

American Morgan Horse Association, Inc.

Presents



YOUTH OF THE YEAR
CONTEST RULES
& GUIDELINES

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American Morgan Horse Association Youth **YOTY Contest Rules & Guidelines**

YOUTH OF THE YEAR CONTEST RULES AND GUIDELINES

Rules and guidelines to hold a successful Youth Contest eligible with AMHA.

MISSION STATEMENT

The AMHA Youth Contest Rules and Guidelines are designed to support our Youth Coordinators in holding contests that are both consistent in form and easy to establish across the country. The overall purpose is to prepare all of your youth contestants adequately to perform their best at all contests, and prepare them for Grand National & World Championship Youth Contests in Oklahoma City. If you have any questions about coordinating your contest, please contact Nikki at AMHA at nicole@morganhorse.com, (859) 448-5109.

AN OVERVIEW

The Youth of the Year Contest is a four-phase competition designed to test skills in various equine-related areas. The competition can be designed to accommodate any type of rider—youth, junior exhibitor, or walk/trot divisions. At the discretion of the contest coordinator, exceptional needs of contestants may be met by modifying the contest schematic. Additionally, this discretion may be applied to the creation of specific divisions (i.e. leadline) to be inclusive of youth who desire to participate. These guidelines will list the preferred and required methods to run a Youth of the Year Contest, as well as ways to modify your contest to provide a positive experience for different ages and ability levels of riders.

HOLDING A YOUTH CONTEST

Each local Youth Contest should consist of four phases: 1) Taking a horsemanship test 2) Judging four classes (two in-hand, two performance) with two sets of oral reasons 3) Presenting a speech on a horse-related topic of the coordinator's choice and 4) riding or driving a horsemanship pattern. There should also be at least three age groups to each contest.

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AGE DIVISIONS

SENIOR (14–21 years of age)

The Senior Division should represent the highest standards of your competition and prepare contestants to compete in the National Youth of the Year Contest held at the Grand National & World Championship Morgan Horse Show® in Oklahoma City. It is required that each phase of a Senior Division be based on 250 points. Each contest must hold all four phases in order for the senior winner to qualify for competition in the AMHA Youth of the Year Finals. Nikki at AMHA can help supply any materials needed to hold all four phases.

JUNIOR (Under the age of 14 that show in canter classes)

The Junior Division participants should be prepared to eventually participate in the Senior division. It is recommended that all four phases are held.

WALK/TROT (12 years and younger)

The Walk/Trot Division may be used to encourage younger competitors to try a Youth of the Year Contest with less intimidating requirements than the Senior or Junior divisions. A Walk/Trot division will consist of riders who are 12 years old and younger and have not been judged in ANY saddle class, test, or pattern that has required a canter in a recognized or non-recognized competition.



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THE PHASES

Phase 1: Horsemanship Test

The written exam is designed to test the knowledge of the participant in the areas of:

1. Nutrition
2. Breeding & Genetics
3. Physiology & Endocrinology
4. Anatomy & Conformation
5. History & Evolution
6. Showing & Show Procedures
7. Diseases & Unsoundnesses
8. Tack & Equipment
9. Morgan History & the Morgan Breed
10. Parasites
11. Horse Psychology

To maintain consistency throughout all contests, nationwide, AMHA has created a testing database on a software called Classmarker. To use this resource, first decide the number of questions you would like on the test for each age division. The total overall test points should equal 250.

When creating a contest, email Nikki at nicole@morganhorse.com with the number of questions per test you prefer, and she will then send you links to each test.

For Example:

Senior Test = 250 questions

Junior Test = 125 questions

Walk/Trot Test = 50 questions

(These are the recommended amount of questions for testing.)

Remember that the total of points on the testing phase must equal 250, so grade the tests accordingly. (50 questions=score x 5)

On the day of the test in your contest, email the link to each age category. All the contestants will have one hour to complete the test and cannot exit and resume once they have started. No study material can be used during the testing time.

The software will send the contestants scores and their answers to Nikki, who will then forward them to the coordinator.

Written tests can also be provided upon request.

Testing Sources

- The Morgan Horse Judging Standards
- The AMHA Registration Rules
- AMHA Youth Merit Program
- USEF Rule Book
- The Morgan Horse Magazine
- AMHA Website
- The Horse by J. Warren Evans, Anthony Borton, Harold Hintz, and L. Dale VanVleck.
- The Illustrated Veterinary Encyclopedia for Horsemen by Equine Research, Editor Don M. Wagoner

Phase 2: Judging

The judging phase of the Youth Contest should always be held in some form. The judging contest is **VERY** important to the preparation of the contestants for future contests and is a great test of their horsemanship knowledge.

The judging phase consists of judging four classes—two in-hand classes and two performance classes—followed by oral reasons. Depending on their age division, contestants should complete the following oral reason: two sets for seniors, one set for juniors and walk/trot contestants.

There are two different ways to hold the judging phase of your contest:

OPTION 1: LIVE WITH VOLUNTEERS

How to prepare

1. Decide upon the quantity and type of classes to be judged:

- A. Four classes are required.
 - Two classes must be in-hand (mares in-hand, geldings in-hand). Please refrain from stallion classes for the safety of the contestants. Contestants must then give reasons for one of the in-hand classes by designation of the coordinator. Each in-hand class should consist of four horses each. It is recommended to have one or two back up volunteers as well in case a volunteer/horse does not show up or falls sick on the day of the event.
 - Line up the horses, head to tail, in a line in center ring. The contestants must judge at least 15 feet away from horses. After one minute, have the handlers make a ¼ turn to the right and continue to do this until they have made a full circle. The contestants are then allowed one minute of “close” inspection. They may not touch or get dangerously close to horses but can move in for a closer look. Then, have each volunteer trot a “square” (we recommend 20–30" dimension). Have the contestants stand in center while the volunteer trots around.
 - Two classes must be performance. It is suggested to keep class definitions simple (Saddle Seat, Hunt Seat, Western). It is easier to get volunteers for these as opposed to more defined class names (Park, Classic, etc.). Each class must consist of four horses. Each class must have horses walk, trot/jog, canter/lope both directions of the ring and then line up. Contestants must stand outside of the ring to observe this, for safety reasons. Seniors are required to give reasons on one of these classes as well, designated by the coordinator.

2. Prepare numbers for the four exhibitors to use in each class. Prepare two sets of number (1–4), this will save you time in between classes.

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3. Be sure to supply each contestant with one judging card per class. We suggest to have each class's judging card a different color for ease of scoring later. Nikki at AMHA can provide you with judging cards if needed.

4. Secure the following volunteers:

- A. Judge for the classes
 - It is imperative for your judge to know the concept of “cuts” and apply to each class they judge. Please see “description of cuts” directly following in this guideline for explanations. Be sure to supply your judge with judging cards as well that include spaces for cuts.
- B. Judge for reasons. (If time is short, we suggest a different judge for each age category for reasons). Be sure to supply the judge with reasons scoring sheets for each contestant. Nikki from AMHA can provide these if needed.

5. Volunteers to help with scoring

- A. We suggest www.livestockjudging.com for your scoring. Once on the page, just enter the judge's scores and cuts, compare to the contestants', and a numerical score is assigned.

OPTION 2: LIVE USING HORSE SHOW CLASSES

How to prepare

1. Find two Morgan in-hand classes and two Morgan performance classes in the class list prior to the horse show. Promote these classes with the contestants and tell them to be at a designated area during that class. *If in-hand classes are not available at your horse show, please contact Nikki at AMHA for alternative judging methods.*

- A. A judge for the contest must still be obtained. **YOU CAN NOT USE THE SAME JUDGE/SCORES AS THE HORSE SHOW.**
- B. Contestants can then judge the classes as the horse show continues.
- C. For minimal confusion, we suggest judging the first four horses that enter the ring (if the class has over four entries).

2. Scoring/reasons for these classes will be held the same way as in Part 1. Be sure to re-assign the back numbers of the horses you chose in that class to #'s 1–4 and let your contestants know while they are judging. I.E. 401=1, 398=2 (You can also do this after they have turned in their cards and change the numbers yourself for less confusion).

DESCRIPTION OF CUTS

A cut, or number of penalty points, should be determined between each pair of horses. This number will represent the degree of difference, or of similarity, between each pair of horses. Judges will compare their first- and second-place horses, these are the first pair, and determine the cut. Next a determination will be made between the second- and third-place horses, or the second pair. Finally, a determination will be made between the final pair, the third- and fourth-place horses.

The total of the three penalties cannot exceed 15 points. If the penalties total 15, the middle pair cannot be more than a 5-point cut; if the total is 14, the middle cut cannot be more than 8 points. Exceeding any of these limits could result in a final score less than zero.

Assigning Cuts

1 point - Horses are extremely similar; no obvious reason why one should be placed over the other; or, both horses have numerous faults, and none supersedes the others; placing is strictly a matter of personal preference; placing varies among official judges.

2 points - Horses are very close, but one horse has one or two qualitative or quantitative advantages; the majority of official judges would not switch the pair, but half of the contestants could logically switch the pair.

3 points - Horses are of unequal quality, but there is a logical placing in favor of one horse; either one horse has several faults or several advantages; all official judges would agree on the placing; no more than one third of contestants would be expected to switch the pair.

4 points - Horses are not of similar quality; one horse has several decided advantages based on many points; all experts would

quickly see the placing; no guesswork or personal preference required to make placing; no more than 10 percent of contestants would be expected to switch the pair.

5 points - Large number of extreme differences between the horses; placing is obvious to everyone on first, quick observation; careful study not required for the placing; pair consists of an inferior horse vs. a consistent winner; only very inexperienced, uninformed contestants would switch the pair.

6 points - Horses are not comparable; differences reflective of a champion-quality horse or performance vs. a horse or performance that is not of show quality.

7 points - Largest cut; differences reflective of a world-class halter horse vs. an extremely poor quality or lame horse; or a world-class performance vs. a disqualified performance.



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Phase 3: Speech

The oral presentation phase of the contest is important for many reasons:

1. It prepares our youth to speak on issues with confidence and expertise.
2. It helps to build public speaking skills through the judge's detailed evaluation sheet.

SPEECH STRUCTURE

1. Speech Topics

AMHA has created a bank of speech topics for you to use at your contest. Please contact Nikki at AMHA for the list of topics from which to choose, or you can choose your own Morgan/horse related topic.

2. Time Limits

- Junior and Senior Speeches have a time limit of 3–5 minutes. They should be penalized five points for every 30 seconds they are over the 5-minute time limit and under the 3-minute minimum.
- Walk/Trot speeches do not have a minimum time restriction, but do have a maximum restriction of 5 minutes.

Contestants should bring a typed copy of their speech for each judge.

The speeches for juniors and seniors should be memorized while presenting.

Visual aids, themes, technological aids and other props are strongly recommended for speech presentation.

How to prepare:

1. Secure three individuals to form a judge's panel. These people should be knowledgeable in equine areas and skilled in communications.

2. Supply the judges with scoring sheets, one per judge, for each contestant. Contact Nikki at AMHA for scoring sheets if needed. Copies of the evaluation sheets will be viewed by contestants after the contest so encourage your judges to write constructive criticism and positive comments.

3. Please contact AMHA for a list of topics to choose from for each division if necessary.

4. Scoring:

- Total each judge's score.
- Add all judges' scores together.
- Divide by the number of judges to get an average.

Correct scoring is crucial because if there are ties in the overall placing (Champion through tenth place), the speech score breaks the tie. There should be no ties in the final placements.

Part 4: Horsemanship Phase

In this phase, the contestant is to ride or drive a predetermined pattern. Riding or driving ability is evaluated in this phase. This pattern is prepared by the contest organizers and mailed/mailed to the contestant prior to the contest day.

This pattern is to be memorized.

There are two ways to incorporate the pattern phase into the contest:

OPTION ONE: LIVE AT THE CONTEST

Each participant executes the pattern individually before the judge. The judge, armed with an itemized scoring sheet specified for that pattern, scores the entrant in detail.

OPTION 2: ONLINE

Participants can upload videos of themselves performing the pattern. Contestants can then email the videos to the coordinator. Coordinator can upload onto Google or YouTube for the judge to review. A spot in the written pattern must be designated for the camera man to stand. No editing will be accepted on any of these videos. Also, be sure to clearly state that the videographer should be aware of the background lighting, and background music must NOT be added to these videos. Contact Nikki at AMHA for support of online patterns, or if a pattern is needed with judging cards.

It is recommended you obtain a USEF-certified judge for scoring this portion of the contest.