually make small talk, joke, and laugh during performances.
2. Threats leveled at officials by exhibitors/officials of equal stature, insinuating that they will have “their day” when they sit in the judges chair and reflect back on past decisions, should not be tolerated. The official who is the target of these threats must come forward and report it.
3. Some exhibitors have threatened and attempted to intimidate show managers. These exhibitors have made it clear to show managers that if certain individuals are hired to judge, the managers will lose their entries. When reported (in writing) by a show manager, the situation will be thoroughly investigated and dealt with by the USEF.
4. Vocal abuse of officials before the show, defaming the judge’s character and questioning his/her competence seems to be on the increase. After and during the show, some exhibitors have verbally abused officials for their decisions in the ring. Again, the victim of this kind of slander has the right and the responsibility to report it.
5. Officials must honor their contracts with shows, and those who break contracts will be dealt with on a firmer basis. This means that you do not break the contract because you received a better offer!
6. Stewards represent the USEF and are at the show to be of assistance to exhibitors, management and judges. They should not allow themselves to be intimidated or coerced into failing to report the true picture.
7. Stewards should familiarize themselves with Articles GR1121 and GR1122.
8. Cruelty to our horses in some disciplines is on the rise. Stewards and TDs must keep a watchful eye and report their findings. They must also file a charge when it is appropriate.
9. Fraternalization, socializing, etc. by officials with exhibitors, owners and trainers has become a problem. No one doubts the honesty of any official, but the appearance of favoritism is disconcerting to new entrants in the show world.
10. By dressing appropriately, you demonstrate your professionalism to your fellow officials, show management and exhibitors. Your standard of attire should be consistent, regardless of the show’s rating.

The confidentiality agreement is once again in effect at USEF, and the Licensed Officials Committee is seeing more honest appraisals of applicants for licenses. In addition, USEF is receiving more comments on the performance of officials at shows.

Through the current rules, you have the power to solve many of these problems. However, it is up to the affected individuals to use the channels available to them in the USEF Rule Book. Airing your concerns verbally will not solve these problems. Putting pen to paper, however, is a good way of becoming part of the solution. You can make a difference.

# Do's and Don'ts of Judging

*by James C. Brown*

In our USEF Rule Book, Article GR1040.1 states that good judging depends upon a correct observance of the fine points and the selection of best horses for the purpose described by conditions of the class. A judge serves three interests: his conscience, exhibitors, and spectators. He should make clear to the onlookers that the best horses win. The day has long passed when the judge could fool most of the people standing around the rail. Our shows are much more sophisticated, the competition keener and because people are spending more and more money, they are studying the rules and classes as well as breed criteria more closely.

There is no way one can separate responsible judging from integrity. That is to say a good judge must maintain the highest level of honesty, ethics, completeness, sincerity, integrity and obviously, a complete and thorough knowledge of the rules governing the classes he is judging is paramount.

Judging is a very serious job and must never be taken casually. Your success depends a great deal on your astuteness and mannerisms before and during the show you have accepted to judge. To be popular, a judge must be organized from the time the call comes in from the Show Manager or Show Secretary asking him if he is available to judge the show until he has turned in his last class card and has collected his remuneration and is on his way home. You can minimize much havoc and duplication of effort if you have available a list of show dates and locations you have already accepted to judge. The current USEF rules attempt to control too few judges doing too many shows in one area too close together. If you know what shows you have already committed to, it will eliminate the embarrassment to yourself and the show committee if generally the same horses are being shown in front of you several times in one season. Before accepting a show to judge, you should discuss the number and type of classes you are expected to judge. Obviously, if there are a number of Hunter or Stock classes and you are not qualified, it will only make you and the Show Management look bad.

It is always a good idea to require a contract. There have been many misunderstandings during phone conversations which could have been cleared up if only a brief agreement would have been exchanged at the time the commitment was being made. The contract should clearly state when you are to arrive, where, who is responsible for local transportation, motel reservations, meals, etc. Also, which sessions you are judging, whether the show is inside or out, and whether or not formal attire is required. Your total judging fees, mode of travel and any other anticipated expenses should be stated so that both parties know who is responsible for them. Of course, personal conveniences such as hairdress, bar checks and spouse expenses, etc. should be for your personal account. It is most courteous to return the contract as soon as possible. At this time, you should request a copy of the prize list when it becomes available. Your cover letter should include: your mode of transportation; a request for lodging reservations and confirmation from the motel; your arrival time as near as possible; and flight numbers if available.

It is becoming increasingly popular nowadays to require formal dress one or so nights of the show. At the time you are discussing the show is the time to make the inquiry about equipment and dress necessary for that show. There is nothing worse than for a judge to arrive at a show without adequate dress and outerwear, boots, raincoat, etc. It is a good idea to furnish your own scratch pads and other equipment you routinely use because the desired materials may vary between judges.

When the judge arrives at the show, he or she should go directly to the show office. You must not stop to visit with exhibitors on the show grounds or at the motel during the show. If, of course, you should meet an exhibitor in passing, you should exchange normal salutations. You must not stop and chat or you immediately leave yourself open for criticism from those who see you but do not understand the circumstances. Before the show begins, you should inspect the ring and the conditions around the ring as it would affect a class in the ring. The judges'

cards should have the class specifications on the card (this is an USEF rule).

There is much controversy about whether or not a judge should discuss with exhibitors the reason a class was pinned as it was. One point that is not a controversy is that anyone wishing to talk to the judge must first ask permission from the steward or show committee and arrange an appointment. It is safe to say that most judges prefer to not meet with any exhibitors or trainers until the session is over or the show has been completed. When other exhibitors see a trainer or exhibitor talking with a judge during the progress of the show, the accusation of "politics" arises and he begins to "lose face" with those who had faith in him and his decisions. This problem becomes more acute if, in a later class, the exhibitor pins higher. Onlookers can only assume that the talk made the difference. As was previously mentioned, as a judge, your conduct from the time you arrive at the show area until the show is completed and you leave, is under scrutiny by everyone connected with the show.

The ring procedure you adopt is personal and should be one which is most expeditious for you. If you are just starting to judge there are some clues which will help that will be dealt with in another session of the seminar. If a judge takes real pride in his position and interest in his work, he will seriously try to maintain peak efficiency at all times. The judge's job is a very trying one both mentally and physically. The average exhibitor seldom realizes the strain under which the judge must work. It is, in fact, a lonely job, and his or her energies are taxed to the limits of endurance many times. The astute judge is ready to make fast and accurate decisions in all classes for which he is responsible. Remember, the decisions are yours and yours alone, formed then and there. It seems the most difficult task for a beginner judge is to pin a horse where he needs to be pinned in a specific class and disregard the horse's past performance and reputation. It is not being honest if you do not use him where you feel he should be pinned. Be your own person, and in the long run, people will respect you for it.

# Judging Procedures — Contracts & Contacts

by Karen Homer-Brown

## USEF Rulebook

Article GR1040.1 states:

*“Good judging depends upon a correct observance of the fine points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose described by the conditions of the class. A judge serves three interests: his own conscience, exhibitors and spectators. He should make it clear that the best horses win.”*

Articles GR1040 and GR1041 outline a judge's responsibility regarding adjudication and restrictions. As a judge, you would be well advised to read these sections and adhere to them exactly.

## Initial Contact

The first thing you need to be aware of as a judge is that you must NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING. The judge will be responsible for anything that occurs from the initial contact by the person hiring the judge until the conclusion of the competition when you have arrived back home. Many times the judge, along with the USEF Steward, are the only “professionals” involved with the competition.

Initial contact is usually by telephone, from the individual chosen to contact the judge(s). This may or may not be the Manager or Secretary. This contact will inquire as to your availability to judge the show in consideration. Items you need to inquire about on this initial contact are:

- 1) Date of Show
- 2) Location of Show
- 3) Show approvals (USEF/CEF/AMHA/4-H/Local/Breed/USDF/ADS, etc.)
- 4) Credentials necessary: USEF “R” or “r” or CEF “S,” “SN” or “r,” also, credentials for Dressage, Carriage and Reining.
- 5) Single or Multi-Judge System
- 6) Type and number of classes to be offered (number of days/sessions)
- 7) Is the show inside or outside
- 8) Is formal attire required
- 9) Amount of fee to be paid to the judge
- 10) Expenses to be covered (airfare/travel, motel, meals, taxi/car, tux rentals)

- 11) Nearest airport to show location or airport nearest to you
- 12) Establish who purchases the plane ticket, i.e.: makes travel arrangements
- 13) Request a written contract
- 14) Establish a date of how long you will hold the date before you get the contract.
- 15) Request a Prize List when available
- 16) Name, address and phone number of the contact person

After receiving the contract, you should sign the show management's copy and return it promptly with a cover letter. The letter should include: your mode of transportation, a request for accommodations asking for a motel confirmation, mode of transportation to and from the airport, motel and show grounds. Be sure to keep copies of the contract and any and all correspondence with the contact person. THIS IS IMPORTANT! Develop a file folder just for judging contracts.

The subject of expenses causes more problems than that of judging fees. Airfare should be charged at the economy or tourist rate, if you want to fly first class, you pay the difference. Car rentals are at the lowest-rate you can get or you pay the difference. Personal phone calls, cleaning, movie rentals, bar bills, etc. should not be charged to the shows. Meals, taxi fares, tips, motel rooms, etc. should be charged to the shows. Of course, as a private contractor, you are entitled to negotiate any provision which suits you personally.

### Expect contact person to provide you with:

- 1) Judge's contract in duplicate (one for them and one for you)
- 2) Prize List
- 3) Airplane ticket (if they purchase and mail it to you)
- 4) Copy of motel confirmation or address and phone number of the motel.
- 5) Confirmation that they know of your arrival time and mode of ground transportation plans (taxi, chauffeur, van, rental car).
- 6) Typical climate and weather expected for that locale and season.

**Items needed at shows for inclement weather:**

- 1) Rain coat or rain suit, winter coat, light coat, gloves, hat, ear muffs, etc.
- 2) Boots or shoe covers, socks
- 3) Plastic bag large enough to cover note pads and judge's cards

Upon receipt of the Prize List, check all classes to determine if you are eligible to judge them. If a problem arises, notify the show contact immediately. If an emergency arises for any reason, notify the show contact immediately.

Some shows will request a biography and/or a photograph of you so it is a good idea to give this some thought and be prepared.

If you are unavailable to judge when invited, be courteous and ask that you be considered by that show management in the future.

**After arrival at the location and prior to the beginning of the show:**

- 1) Locate the show arena, show office, restrooms, restaurants.
- 2) How many gates does the arena(s) have; is there an in-and-out gate; how will they be used; where are they located?
- 3) Will there be a gazebo in the center of the arena?
- 4) Is there a special area where you can go between classes?
- 5) How is the footing in the arena: wet, dry, hard, soft, deep, slick; are there any holes, drops or weak areas in the arena?
- 6) Are there any spooky or problem areas in and around the arena; in outdoor arenas locate where east and west are, so you know where the sun will rise and set.
- 7) Where is the blacksmith located?

**Meet with and discuss the following with the show manager and steward:**

- 1) How many horses are entered?
- 2) How will you handle enforcement of the USEF/AMHA rules?
  - Visible blood (bleeding mouth)
  - Illegal equipment
  - Kicking
  - Lameness
  - Fall of horse or rider
  - Out of control, unruly
  - Etc.

- 3) Check with the management and steward pertaining to any special announcement you want read during the show.
- 4) Do the judge's cards have the class specifications listed, and are they correct?
- 5) Are the scales available to weigh cast shoes and are they accurate?
- 6) What experience level do the competitors have in pattern classes?
  - You should have a variety of different skill-level patterns for equitation.
- 7) Discuss when and what patterns need to be posted.
  - Select a reining horse pattern suitable to the arena and appropriate for the skill level and expected number of exhibitors.
- 8) How will order of go be determined in individually worked classes?
- 9) Who will and how will bits be checked if necessary or requested?
- 10) Is there a course designer provided for the necessary classes?
- 11) Ask for a copy of all courses provided by the course designer.
- 12) Are markers available for use when needed?
- 13) Are there any special time constraints pertaining to the schedule?
- 14) Are there any local or special rules for this competition?

**Meet with and discuss with the announcer, ringmasters and paddock master (gateman):**

- 1) How you expect the gate to be conducted.
- 2) Who times the gate? Do they know how to time a gate?
- 3) How will late arrivals at the gate be handled?
- 4) Do you want to know how many competitors are expected in each class?
- 5) Is the announcer familiar with the gait calls for each class?
- 6) Are there two way radios between announcer, gate, ringmaster, center ring?
- 7) Explain to the ringmaster how you want each class conducted.
- 8) Explain to the ringmaster how you expect them to conduct themselves to assist you in conducting the classes?
- 9) How will timeouts be handled?
- 10) How and when will grooms/headers be called into the arena?

## GLOSSARY

**Disqualification:** To exclude a competitor or horse, for cause, from participation in a given class, division or competition (see Article GR116.1).

**Performance Championships:** To be eligible to show in a Performance Championship class a horse must have been properly entered, shown and judged in one qualifying class in the same division or section. An entry which while performing in a qualifying class fails to qualify by reasons of equipment repair, shoeing time, illness, (certified by the official veterinarian) or failure of a class to fill shall be permitted to pay double fee and make a post entry in another qualifying class in the section or if no subsequent qualifying class is available for such post entry, the horse shall be considered qualified for the Performance Championship class, provided the horse has been previously entered in the Championship or Stake. Refer to Article GR334.

**Elimination:** To exclude a competitor or horse, for cause, from judging consideration in a class. Refer to Article GR117.

**Elimination and Withdrawal from Classes & Competition:** No exhibitor may withdraw horses from a Recognized competition after it has commenced, or remove them from the competition grounds, without the permission of the competition secretary. If an exhibitor voluntarily removes a horse from the ring without the permission of the judge, the Show Committee will disqualify the exhibitor and all his entries from all future classes at that competition and all prize and entry fees for the entire competition will be forfeited. Any horse leaving the ring without the exhibitor's volition is deprived of an award in that class. See also division rules for other causes of elimination.

**Excused:** To have a judge(s) grant permission to, or request that a competitor leave the class. A competitor who is excused is ineligible to receive an award. Refer to Article GR118.

**Commencement and Completion of Classes:** In classes where horses compete collectively, a warning is issued and the ingate must be closed two minutes after the first horse enters the ring. Judging must not commence until the gate is closed or at the end of the two minute call. An official timer must be

appointed to enforce this rule. (Exception: Dressage division). In a class where horses compete individually, a class is considered completed when all horses have completed the class routine as designated by the rules. In classes where horses compete collectively, a class is considered completed when the class has been judged in accordance with the rules and the judge(s) submit their cards to the ringmaster or announcer. None of the above applies to the Jumper division. Refer to Article GR109.

**Falls:** A rider is considered to have fallen when he is separated from his horse, that has not fallen, in such a way as to necessitate remounting or vaulting into the saddle. A horse is considered to have fallen when the shoulder and haunch on the same side have touched the ground or an obstacle and the ground. Refer to Articles GR121 and GR305.

**Shown & Judged:** To be shown and judged in any class in which horses compete together, an animal must perform at all required gaits both ways of the ring in the original workout and must remain in the ring until excused by the judge. (If you must back this class, do not excuse the competitor until you have backed all the competitors.) Refer to Article GR140.

**Soundness:** Unless specific division rules state otherwise, all animals except stallions and mares in Breeding classes must be serviceably sound for competition purposes i.e., such animal must not show evidence of lameness, broken wind, or complete loss of sight in either eye. Refer to Article GR303.

**Interruption of Procedure:** If a competition is in progress and must be stopped due to a storm, accident, or other emergency, the Show Committee will decide whether to recommence. Any interrupted classes may be recommenced within the session in which they were originally scheduled or at a succeeding session of the competition. (Exceptions: Dressage Combined Training, Reining.) If a class is continued during the session of the competition in which it was originally scheduled, the judge(s) will decide 1) to hold the class over in its entirety in which case no scores credited in the first session will count, or 2) to recommence the class where it was interrupted. If the class is continued at a succeeding session of the competition, it will be held over in its entirety and no scores credited in the first session will count. Refer to Article GR311.

**Time-Out:** A suspension of judging which may be requested by a competitor or directed by the judge(s). A competitor is entitled to request a time-out for a period not to exceed five minutes in aggregate in order to make adjustments or to repair broken equipment or to rectify a similar condition, or to replace a shoe. (Exception: Dressage, Jumper, Hunter Seat Equitation, Reining). If division rules allow a competitor to call a time-out, the competitor may call only one time-out per class. (Exception: Reining Seat Equitation and Western where a competitor may request a time-out no more than two times.) To request a time-out for any such emergency, the competitor must go to the center of the ring (if possible) and/or be acknowledged by the judge. The announcer will declare that a request for time-out has been made and permission granted; time will be taken from the moment such announcement is made. If a horse casts a shoe in a class, time starts (after weighing has concluded, if applicable) when the farrier or his assistant touches the shoe or the horse. No more than three minutes will be allotted to find a shoe; if the shoe is not found the exhibitor may elect to continue or withdraw. If a horse is removed from the ring for the purposes of shoeing, the steward or judge shall accompany and remain with the horse until it is returned to the ring or excused from the class. Two attendants are permitted in the ring to assist a competitor during his/her timeout. If at the expiration of five minutes the repair has not been made, the competitor may proceed as is or be eliminated. The steward or judge is responsible for timing unless an official timer is present. Competitors who are not involved in a time-out may make minor adjustments that can be performed with the assistance of one attendant and not be charged with a time-out. At any time the judge(s) considers it necessary he/she may call for a time-out. Said time-out may be charged to a competitor that, in the judge's opinion, is responsible for the suspension of judging as long as the competitor is so informed by the judge prior to calling the class back to order. Refer to Article GR312.

**Attire and Equipment: Dress:** It is the tradition of the show ring that riders and drivers be correctly attired for the class in question, that attendants be neatly dressed and horses be properly presented. Riders in all classes where jumping is required and when jumping anywhere on the showgrounds must wear protective head-gear (Exception: Trail classes). The Show Committee must bar riders without protective headgear from entering the ring for classes in which protective headgear is required and may bar any entry or person from entering the ring if not suitably presented to appear before an audience. All juniors riding in Hunter, Jumper and Hunter Seat Equitation sections must wear properly fitting protective headgear while riding in the designated schooling and exercise areas, the show ring and while jumping anywhere on the competition grounds. Any rider violating this rule at any time must immediately be prohibited from further riding until such headgear is properly in place. Any exhibitor may wear protective headgear (ASTM/SEI) in any division or class without penalty from the judge. The USEF strongly encourages all riders to wear protective head-gear passing or surpassing current applicable ASTM/SEI standards with harness secured while riding anywhere on the competition grounds. It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian or trainer of the junior exhibitor to see to it that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use, and is properly fitted and in good condition, and the USEF, Show Committees, and Licensed Officials are not responsible for checking headgear worn for such compliance. USEF makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, about any protective head-gear, and cautions riders that death or serious injury may result despite wearing such head-gear as all equestrian sports involve inherent dangerous risk and as no helmet can protect against all foreseeable injuries. Competitors must display the correct number which must be clearly visible while performing in any class unless otherwise stated in the prize list. Competitors may be penalized at the discretion of the judge. Numbers to be supplied by management. Refer to Articles GR1215.11 and GR318.

# Judging Procedures In The Ring

by Karen Homer-Brown

## IN-HAND CLASSES

### Stallions, Mares & Geldings

**Necessary Tools:** Note Pad, Pen or Pencil,  
Judge's Card

**Pattern Required:** No

**Cause for competitor to be excused:** Any unruly horse or one whose actions threaten to endanger other exhibitors or their entries. Any horse showing lameness so severe as to be considered abuse to be allowed to continue the class. Curb bits are PROHIBITED for weanlings and yearlings in In-hand classes.

**Cause for competitor to be eliminated:** Evidence of lameness, broken wind, or complete loss of sight in either eye. Any horse who shows aggression or discontent toward its handler. Horses who do not conform to hoof length.

### Class Requirements:

- 1) Entries are to be judged individually, standing then at a walk and trot on the line and MUST be serviceably sound. (Article MO112.1).
- 2) Horse MUST stand with front legs perpendicular to the ground. Rear legs MAY be placed slightly back, but the horse MUST also be judged at some time in the class not stretched. (Article MO112.2).
- 3) EMPHASIS is placed on type and conformation with consideration given to horse's ability to move correctly on the lead. (Article MO112.3).
- 4) Rubber bands inconspicuously applied in the forelock are permitted. (Article MO110.1).

### Suggested Class Procedure:

Horses enter the arena at a walk or trot as designated by the show management or the judge. Take into consideration spectators, lighting and arena conditions when selecting where and how you will position the horses for adjudication. Traditionally, in-hand classes are conducted by positioning the horses head-to-tail around the perimeter of the arena. At a designated area (usually where the judge has asked the ringmaster to stand) the horses are asked to stop and wait in a head to tail position along the rail until the judge indicates he/she is ready for the horse to be walked directly to him/her.

After all entries are in position along the arena and the gate has been closed, judging may begin. After

a quick evaluation of the horse in the side profile position from a distance, upon the judge's instruction either directly or through the ringmaster, the handler walks the horse straight to the judge and positions (stands the horse up) for a close inspection by the judge. For close inspection, the judge walks around the horse. The judge looks at the horse from the oblique angles, side, rear and front. The judge should visually check stallions over two-years of age for two testicles. The judge may request that the handler allow the horse to lower its head, re-position the horse, or open its mouth for inspection of the bite.

After the judge has completed the close inspection, the exhibitor is asked to trot the horse away from the judge a designated distance in a straight line and continue to trot (usually to the left) toward the end of the line of the balance of the class. The next horse has now moved forward into position on the rail and the process repeats itself. The judge now may walk the line-up of horses for final inspection and comparisons of his/her finalist.

Routinely a head-to-tail line of horses, being considered for awards, is organized down the center of the arena at the direction of the judge. This is for the benefit of the spectators so they can better enjoy seeing and comparing the horses themselves. This would also represent a single-judge versus multi-judge system.

If available for final consideration, it is recommended that you line up at least one more horse than there are ribbons. This is called a reserve horse. The final line-up would be done again in a head-to-tail fashion, plus the horses would be in their placement order.

When using multi-judge systems, the final judging of the horses would be done with the horses remaining in their head-to-tail line and none would be excused. Check the exhibitors' numbers, write down the numbers in your order of preference on the judge's card, sign it, date it, and hand it to the ringmaster. Always write down one or more numbers than ribbons.

### **Show Champions and Reserves**

Will be awarded to horses that have placed first OR second in their qualifying classes.

#### **Suggested Class Procedure:**

Eligible horses from each qualifying class are arranged in a head-to-tail position in a designated area in the arena usually across the end or down the center of the arena with the first-place horse in front and the second place horse in the back line. Each pair of eligible horses from the qualifying class is lined up side-by-side with the other pairs of eligible horse usually from left-to-right with the oldest to the youngest in ascending or descending order. After the gate is closed, the judge walks among the exhibitors for distant and close inspection and adjudication as the horses stand. All horses are to be asked to perform at the walk and trot for final comparisons. After determining the Champion, that horse may be brought out onto the rail to await the award presentation or that horse may remain in line. The same goes for the Reserve Champion. Check your numbers, mark you card, sign it and date it if the date isn't on the card, and turn it in to the ringmaster.

### **Get of Sire and Dam and Produce**

#### **Class Requirements:**

Entries are to be judged as a group and individually, standing, then at a walk and trot on the line and MUST be serviceably sound. Horses must stand squarely on all four feet with the front legs perpendicular to the ground. Rear legs may be placed slightly back. Judge may ask exhibitor to move hind legs under horse for inspection. Emphasis is placed on type and conformation with consideration given to horse's ability to move correctly on the lead. Rubber bands inconspicuously applied in the forelock are permitted. Curb bits are prohibited for weanlings and yearlings in in-hand classes.

### **Showing & Judging Regulations in Performance Classes**

#### **Cause for competitor to be eliminated:**

Evidence of lameness, broken wind, or complete loss of sight in either eye. (Article GR303). Stallions are prohibited in Ladies and Junior Exhibitor classes. Headers in Classic Pleasure classes must be a minimum of sixteen years of age.

Addition of supplemental hair in the mane or tail, irritants or use of any device in the ring to alter the

natural carriage of the tail or ears shall result in disqualification.

Boots and artificial appliances are forbidden in the Morgan division except in Roadster, Jumper, and Stock horse classes where boots are permissible. Horses shown in Western Pleasure shall not be shown with artificial appliances that would tend to alter their performance. An exhibitor is entitled to request only one time-out per class.

#### **Cause for exhibitor to be penalized:**

Judges MUST severely penalize any horse with laboring motion at any gait whether or not such motion indicates excessive weight or use of artificial training devices.

#### **Division of Classes:**

- 1) All Harness classes with over 25 entries or in which safety appears to be a factor in the judgment of the show committee and/or judge, MUST be divided.

#### **Championship Classes:**

- 1) Stripping of horses is mandatory in Championship classes under saddle, except one-horse classes and Parade.
- 2) Stripping of these horses will be accomplished by not more than two attendants assisting the rider.

#### **Shoeing Regulations:**

In Pleasure (except classic section), Pleasure Driving, and Natural Park Classes, there are no specific shoe weight limits but length of toe must not exceed 5" including pad and shoe. (Article MO103.4).

In Classic Pleasure classes, horses may be shown with or without rim pads. A rim pad must follow the inner and outer edge of the shoe, including rim pad must not exceed 16 ozs., and the length of toe including shoe and pad must not exceed 4 1/2". Refer to Article MO103.3.

In all Morgan classes other than classic pleasure, there is no specific shoe weight limit, but the length of toe MUST NOT exceed 5-3/4" including pads and shoe. Refer to USEF Article MO103.5.

#### **Class Requirements:**

- 1) Suitability of the horse and its motion for the type of job at hand is essential. Natural animated motion is desired in Park Horse classes. Easy ground covering motion is desired in Pleasure and Working events.
- 2) In Park Harness classes, except Ladies, Amateur

and Junior Exhibitor, judges shall ask for a park walk, a park trot and "show your horse."

- 3) Unless class specifications state otherwise, entries shall be judged 40% on type and conformation and 60% on other qualifications appropriate to the class. Stakes are judges as qualifying classes. In championship Performance classes, type and conformation shall count 50%. Judges MUST strictly apply these percentages.
- 4) Youth classes are to be judged as Open classes, open to exhibitors 21 years of age and under. A youth rider or driver may exhibit stallions, mares and geldings.
- 5) All horses chosen for a workout MUST be worked both ways of the ring at any gait requested.
- 6) All Western Pleasure horses being considered for a ribbon MUST be required to back and be judged on willingness.
- 7) In Pleasure classes, horses may be asked to back.
- 8) Hunter Pleasure, Hunter and Western horses MUST stand with all four legs perpendicular to the ground in the line.
- 9) The Morgan shall be shown in all its natural beauty with a full mane, forelock and tail. Braiding is permitted ONLY in Hunter, Jumper, Dressage and ADS Carriage classes or in performance and equitation classes when shown under proper Hunter or Dressage tack and attire.
- 10) In case of inclement weather, competition management may permit the use of polo boots or bandages and may allow tails to be tied up provided this is publicly announced before a class or session.
- 11) Riders attire should be suitable to the saddle being ridden. Sidesaddle riders, in appropriate tack and attire, shall be allowed in all classes except equitation.
- 12) A driving snaffle bit with a half cheek and overcheck or sidecheck is considered proper in all Harness classes. One or two bits is acceptable.
- 13) In Park Harness classes only, a liverpool bit with sidecheck is permissible if driven in the half cheek.
- 14) A running martingale may be used only when the horse is driven in a snaffle bit.
- 15) In Park Harness classes, horses MUST be shown to a four-wheeled vehicle.
- 16) In Pleasure Driving classes, horses MUST be shown to an appropriate two-wheeled vehicle.
- 17) Western tack MUST be used in all western class-

es and appointments and attire MUST conform with that described in Articles MO132.

- 18) English tack MUST be used in Park Saddle classes.
- 19) A flat English saddle is appropriate in Park, English Pleasure, and Classic Pleasure classes.
- 20) A full bridle (Weymouth) will be proper in both Park and Pleasure.
- 21) In Classic Pleasure classes, saddle seat attire is mandatory.

## **Park**

### **Class Descriptions:**

- 1) LADIES' Park horse should be outstanding in refinement and elegance, with suitability of horse to rider taken into consideration. Expression is paramount and quality is a prime consideration. The execution of gaits should be performed with brilliance on command. The horses should walk and stand quietly.
- 2) A JUNIOR EXHIBITOR's Park Horse should be mannerly, willing and expressive with balanced action. The execution of gaits should be performed with brilliance on command. The horses should walk and stand quietly.
- 3) An AMATEUR's Park horse can be a bit stronger and perform in a bolder manner. More action and animation are desired and less emphasis can be put on manners than in Ladies or Junior Exhibitor Park classes. However, suitability of horse to rider MUST be considered and manners are still the primary consideration.

## **CLASSES**

### **Park Saddle**

MAIDEN, NOVICE, LIMIT, JUNIOR (four-years and under).

*Judged on quality, presence, performance and manners 60%; type and conformation, 40%.*

OPEN, STALLIONS, MARES, GELDINGS, UNDER 15 HANDS, 15 HANDS AND OVER, YOUTH

*Judged on performance, presence, quality and manners 60%; type and conformation.*

LADIES, AMATEUR, JUNIOR EXHIBITORS

*Judged on manners, suitability, quality and performance 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

## CHAMPIONSHIP

Open to stallions, mares and geldings. To be eligible, horses **MUST** be entered, shown and judged in any Park Saddle Class. To be judged on performance, presence, quality and manners 50%; type and conformation 50%.

### Park Harness

MAIDEN, NOVICE, LIMIT, JUNIOR (four years and under)

*Judged on quality, presence, performance and manners 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

OPEN STALLIONS, MARES, GELDINGS, UNDER 15 HANDS, 15 HANDS AND OVER, YOUTH

*Judged on performance, presence, quality, manners and suitability as a stylish harness horse 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

LADIES, AMATEUR, JUNIOR EXHIBITORS

*Judged on manners, suitability, quality and performance 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

## CHAMPIONSHIP

Judged on performance, presence, quality, manners and suitability as a stylish harness horse 50%; type and conformation 50%.

### Gait Requirements

**Park Saddle:** Park Walk, Park Trot, Canter

**Park Harness:** Park Walk, Park Trot, "Show your Horse," (except in Ladies, Amateur and Junior Exhibitor classes).

Both classes are to be worked both ways of the arena at all gaits. All horses chosen for a workout **MUST** be worked both ways of the arena requested by the judge.

**Necessary Tools:** Note Pad, Pen or Pencil, Judges Card

### Suggested Class Procedure:

Horses enter the arena in a counter clockwise direction at a trot. When all competitors are in the arena and the gait is closed, the judging shall begin. At the judge's discretion, the horses are asked to park trot, park walk, and canter both directions of the arena a sufficient amount of time to adjudicate the competitors at each gait. This class traditionally is brought back to the park walk between the park trot and canter. The horses are asked to lineup usually at the park trot. Be aware of the different criteria in the "to

be judged on" section of the class description. Stripping is mandatory in Park Saddle championship classes, unless there is only one horse.

### Pleasure

#### Class Descriptions:

- 1) A LADIES Pleasure Horse **MUST** display an elegant, refined and cooperative way of going with absolute acceptance of regimentation of speed and a light mouth at all times. Misconduct, resistance or unpleasantness of any kind **MUST** be severely penalized.
- 2) A JUNIOR EXHIBITOR'S Pleasure horse **MUST** be safe, pleasant and mild-mannered, showing complete cooperation. All signs of resistance, resentment or aggression **MUST** be severely penalized. Suitability of horse to rider is of particular importance.
- 3) An AMATEUR'S PLEASURE Horse **MUST** show all of the tractability and willingness of the full trained Pleasure Horse. He may be somewhat stronger than a ladies or junior exhibitor's horse, but **MUST** be completely cooperative and absolutely agreeable at all times. A light mouth and a willing nature are paramount to the Amateur Pleasure Horse.
- 4) The HUNTER PLEASURE Horse should be shown with hunter style equipment, including forward or balanced seat saddle and snaffle, pelham or kimberwick bit. If a bridle is used, it **MUST** be of hunt style and excessive length of curb shank will be penalized. Martingales are prohibited. Mane and tail may be braided in traditional hunter style. No discrimination will be made against a full, unbraided mane and tail.
- 5) FORMAL ATTIRE (shadbelly) is optional for all female competitors after 6:00 p.m. or in Championship classes held at any time.
- 6) The HUNTER PLEASURE Horse should be a mild mannered individual capable of working on a light rein with only light contact with the bit. He should have ground-covering gaits that would be comfortable for horse and rider over extended periods of time. He **MUST** have impeccable manners and should clearly enjoy his work. He should **NOT** be penalized for slight errors.

The Morgan HUNTER PLEASURE Horse MUST demonstrate proper Morgan type and conformation, but the Morgan Hunter may travel with his nose out slightly ahead of the vertical and give a low, ground-covering impression.

### **English Pleasure Specifications**

MAIDEN, NOVICE, LIMIT, OPEN, STALLIONS, MARES, GELDINGS, UNDER 15 HANDS, 15 HANDS & OVER, YOUTH

*Judged on manners, performance, quality, presence, and apparent ability to give a good pleasure ride 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **JUNIOR HORSE**

*Judged on manners, quality, performance, presence and apparent ability to give a good pleasure ride 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **JUNIOR EXHIBITOR**

*Judged on manners, suitability, performance, quality, presence and apparent ability to give a good pleasure ride 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **LADIES**

*Judged on manners, suitability, quality, performance, presence and apparent ability to give a pleasure ride 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **AMATEUR**

*Judged on manners, performance, suitability, quality, presence and apparent ability to give a good pleasure ride 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **CHAMPIONSHIP**

The same specifications as the above paragraphs EXCEPT the percentages are 50%/50% instead of 60%/40%.

#### **Pleasure Driving Specifications:**

The class specs are the same as above with the one exception of “apparent ability to give a pleasure drive.”

#### **Classic Pleasure Specifications:**

Refer to Articles MO128 and MO130.

- 1) SADDLE: MAIDEN, NOVICE, LIMIT, OPEN, STALLIONS, MARES, GELDINGS, UNDER 15-HANDS, 15-HANDS AND OVER, JUNIOR, JUNIOR EXHIBITOR, LADIES, AMATEUR, YOUTH

*Judged on manners, performance and gait 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

It is imperative that the horse give the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride with emphasis on the walk and smooth transitions. Horses must stand quietly and back readily. To be shown by an amateur in saddle seat attire only. Attendants MUST be amateurs or individuals eligible for amateur status.

#### **2) PLEASURE DRIVING**

The class specs are the same as above except “to give a distinct appearance of being a pleasure to drive.”

### **CHAMPIONSHIP**

The same specifications as Under Saddle/ Pleasure Driving except that the percentages are 50%/50% instead of 60%/40%.

#### **Gait Requirements**

**Pleasure Saddle:** walk, pleasure trot, road trot, canter. May be asked to back.

**Pleasure Driving:** walk, pleasure trot, road trot. May be asked to back.

**Classic Pleasure:** walk, pleasure trot, road trot, canter. MUST stand quietly and back.

**Necessary Tools:** Note Pad, Pen or Pencil, Judge's Card.

#### **Suggested Class Procedure:**

Horse enters the arena counter-clockwise at a pleasure trot. When all the competitors are in the arena and the gate is closed, the judging shall begin. At the judge's discretion, the horses are asked to work the required gaits for the class in the arena. These classes are generally brought back to the walk between the trot and the canter gaits. They work both ways of the arena. Usually the horses are brought into the lineup at a trot. Be aware of the different criteria of the “to be judged on” section of the class description. The order listed is in the order of importance. Stripping is MANDATORY in Saddle Championship classes. Walk your line, back if necessary, mark your card. Make sure you select (list) a reserve horse (extra), check your numbers, and hand the card to the ringmaster.

#### **Western Pleasure Specifications:**

Refer to Article MO134.

MAIDEN, NOVICE, LIMIT, OPEN, STALLIONS, MARES, GELDINGS, UNDER 15 HANDS, 15 HANDS AND OVER, YOUTH

*Judged on manners, performance, quality, presence and apparent ability to give a good pleasure ride, with emphasis on manners 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **Hunter Pleasure Specifications:**

Refer to Article MO139.

OPEN, STALLIONS, MARES, GELDINGS, UNDER 15 HANDS, 15 HANDS AND OVER, LADIES, GENTLEMEN, AMATEUR, JUNIOR EXHIBITOR, MAIDEN, NOVICE, LIMIT, JUNIOR (four years old and under), APPOINTMENTS

*Judged on performance, manners and soundness 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **CHAMPIONSHIP**

The same specifications as Hunter Pleasure, except that the percentages are 50%/50% instead of 60%/40%.

#### **Gait Requirements**

**Hunter Pleasure:** walk, trot, extended trot, canter, extended canter.

**Necessary Tools:** Note Pad, Pen or Pencil, and Judge's Card

#### **Suggested Class Procedure:**

Bring the class in at a trot. When all the horses are in the arena, the gate will close and the judge will begin judging. Call for a trot, then move up to the extended trot, then return to the walk. Move up to the canter, then the extended canter. Reverse and repeat the same procedure. At the end, call for a trot and line the horse up in line. They are required to stand squarely in line. Walk your line. Mark your card with one more number than ribbons (reserve), check your numbers, sign and date your card and hand it to the ringmaster.

### **Roadster to Bike/ Under Saddle**

The principle gait assignment for Roadsters is the trot. They shall be asked to trot at three different speeds; slow jog-trot, the fast road gait, and then at full speed. The judge may ask a roadster to walk. Refer to Article MO144.

### **SINGLE ROADSTER OPEN**

*Judged on performance, speed, quality, and manners 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **SINGLE ROADSTER TO BE SHOWN BY AN AMATEUR**

*Judged on manners, performance, speed and quality*

*60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **SINGLE ROADSTERS, APPOINTMENTS**

*Judged on performance, speed, quality, manners and appointments 60%; type and conformation 40%.*

### **SINGLE ROADSTER CHAMPIONSHIP**

*Judged on performance, speed presence, quality, conformation and manners 50%; type and conformation 50%.*

### **ATTIRE**

Shown under English saddle, full-martingale, open bridle with snaffle bit, single or double rein and quarter boots. Rider to wear stable colors, jacket and cap to match.

#### **Gait Requirements**

Morgan Roadster (Harness/Saddle) See above.

### **HUNTER OVER FENCES/ WORKING HUNTER THINGS TO LOOK FOR:**

#### **OPEN HORSE:**

- Never Changing Pace from Start to Finish
- Rhythm, Brilliance, Scopey, Powerful
- Back Up, Roundness of Back
- Alertness
- Enthusiasm

#### **AMATEUR HORSE:**

- Smooth
- Movement
- Manners
- Consistent

#### **JUNIOR EXHIBITOR**

- Rider/Horse Combo-Suitability
- Obedient

#### **5 AREAS OF A GOOD WORKING HUNTER**

- Way of Going
- Brilliance
- Manners
- Form
- Movement

#### **CREDITS:**

- Even Hunter Pace
- Free Flowing Stride
- Jumping Without Breaking Stride
- Even Arc over the Fences
- Good Hunter/Morgan Conformation

**SCORING (0-100)**

- 90-100 Excellent movement, no faults
- 80-89 Good movement, commits 1 or 2 minor faults
- 70-79 Average movement, commits 1 or 2 minor faults
- 60-69 Bad mover—No major faults, only minor
- 60-59 Major Faults—“Oh my God!” jump, hind leg down, refused, trotted, cross-cantered, front leg down
- 49-30 1 or 2 major faults, unsafe jumper

**Eliminations:**

- 3 Refusals, runout, bolting on course, extra circle, showing an obstacle
- Off course, fall of horse or rider (when the shoulder is down)

**Mark for Faults:**

- Bucking On Course . . . . .60-40's
- Poor Form Over Fence . . . . .60-40's
- Knockdown . . . . .50-30's
- Refusals . . . . .50-30's
- Lead (missing, cross canter, wrong lead) . .60-down
- Break of Gait . . . . .60-down
- Use of Whip . . . . .60's down
- Dangerous Jump . . . . .59-down

Keep a cheat sheet, it helps to maintain a running list of placements in that class.

Make sure the course has been posted and after the fences go up walk the course with the course designer. After it has been inspected, have a course walk. The best place to judge the class is probably outside the ring slightly above the horses' backs. Bring the horses back for a jog in the order of those who are getting a ribbon.

**Necessary Tools:** Note Pad, Pen or Pencil, Whistle and Judge's Card

**Suggested Class Procedure:**

Each horse will enter the ring individually. They are entitled to one circle before they start the course. In that circle, they usually will go from a trot to a canter and then proceed on course. After they complete the course, review your worksheet, tally the score, and place the entry on your cheat sheet accordingly. After each entry has gone, it is customary to review those who are to receive a ribbon, to trot in front of the judge before final placement.

# Check List for Judging a Show

## Questions to ask when you are called to judge a show:

- Name of person calling you?
- Dates of show?
- Location of show?
- Is it a Class A show?
- How many judges? (If you are a small “r” judge, make sure the show contact knows that you must have a guest card or judge with a “R” judge.)
- Which classes will you judge?
- How many sessions will you judge?
- What is the show’s procedure for hiring a Learner Judge?
- Judging fee?
- How will the hotel and transportation arrangements be handled, i.e. pick-up at the airport, purchasing and receiving the ticket, etc.?
- Request a signed contract to include:
  - show dates
  - location
  - divisions to be judged
  - how transportation and hotel arrangements will be handled, which sessions will be formal and whether formal attire will be provided by the show or yourself
- Are the classes inside or outside?
- When will the prize list be sent to me?
- Name, address and phone number of caller and/or an official contact.

## Follow-Up

- Return contract immediately
- Request prize list if it has not arrived at least 30 days before the show.
- Near time of show, confirm your travel plans with your contact.
- Plan wardrobe, i.e. rain gear, formal attire, warm clothing, etc.

## Equipment to take with you

- USEF Rule Book
- AMHA Judging Standards
- ADS Rule Book
- Prize List
- Equitation Patterns
- Clip Board
- Paper & Pencils (pencils work even in wet weather)
- Stop watch & whistle
- 18 oz. weight
- Travel iron and/or steamer
- Alarm clock

## Review Before First Class

- Rule Books
- Prize List
- Seminar Handbook

# Judging the Morgan Western Pleasure Horse

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Today's Morgan judges are faced with an awesome and challenging task when familiarizing themselves with the many disciplines offered to exhibitors within breed competition. While each discipline has found itself supported by greater number of enthusiasts, the Western Pleasure section finds itself on the front edge of a swelling tide of popularity. As Western Pleasure classes increase in number of entries, show committees are finding it necessary to hire judges who are not only knowledgeable, but completely at ease with the rules and subtleties of the division in order to keep exhibitors happy and coming back to the office with entry fees, the lifeblood of any event. If Western Pleasure hasn't been a main focal point for you in the past, this article may help you become more aware of its finer points, enabling you to give exhibitors the consideration and reward due for their efforts in future judging assignments.

Of major importance to realize is the fact that as the Western Pleasure section has become more sophisticated, it can no longer be considered a "dumping ground" for any horse that cannot make the grade in other performance areas. Competition has become so keen and the quality has increased so drastically that exhibitors have realized that the Western Pleasure prospect must be identified and developed from the very beginning if he is to be competitive. There is no room in the Western Pleasure section of today for the "English Pleasure-Type Hidden under Western Equipment," or the "Parade Type." Just as the Hunter Pleasure horse exhibits certain physical differences which lend him ideally for the job, so does the Western Pleasure horse, but these physical factors do not make him any less of a Morgan or a representative of the breed.

The ideal Western Pleasure horse in today's show ring must be a masterpiece of discipline and precision with a stress-free, pleasant expression and the manners of a country gentleman. He must exhibit total responsiveness and compliance with his rider's direction while balancing his performance on a light rein, never expressing intimidation, anxiety, or aggression. His motion must be cadenced, but fluid

and softly ground covering, ensuring his rider the ultimate in comfort through each gait and transition with the most subtle of cues. He is supple, completely balanced from a properly flexed poll and steady head to a hindquarter that is well engaged at all times, and still displays a flair and style while managing to express total relaxation.

Not an easy bill to fill, when you stop to consider that a rider cannot take advantage of two hands or two bits in setting or collecting the horse, nor can he take advantage of a horse's natural aggression or animation; there is no cavesson with which to keep a mouth clamped shut and you can't rely on just one or two brilliant passes. He must be a solid performer 360 degrees of the ring. Judging the Western Pleasure horse often becomes a case study in subtleties and judges must reward those individuals who exhibit most nearly the perfection in mind. It is not hard to understand why Western Pleasure exhibitors want knowledgeable judges to assess their efforts when, done at its best, it becomes an art form.

The following paragraphs are taken from a combination of the USEF Rule Book and the Morgan Horse Judging Standards. They are not verbatim nor should they be mistaken for exact rules, but are merely an attempt to clarify some areas that can cause confusion for judges not specializing in the Western Section.

## **Style Of Movement**

A winning Western Pleasure horse should exhibit a style of movement that "flows," allowing him to carry his rider in comfort for extended periods of time. The silhouette he projects should be the result of correct training and natural athletic ability, a perfect harmony of balance and agility. He must be rewarded for a fluid, free-moving, ground-covering type of movement, using his feet with cadence but softness, giving the impression of agility and cleanliness of motion at all gaits.

A. **Walk:** The horse should have a four-beat, flat footed walk that is elastic and ground-covering. Any evidence of slowness or a disinterested,

non-attentive attitude should be considered minor faults. Major faults at the walk include nervousness, jogging intermittently, or failing to walk at all.

- B. **Jog-Trot:** The jog-trot should be two-beat, slow, free, and easy without a tendency to mix gaits. Motion should be clean and fluid, reaching rather than knee-lifting, exhibiting smoothness to the rider, as well and bring consistent and steady in rate of speed. Minor faults at the jog-trot are being too slow or too fast. Major faults are not performing a two-beat job, failing to jog both front and back and being hard or rough riding. Short, choppy, or overly animated strides should be as penalized as dragging the feet in a listless manner or dropping the hips drastically (resulting from going to slow).
- C. **Extended Jog:** The extended jog should be fluid, energetic, balanced, and ground-covering with a definite lengthening of stride, resulting in an increase of speed without giving a sense of racing or straining. The mouth should remain light and the horse must demonstrate complete acceptance of control, without resistance, at all times. Smoothness of transition into the extended jog and a consistent rate of speed are to be rewarded. Inconsistent speed at the extended jog is to be considered a minor fault. Major faults include breaking gait, pulling or leaning on the bridle, hard or rough riding, and no increase in speed. Riders may sit the trot or take a “two-point” position by rising onto the knees and feet with a slight inclination of the body, but should not post. The overall stability, balance, and consistency of the horse at this gait should take precedence over speed.
- D. **Lope:** The lope should be smooth, slow, straight on both leads, and show a definite three-beat cadence. It should be easy riding with fluid motion, consistent and steady. Minor faults include being too slow or too fast. Major faults are being on the wrong lead, pulling or lugging at the bridle, not performing a three-beat lope, and being hard or rough riding. A horse that remains steady and balanced with his head should be rewarded.
- E. **Extended Lope:** The extended lope should be ground-covering, free-moving, and smooth. It should show a definite lengthening of stride, while still being controlled, balanced, and manly. Extreme speed shall be penalized.

Inconsistency of speed shall be considered a minor fault. Major faults are being on the wrong lead, breaking gait, pulling or lugging on the bridle, being hard or rough riding, and showing no increase in speed. Reward those who are easy riding, fluid in motion, and consistent in speed.

- F. **Backing:** In the Morgan breed, all western pleasure horses being considered for a ribbon must be required to back and judged on willingness. The horse should demonstrate proper flexion, be readily responsive and back in a straight line. Minor faults at the back include being hesitant and not backing in a straight line. Major faults include throwing or tossing the head, gaping, pulling, not backing and rearing.

**Note:** The practice of calling for an entire class to back while out on the rail (as a time saver) is probably not to your advantage as a judge. You must still walk the line for conformation and backing them individually gives you an opportunity to compare a rider's technique in asking the horse to back in relationship to the horse's response as well as, and more importantly, a chance to observe the use of any illegal or improper equipment and appointments.

- G. **Overall:** A good Western Pleasure horse should be rewarded for being smooth, steady and easy riding, demonstrating proper flexion and balance at all gaits with a good attitude. Minor faults would consist of over or under flexion, sour ears, switching tail, inconsistent speed at any or all gaits, being out of balance, the poll being too high or too low (resulting in the horse being out of balance), and improper or incomplete appointments of the rider. Major faults include throwing or tossing the head, evidence of a bad mouth, constant bumping of the bit, gaping, constant breaking of gait, and obvious schooling by the rider.
- H. **Elimination:** Absolute elimination is required when two hands are used on the reins (except with Hackamore or Ring Snaffle bit), fingers between closed reins or more than one finger between split reins, a horse kicking, illegal equipment, evidence of lameness, the rider cueing the horse in front of the cinch, the fall of horse or rider, and when a bleeding mouth is evident.

## Style and Attitude

Technical Ability vs. Technique Ability: Since we are faced with considerable entries in each pleasure class today, we need to consider more than just the way the horse performs the required class routine (...his “technical ability”) and learn to identify and reward the more intangible qualities of style, presence, attitude, and manners. These are qualities that tend to separate the “coffee from the grounds” and from an individual’s entry’s “technique ability.”

The top western pleasure candidate will have an air of supreme assurance about him. He is confident, bright in expression and uses his ears well, yet at all times he appears relaxed, fluid, and steady. He is a horse who likes himself and his job and sells himself to the judge and the crowd from the moment the ingate opens, not some lifeless robot that slogs his way through the class routine and simply does not make a technical error. He should not express any sign of tension, wariness, intimidation, or aggression. He is that horse who brings a “little extra something” into his performance, and whether you define it as charisma, style, attitude, or a combination of all these factors, it comes out as being the rare quality that makes some horses superstars, and a lack of it makes others also-rans. This presence and attitude is the same whether you’re judging park horses or western horses.

While considering these qualities and attitude, we need to understand the term “manners,” especially as they relate to the different classes within the section:

**The Junior Exhibitor Western Pleasure Horse** must be safe, pleasant and mild mannered, showing complete cooperation with his rider. All signs of resistance, resentment, or aggression must be severely penalized. Suitability of the horse to the rider (size, length of stride, responsiveness, etc.) is of particular importance.

**The Ladies Western Pleasure Horse** must display an elegant, refined, and cooperative way of going with absolute acceptance of regimentation of speed and a light mouth at all times. Misconduct, resistance or unpleasantness of any kind must be severely penalized. Transition of gaits must appear to be effortless and smooth.

**The Amateur Western Pleasure Horse** must show all of the tractability and willingness of the

fully trained pleasure horse. He may be somewhat stronger than the ladies or junior exhibitor horse, but must be completely cooperative and absolutely agreeable at all times. A light mouth and a willing nature are paramount to the Amateur Pleasure horse.

**The Junior, Maiden, Novice, Limit, or Green Western Pleasure Horse** must display an agreeable nature and a willingness to accept direction and regimentation, but occasional coltish errors should receive a lighter penalty than they would in classes for finished horses.

**The Open Mare, Gelding, Stallion (etc.) Western Pleasure Horse** should display a bright and willing attitude and while they may be a bit more aggressive than Ladies, Amateur or Junior Exhibitor horses, they must show impeccable manners and a light and tractable nature at all times.

## Head and Neck Carriage in the Morgan Western Pleasure Horse

In the Morgan breed, we are required as judges to evaluate conformation and type right along with actual physical performance (60%-40% in qualifying classes and 50%-50% in championships). Due to the unique conformational structure of the Morgan breed, especially with regard to ideal neck placement, you will find that many of the horses shown in the Western Pleasure section tend to exhibit a higher set-on head and neck carriage than you may have been used to seeing in other breeds of Western Pleasure horses. If you’re new to the Morgan breed as a judge, this may cause you some concern at first, but it shouldn’t.

As mentioned earlier, certain job descriptions require a bit different look, and horses who compete successfully in events such as western pleasure, hunter pleasure, and roadster may deviate from the norm somewhat. A horse that carries his poll a bit higher than would be normally considered proper for a western pleasure silhouette should not be eliminated from consideration for that factor alone, any more than we should discount a horse that may be lower in the poll than the ideal Morgan in-hand or English pleasure horse. If the horse has the correct attitude, style of motion, smoothness of gait, responsiveness, *and* balances properly on a light rein, he is a definite contender for a top ribbon, regardless of

how high or low his head position is if it is in relationship to his overall conformation.

Western pleasure is western pleasure and there is a style of horse who lends himself well to the requirements of the job. With the great amount of diversity in performance activities within this breed, we must be willing to recognize and reward the individuals who fit the ideal for the job at hand, always keeping in mind proper Morgan type and conformation, but not swinging to one extreme or another when evaluating the overall picture. A Morgan who may deviate slightly from the ideal Morgan standard with regard to his neck placement should not be penalized any more than the up-necked individual who falls short of the requirements on the rail.

A proper head set on the Western Pleasure horse should give evidence of flexion at the poll with the front of the face being slightly ahead of or on a vertical plane to the ground. We, personally, feel that a horse that may be just slightly ahead of the vertical shows a bit more relaxation and gives the overall impression that he is light on the bridle. Horses tend to come back toward the vertical when increasing collection and speed at the various gaits and more often than not a horse that is on the vertical at the walk appears to get behind the vertical as he moves into the jog or lope, giving the impression of being held in place or position. Being behind the vertical is to be more penalized, in our opinion, than a horse that is a bit ahead of the vertical.

The manner in which the horse carries the bit also deserves attention. Ideally, he should pick the bit up and carry it quietly and comfortably in his mouth throughout all gaits with a minimum of adjustment on his part. Many curb bits have copper rollers, or "crickets," on the port which are to encourage a horse to use his tongue and keep a flow of saliva going to ensure a responsive mouth. When a horse uses this roller in a normal manner, he should not be penalized for being fussy or nervous in the mouth as he is doing exactly what the bit was designed for. An overly anxious horse will display more obvious symptoms than just rolling the cricket and can easily be distinguished from the horse using the cricket properly.

In summation, the way the horse carries the bit and responds to the hands of the rider is of more impor-

tance than the height placement of his head and neck as it relates to his individual conformation. Horses should be faulted for gaping of the mouth, pulling or lugging down on the bit, cocking their heads in either direction down the rail, trying to evade or "spit out" the bit, constantly opening and closing the mouth, tossing the head, etc. A bleeding mouth results in elimination. Once again, we are after the horse who "sells" himself to us as a happy and willing worker, regardless of whether his head is carried a little higher or lower than we personally prefer.

## **Equipment and Its Usage**

As a judge, you must familiarize yourself with the wide variety of equipment that is considered legal or illegal for use on the Western Pleasure horse. The Western Pleasure Division Rules in the USEF Rule Book are fairly specific in listing proper and improper equipment and its usage, but you must also consider the slight deviations which might occur between the Morgan and Open Western Division Rules.

Most infractions concerning legal equipment result from simple negligence on the part of exhibitors when it comes to reading the Rule Book, and not a true desire on their part to "cheat." Ideally, each show would be able to hire an "equipment judge" or instruct their stewards to inspect equipment outside of the ring, making sure that all entries were legal upon entering the class by allowing exhibitors time to make corrections. However, the burden to be aware of illegal equipment falls to the Judge, and we must be sure that every entry we place meets with the requirements listing in the USEF Rule Book.

As the western section advances in sophistication, you must be able to identify and ascertain the legality of standard bits, snaffle bits, and bosal-type hackamores. Remember that for the last few years, it is legal for horses of junior age (4 years of age and under) to be shown in either a standard Western bit, a ring snaffle bit, or a hackamore in any class in the Western division, and they should not be discriminated against for the proper use of one type of bit over another or the use of a hackamore rather than a bit. Riders using a ring snaffle or hackamore have the option of riding with both hands and both hands must be visible to the judge, while those using a standard Western bit must use only one hand.

**A Standard Western Bit:** There shall be no discrimination against any standard Western bit. A standard Western bit is defined as having a shank with a maximum length overall of 8 1/2". The mouthpiece will consist of a metal bar 3/8" to 3/4" in diameter (as measured from the shank to 1" in from the shank), varying from the straight bar to a full spade with nothing extending below the horizontal plane of the mouthpiece other than a roller attached to the center of the bit. Jointed mouthpieces are permitted. Swivel posts and flat polo mouthpieces are permitted. Roping bits with both reins attached to a single rein at center of cross bar shall not be used. Reins must be attached to each shank.

**A Standard Snaffle Bit** is defined as a center-jointed single, rounded, unwrapped smooth mouthpiece of 3/8" to 3/4" diameter metal as measured from ring to 1" in from the ring with a gradual decrease to the center of the snaffle. The rings may be from 2" to 4" outside diameter of either the loose-type, eggbutt, dee, or center-mounted without cheeks (a shank of any type). If a curb strap is used it must be attached below the reins. A Standard Snaffle Bit may be used on junior horses (4 years of age and under) only, in any class in the Western section and the rider may use both hands on the reins.

**A Hackamore** must be of bosal-type, must be round in shape and constructed of braided rawhide or leather and must have a flexible non-metallic core. Attached reins may be of hair, rope, or leather. No other material of any kind is to be used in conjunction with a hackamore, i.e., steel, metal or chains (exception: smooth plastic electrical tape is acceptable). Narrow "pencil" bosals, often used as cavessons or part of tie-downs, and mechanical hackamores are prohibited. To help you recognize the proper size of a hackamore, it should be no less than 1/2" in width at the narrowest point (cheek of hackamore where headstall attaches). Hackamores are permitted in any class on horses 4 years of age and under that have never been shown in any event in a bridle, and the rider may use both hands on the reins.

**Curb Straps and Curb Chains** are the most frequently misused equipment you will find as a judge. If a curb chain is used, it must be 1/2" in width and lie FLAT against the jawline of the horse. Leather curb straps must meet the same 1/2" requirement and

also lie flat against the jawline. No wire, rawhide, metal or other substance can be used in conjunction with or as part of the leather chin strap or curb chain. Rounded, rolled, braided, or rawhide curb straps are prohibited. A light leather lip strap is permissible. Hackamore bits, bosals, cavesson-type nosebands, martingales, and tie-downs are prohibited.

**Use of Reins** is an area that often is difficult to assess, but needs your attention. Only one hand may be used on reins and hands must not be changed except to negotiate an obstacle in a Trail Horse class. Hand to be around reins. When end of split rein falls on the side of the reining hand, one finger between reins is permitted. When using romal or when end of split reins are held in hand not used for reining, no finger between reins is allowed. Rider may hold romal or end of split reins to keep them from swinging and to adjust the position of the reins provided it is held at least 16" from the reining hand. Riders may use both hands on the reins of a hackamore or snaffle bit horse and both hands must be visible to the judge.

**Checking Bridles:** If bridles are to be checked it is the sole responsibility of the judge(s) to do so. The judge may designate a steward to check bridles at the outgate. Riders must be dismounted.

Ideally, you should have the equipment checked prior to the commencement of the class, so that exhibitors are allowed the time to make corrections before entering the ring and you are not placed in the unpleasant situation of disqualifying an entry after the railwork.

The preceding paragraphs are meant to highlight or emphasize certain areas where most judges have difficulties, but they do not completely portray the exact specifications and requirements as outlined in the USEF Rule Book. It is most important to note that equipment rules frequently undergo changes in the Western division and it is imperative that you read the current rules completely before accepting an assignment and officiating a show. Have all of the specifications clearly in mind when you step into the ring.

**Additional Equipment:** With regard to other equipment, entries shall be shown with a stock saddle, but silver equipment will not count over a good working

outfit. A sidesaddle shall be considered legal equipment. Tapaderos are prohibited.

A judge does not have the authority to add or to remove any of the standard equipment as specified in the USEF Rule Book.

Bandages and boots of any type are prohibited as part of the normal equipment. In the event of injury, a judge may permit a protective bandage. In stock horse and reining classes, the use of shin, bell boots, and/or protective bandages on the front legs and standard sliding or rundown boots on the rear fetlocks are permitted.

## Rider Attire and Appointments

The basic requirements for a rider with regard to his or her attire and appointments are well outlined in the USEF Rule Book and it is important to note that competitors must be penalized, but not necessarily disqualified for having incomplete appointments.

Riders should be attired in clean, well-fitted clothes that have a tendency to enhance the overall picture by virtue of style and color. They shall wear a Western hat (felt or straw equally acceptable), long-sleeved shirt, trousers or pants (a one-piece equitation suit is acceptable), a neck-tie, bolo tie or kerchief, chaps, and boots. A vest, sweater or jacket and gloves may also be worn. Spurs are optional. Protective headgear is optional in all classes; it is not necessary to be of Western style.

A sidesaddle rider must wear an apron of closed or button type with belt under loops. It is suggested that an apron with waistband cut the same as chaps and double thickness be used in classes where chaps are required.

## Overall Summation

As a judge, it is your duty to find that combination of horse and rider who best exemplify the ultimate goal of perfection in each class, making it obvious to the spectators and exhibitors alike that the best horse won.

Make sure to judge on a positive basis, rewarding the best qualities of movement, attitude, and style while being ever mindful of the subtleties involved within the Western Pleasure section. Choose horses that exhibit a smooth, flowing style at all gaits while maintaining a light, quiet mouth and steady head carriage, selling themselves with a bright and willing attitude while remaining totally relaxed, supple and responsive to the direction and control of the rider.

The western pleasure horse should not be overly animated, short or choppy strided, anxious or aggressive any more than he should be lethargic or mechanical, artificially show, or unnatural in his style of movement. Overall head and neck carriage should be in relationship to the individual's natural conformation, showing the proper flexion of the poll and lightness of mouth achieved through proper training techniques which allow the horse to move in total balance and harmony.

The western pleasure horse should display a unique mental soundness and must perform with a minimum of direction and control from the rider. Seen at its best, developed after countless hours of work and dedication to an ideal goal, the winning western pleasure horse cannot be artificially enhanced or aided and deserves the serious attention of all judges to the details and subtlety of the discipline.

Recognize the talent... and then reward it!

# AMHA Equitation Manual

The purpose of this manual is to clarify and expand on the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Equitation Division Rules, and the rules for the American Morgan Horse Association (AMHA) Medal classes. It does not replace or supercede these rules, rather it is meant to augment the information found there.

Judges must always know the rules of the pertinent association(s) and the classes they are adjudicating. In the Morgan division, this means that the USEF Rule Book prevails. A copy of all applicable rule books should be carried to horse shows for easy reference.

— Created by the AMHA  
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## Equitation – An Overview

Ring generalship, or the awareness and command of what is happening in the ring, is paramount in all equitation seats. (This is especially true in saddle seat classes, because of the quicker, bolder pace and tempo.) In order to achieve the best advantage, a rider must maintain good forward motion and an uninhibited path for that motion. This means knowing where other horses, crowded or trouble spots, and the judge(s) are located at any given time. Circling or cutting across the arena to achieve better positioning is acceptable as an indication of good ring generalship, but should never be used to excess.

Riders should enter the ring ready to show, displaying confidence and presence. Poise and consistency, even under adverse conditions, are necessary.

The horse's performance should be perfected to best reflect the rider's abilities. A ground-covering walk should not be so strong that its lateral movement creates too much body motion in the rider. A smooth, cadenced jog or trot will be much more attractive than a bone-jarring concussive gait. A smooth flowing canter or lope will enhance a rider's skills rather than a four-beat gait that shakes or vibrates the rider.

Subtle verbal communication between rider and horse is acceptable in equitation classes; however,

this communication should not be so loud as to be distracting to other exhibitors or ring personnel. Riders should always be positioned so they can go around those ahead of them, and should be penalized at the judge's discretion for not doing so.

Riders should leave room in the line-up for the judge to move around each exhibitor, as well as giving space to a nervous horse or rider; this is both courteous and safety-conscious.

A rider should show disciplined control of his or her horse, but should never abuse it if it makes a mistake, either in or out of the ring. The show ring and grounds are not proper places to "teach the horse a lesson." Emotions run high and a lot is at stake and because of this, many mistakes are due to rider error for which the horse should not be punished.

Judges should appraise the ability and level of proficiency of the riders at the show before posting patterns. Both exhibitors and judges alike benefit from this. Those exhibitors who want a challenge are given one, while those whose ability is not as advanced are given a test they can perform and the judge's decision is made much simpler by this consistency. Judges should be prepared with more than one pattern for any given class so as to compensate for differences in the ability of the riders, ring size, weather conditions, and the like.

## Saddle Seat Equitation Division

### Position of Rider/Suitability of Horse (Refer to Current USEF Rules)

1. **Maintaining center of balance:** Rider's back should be straight, with shoulders directly over hips and spine in line with that of horse. Leaning down over horse to check leads and/or diagonals should be severely penalized. Ideally, a rider should be able to feel the correct lead and diagonals, but if they must be checked, only a glance downward with the eye is appropriate. However, a rider who leans over and obtains a correct lead or diagonal should be scored above a rider who glances down but obtains and maintains an incorrect lead or diagonal.
2. **Hands:** Hands should be quiet and light, with flexible (not locked) wrists and should show sympathy, adaptability, and control. Horse with

high-set necks allow the rider's hands to be held higher than do horses with low-set necks, therefore, the placement of the horse's neck dictates the proper elevation of the rider's hands. Hands should be tipped in 30-45 degrees from vertical and should not be excessively far apart. Bight of reins is on off (right) side. Constant bumping of the horse's mouth or excessive shortening of the reins is distracting and should be penalized.

3. **Arms:** Elbows should be no further from the body than the point at which the chest begins to look concave. This is called "pumpkin arms" or cave-chested because improper roundness of the arms forces the chest to cave inward and the shoulders to come forward out of position. The upper body, including the arms and hands, should give the appearance of elegant style and complete control, but without the impression of stiffness, posing, or exaggeration.
4. **Legs and Feet:** A flared lower leg and cocked ankle are major faults. It is easy to see why, as this unnatural leg and foot position does not allow the rider to properly guide the horse using calf pressure. With feet in stirrups, the stirrup leathers should hang straight down, should never be twisted and should be even on both sides.

#### **Attire of Rider/Tack of Horse**

1. Informal saddle suits should be a conservative, preferably dark color that appears to be solid. Small pinstripes or herringbone-type patterns are acceptable as long as the material appears from a distance to be of a solid nature. According to the USEF Rule Book, accessories are to be the same color as the suit itself. Taken literally this would mean that derbies, boots, ties, vests, hat bands, and gloves must all match. However, at this time the Morgan division (and others) is tolerant of and will allow contrasting derbies, ties, boots, hat bands, vests, and gloves. Day coats are not permitted.
2. Formal attire is even more conservative and may be worn only after 6:00 p.m. It is recommended, but not mandatory, that tuxedos be worn in the evening, so judges should not penalize riders who do not wear them. There is no allowance in formal attire for contrasting colors, with one exception made for gloves, which may be either white or black. This means the collar and lapels must be of the same color as the jacket and the top hat must match the entire ensemble. White or black tie may be worn, but no contrasting tie/cummerbund sets. If earrings are worn, they should be small and also conservative. Small stud earrings are more appropriate for formal than informal attire.
3. Spurs, if worn, must be unrowelled and not so large that they noticeably interfere with the smooth line of the jod pants. A whip or crop is optional, but if used should be of an appropriate length.

#### **Patterns and Tests (Refer to Current USEF Rules)**

1. If a pattern or workout is used in any given class, it is to count 50% of the final score; the exception is UPHA Challenge Cup classes, where workout counts 40%. Too many judges score saddle seat classes on the workout alone and this is entirely improper. If judged correctly, it is very possible for a rider who was excellent on the rail but who badly mishandled the pattern to place above a rider who was below average on the rail and slightly above average on the pattern. Cones or markers of any kind are not to be used to mark points of a pattern, etc., in a saddle seat equitation class. How well a rider selects and uses points in a pattern should be taken into consideration by the judge in the overall scoring of each rider's performance.
2. Unlike terminology in other equitation seats, there is no such thing in saddle seat equitation as being "off pattern." This has caused much confusion among judges and exhibitors alike when they see riders who make obvious mistakes. Saddle seat classes instead are judged on a common sense system of rewards and penalties just like any other class. If judges want to assign numbers to these rewards and penalties, that is their prerogative.
3. The fall of a horse or rider does not necessarily eliminate an entry from competition. The penalty in the saddle seat division for a fall is at the judge's discretion.
4. A common question asked by judges and exhibitors alike is the proper number of exhibitors chosen to perform workouts in classes such as championships where entries are not required to do additional tests, but the judge asks for a pattern. Four or more is typical. Judges should watch the entire pattern completely through to the finish and not begin writing notes as the riders approach the end of the workout.

5. The order of running a class in which a pattern is to be performed is to do the rail work first, followed by the lineup for inspection, reading of the pattern and any questions, and finally the pattern work. Judges are prohibited from conferring with riders individually in the lineup but they may answer questions regarding the pattern where the entire lineup can hear the question and answer. Judges may not speak to any rider in the lineup even after they turned in their cards.

## **Reining Seat Equitation Division**

### **Position of Rider/Suitability of Horse**

#### **(Refer to Current USEF Rules)**

1. Maintaining center of balance: Riders should always be centered, not behind or in front of vertical. The rider's back should be flat with the shoulders directly over hips. The saddle should always be straight and the stirrups even. No daylight should be seen between seat and saddle or between legs and saddle. Proper and even weight should be placed in stirrups so that daylight cannot be seen between foot and stirrup. Any loss of stirrup is a major fault.
2. Arms and Hands: Arms are to be in a straight line with the body. Rein arm should be bent at elbow showing a soft smooth line to hand. Shoulders should be kept square, neither tipped forward nor backward. The rein hand should be quiet and soft, and should not be constantly bumping the horse's mouth. Rein hand is to be completely around the reins. No finger is allowed between romal reins. When split reins are used and ends of split reins fall on the same side as reining hand, one finger (index finger) between reins is permitted. Rider can hold romal or end of split reins to keep them from swinging provided it is held at least 16 inches from the rein hand. Split and romal reins are equally acceptable.
3. Legs and Feet: Legs should hang naturally from the hip without being excessively flared away from the horse. Heels should be slightly lower than toes, and knees should face straight ahead. Toes should also face straight ahead or turn slightly outward.
4. Refer to the current USEF Rule Book for specific rules regarding reining seat position and suitability. Refer to the current AMHA Morgan Horse Judging Standards for procedures.

### **Attire of Rider/Tack of Horse**

1. Riders shall wear Western hat; long-sleeved shirt with collar; a necktie, kerchief or bolo tie; trousers or pants. Chaps, shotgun chaps or chinks and boots are required. A vest, jacket, coat, and/or sweater may also be worn. Protective headgear with harness is optional in all classes; not required to be of Western style. Spurs are optional.
2. The saddle must fit the rider. It may be slick or swelled fork, have a high or low cantle but must definitely be sized to the rider. Nothing that would prevent the stirrups from hanging freely shall be added to or deleted from a standard western saddle.
3. There shall be no discrimination against any standard western bit.
4. Curb chains and leather chin straps may be used but must be flat and at least 1/2" in width, and lie flat against the jaws of the horse. No wire, rawhide, metal or other substance can be used in conjunction with or as part of the leather chin strap or curb chains. A light lip strap is permissible.
5. Hackamores, snaffle bits, tie-downs, running martingales, draw reins, bosals and cavesson-type nosebands are prohibited. Silver equipment may be used, but shall not be given preference over good working equipment.
6. In all Medal classes, it is mandatory for the judge to have bits dropped and inspected on all finalists being considered for an award. Riders must be dismounted for this inspection.
7. Bandages and boots of any type are prohibited. In Reining Equitation classes where a pattern is required, the use of shin, bell boots and/or protective bandages on the front legs and standard sliding or rundown boots on the rear fetlocks are permitted.

### **Patterns and Tests (Refer to Current USEF Rules)**

1. In the Morgan Reining Seat Equitation Division, only AMHA Medal classes require a pattern. The pattern for AMHA Medal classes must be posted at least one hour prior to the class, not the session in which the class is held. It is recommended that work orders also be made available. Patterns are not required in either age group or championship classes. However, in any class in which a pattern is used, it must be publicly announced prior to being performed.

2. Riders are eliminated from consideration and are not eligible to win a medal or ribbon if they go off pattern. This follows the theory of the open reining horse classes in which the pattern work is the crucial (and only) portion of the class, so in reining seat equitation classes more emphasis is given to pattern than to rail work.
3. The fall of a horse or rider in the reining seat division is mandatory elimination.
4. In AMHA Reining Seat Medal classes, reining patterns 1-11 will be used. (See USEF Rule Book.)
4. Moving upward to the base of support, the seat and thighs are next. The thighs should lie flat with contact distributed evenly between the calf, inner knee bone and thigh. The seat itself is placed in the forward or lowest part of the saddle close to the pommel. The base of support is considered strong and secure when thighs and the weight of the seat, through flexibility and feeling, remain in complete harmony with the horse's movements at all times.
5. The rider's upper body is dependent upon the base of support and leg. The trunk of the body should be carried erect with the shoulders relaxed and the chest open, without being stiff, hollow, or sway-backed, or hunching or rounding the shoulders. A slight arch should support the upper back, but the lower back should not be arched, as this brings the seat out of the saddle. With the rider looking straight ahead, their line of vision should be parallel to the ground; eyes and head should anticipate the line of movement. The head should not jut out in front of the body or look down to the side.

## Hunter Seat Equitation Division

### Position of Rider/Suitability of Horse (Refer to Current USEF Rules)

1. The hunter seat equitation rider should present a polished workmanlike appearance. Seat and hands must be light and supple conveying complete control should any emergency arise. Toes should be at an angle best suited to the rider's conformation, but not exaggerated. The knees must not be pinched in tight with the calves and heels pushed away from the horse's sides. Heels should be down with the calf of the leg in contact with the horse and slightly behind the girth with the stirrup iron on the ball of the foot.
2. The rider's body can be divided into four principal parts:
  - A. The leg from the knee down.
  - B. The base of support, which includes the thigh and seat.
  - C. The upper body and head.
  - D. The arms and hands.

A rider is considered balanced when his/her leg, seat, upper body, hands and arms coordinate correctly and are in equilibrium.
3. Establishing the rider's position is the foundation. Beginning with the leg, the ball of the rider's foot should be placed in the middle of the stirrup and the heel pushed down and in, just behind the girth. The rider should not grip with the knee; too much pressure on the knee acts like a pivot and causes the lower leg to swing, which will cause the upper body to fall forward or backward. In its correct position, the leg serves as a brace to the body and stays just behind the girth where it can act as an aid to influence the horse. The leg also acts as an anchor for the entire body. The importance of leg position cannot be overly stressed, as everything the leg does reflects in the rest of the body.
6. Hands and arms: Elasticity is the best description here; rigid arms and hands will be reflected in the horse's performance. The hands should be placed above and slightly in front of the withers, two or three inches apart with the thumbs just inside the vertical, keeping a straight line from the horse's mouth to the elbow. Wrists should be straight, as bent or twisted wrists cause unnatural arm and elbow displacement which in turn causes stiffness and a forced, irregular body position. A useful hand is one strong enough for control, yet relaxed enough to allow freedom and a straight position of forearm, hand, and wrist.
7. Maintaining center of balance: In order to maintain balance, the rider must coordinate his or her center of gravity with that of the horse. The rider's center of gravity must be directly over the horse's center of gravity to instill forward drive and restraint. For real smoothness, fluidity, and invisible control, the rider must stay with the motion of the horse; rider and horse relating to each other. In principal, the faster a horse moves the farther forward its center of gravity shifts. The rider must then lean forward in proportion to the speed of the horse. It is this action, sometimes called "closing the hip angle" or "upper body angulation" which enables the rider to be

with the motion of the horse at all times. Understanding these angles is a must to smoothness, poise, and control when riding.

When the horse is standing, the center of gravity is directly in the middle and the rider sits perfectly straight. Because of the slow speed of walking and backing, the alterations in the center of gravity and the hip angulation are very slight. Sitting to the trot creates a delicate shift forward, just a couple of degrees in front of the vertical, as does the canter. During all sitting gaits the rider should show an elegant self-carriage, yet be supple and deeply glued to the horse. The posting position is also the correct position for the hand gallop and gallop. The reason these two gaits require the same angulation is to compensate for the rider's center of gravity and balance, which must skirt forward a bit as the rider comes out of the saddle. This is also the basic position for jumping. This position is referred to as the "two-point" position. The two-point contact lifts the rider's weight off the horse's back and puts it down into their legs, somewhat lightening the burden on the horse's back.

As the rider begins to jump, he or she will roll up into the two-point position as the horse is pushed to the gallop, immediately establishing the set pace that is to be maintained throughout the entire course. As the rider approaches the first fence, he or she must be on a direct line to the center of the jump, eyes looking forward, legs in position, and hands in control. The rider will hold the two-point position while galloping throughout the entire course. When the horse leaves the ground on takeoff, the thrust will close the hip angulation in a smooth, fluid motion and the rider's hands will follow the horse's head forward, releasing, to allow it freedom in the air. As the horse lands, the rider's angulation to the galloping position will be resumed and the rider's eyes will continue to look forward to the next jump. Remember, an equitation rider should show accuracy to and over the jumps, smoothness over and throughout the course, and must always be in total control, with the horse between their hands and legs showing absolute balance and control.

### **Attire of Rider/Tack of Horse (Refer to Current USEF Rules)**

Exhibitors and judges should bear in mind that at all

times entries are being judged on ability rather than personal attire.

1. Riders should wear coats of any tweed, melton for hunting, conservative plaid, stripe, or solid color. Breeches and boots must be worn. A black, brown, or dark blue regulation hunt cap with proper under the chin protective head gear, in accordance with USEF Rules, must be worn at all times. Shirts with a choker collar or a shirt and tie may be used. Gloves matching the coat will finish the picture. Spurs, bats, and crops (not to exceed 30 inches in length) are optional. Bright or gaudy colors should not be worn. Judges must eliminate contestants who do not conform.
2. Regulation snaffles, pelhams, kimberwicks, and full bridles, all with cavessons, are recommended and a judge may penalize a horse with a non-conventional type bit or noseband. Colored cavessons and browbands are not allowed. Tack should be neat, clean and properly fitted to the horse. Horses may be braided.

### **Judging Hunter Seat Equitation**

1. In any equitation class, minor faults or errors in the horse's performance should not be considered unless they are the fault of the rider. Much consideration should be given to the body aids used and the influence they have on the horse. General showmanship, ring position, and ring etiquette should also be considered in an equitation class. In an equitation over fences class, riders should be penalized heavily for allowing the horse to refuse a jump, losing a stirrup or rein, or allowing the horse to trot on course when not part of a test. Riders must also be penalized for falling forward ahead of the center of gravity, allowing the leg to swing backward out of position or falling backward behind the center of gravity, especially on takeoff at a jump. Ducking to the side over a jump or looking down should also be penalized as should loss of consistency or timing on the approach to a jump. Three refusals anywhere on the course is elimination as is a fall of the horse or rider.
2. After recording each exhibitor's fence-by-fence performance, taking into consideration rider's position, rider's influence on the horse's performance and overall appearance, the judge should give a numerical score. A score in the 90's would be an A score—an exhibitor who "has every-

thing” and performed accordingly, an excellent round. A score in the 80’s would be a good round or B score. A score in the 70’s is a fair round, a score in the 60’s is a poor round, and 50’s or below are very poor or “failing” rounds.

### **Class Routine/Patterns and Tests (Refer to Current USEF Rules)**

1. In classes not required to jump, contestants shall enter the ring and shall proceed at each gait and on command reverse and repeat each gait. Riders may be asked to work collectively on the rail without their stirrups in 14-17 age group, Medal, and championship classes, and may be asked for a sitting trot. The reverse may be executed either turning toward or away from the rail. Light contact with the horse’s mouth is required. Entries shall line up on command and any or all riders may be asked to execute any appropriate test included in the class requirements.
2. In regular equitation classes over jumps, the performance begins when the horse enters the ring or is given the signal to proceed after entering the ring. Except for refusals, jumping faults of the horse are not to be considered unless it is the end result of the rider’s ability. Major faults to be penalized are refusals, loss of stirrups, loss of reins, or trotting while on course when not part of the test. Each contestant may circle once if desired before approaching the first jump. The rider shall then proceed around the course keeping an even pace throughout. Three cumulative refusals or fall of the horse or rider will eliminate a rider. If a refusal occurs in a double or triple combination, the rider shall re-jump all elements of the combination. Any of all riders may be asked to perform at a walk, trot, and canter or to execute any appropriate test included in the class requirements.

Below are tables of faults, credits and predetermined scores as recommended by the USEF Hunter Seat Equitation Committee for judging Hunter Seat Equitation.

### **Table of Faults in Hunter Seat Equitation (Over Obstacles)**

The severity of the fault dictates the severity of the penalty. The greater or more dangerous the fault, the greater the penalty.

Long Fence (*taking off too far away from the jump*)

Close Fence (*taking off too close to the jump*)

Chip or Chipping In (*adding a short or half stride just before the jump*)

Left Stride Out (*not enough strides between jumping*)

Jumping to the Right Corner

Jumping to the Left Corner

Rail Down (*rider fault due to rider being off balance or behind motion*)

Pace Uneven (*too fast or too slow or erratic*)

Rider Ahead (*ahead of center of gravity*)

Rider Behind (*behind center of gravity*)

Rider Left on Takeoff (*rider out of position falling back*)

Lost Stirrup

Lost Rein

Wrong Lead

Cross Canter

Switching Leads in Front of Fence or Between Fences

Rider Posts Canter

Trot on Course

Bad Eye (*poor timing or approach to jump*)

Refusal (*three refusals is elimination*)

Did Not Trot Fence (*when part of course or test*)

Fall of Horse or Rider (*elimination*)

Rider Leans or Ducks to Side or Breaks Hard Over Fence

Rider’s Seat and Thigh Slide in Saddle

Rider’s Legs Slide

Rough Hands

Horse Bucked or Kicked

Use of Stick

Rider Stiff or Loose

Overchecking or Overriding by Rider

Weaving or Bad Approach to Fence

### **Table of Credits to be Given to Hunter Seat Equitation Riders**

Good, Normal Fence (*correct takeoff spot at jump*)

Good Position (*rider maintaining correct position throughout course and over jumps*)

Rider Making a More to Prevent a Problem

Good Entrance

Good Exit

Even Pace Throughout Course

Good Eye (*good timing or approaches to jumps*)

Good Control

Straight Approaches to Jumps

## Numerical Scoring

90's – Excellent (to receive a 90 or above score the round must "have everything" plus a little extra and was performed accordingly)

80's – Good (above average performance, a very good, solid round with no mistakes)

70's – Fair (an average performance)

60's – Poor (below average performance)

50's – Very Poor (bad performance, bad fences, major faults)

## Predetermined Scores (For Major Faults)

Trotting on Course – 60 or lower (when a trot is not called for)

Very Poor Trip – 55 or lower

Dangerous Fence – 55 or lower

Adding a Stride in an In-and-Out Combination – 55 or lower

Loss of Stirrup – 55 or lower

Loss of Reins – 55 or lower

1 Refusal – 45 or lower

2 Refusals – 35 or lower

3 Refusals – Elimination

## Fitting and Showmanship

Good halter showmanship is developed through the knowledge and understanding of the horse and the ability to present the horse and oneself in a confident manner. Showmanship involves the handling of the horse, learning the horse's conformation, how to position and present the horse at its best, and understanding the disposition of the horse. Showmanship teaches the handler poise and self-carriage. A good showmanship handler shows alertness and a confident attitude, always presenting the horse in a positive manner, paying attention to detail and the judge's position in the ring. The handler is always aware of their surroundings and other exhibitors.

Although the handler is being judged, it is the Morgan horse that is being shown and the handler should be judged on how the horse is being shown and presented.

## Judging Criteria

Presentation is 40 percent. The horse must be healthy, alert, and in good condition. Horses must be clean and properly groomed. Goop and oils should not be overdone.

Appointments include a suitable headstall with a

throatlatch. A throatlatch is mandatory. A show halter or a headstall with a bit may be used. A whip or crop is optional.

The handler's attire should be neat and clean. It should be suitable and appropriate to the manner in which the horse is being shown (saddle seat, hunter seat, or western). The handler's number should be worn on the back and pinned down. Boots or dress shoes, a long-sleeved shirt or blouse, and a tie or scarf are mandatory. Appropriate pants are necessary. A sweater, vest, or jacket are optional. Informal attire, such as that worn in halter classes, should not be penalized (remember a tie or scarf is mandatory). Formal attire is only appropriate after 6 p.m.

Showmanship is 60 percent. Leading the horse safely is of primary importance. Handlers should always be in control of the situation and should also consider the safety of others in the ring. The recommended method is to lead from the horse's left side holding the lead strap or reins in the right hand at a distance from the horse allowing the most control and presentation. The handler's position when leading should be midway between the horse's head and shoulder. When making a turn of 180 degrees or greater, the horse should be turned to the right with the handler walking around the horse, maintaining control of the horse's actions. The horse's hindquarters should remain stationary as the front end moves away from the handler pivoting around.

The horse must stand balanced on all four feet; stretching is permitted. Crowding must be penalized, as it is never safe. When showing the horse, the handler should stand toward the front of the horse, off the horse's shoulder, facing the horse. The handler should always be in a position to keep an eye on the entire horse. If the handler is standing beside the horse facing forward, they cannot keep an eye on the horse or present the horse properly.

When leading to the judge, the lead shank or reins should be held with the right hand at a level appropriate to the height of the handler. It is optional to hold the lead shank or reins in the right or left hand when showing or presenting the horse, holding the whip in the opposite hand. As the judge moves around the horse, the handler should position himself or herself so as to avoid obstructing the judge's view of the horse.

The handler should be aware of the judge during the entire class. The horse should be shown at all times quietly and effectively; the handler's actions should be smooth and with a purpose. Handlers should not move too abruptly or too quickly. Handlers should respond quickly to requests from the judge and should be courteous and sportsmanlike at all times. Handlers should not be distracted by persons or things inside or outside the ring. The horse should always be shown with confidence, self-assurance, assertiveness, and precision. Handlers should never be stiff or awkward, but at ease while attentive, effective, and in control of every situation. The handler's body should be erect, but not stiff and arms should be carried in a natural position, not rigid or bent stiffly in an unnatural position.

## Showmanship Faults

Any motion or action jeopardizing the safety of anyone in the ring is a major fault. Loss of control or not following the judge's directions is a fault. Not performing the pattern precisely and accurately is a fault. Executing the pattern in a sloppy, haphazard fashion, not tracking straight to or away from the judge, pivots or turns that wander are penalized. Any loss of control of the horse is penalized. This includes horses that spook and turn past the handler or circle the handler, horses that do not stand still while being shown, horses that trot too fast for the handler, or horses that do not trot at all.

Overshowing of the exhibitor and not being aware or not paying attention to the horse and the horse's actions is penalized. Handlers that are too stiff, rigid, and artificial and carry themselves in an unnatural position are penalized. Lack of attention to the judge is penalized. Handlers that move abruptly or unnecessarily for show rather than effective showing are penalized.

Poor use of the whip or fumbling with the whip should be penalized. If a whip is used, the handler should be able to use it effectively and correctly.

## Showmanship Credits

Credit handlers who stay attentive to the judge, always aware of the judge's position in the ring with respect to their own position and the horse's position and with regard to others in the ring.

Credit handlers who walk or trot the horse directly

to the judge in a straight, deliberate line. When trotting away from the judge, the handler should do so in a straight line, with the horse in line and moving directly away from the judge. Handlers may glance back over their shoulder once to confirm a straight and direct line away from the judge, but should never continue to jerk the head around. The handler should correct the line if not trotting away straight.

Handlers should show complete control over their horses and must perform the maneuvers of the class promptly and correctly. A pivot executed correctly should be credited as it shows control. A pivot or turn on the haunches should be just that. The haunches are stationary and the forehand moves around in a neat, very controlled motion. It is not just swapping ends of the horse to get turned around and it should never wander.

Handlers who show poise and alertness without being stiff, artificial, or rigid are credited. Hands should have a purpose showing control and proper use of the whip. Handlers are credited for showing their horses in a safe and correct manner.

## Examples of Equitation Patterns

### Saddle Seat Equitation

1. Trot down the right rail to the first quarter point. Continue to trot and execute a two loop serpentine across the width of the arena, demonstrating one change of diagonal. Continue to trot down the left rail to the midpoint. Halt. Turn and canter on the left lead a diagonal line to the midpoint of the far end. Halt. Turn and canter on the right lead a diagonal line to the midpoint of the right wall. Halt. Back your horse parallel to the wall (at least three steps and not more than eight steps). Return to the end of the ring at the trot.
2. At a trot, proceed down the center of the ring to the far end. Stop. Back a few steps. Move forward and turn to the left. Execute a four loop serpentine at the canter, beginning with the left lead; showing simple changes of lead. (Use your trot line as your center line.) Stop at the ingate.
3. Using the rail to your right, trot along the straightaway on the right diagonal. At the midpoint, execute a circle at the trot. Halt. Canter on the left lead the remainder of the straightaway. Without stopping, canter a circle. Halt. Reverse and return to line demonstrating two

changes of diagonal along the straightaway.

4. Using the rail to your right, divide the straightaway into three sections. Canter the first section on the left lead, trot the second section on the left diagonal, and trot the final section on the right diagonal. Halt. Reverse. Canter a circle on the right lead. Halt. Return to line at a show trot.
5. Trot along the right rail to the far end of the ring. Facing center ring, execute a figure eight at the trot. Stop. Reverse. Canter a figure eight. Stop. Return to line at show trot. You may use either rail.
6. Using the right side of the ring, trot a three loop serpentine. Begin on the right diagonal. At the completion of the final loop, halt. Canter a circle on the left lead. Continue at the canter across the ring to the opposite straightaway. Stop at the rail. Turn left and show trot back to line.
7. Divide the ring into four segments and perform a four loop serpentine. First loop at a canter on the right lead. Second loop at a trot on the right diagonal. Third loop at a trot on the left diagonal. Fourth loop at a canter on the left lead. Continue cantering a full circle. Stop. Turn horse to return down an imaginary straight line. Divide arena into three segments. Canter the first segment on the right lead. Stop. Canter the second segment on the left lead. Stop. Trot the third segment. Stop at end of arena. Return to line.
8. Use an imaginary straight line down the center of the arena as a guide. Trot to the 1/3 point. Continue trotting into one circle to the right. Stop. Canter a circle to the right. Stop. Trot a circle to the left. Stop. Canter a circle to the left and continue cantering out of the circle to the 2/3 point. Stop. Drop your irons. Trot, posting on the right diagonal to the end of the arena and around to the left; continue trotting to the midpoint of the straightaway. Stop. Pick up irons. Back. Canter on incorrect lead to the end of the straightaway. Drop to a trot. Return to line on correct diagonal.
9. Trot a diagonal line to the center point of the straightaway. Continue trotting and perform a circle to the left. As you come out of the circle, change to the left diagonal and trot on a diagonal line to the end of the arena. Stop. Turn left. Canter on a diagonal line on the right lead to the center point of the opposite straightaway.

Stop. Turn left. Trot on a diagonal line to the end of the arena on either diagonal.

10. When your number is called, execute a three loop serpentine at the canter, demonstrating two simple changes of lead, beginning on the left lead. Stop. Trot a circle on the correct diagonal. Halt. Turn and trot a line down the center of the serpentine. Change diagonal every four strides, beginning on the incorrect diagonal. Halt.

## Hunter Seat Equitation

1. From the lineup, execute a figure eight at the trot. Then execute a figure eight at the canter, demonstrating a simple change of lead. Halt. Back three steps. Return to the lineup at the trot.
2. From the lineup, along one straightaway, back out of line, turn left, and pick up a posting trot. At end of the gate area, go to sitting trot and turn down center of arena. In the middle, halt. Do not back. Pick up right lead, canter to end of ring. Do transition to sitting trot and return to place in line.

## Western Seat Equitation

1. Starting at first marker, lope on left lead to second marker. Stop. Pivot on hindquarters 360 degrees to the right. Pick up right lead, lope circle, and lope to third marker. Stop. Pivot 360 degrees on hindquarters to the left. Pick up left lead, lope circle to the left, and lope to fourth marker. Stop at fourth marker and back approximately 10 feet. After completing pattern, jog to far end of the arena and form new line.
2. Starting at first marker, lope on right lead to second marker. Stop. Execute a 360 degree turn on the hindquarters to the left. Lope on the left lead to the third marker. Halt. Execute a 360 degree turn on the hindquarters to the right. Jog to the fourth marker. Stop. Back approximately 10 feet. After completing pattern, line up on far end of arena.
3. Starting at first marker, lope a 3/4 circle to the left. Stop at second marker. Turn 180 degrees on hindquarters to the right. Lope on right lead to the third marker. Stop. Back approximately 10 feet. After completing pattern, jog to far end of arena and form new line.
4. Starting at first marker, lope on left lead to second marker. Stop. Turn 180 degrees on hindquarters to the right. Lope on the right lead to the first marker. Stop at first marker and turn

180 degrees on hindquarters to the left. Lope on the left lead to the third marker. Stop. Back approximately 10 feet. After completing pattern, jog to far end of the arena and form new line.

## Reining Seat Equitation

1. Enter arena at the walk. Pick up the jog to the right. At point A, pick up the lope, left lead. At point B, turn left toward the center of arena. Begin figure eight to the left. Execute two circles to the left. Change leads. Execute two circles to the right. Change leads. Continue loping around the end of the eight into the rundown, running down the center of the arena. Run to the end of the arena. Stop. Execute 1 1/2 turns to the left. Run to opposite end of arena. Stop. Execute 1 1/2 turns to the right. Run past center. Stop. Back 10-15 feet. Do one full turn each way, either way first.
2. Walk in arena. Depart lope on right lead. Complete a figure eight showing two changes of lead. Continue out of eight at lope. Stop. Jog to rail, pick up lope partway across end of arena. Run down side wall past marker. Stop. Make 1/2 turn left. Run down to other end past marker. Stop. Make 1/2 turn right. Run down past center marker. Stop. Back 10 feet. Jog forward, face center. Execute one full turn right, one full turn left. Jog out of arena.
3. Enter at a lope and complete the first run. Stop. Do 2 1/2 turns left. Pick up a lope on the right lead and complete one figure eight showing two changes of lead. Lope out of figure eight and do second run. Stop. Do 2 1/2 turns right. Run past center marker. Stop. Back 6-10 feet. Do one full turn left and one full turn right. Jog out of arena.
4. Enter arena at the walk. Turn left. Pick up the jog. At the marker, lope on right lead to the far end of the arena. At the midpoint of the end of the arena, turn right, begin figure eight. Circle right, change leads, circle left, change leads. Continue loping around top of eight directly into first run down. Run downs are to be midway between center and arena wall. Run to end of arena. Stop. Execute 1 1/2 turns to the right. Run to end of the arena. Stop. Execute 1 1/2 turns to the left. Run to end of arena. Stop. Back 10-15 feet. Execute one full turn each way, either way first.

# Western (Stock) Seat Equitation

by Don Burt

Portuguese Bend, California

## Rider's Basic Body Position

As an equitation rider enters the ring, he presents a composite picture to the judge. Care should be taken that all body parts be coordinated to make a free, natural, quiet picture. A rider should never look stiff, but should be straight, square and graceful.

**Head:** Should be alert, lifted in line and in balance with the body. It should never be carried, turned or tipped down. Their eyes should always focus in front and thirty to forty feet ahead of the horse.

**Shoulders:** Should be square in our basic position, with one hand over the horn and the other on the thigh. There is a decided tendency to carry the shoulders holding the reins forward, this can be eliminated by slight turn at the waist, to line up your shoulders. Shoulders should never be carried back or hunched.

**Arms:** The upper arms should fall freely down the shoulders toward the hip bones. Never let arms be tight against the body nor allow them to fly with the horse's motion. The forearm, holding the reins, should be parallel to the ground. All handling should be done with hand, wrist and by bending the elbow. The bend in the elbow is of paramount importance as this provides a cushion of the horse's mouth. The off forearm should be bent to conform with the angle of the upper body and thigh.

**Back:** Should be straight, not stiff, and preferably with no arch or slump.

**Hips:** Should be directly under the shoulders and hip bone should be tilted slightly forward. The motion is found at the jog and causes the saddle to move on a horse's back. This motion can cause soreness in the horse's loin area.

**Seat:** The seat should be deep and always in the center of the saddle. The rider should never sit on his/her tail bone. The rider's spine should always be in line with the horse's spine.

**Thighs:** Should be kept firmly against the saddle.

Relaxed contact, but no rolling or rigid gripping. The thigh angle should be more downward than forward.

**Knees:** Should be slightly bent, rolled in snug and with steady contact. They must not be gripped or loose.

**Lower Legs:** The lower leg placement is of extreme importance to maintaining proper placement of the entire body. The legs should hang down straight below the knee from a side view. From a front view, they should hang naturally away from the horse. The lower leg should never dangle, be spraddled wide or thrust forward. Too great of an effort to hold legs too close to horse results in faulty turned ankles, incorrectly placed foot pressure, loss of knee contact and looseness of thighs.

**Feet:** The ball of the foot should make contact with the stirrup with the entire width of the boot sole. Pressure should not be put on the ball of the foot, but rather on the heel so the heel will be down. Feet should be held naturally, neither extremely turned in or out.

## Rider's Motion and Position

This category is very hard to put into words as it encompasses the conformation, gaits of the horse and build of the rider. To generalize, the less motion the rider has, the easier it is on the horse and the more attractive it is for a judge.

**Walk:** This may be the most important gait you will execute during a class. Remember, first impressions are important when entering a show ring. Any motion or equitation fault evident at the walk will be much more pronounced at the faster gait.

**Jog:** Keep a slight up and down motion to overcome the side-to-side tendency promoted by the diagonal two-beat gait of the jog.

**Lope:** Here we get into the problem of the thrust of the hindquarters of the horse. A rider must keep his/her body either with the horse's motion or slightly ahead of the motion. If this is not done, you will

tend to bump back and forth with the upper body. There is a natural tendency for your inside leg to drift forward and put you off center in the saddle.

## Use of Aids

The proper use of aids (hands, body, legs and feet) cannot be overemphasized. Each aid must be used subtly but effectively.

**Hands:** Must be quiet, no jerky motions, yet must be solid with no flexibility. The hand should remain above the horn as much as possible. The hands should always appear light, relaxed and quiet.

**Legs:** The only motion should be to apply slight calf pressure, when necessary, to promote impulsion.

**Feet:** Should be used behind the cinch only. The only reason for keeping the leg no further forward than the cinch is to shorten the distance the foot must travel to apply pressure to the horse. The heel should not be raised when using the foot as an aid.

**Body:** Weight should be distributed properly to enhance the performance of the horse. Weight distribution should be adjusted gracefully and lightly.

**Appointments:** Clothes and equipment do not make a rider, but they certainly enhance the overall picture presented to the judge.

*(a ) Personal - Clothing must be workman-like and neat. Riders must wear pants and a long sleeved shirt or a one-piece equitation suit with a collar and cuffs and with either buttons or snaps attached to the front shirt plaque. A zipper is permissible under the front plaque or shirt or shirt part of suit. A belt under loops, western hat, boots, chaps and a necktie, kerchief or bolo tie are required. Spurs are optional. Side-saddle riders must wear an apron if showing in classes where chaps are required. (See Figure 3.) Hair must be neat and securely fastened if long so as not to cover the rider's number.*

*2.1 Tack. The saddle must fit the rider. It may be slick or swelled fork, have a high or low cantle but must definitely be sized to the rider. Nothing that would prevent the stirrups from hanging freely shall be added to or deleted from a standard western saddle. Exhibitors can ride side saddle in adult equitation classes but not in classes restricted to juniors.*

*2.2 There shall be no discrimination against any standard western bit. Curb chains and leather chin straps may be used but must be flat and at least 1/2" in width, and lie flat against the jaws of the horse. No wire, rawhide, metal or other substance can be used in conjunction with or as part of the leather chin strap or curb chains.*

*2.3 Hackamores as defined in Art. 3905.4, all snaffle bits including those defined in Art. 3905.3, tie-downs, running martingales, draw reins, bosals and cavesson-type nosebands are prohibited. Silver equipment may be used but shall not be given preference over good working equipment.*

*2.4 In Medal Classes, it is mandatory for the judge to have bits dropped and inspected on all finalists being considered for an award. Riders must be dismounted for this inspection.*

*3. Shoes. The use of shoes on the hind feet other than standard shoes is not allowed. A standard shoe is defined as a shoe not to exceed more than 1" at the widest point as measured by calipers.*

*Bandages and boots of any type are prohibited. In the event of injury, the judge may permit a protective bandage. In Western (Stock) Seat Equitation classes where a stock horse routine is required, the use of shin, bell boots and/or protective bandages on the front legs and standard sliding or rundown boots on the rear fetlocks are permitted.*

— USEF Rule Book, 1992-1993

## Showmanship

This category is primarily the appointing, positioning and handling of yourself and your mount to allow the judge to make his evaluation.

## Ring Management

This is the proof of proper preparation and training. Always stay alert and attentive. Keep your horse positioned advantageously. Ride as close as possible to the rail. Avoid being blocked from the judge's view and avoid riding groups.

## Etiquette

Don't follow another rider too closely, at least one horses length should be maintained. Don't ask another rider to move from his/her position on the rail. Why should they jeopardize their performance

by moving to the inside because you have a faster moving horse? Do not cut in too sharply when passing. Ask the ringmaster if you can be excused if your horse becomes unmanageable.

## **Sportsmanship**

Practice it and encourage others to be good sports. Take time to be courteous both in and out of the ring. Take a few moments to congratulate winners and accept congratulations gracefully. Do not intercept the judge with questions. Nine out of ten times, he will tell you something that will irritate you.

## **Suitability of Mounts**

**Manners:** Mounts should show good disposition and proper training.

**Mouths:** Should be quiet, light, and sensitive.

**Gaits:** Should be true, smooth, and controlled so the rider will be shown to their best advantage.

**Size:** Proper proportions between a horse and rider will present a better picture.