



# COMPETITIVE **HORSE** JUDGING

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She fell head over heels with an American Quarter Horse named Mia Lena Bar and never looked back.

Anna says, "I always knew that horses would play an important role in my life, and with the American Quarter Horse, I found the perfect horse."

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# USE OF THIS HORSE JUDGING MANUAL

This manual is designed as a guide for developing a successful horse judging team. Terms, suggestions and drawings that are listed can be used to describe any individual, no matter the type of style established by a breed organization. The body parts and structural diagrams, as well as structural deviations, are the same for all breeds. Criteria for judges are universal rules that have withstood the test of time. Obviously, there are many ways to develop and coach judging teams; however, the suggestions outlined here have proven to be successful.

The sample reasons provided in this manual are sample sets and are only a few of many different styles and adaptations used in competitions.

Always refer to the most recent rulebook for the most up-to-date rules.

The American Quarter Horse Association gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Dr. James C. Heird for the initial compilation of these materials.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL JUDGE

### They are

- A clear mental picture of the ideal or type and an ability to recognize undesirable traits
- Ability to employ deductive reasoning and incorporate practical considerations in a positive manner
- The mental and physical stamina necessary to make logical decisions under pressure
- The ability to effectively defend the placing of a class

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# Chapter One

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## COACHING THE TEAM

Regardless of the level of competition, whether it is 4-H, FFA or collegiate, the coaching of a horse judging team most often determines how that team will succeed as a team. Certainly, the actual competition is the least important, long-term benefit to being a member of a competitive horse judging team. The development of a team's competitive personality is the coach's objective. Aside from the obvious benefits of learning about horses, horse judging also provides the opportunity for students to learn life skills, like objective reasoning, decision making, sound reasoning, public speaking, and learning how to work on a team.

Time and experience has proven that graduated students of most horse judging teams have benefited from the experience by leaving the team as more mature and better prepared individuals. The experience often reaches into all areas of the individuals' lives, through their business, educational and personal relationships, as they will learn to evaluate situations and experiences prior to making a judgment. In other words, successful judging team members must learn to "look before they leap."

Obviously, the coaching of these individuals is probably the greatest influence in making those "individuals" a "team." Even if the team does not have what could be considered outstanding individuals, they are often more successful than teams which have one or two outstanding individuals, because they work together and learn from each other. Perhaps they are all outstanding individuals, which might make the coach's job easier; but if they do not work together and complement each other, the task could become more difficult.

There is no right or wrong way to coach a judging team, but there are methods that will usually work as a skeletal outline and to which adjustments must be made as each team is evaluated.

As styles and preferences change in the horse industry, so will the way in which horses are evaluated and judged to be the "ideal." Because those styles and preferences are usually dictated by the industry as a whole, the information horse judging students receive, no matter where they are, is likely very similar. The way in which it is presented and implemented is the difference for a team's success.

### **As Class Begins**

Coaches should keep in mind that there are a number of different variables in play when beginning with a new team each year. Each individual's personality (including the coach's), level of maturity, past experiences with horses and other teams, and conversely, an individual's lack of knowledge about horses and equine sport, provide a combination of assets and faults that must be shaped to form a team.



Each of the aforementioned characteristics cannot be considered assets or faults in themselves. Horse judging students can come from almost any type of background and be successful. It is their willingness to accept the information they receive as correct, and the resulting criticism of their performance when they are incorrect, that makes the difference between a perceptive, growing student and one that refuses to bend. Horse judging students who tend to use hard facts to make thoughtful decisions, instead of relying on their intuition, are usually the more consistent performers. In addition, those students who maintain a solid level of commitment, self-motivation and competitive spirit are also able to cope with the pressure they will ultimately face before and during competition.

The task of building confidence and enthusiasm rests on the coach's shoulders. Leaders will naturally develop within a group, and the encouragement of those individuals as enthusiasm builders can help, but the team must never think that one or two persons make a team. It is the coach who should be their nucleus of support and guidance.

Confidence should be developed from the first day of instruction and should grow throughout the entire training period. Coaches should encourage the group to make their own individual decisions, based on the same information, and then objectively evaluate each student's performance. There is no need to harshly criticize or openly question a student's performance—this will only serve to instill feelings of self-doubt in the student. A different approach to criticism can be taken so that the coach merely informs the student he was wrong and points out the mistakes. A student should never argue with the coach, and the coach should not allow it. Students who tend to argue with the coach are notoriously the least successful in competition. The entire team must accept the coach's decision as final and correct because of his or her knowledge and experience.

Certainly, there is room for discussion about the coach's decision, but through the practice workouts, the team will become accustomed to the fact that at a contest, the placing assigned is the only one that matters. Through these discussions, students will learn to see their mistakes and discover how they can improve on their thought processes. There is no room for "I thought," "Yeah, but," or "I don't like."

Each student who has a different placing than the coach must automatically assume that he is wrong and the coach is right, regardless. However arrogant that may appear, there must be a basis by which the students can assess their performance; and the coach is the only one who can provide that basis. In addition, the team members must place the classes alike if they are to win. If an entire team's placing disagrees with the coach's, then it is likely the coach who is at fault, either with his coaching method or his evaluation of the class. Should one team member place the class incorrectly, then he must accept his mistake, because he was exposed to the same information as was the rest of the team.

## **Defining the Basics**

Judging contests normally consist of 6-12 classes of halter and performance with four animals each. Contestants receive scores based on how they placed a particular

class as compared to how contest officials placed the class. The closer the contestant's placing is to the officials', the higher the score received. A correct placing receives a score of 50 points. Points are deducted from 50 for placings which differ from the official placing. The amount deducted is based on the relative difference between the animals being judged. Thus, cuts are assigned to each pair; top (1 vs. 2), middle (2 vs. 3), and bottom (3 vs. 4) within a class. A small cut indicates that the animals being compared are very similar, while large cuts indicate that considerable and obvious differences exist. Cuts can range from one to seven points, with the sum of the 3 cuts never totaling over fifteen points.

As most new coaches will discover, and most veterans know, their ability to coach a team and the success of the team often relies on their ability to convey to the team the correct information. As was mentioned before, most of the information will be the same, simply because the industry does not change drastically and the styles and preferences of the industry are, for the most part, functionally definable. This is where the success of the team will be determined—by the coach's ability to communicate and the team's ability to understand.

Confusion must be avoided at all costs, so logical instruction should be the game plan. That is what horse judging really is—a think-tank game—much like the childhood task of fitting geometric figures into their matching slots. Students should realize that there are certain requirements a horse must match before he can be considered to be the ideal. A square peg cannot fit into a round hole.

To do this, the student must examine each animal individually, in comparison to the ideal, and must find the best traits about the animal, rather than looking for fault. Students should avoid personal likes and dislikes so that the industry standards are upheld. Working from the positive viewpoint, rather than the negative, teaches the student to avoid making horse judging an elimination contest. Rather, the horse with the greater amount of good is judged as best, while the horses with the lesser amount of good are placed lower.

As the coach begins to form practice classes, he or she must keep in mind that in the beginning these classes must be very placeable; otherwise, he or she will be defeating the purpose. Designing classes that emphasize the ideal in the beginning will teach the student that he should look for an aid in avoiding confusion.

Coaches will learn that students often go through three phases when learning to judge horses. There is the initial phase where most of what they see and hear is clear to them, and they have very little real trouble in placing the classes and understanding their mistakes. The second phase is when they are becoming far too critical of the individual horse and fail to see the "big picture;" and third is the phase in which they eventually resolve the confusion and are successful in grasping the "big picture."

Of course, there will be times when students will switch placings in a class that can be classified as close pairs. There is nothing essentially wrong with a close, but incorrect, placing, and it is an excellent place for a student to score more points while presenting his oral reasons. Other than that, a close placing is no place to teach a lesson. Students should recognize a close pair and learn that the

placement of a close pair in relation to the rest of the class is what is important. One should point out here that if the student is unable to defend his placing to himself while judging, he certainly cannot in the reasons room.

## **Reasons – The Oral Defense of Placings**

Learning to orally defend a placing does not need to be a difficult task for the student to grasp—all he needs to know is why he placed the class the way he did and have a reasonable command of the English language. The whole purpose behind reasons presentation, besides the obvious defense of placings, is to give the reasons taker a clear picture of what the judge saw, as if the reasons taker was there.

The reasons room is where the student will be able to salvage an average placing if he is able to clearly and logically explain his placing. It is possible for a student to defend his placing intelligently to the satisfaction of a reasons judge.

That is why it is so important the student learn early in the judging training to organize his thoughts so those thoughts can be presented in an organized manner—sometimes hours later after memory of the class has become vague.

While the student must work with the other team members as a team in placing classes, oral reasons is the point in horse judging where the student can, and should be encouraged, to express his individuality. He can learn reasons, first of all, by listening to several sets of very good reasons, and then develop his own style from there. Some students will feel more comfortable giving what is considered a “canned” set of reasons—meaning that the form and word usage is basically the same, only the horses have been changed. These students need to realize that they will probably receive a canned score as well, and will never be able to develop a style that captures the attention of a reasons taker.

Students can first learn to organize their thoughts by taking clear, concise notes of the class. In halter, more than enough time is given for the student to objectively place the class, and the remaining time period should be devoted to taking notes, especially of details he is not likely to remember. In performance, the student should spend as much time as possible watching the class, but can, at times, jot down certain attributes or faults he saw during the class. Then at the conclusion of the class, he can more fully describe the class in his note taking. Over time, some students will not feel the need to take a great deal of notes, and the coach should not be bothered by this if their ability to give reasons does not suffer.

Students should first submit their reasons in written form. This will give them a better opportunity to be more elaborate and descriptive with their reasons, as well as give them an idea of how to organize a good set. This should be done through at least two workouts. These written sets should be as long and concise as possible. In the next series of workouts, students should continue to write their reasons and then should memorize them for presentation. Although memorization on the contest level is not recommended, memorizing the first few sets of reasons in practice will help students develop their own style, not to mention their confidence.

Following the reasons presentation, either in oral or written form, the coach

should be careful to point out both the good and the bad. Points of criticism a coach should watch for is the Canned Set, where the student continually uses the same terms regardless of the class; The Liar, where the student makes up faults or attributes about the horse that simply weren't there in order to "fluff" his set; and The Killer, where the student relentlessly criticizes his lower placing horses. This could really hurt the student later when he discovers that his bottom horse was a higher placing horse in the official placing.

Good points to recognize are original use of terms or phrases; clear, concise speaking practices, and an overall positive appearance by the student. The projection of a positive, forceful attitude to the reasons taker will not only wake him up after a long afternoon of listening, but will encourage him to give the student a higher score.

Before the student leaves the reasons room, the coach should give the student a score, along with major points to work on for the next practice. A critique card should be given to the student which summarizes the coach's critique. Most students are usually too preoccupied or nervous to listen to what the coach has to say in the reasons room. A student should be encouraged if he is going to enjoy giving reasons, and reasons should be fun for him to give. Teach it that way, and he will project the same attitude when giving reasons.

## **And Finally**

There are a number of things a coach can do to separate the team from the rest and give them a feeling of confidence as they are preparing for a contest.

**Check, Check and Double Check.** The number of contests that have been lost because a student wrote down the wrong placing, or even worse, forgot to fill out his card, will probably never be known. The coach must emphasize that the card should be checked, double-checked and triple-checked before they are collected by group leaders at a contest. It is a good practice for the student to write his placing on his note sheet, again in the back of his notebook and then on his placing card. Then he should check all three of those placings again to match what he has written before turning in the card. It is a good idea that he refuse the card when offered in the reasons room; one, to show he is confident in his placing; and two, to avoid the shock of possibly seeing that he has just spent the last two hours working on a set of reasons for the wrong placing!

**Put Up and Shut Up.** Students will be penalized if their reasons are longer than two minutes, so they must learn to state their case and get out. Shouting at the reasons taker will not make their case any more convincing, and talking about it longer than necessary won't either. A good projected volume and short, crisp terms will do the trick every time.

**The Placing Is There.** Each class in a contest is picked with a placing in mind, and very few contest managers have the time or are willing to make up "trick" classes. Once the student learns that judging is a game, there is no need to panic over a class. Classes are designed with a placing in mind, and if the students evaluate the classes logically, they shouldn't panic. Teach them to look for the most logical placings first, and get "the big picture."



**If It's Hard for One, It's Hard for All.** Although the student may not think it to be true, when a class is hard for him, it is probably hard for everybody else. Again, logic has got to come into play here, and he must keep a positive, confident attitude.

**The Bomb.** Even if the student feels like he totally bombed a placing, it's important that it doesn't affect his ability to judge the next class. Once the class is judged, it's over. The student must learn to put that class behind him and move on, or the end result could be a very bad day.

**Final Exam.** The final exam for a student is the contest, and he should be as well prepared for that contest as he would be for any other examination. If he is well prepared, he should not be nervous about judging the contest. The morning of the contest is the time to relax, and the student should remain relaxed throughout the judging phase of the contest. The time to become aggressive will be in the reasons room hours later.

**Infighting.** The coach has enough to worry about in developing a team than to let the team beat themselves because they don't get along. If there are personality conflicts on the team, it is best to get those worked out early. Successful teams are made up of individuals who are willing to work as a team, and more than likely, they end up being good lasting friends.

**Don't Be Too Early.** Contests are designed to give coaches and teams plenty of time to register and prepare for the judging contest. Arriving 15-20 minutes prior to the starting time will give the team plenty of time to get comfortable with their surroundings. Getting in there an hour ahead of time will just give the students an opportunity to get nervous, bored or just tired of sitting. Also, make sure the team has eaten a full breakfast before the contest. They don't need the distraction of hunger while judging, and more than likely they are not facing a gourmet meal during the lunch break.

**Dress for Success.** Dressing professionally and with good taste projects an image of self-confidence and poise. If a person looks professional, more than likely he feels that way. And so it goes for horse judging. The student who looks like he knows what he's doing can be very intimidating to those students who don't. Make sure your team projects a confident, professional image the minute they walk into the arena and in the reasons room.

# Chapter Two

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## DEVELOPING A SET OF REASONS

The ability to present reasons clearly and concisely is an absolute necessity to being an effective judge. Further, it is essential to absorb and retain a mental image of the good and the bad points of an animal. These attributes come only with practice, time and experience. Without the appropriate vocabulary to convey decisions accurately, concisely and effectively, a judge is seriously handicapped.

### **NATIONAL HORSE JUDGING COACHES ASSOCIATION**

#### **Philosophy and Objectives for Giving Reasons**

While major emphasis in horse judging training programs is placed on students learning to evaluate horses objectively, equal importance is placed on students learning to discuss and defend judgments rendered in the process of placing a class of horses.

The combined process of placing horses, then defending those placings, teaches students to be totally objective, honest and fair in their approach to evaluating horses. Further, this process of giving reasons discourages student judges from rendering opinions which may be based on personal likes and dislikes, and encourages them to render defensible judgments in regard to current standards in the horse industry.

Another major purpose for giving reasons in judging contests is that it offers an opportunity for students to learn how to think, organize thoughts, and speak about those thoughts in a refereed environment. Students who master those skills find them useful in many ways for the rest of their lives. Many leaders in the field of Animal Science had judging team experience, and they frequently point to the reasons process as significant in developing leadership abilities.

Giving reasons should be a positive, pleasant learning experience for students. Students should be encouraged, not discouraged, when giving reasons, and they should gain confidence in themselves through practice. Performance in the reasons room by students who are prepared should be evaluated from a positive view, rather than a negative view, giving every advantage possible to students who do a good job. Reasons judges should never use a negative, penalizing “fault out” system for scoring towards students and their scoring method should reflect a positive approach

#### **Characteristics of Good Reasons**

There are at least five major characteristics to consider when scoring reasons.

**1. Organization.** Styles of reasons will vary with individual personalities and coaching methods, but all reasons should be well organized and systematic. The

basic approach is the comparison of animals in three pairs; the top pair, the middle pair, and the bottom pair. Other additions will be included and are perfectly acceptable as long as the basic organization is followed. However, reasons should not consist of a simple description of each animal. The focus should be on why one animal in a pair was placed over the other animal in that pair.

**2. Relevance.** Reasons should reflect the actual differences in the pair and should consist primarily of those points of comparison that were significant in the placing of the pair. Use of comparative or descriptive reasons that are irrelevant or unimportant in the placing of the pair are discouraged and should be scored lower. Judges should be alert for the so-called “canned” reasons that may sound good, but, in fact, do not fit the particular pair of horses.

**3. Accuracy.** Truth is the primary consideration in scoring reasons. Students should be credited for accurate statements regardless of how the horses may be placed. Errors of omission are to be considered when the student leaves out something important, but inaccurate statements are considered the major fault in a set of reasons. A complete and accurate set of reasons should receive a high score, even when placings differ from official placings. Official judges are cautioned to listen carefully for accuracy and should not penalize the reasons score simply because the student’s placing is different from the official placing. It is entirely possible for a student to receive a high reasons score with a low placing score.

**4. Terminology.** Some emphasis should be placed on use of terms commonly used to discuss horses or performances. Terminology will vary among students, but it should reflect that terminology commonly used by horsemen. Major emphasis should be placed on comparative rather than descriptive terminology. However, descriptive terminology can be used to a limited extent in the opening statements and to describe faults.

**5. Presentation.** Oral reasons should be presented in a poised, confident, convincing manner, but they should never convey arrogance. Loud, boisterous, arrogant delivery is not desirable and should be penalized. Likewise, shy, timid, unconvincing presentations should not receive the highest scores. Reasons should be presented in a relaxed, conversational manner. The presentation should not contain lengthy pauses and must be delivered within 2 minutes. Speaking manner will vary, but all students should use correct English. Oral reasons should be grammatically correct with proper pronunciation and enunciation of words and syllables. While good presentation is important, reasons judges are cautioned that this is not a contest of oratory at the expense of accuracy, relevancy, organization, and terminology used in discussing a particular class of horses.

Three additional points critical for obtaining a high reasons score are

- a. One must speak with conviction. He must convey a sincere belief his placing is correct. Speaking with conviction means truly communicating with the reason taker, rather than just quoting terms. Needless to say, this will convince the reason taker that you have seen the class.
- b. Your reasons must be grammatically correct. The reason giver should pause at commas and periods. New paragraphs require a longer pause. This will allow the official to comfortably and mentally visualize your

placings.

- c. Reasons must be presented in two minutes or less. First and most important, there are penalties for taking longer than two minutes. Secondly, there is no need to talk longer than two minutes. The official will become bored, and the reason giver is probably covering too many trivial points. Many national level contests employ the following guidelines for penalties for speaking longer than 2 minutes (Table 2-1 taken from the NHJTCA Handbook).

### **Grading and Scoring Reasons**

Reasons scores are to be reflective of organization, relevancy, accuracy, terminology, and presentation of reasons, regardless of the student's placing of the class. A bad placing must not automatically result in a low reasons score. If students see the differences in the horses and reflect those differences accurately in their reasons, they must not be penalized on the reasons score because their emphasis for placing the horses was different than the official judges. Placing scores will adequately reflect incorrect emphasis in placing.

### **REASONS PENALTIES • Table 2-1**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>DEDUCTION (Cumulative)</b>
<b>2:01-2:10</b>	<b>1 point</b>
<b>2:11-2:20</b>	<b>2 points</b>
<b>2:21-2:30</b>	<b>3 points</b>
<b>2:30 +</b>	<b><u>4 points</u></b>
	<b>10 points Total</b>

Reasons can be divided into five basic parts; all are important to the overall score.

- 1. Opening statement.** This is the first impression the official has of the contestant's speaking ability. In the opening statement, the contestant should tell something obvious and/or briefly summarize the class. This statement is usually descriptive. Use terms and expressions that are unique and different without getting away from familiar livestock terms.
- 2. Comparisons.** Contestants give reasons to justify their placing of one animal over another. Therefore, comparisons between pairs will constitute the bulk of a set of reasons. Each class is placed on a positive evaluation of three to five main points. Include each of these points in your comparisons. If there were no differences, it is permissible to state that no differences were observed. It is also permissible and a good idea in a close pair to describe the pair together. This should be done prior to making any comparisons between relatively similar animals. Again, keep reasons fundamental. Do not use terms or phrases which are not common to the industry.
- 3. Grants.** Grants give credit to an inferior animal in the areas where it surpassed the higher-placing animal. Synonyms for the word "grant" are desirable and will set your reasons apart from the average. Use words, such as "realize", "admit", "render", "saw", "noticed", etc. "Grants" should never repeat anything that has already been stated in the comparison(s).

- 4. Criticisms.** Criticisms are utilized to describe an animal's faults as they relate to the ideal. They are used in the body of the reasons only if a problem cannot be described by grants and comparisons. The last-placed animal is always criticized. Criticisms are a chance to demonstrate to the reasons taker that you know the ideal. However, never be overly critical to any animal.
- 5. Transitions.** The most often neglected part of a set of reasons is the transitional terms. Transitions are the words or phrases that make reasons flow. Almost everyone uses terms, such as "furthermore" and "in addition." Use transitions that are unique. A list of transitional terms is found in chapter nine. Learn to use a thesaurus.
- 

The most important aspect of giving a set of reasons is the opening statement and the top pair because in general, the range of your score is determined by the official at that time. Thus, this portion needs to be mistake free and accurate. At the same time, the last impression the official has is the manner in which you handle the bottom pair and last-placed animal. Make certain you finish your reasons just as strongly as you started them. In general you should always cover the main points and anything unusual in each pair; describe animals only long enough for identification; and never include your personal opinion. Remember: a perfect set of reasons should describe and compare the class so clearly and accurately that even if the official has never seen the class, he would be able to look at the animals and identify each individual based upon your reasons.

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## **Taking Notes on a Class**

In competitive judging, students are often required to give reasons several hours after they have placed a class. Under these circumstances, it is necessary for the student to take notes as they judge. These notes may be used only as an aid for reasons preparation, but cannot be used during the presentation.

One should not take notes until he or she has studied the class and observed the differences among individuals. Only after making these observations and placing the class is the judge ready to take notes.

It is generally helpful for the beginner to include in the notes something unique about the animals which might help to visualize the class later. For example:

**1 – Green halter**

**2 – Bay with star and strip**

**3 – Handler wore red blouse**

**4 – Solid black**

Each person will develop his or her own method of taking notes. The important thing is to get the essential information into your notes for reasons preparation. Many judges develop shorthand methods for taking notes.

It is always important to write your order of placing at the top of each page. Be certain this agrees with the placing on the card turned into the contest officials. After the placing, describe in your notes the distinguishing characteristics of each animal. The major reason why the first-placed animal started the class



should be recorded next. Factors of major importance should be listed first.

In placing a class of four animals, there are three pairs. For example, in a placing, 1-2-3-4, 1-2 are the top pair, 2-3 are the middle pair and 3-4 are the bottom pair. Thus, the next step is to list reasons why 1 was placed over 2. These reasons should also be listed in order of importance. In some pairs, it will be necessary to grant some considerations to the bottom animal in a pair. Each pair is handled like the first pair, i.e. reasons are listed why one animal was placed over another followed by grants to the lower-placed animal of the pair.

In discussing the bottom-placed animal, it is necessary to list the main reasons for placing the animal at the bottom of the class.

The following is a sample set of notes:

Placing 3-2-4-1

Excellent quality in entire class

3 – Sorrel mare with blaze and right hind stocking

2 – Bay mare with star

4 – Large black mare, had buck-stitched leather halter

1 – Lightest muscled, least balanced

3/2 – More balanced, shorter back, longer underline, longer trimmer neck, breed character about head, shorter ear, more prominent jaw, straighter.

2 – Heavier muscled

2/4 – Heaviest muscled – stifle, gaskin, forearm, V-ed up more, more balanced, more level croup, shorter back, longer underline

4 – Taller, moves straighter and more correct

4/1 – Larger, heavier muscled – taller, longer legged, wider through stifle, gaskin, forearm – straightest most correct moving in class – straighter at walk and trot

1 – More feminine features—bottom, smallest, lightest muscled, lacks muscle

The person who has an organized set of notes has a definite advantage in preparing his or her reasons.

## **Presenting Oral Reasons**

Organization of reasons should follow the same pattern used in taking notes, i.e., the important facts are presented first. However, each person should develop an individual approach that is convenient to his way of speaking. Reasons should vary and not be monotonous due to repetition.

The following is a list of guidelines to follow in giving oral reasons:

- a. Refer to your notes only if necessary. Learn to visualize the animals.
- b. Always prepare a set of reasons in their entirety before making revisions. This will prevent one from spending more time on the top animals than on the bottom animals.
- c. As previously mentioned, use comparative terms. Note: Most of the terms are adjectives ending in “er”. Never use in definitive words, such as better, good, nice, etc. They explain nothing about the class and do not explain why one animal is superior to another.
- d. Good organization is important. Go from one end of the animal to another.

Start at the head and go to the rear.

- e. Never memorize or write your entire set of reasons. Always think about the class; as you talk, visualize.
- f. Do not learn one set of reasons and attempt to apply it to every class. Remember: no two animals or two classes are alike.
- g. Stand four to five steps away from the official listening to your reasons. Dress professionally and make every effort to appear at ease.
- h. Talk in a slightly louder than ordinary voice. Do not shout. Be confident and enthusiastic.
- i. Always start your reasons by stating the name of the class and your placing. Assume the official does not have your placings. Example: I placed this class of Quarter Horse stallions 1-2-3-4. Then proceed with your terms.
- j. The ability to give good reasons takes hours of practice; it does not come easily. Try to be the first to give a perfect set of reasons. Here are some suggestions to improve your reasons:
  - 1. Practice giving reasons to other people.
  - 2. Practice reading sample sets of reasons just as though you were presenting them.
  - 3. Practice giving reasons in front of a mirror.
  - 4. Practice your reasons using a tape recorder or video recorder so that reasons can be critiqued.

## GRADING & SCORING REASONS

REASONS SCORES • TABLE 2-2

REASONS PERFORMANCE	GRADE	SCORE RANGE
Good to Excellent	A	46-50
Above Average to Good	B	41-45
Average	C	36-40
Below Average	D	31-35
Poor	F	30-below

Table courtesy of NHJTCA

A contestant who is reasonably well prepared and gets through a complete set of reasons should not receive a score less than 25.

# REASONS SCORE SHEET

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Score: (50)** \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Guidelines: (0-10= 10 Excellent, 9 Very Good, 8 Good, 7 average, 5-6 poor, 3-4 very poor, 0-2 Extremely poor)

**Penalty 1:**

- 1a) Minor pauses (2-3 sec), hesitations or major loss of momentum
- 1b) Non-comparative terms in comparative sections, incorrect grammar
- 1c) Incorrect number, color, or gender
- 1d) Omission of important content

**Penalty 2:**

- 2a) Major pauses (4-10 sec)
- 2b) Incorrect statement in content

**Penalty 5:**

- 5a) Extended pauses (>10 sec)
- 5b) Each time notes used
- 5c) Start set over
- 5d) Talks incorrect placing

**Categories/comments:**

**10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1**

**Content Relevancy**

Addresses most important, key, pertinent criteria that fits class and presenters placing

**10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1**

**Content Accuracy**

Accurate, truthful criteria for horses regardless of placing

**10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1**

**Organization**

Systematic; logical, easy to follow; follows proper format; Opening statement of each pair or section is clear, concise, and starts with important content

**10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1**

**Terminology**

Common, main stream, horseman-like. Correct grammar Comparative terms in main pairs and grants

**10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1**

**Presentation**

Professional, poised, energetic, confident, convincing Proper word enunciation, pronunciation, emphasis, and inflection Effective eye contact and facial expression Avoids distracting actions or movement or mannerisms Smooth, continuous, fluid, effective transition, proper length

**TOTAL SCORE (50)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Placing**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	
	<b>6</b>	
	<b>8</b>	
	<b>9</b>	

# Chapter Three

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## CONFORMATION

### **Conformation and Structure**

Conformation is the physical appearance of an animal due to the arrangement of muscle, bone and other body tissue. There is no perfectly conformed horse “except in the eye of the artist.” However, each breed organization has its ideal horse. Therefore, the breed ideal is the place to start. Prior to comparing two or more horses, it is essential to have a mental picture of the ideal horse of the breed (Figure 3-1). It is not the judge’s place, and especially not the college and 4-H judging team member’s place, to decide what is ideal. The purpose of judging, either in competition or as a selection tool, is to find within a group of horses, the horse most typical of the ideal horse of that breed, the second closest, third closest, etc.

Unfortunately, the ideal horse may not possess the optimal conformation for all performance events. This dilemma presents problems, not only for the competitive judging team member, but for the experienced horse show judge. It is essential to judge horses in a conformation class based upon their merit that day. Do not attempt to predict the potential riding ability of an individual being shown in a conformation class.



**Figure 3-1**

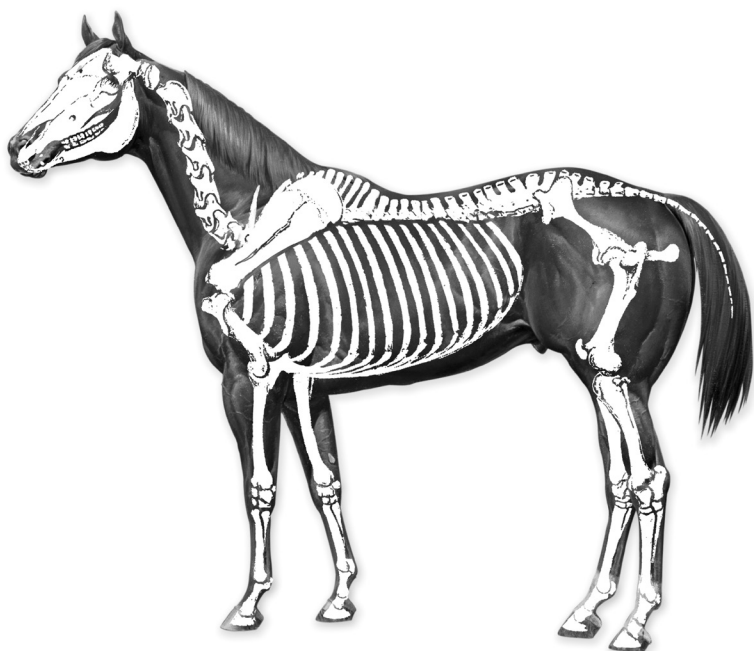
The American Quarter Horse

The purpose of this chapter is to acquaint the horseman with basic facts that will help in evaluating two or more animals. This discussion is limited to facts derived from research data.

To understand conformation, one must understand the skeleton (Figure 3-2), the framework of the horse. Horsemen tend to talk about long heads, short backs, long backs, short hips, low knees, short cannons and high hocks. As the chapter is read, an effort will be made to make the reader think about what he sees or thinks he sees.

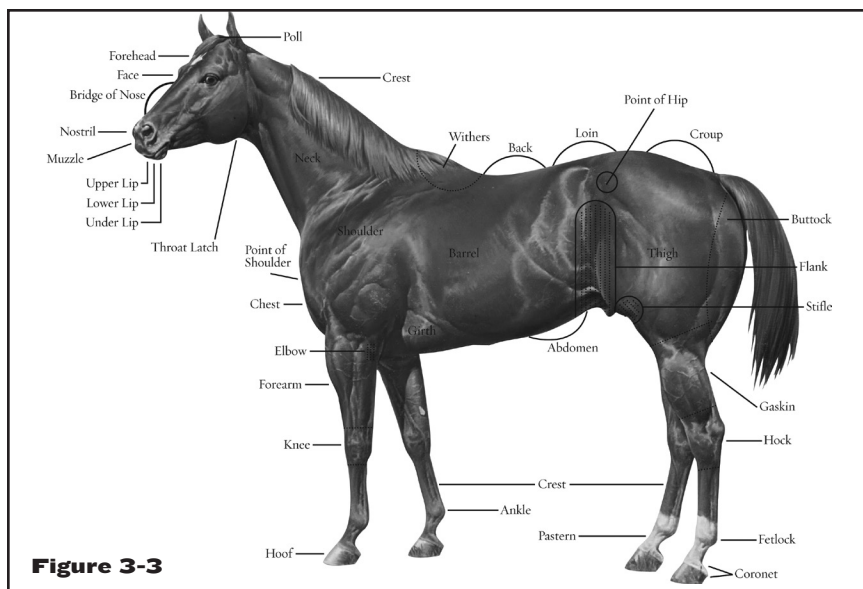
## Horse skeletons

A really competent judge must have a sound understanding of all parts of the horse, as well as the function of those parts (Figure 3-3).



**Figure 3-2**





**Figure 3-3**

## The American Quarter Horse external features

**Head.** Starting at the horse's head, an effort will be made to define and describe the various parts of the horse's body.

In general, there is no physiological benefit to a horse having a "pretty" head. Ugly-headed horses are able to breathe, see, hear and ingest food. Basically, an ugly head functions similar to a beautiful head. However, most people do not want to own an ugly-headed horse, so selection is based upon beauty. What makes a head pretty or attractive? Certainly the set of the ears, shape of the eye, size of the nostril, depth of the mouth and overall proportionality of the head is important to the concept of beauty. Basically, the ears will be proportional to the horse's head. In fact, as the reader continues, it will become apparent that the various parts of the horse are always proportional. However, the placement of the ears will not always be the same. It is important that the ears sit squarely on top of the head, that they point forward and have an attractive, alert appearance. Some horse's ears turn outward, some turn inward and some are positioned on the side of the head; some are flop-eared and so on. Any deviation in placement or carriage detracts from the beauty of the head, thus from the beauty of the horse.

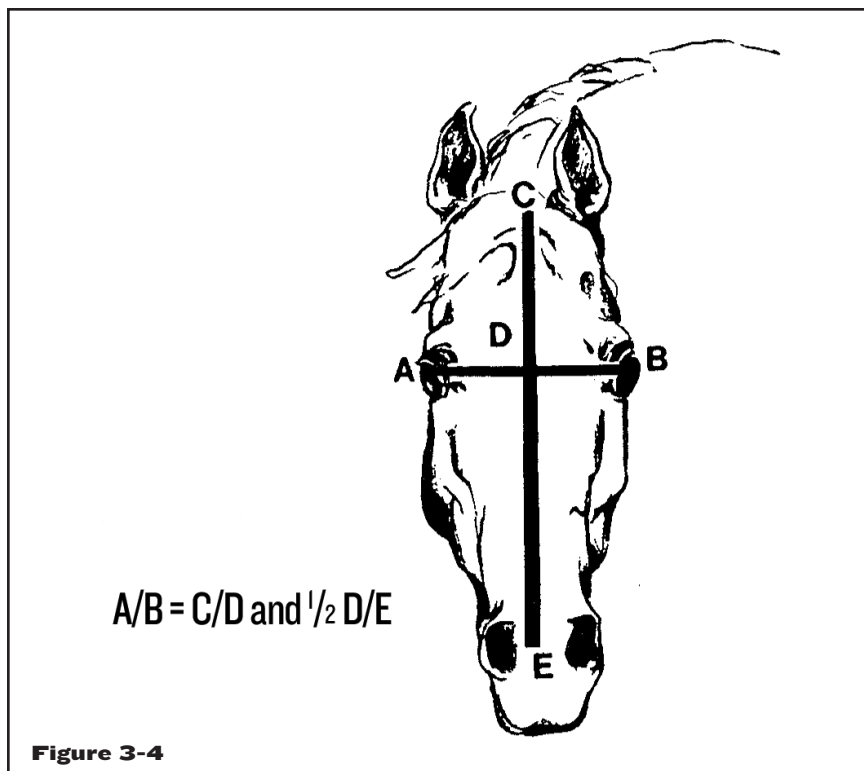
When you measure a horse from the poll to a horizontal line drawn between the eyes, this distance is approximately one-half the distance from the horizontal line to the midpoint of the nostril (Figure 3-4). Thus, the eyes will be positioned one-third the distance from the horse's poll to the muzzle. When the width of the horse's head across the orbit of the skull is measured, that distance should almost be identical to the distance from the poll to the horizontal line drawn between the eyes. Horse's heads are proportional. Consequently, length of the head is the same percentage of height for both tall and short horses.

### Proportion of Horse's Head

For beauty's sake, the horse should have a well-defined jaw. Stallions will have a slightly larger, deeper jaw than mares, indicative of common male sex characteristics.

When examining mouths, the horse show judge should ensure that the horse is not parrot-mouthed or monkey mouthed. However, in judging contests, all mouths are considered sound and should not have an effect on the overall placing.

Shape of the muzzle contributes to the beauty of the horse. There are distinct differences in shape of the chin and jaw in definition and refinement. The pretty-headed horses will always have a well-defined muzzle flaring into a refined chin and prominent jaw.



**Figure 3-4**

**Neck.** The neck is always an important conformational part of judging. The throat latch, which is from ear to ear, should be trim and refined regardless of the breed. However, the depth of the throat latch is usually equal to one-half the length of the head. If a horse is thick and coarse in the throat latch, flexion at the poll is restricted. This will prevent the horse from carrying its head in a vertical position during training because of an inability to breathe correctly.

Most judges give preference to horses with long thin necks, when in reality they should select horses with appropriate top to bottom line neck ratio. The top line is the distance of the poll to the withers, and the bottom line is the distance

of the throat latch to the neck-shoulder junction at the chest. The ideal would approximately be a 2 to 1 ratio of the top to bottom line of the horse's neck. Invariably, a horse that is short and heavily muscled will have a shorter, thicker neck than a taller horse with less muscle. The neck is proportional to the horse's overall length and height. Shorter horses will always have shorter necks than horses that are tall.

The determining factor in the ratio of the top to bottom line of the neck is the slope of the horse's shoulder. As the shoulder becomes more sloping, the top line becomes longer in relation to the bottom line. Conversely, as the shoulder becomes straighter, the ratio of the top to bottom becomes smaller. As the ratio deviates toward 1 to 1, the horse appears to have a short, square boxy look to his neck. When two horses of the same frame size are compared, one with a normal neck and one with a short-appearing neck, both horses will have the same length in the bottom line of their necks. Obviously, the withers of a straight-shouldered horse are more forward and thus, the top line is shortened. Straightening the shoulder has little, if any, effect on the length of the bottom line of the neck.

**Back.** All horses are basically proportional, but not necessarily balanced. Balance is the single most important characteristic in equine selection. Balance is determined by the skeletal structure. Thus, when judging, it is important to attempt to visualize and evaluate the skeleton of the horse underneath muscle and other tissues. Nothing is more critical to balance than the slope of the shoulder. The slope of the shoulder changes drastically when the angle of the shoulder is increased or decreased. Not only does the top to bottom line ratio of the neck change, but the ratio of the length of the back to the length of the underline also changes. The ideal would approximately be a 1 to 2 ratio of the back to underline. As the shoulder becomes straighter, the withers move forward, which results in a longer back, measured from the withers to the coupling. The length of underline, as measured from elbow to stifle, is not affected by a change in shoulder angle, thus the straight-shouldered horse's body has the appearance of a tube. It is ideal to have a short topline and a long underline; however, it is incorrect to compare 14-2 hand horses to 17-hand horses because horses of different sizes should not have the same length of body or underlines. The long back coincides with the short neck of the straight-shouldered horse. When the shoulder is straight, the other angles of the horse's body will be straight. Thus, the horse will have a short, steep croup, a straight stifle and straight pasterns.

**Shoulder.** In addition to overall balance, the slope of the shoulder influences length of stride. Thus, the straighter the shoulder, the shorter the stride. The angle of the shoulder and angle of the pastern serve to absorb shock when the horse moves. The ideal slope of the shoulder is approximately 45 to 50 degrees. However, shoulder angles will vary from the ideal. The judge should not be overly influenced in demanding an exact degree of slope of shoulder, but should concentrate on balance and blending of structure. The straight-shouldered horse will be shallow-hearted as measured from the top of the withers to the chest floor. Unlike the balanced horse, with

legs that will measure approximately the same length as its depth of heart; the straight-shouldered horse's legs will be longer than its depth of heart. A straight-shouldered horse will always be a rough-riding horse.

**Withers.** The ideal withers are sharp, prominent and slightly higher than the horse's hindquarters or croup. A properly balanced horse will appear to be sloping downhill from front to back. This is much preferred to a similar appearance from back to front. When the withers are higher than the croup, the hindquarters are positioned under the body more and contribute to athletic ability of the horse. Strength of the top line and loin muscles over the kidneys are also important in athletic ability and soundness of the horse.

**Hindquarters.** Regardless of breed, the hindquarters should appear square when viewed from the side. How the corners of the square are filled in will depend on the breed. The flatter or more level the croup, the more likely that horse will move with vertical action behind and less horizontal action. The horse with a steep croup will move with its legs more collected under his body. The ideal horse has a quarter that is as full and as long from across the horizontal plane of the stifle as it is from point of hip to point of buttocks. When a horse has a V-shaped quarter, it is due to limited muscling and/or a straight stifle.

**Barrel.** The judge should evaluate spring of rib and depth of heart as these are indicative of capacity. Again, these measurements will be proportional; however, some horses will have a pinched effect and less of a rounded, convex look to their rib cages.

**Feet and Legs.** Structure of feet and legs are major areas of consideration in judging. When standing beside the horse, the judge drops an imaginary line from the point of the buttocks to the ground. Ideally, that line should touch the hocks, run parallel to the cannon bone and be slightly behind the heel. The horse with too much angle to his hocks is sickle-hocked, and the horse that is straight in his hocks is post-legged. Ideally, when viewed from the rear, any horse, regardless of breed, should be widest from stifle to stifle. Another imaginary line from the point of the buttocks to the ground should bisect the gaskin, hock and hoof. It is not critical that a horse be perfectly straight from the ankles down as viewed from the rear. In fact, most horses naturally stand with the cannons parallel and toe out slightly from the ankles down. This allows the horse's stifle to clear his ribcage in flight, resulting in a longer-strided, freer-moving horse. However, when a horse is bowed-in at the hocks and the cannon bones are not parallel, it is cow-hocked. The horse that is cow-hocked has a tendency to be weak in the major movements that require working off of the haunches, such as stopping, turning, sliding, etc. Occasionally, there are horses that actually toe-in behind and are bow-legged, most of which are very poor athletes.

The horse should stand on a straight column of bone with no deviation when viewed from the side. A horse that is "over at the knees" is buck-kneed, and the horse that is "back at the knees" is calf-kneed. Obviously, calf-kneed is the more

serious condition since the knee will have a tendency to hyper-extend, or bend backward. When the horse is viewed from the front, an imaginary line from the point of the shoulder to the toe should bisect the knee, cannon bone and hoof. The horse hoof should point straight ahead. A horse that has too much slope to its pastern is also undesirable and is said to be coon-footed. This condition can become so severe that the horse's fetlocks hit the ground as the horse moves. When a horse toes out, it is splay-footed; and the horse will always wing in. When a horse toes in, it is pigeon-toed; and that horse will always paddle out. The most serious of these is the horse that wings in because it has a tendency to interfere, i.e. strike its legs with the opposite hoof as it travels. If the cannon bone is off-centered to the outside, it is bench-kneed.

It is essential for the judge to recognize structural defects. There are many structurally incorrect horses that are sound, but few unsound horse that are structurally correct. A complete list of structural deviations follows this chapter.

**Muscle.** Muscling is an important criterion in judging conformation classes, especially stock horse classes, similar to Quarter Horse judging classes. It is important to realize that muscling is proportional, i.e. as one muscle in the body increases, total muscle mass increases. The horse is a balanced athlete that is muscled uniformly throughout. Horses visually appraised as heavily-muscled generally have greater circumference of forearm, gaskin and width of quarter than lightly muscled horses. When muscling is visually appraised at the forearm, gaskin and rear quarters, it will reflect the same relative degree of muscling at other anatomical points. Thus, the common dogma in the industry that a horse can be heavier muscled in the rear quarter than the forequarter is unfounded.

Thus, it appears that horses are proportional. Horses that have long heads are tall, and horses that have short cannons are short. It is important that the judge learns to evaluate skeletal conformation. It is impossible to use long bone comparisons and make accurate conclusions. Each horse must be evaluated individually.

Where differences between horses occur proportionally, there has to be a structural reason, and the good judge will see these differences as a lack of balance. He should visualize the skeleton, rather than the outward appearance. The good judge can see balance and proportionality, just as an artist can see balance and beauty in a great piece of art. We must learn to listen to what our eye tells us as judges and base decisions upon fact, rather than industry dogma.

## **Soundness and Structure**

**Soundness** – Horses should be serviceably sound. In young animals, there should be no indication of defects in conformation that may lead to unsoundness. A judge must first know and recognize normal structure and function before he can identify unsoundnesses. An unsoundness is defined as any deviation in structure that interferes with the usefulness of an individual. Many horses will have blemishes, but will be sound. A blemish is an abnormality which may detract from the appearance of the animal, but which does not affect its serviceability.

A judge should be familiar with all of the common unsoundnesses and learn to recognize them. At the same time, competitive judges should keep in mind that



the placing for most contest classes is not determined by soundness. All horses will usually be considered sound in the conformation classes. Do not spend an inappropriate amount of time in a contest looking for and worrying about unsoundnesses. Structural correctness is only one of four major considerations.

Some definitions and locations of unsoundnesses and blemishes are given on the following pages.

## **Structural deviations, unsoundnesses and blemishes**

**Bench-kneed** – “offset knees” – the cannon bone is offset to the lateral side and does not follow a straight line from the radius.

**Bowed tendon** – excessive stretching and tearing of the flexor tendons, usually in the front legs, with swelling and acute lameness

**Bow-legged** – the hocks are too far apart; the limbs may appear fairly straight to the hock and deviate inward.

**Buck-kneed** – “knee sprung” or “over in the knees” is a forward deviation of the carpus.

**Bucked shins** – periostitis of the dorsal surface of the third metacarpal bone

**Calf-kneed** – backward deviation of the carpus and carpal joints

**Capped elbow** – (shoe boil) an acquired bursitis resulting from injury to point of ulna

**Capped hock** – an acquired bursitis resulting from injury to point of hock

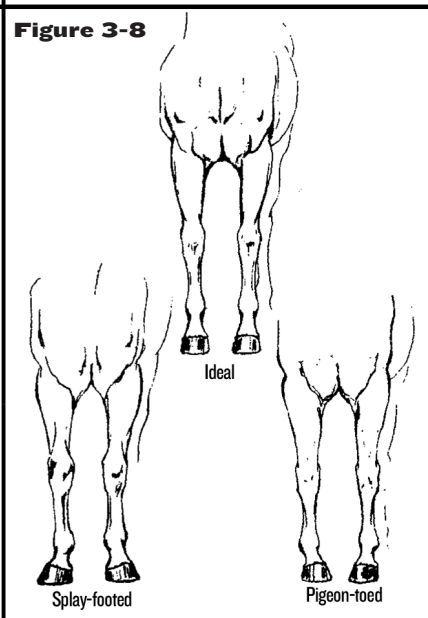
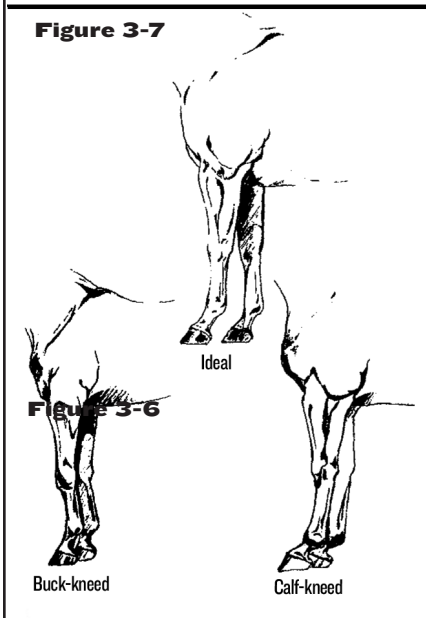
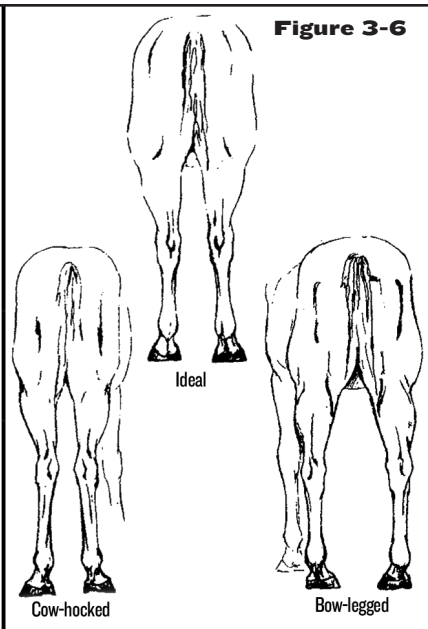
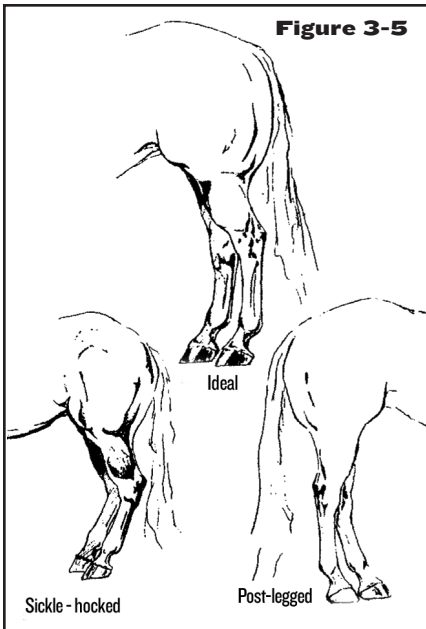
**Contracted tendons** – inability to extend fetlocks and phalangeal joints due to shortening of flexor tendons; may be hereditary or nutritional in origin

**Coon-footed** – too long and sloping a pastern, causing a weakness due to an undue strain on the tendons, sesamoid bones and suspensory ligament

**Cow-hocked** – the limbs are base-narrow to the hock and base-wide from the hock to the feet. The hocks are too close, point toward one another, and the feet are widely separated.

**Curb** – an enlargement on posterior aspect of hock (fibular tarsal bone) with the swelling of plantar ligament; usually of traumatic origin

**Fistula** – (sinus of the withers) a continuous draining tract in the area of the withers or shoulder usually due to trauma



**Heaves** – pulmonary emphysema—characterized by exertive expiratory effort with “heaves groove” developing; more pronounced after exercise

**Laminitis** – an inflammatory process of the lamina of the foot. The chronic form will show alterations in hoof wall growth (rings).

**Monkey mouth** – a condition where a horse has undershot upper jaw

**Osslets** – a traumatic arthritis of fetlock joint with a distention of volar pouch

**Paddled-out** – a traveling condition of the toed-in horse, where the foot “paddles” to the outside, even though it breaks over the inside toe and lands on the inside wall

**Parrot mouth** – overlapping of the upper incisions with failure of proper inclusion

**Pig-eyed** – eyes are placed close together on the head, limiting the field of vision. Eyes are unattractive and give an impression of laziness and stubbornness.

**Post-legged** – when viewed from the side, there is very little angle between the tibia and femur; and the hock joint is correspondingly straight. This predisposes the horse to bog spavin and upward fixation of the patella.

**Ringbone** – periostitis of proximal and/or distal phalanges, usually first and second; may involve progressive arthritis

**Sickle-hocked** – the angle of the hock joint is decreased so that the horse is standing under from the hock down. A horse so affected is predisposed to curb.

**Side bone** – ossification and enlargement of the collateral cartilages, usually visible proximal to coronary band

**Spavin** – 1) Bone spavin – an arthritis and exostosis usually involving medial and anterior surface of tarsal bones

2) Bog spavin – an enlargement of the hock due to distention of joint capsule; soft and fluctuant to touch, does not usually cause lameness

**Splint** – an enlargement, usually on the medial surface of the third metacarpal bone. It may involve the second metacarpal bone and the interosseous ligament, with bony proliferation, periostitis and actual fracture of bones involved.

**Stifled** – upward fixation of the patella over the medial trochles of femur, usually intermittent

**Stringhalt** – exaggerated, involuntary flexion of the hock joints in progress

**Sweeney** – atrophy of the intra- and suprascapular muscles, usually from injury to the suprascapular nerve

**Thoroughpin** – tenosynovitis of tarsal sheath enclosing deep digital flexor ten-

dons of hind leg

**Toes-in** – “pigeon-toed”—the toes point inward towards each other, causing greater stress on the outside of the limb.

**Toes-out** – “splay-footed”—the toes point outward away from each other, causing greater stress on the outside of the limb.

**Wind puff** – synovial swellings of the joints or tendon sheaths, usually in the fetlock area

**Wing-in** – a traveling condition when a horse is toed-out, commonly causing limb interference

# Chapter Four

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## HALTER

### Use of Chart in Making Placings

Judging is an effort to find which most closely fits what could be considered the industry ideal. It is a positive process. When evaluating a class of halter horses, there are four major considerations:

1. Balance
2. Structural Correctness
3. Breed And Sex Characteristics
4. Degree Of Muscling

By evaluating a class only on these characteristics, it is possible to use a chart to aid you in placing a class.

Rank the individuals in the class on BALANCE, then STRUCTURE then BREED AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS then MUSCLING. Total the numbers for each horse, and the horse with the smallest total is placed first in the class. First should be the most positive combination of the main judging criteria, second should be the next most positive combination, and so on. Suppose a class was evaluated as follows for the main criteria:

Horse #	Balance	Structure	B&S Character	Muscling	Total
1	1st	2nd	1st	1st	5 pts
2	2nd	1st	2nd	2nd	7 pts
3	3rd	4th	3rd	3rd	13 pts
4	4th	3rd	4th	4th	15 pts

One would place this class 1-2-3-4. This is a relatively easy way to begin placing halter classes and can be efficient in keeping placings objective and positive. However, this method will usually be used less frequently as the judge becomes more accustomed to judging horses.

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## SUGGESTED TERMS FOR COMPARING HALTER HORSES

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### GENERAL APPEARANCE

The best combination of ....

- One combined, to a higher degree, muscling, balance and size
- Overwhelmed the class with his/her balance, size and muscling
- Dominated the class in terms of her/his heavy muscling, structural correctness



and overall balance

- Heavier muscled, more balanced mare/stallion/gelding
- Shows more balance and symmetry
- Had a smoother blend of all body parts
- All parts blending smoothly and symmetrically
- Showed more refinement and style
- Smoother profiling
- More athletic in his/her appearance
- Represents the ideal Quarter Horse
- She was a more balanced, refined and feminine mare, which showed the classic features which are the trademark (hallmark) of the Quarter Horse breed, being...
- More compact
- More alert and attentive expression
- More stylish
- More substance of muscle and bone
- I realize and appreciate the fact that all of the horses in today's class possess superior quality.
- Simply had more presence in the ring
- Due to her advantage in muscling and overall quality

## **BALANCE**

- Showed more balance in conformation by being....
- Exhibited more balance
- Longer, more sloping shoulder
- Had a more desirable slope to her shoulder and was neater and sharper at her withers
- Exhibited a more correctly angled shoulder and more prominent withers, thus giving her a shorter, stronger back in relation to a longer underline
- More angulation to the shoulders
- Larger mare that is deeper in her chest floor
- Deeper barreled horse
- Showed greater capacity in the heart girth
- More prominent withers, with a more functional top to bottom line ratio
- Longer in his/her hip, shorter in his (her) back and showed more depth of heart girth and hind rib indicating more body capacity
- Taller at the withers and showed more uniformity of height from the croup to the withers
- She was more level from wither to croup.
- Shorter backed gelding that is longer in his underline
- She is longer in her underline and shorter on top.
- Deeper flanked
- More powerful topline
- Shorter-topped
- Was shorter and stronger over the top

- Wider-topped, showing a more powerful loin
- Stronger coupled
- Higher at the withers
- Fuller in his/her loin
- Longer, wider croup
- A nicer turn of the croup
- Higher tail set
- Straighter and smoother over the top
- More horizontal over the croup
- Was stronger, and more horizontal over the back, loin and croup
- Had a shorter back in relation to his underline, due to a more sloping shoulder and longer, flatter croup
- His shortness of back, length of underline and depth of heart combined to give him a more balanced appearance as viewed from the side.
- Exhibited more balance with all parts blending smoothly and symmetrically
- Tail setting higher out of the croup
- Longer and flatter over the croup
- More horizontal over the croup

## **HEAD AND NECK**

- Sharper-chiseled features
- Was more sharply chiseled about the head
- Noticeably deeper chiseled from eyes to muzzle
- Was especially shorter from his eyes to his nose, as well as being...
- Shorter headed
- Shorter down the bridge of his/her nose
- Shorter face
- Brighter about the eyes
- Broader between the eyes
- More width between the eyes
- Wider between the eyes
- Wider from eye to eye
- Broader forehead
- More prominent, larger, brighter eye
- Shorter down the bridge of the nose
- More refined and shorter through the muzzle
- Was tighter in the throat latch and had a more naturally arching neck which tied higher into his/her shoulder
- Trimmer throatlatch coupled with a longer, smoother neck
- Had a longer, leaner neck
- Higher tying from the neck into the shoulder
- Exhibited more presence and quality through the head and neck
- More elegant and refined head and neck
- Finer featured
- More chiseled head

- More expressive about the eyes and ears
- Shorter distance from eye to muzzle
- More prominent through the jaw
- Cleaner cut about the head and throat
- Longer necked
- More naturally arching neck
- Longer neck that rose out of a more angulated shoulder
- Typier, more elegant head
- Had a more masculine, prominent jaw
- Showed more femininity about the head with a kinder eye and more refined facial features

## **MUSCLING**

- Showed more tone and power of muscling from end to end
- He showed a greater volume of muscling over his larger frame.
- Was heavier and had more bulge to her muscle pattern
- An expressively muscled stallion
- Exhibited more ripple and bulge of muscling
- Has more muscling from end to end
- Was more powerfully muscled in his shoulder, hip and through the plane of his stifle
- Spread a greater total volume and mass of muscling of his larger frame
- Fuller through his forearm and shoulder and was more powerfully muscled through his quarter, dropping down into a more flaring gaskin
- Was especially more muscular, showing more width through the stifle dropping down to more bulging gaskins both inside and out, extending forward to a fuller loin and a heavier muscled shoulder
- More length of hip
- Stood on a wider, more desirable foundation
- Wider chested
- Carried more powerful muscling in her chest
- More powerfully built thorough the front
- Was more prominently V-ed
- V-ed up deeper in front
- Longer and stronger hipped horse
- Exhibited more muscle development in her quarter
- Was more uniformly muscled in the hind leg, being thicker and more bulging through her stifle and gaskin
- Showed more total dimension to her hip, evidenced by being longer and flatter over the croup and having more width and depth through the hind leg
- She showed more thickness through the center of the stifle in relation to the points of the hip.
- Thicker, heavier muscled stifle
- Was wider through the lower third of her hip, while possessing an especially heavier muscled gaskin

- Was more vast and bulging through the outside and inside gaskin
- Heavier muscled forearm
- Stronger in the stifle
- Heavier muscled thigh
- Carried more volume of muscling to the upper, central and lower portions of the hip
- Heavier muscled stallion that was particularly wider from stifle to stifle
- Wider fore and aft
- Stood out wider both fore and aft
- This combined to give her more volume and substance.
- More dimension in his quarter, a quarter that is wider from stifle to stifle
- Had more circumference of muscle to his forearms and gaskins

## **STRUCTURE**

- Stands straighter and more structurally sound
- Is more structurally correct by being...
- Squarer-placed legs
- Stood on straighter legs
- Stood wider both fore and aft, with all four legs set square beneath him
- Stood more structurally correct through the hocks and front legs
- Cleaner about the knees and hocks, with a finer and flatter cannon bone
- His cannon bones came out more nearly of the center of the knee
- Stands on a shorter cannon
- Stood on more rugged, durable type bone
- More substance of bone
- Stood on a straighter column of bone
- Knees and hocks are closer to the ground.
- More correct angle at the hock
- Was wider between the hocks as viewed from the rear
- Cleaner at the hocks
- Longer, more sloping pasterns
- More sloping pasterns
- Straighter legged
- His joints were free of swelling and blemishes.

## **WAY OF GOING**

- Moved out with more clearance between the knees and hocks
- Was a wider traveling mare
- Moves out straighter and more correct at the walk (trot)
- Tracked out straighter with a longer stride
- Straighter, truer stride
- Moved with a more athletic and agile stride showing greater drive off his hocks
- Moved with a greater softness of stride
- Longer, more efficient ground-covering stride
- Longer, softer-strided horse

- Moved out with a longer stride, showing more freedom of movement
- More direct stride
- Longer, further-reaching stride
- Freer moving, having a bolder, longer stride
- More fluid
- Sounder moving mare
- Softer moving horse
- More flexion to the hocks, with more elevation and reach from the forehand
- More flexion of the knee and hock with more reach
- More forward impulsion
- More collected stride
- Greater freedom of movement
- More stylish on the move
- Showing more movement and freedom of motion in his shoulder
- More athletic and agile stride
- When on the move, she exhibited more beauty and presence, possessing a more floating stride.
- Drives from behind with more hock action

#### **BREED, SEX CHARACTER AND QUALITY**

- Showed more beauty, bloom and vigor
- Was a more stylish, eye appealing, higher quality mare
- Exhibited a more attractive head of greater quality
- Shows more breed character about the head and neck
- Showed more breed character and femininity
- Showed more femininity
- Showed more refinement about the head
- The mare was more refined and stylish.
- She exhibited more overall style and beauty.
- Showed more masculinity
- He had a larger, more bulging jaw.
- More prominent, deeper jaw
- More bulge and prominence of jaw
- More alert about the head, showing a brighter eye

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## **TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE FAULTS IN CONFORMATION**

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#### **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

- Short, off-type mare
- Light muscled, off-balanced gelding (mare, stallion)
- Lacked balance and quality
- Rough-made mare, lacking femininity

- Lacked the style and quality of the other mares
- Coarser made, lightest muscled and most narrow based
- Is too thin
- Lacked the style and presence
- Was over-finished
- Lacked the quality of those placed above her

## **BALANCE**

- Shallow middled, light-quartered stallion
- Shallow through the heart girth (barrel)
- Lacked the capacity and depth of those I placed above him
- He is narrow in his chest and shallow in the heart girth.
- Shallow hearted
- Long back
- Was long and weak over the topline
- Steep shoulder and croup
- Has a short, steep croup
- Stood croup high
- Has a short, straight shoulder
- Is too straight in the shoulders
- Mutton withered
- Less prominent over the withers
- Low-backed, weak loin, high hips
- Weak through the back and loin
- Had a long-weak back in relation to his underline
- Was steep in the shoulder resulting in a long weak back and short hip
- He was the poorest balanced as he...
- Was the poorest profiling
- He was the poorest balanced as he was steepest in the shoulder, longest over the back and croup high.
- His neck tied in low to a steeper set shoulder thus making him longer over his top and resulting in a shorter steeper croup.

## **HEAD AND NECK**

- Least attractive
- Longer coarser, plainer headed
- Coarse head
- Long ears
- Long face
- Narrow between the eyes
- Duller, smaller eye
- Large, coarse muzzle
- Thick throat latch
- Heavier, thicker through the throat latch
- Too thick at the base of the neck

- Low neck attachment
- Cresty neck
- Neck joined in extremely low into steeper shoulders
- Short, thick neck that tied low into the shoulder
- Small, unattractive eye
- Had a short, thick neck that tied in low to a steep shoulder

## **MUSCLING**

- Was the narrowest based horse, lacking the muscling of the ideal
- Narrow chested, close traveling horse
- Lacked volume and dimension through the hip, gaskin and stifle
- Flat chested
- Was flat through the V muscling and exhibited short, bunchy muscling from end to end
- Showed equal width between the top of the hip and through the stifle when viewed from the rear
- Has a low tail setting
- Short in the underline
- Long coupled
- Was the lightest muscled
- Was the narrowest when viewed from behind
- Was the shallowest through his chest

## **STRUCTURE**

- Structurally incorrect, being .....
- Stood crooked and structurally unsound
- Shorter, straighter in the pasterns
- Has short, steep pastern
- Steep pasterns
- Longer, weaker in the pasterns
- Was post-legged
- Bench-kneed
- Pigeon-toed
- Cow-hocked (stood close at the hocks)
- Is a sickle-hocked stallion
- Had too much angle to the hocks
- Crooked through the front legs with the cannon bone coming out of the side of the knees
- Cannons came out of the side of her knees
- Had a long, weak cannons with splints and had wind puffs through the fetlocks and hocks
- Calf-kneed (back at the knees)
- Buck-kneed (stood over at the knees)
- Splay-footed
- Stood on a hoof too small for his size



- Contracted at the heel
- Stood on bone too fine for her massive size
- Round, coarse boned
- Has too fine a bone
- Has too light a bone
- Puffy about the knees and hocks
- Was stocked up behind
- Stocked up in all fours
- Joints were puffy and swollen.
- Coarse in underpinnings
- Lacked definition of tendons
- Club-footed
- Mule-footed
- Was the least structurally correct
- Was the poorest structured as he was...
- Was over in his knees
- He did not have enough angle to his hocks (post-legged).

#### **WAY OF GOING**

- Was a coarser moving individual
- Lacked the length of stride when compared to.....
- Walks close at the ankles
- Crosses over
- Does not travel straight
- Move stiff
- Paddled out with the right front leg
- Winged in
- Small, choppy and short in her/his stride
- Tracked shorter and choppier
- Lacked animation and style
- Has a rough, pounding gait
- Short-legged, poorly moving
- Limped on the right hind leg
- Favored the left hind leg
- Sluggish moving
- Moved more sluggishly
- Exhibited more rotation to the hocks while traveling
- Tracked with more deviation from a straight plane of motion
- Rolling at the hocks
- Long, weak pasterns

#### **BREED, SEX CHARACTER AND QUALITY**

- Showed the least breed character
- Looked dull and sulky out her eye
- Lacked a powerful jaw

- Lacks style, symmetry and animation
- Low-headed; plain, lacks eye appeal
- Was the coarsest made
- Lacked the quality and refinement of those above her
- Was the least feminine
- Was the least masculine
- Plainest headed
- Lacks overall style and eye appeal

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## **THE FOLLOWING ARE SAMPLE SETS OF REASONS FOR HALTER CLASSES.**

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### **I PLACED THE CLASS OF AGED STALLIONS 2-3-1-4**

In the top pair it is 2 over 3. 2 was more masculine about his head and chizzled about his jaw. Additionally, the bay was more balanced with a longer neck, shorter back and longer underline.

I give credit to 3 as he was more structurally correct down his back leg.

In the closer middle pair, it is 3 over 1. The palomino was more structurally correct on all fours which caused him to be a straighter, truer tracking horse. As well, 3 had more slope to his shoulder, which made him more balanced.

I acknowledge that 1 was a heavier muscled stallion.

In the bottom pair, it is 1 over 4. The chestnut was heavier muscled, with more width and expression in his forearm and gaskin. Furthermore, he was wider from stifle to stifle and had a greater definition of muscle throughout.

Now, in closing, I easily placed 4 at the bottom of the class, for he was the plainest, coarsest, and least structurally correct.

It is for these reasons that I placed the Aged Quarter Horse Stallions 2-3-1-4.

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### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF AGED GELDINGS 2-1-3-4**

Starting with the the highest combination of balance and muscling in 2, and ending with the poorest made in 4.

Ideally, 2 could be slightly trimmer through his throatlatch; however, it is his overwhelming advantage in balance that placed him over 1 in my initial pair. 2 was more laid back in his shoulder, shorter over his top and longer in his hip, being more equally divided into thirds. Additionally, the sorrel had a shorter, stronger topline, in relation to a longer underline.

I do admit that 1 was slightly more refined in his head and throatlatch; however, he was long and weak over his top.

Nevertheless, it is his advantage in muscling that placed him over 3 in my middle pair. 1 showed more expression of muscling from end to end while having more length of hip and depth of heart. Additionally, the bay was wider from shoulder to shoulder and stifle to stifle.

I will admit that 3 stood straighter in his legs when being viewed from the front; however, he was extremely thin and narrow.

However, it is his advantage in quality and structure that finds him over 4 in my final pair. 3 stood more structurally correct through his front legs and down through his hocks. Additionally, the palomino profiled an overall more pleasing outline.

I left 4 last as the sorrel was not only extremely upright in his shoulder and long over his top, but also severely straight through his hocks and over at his knees, making his by far the poorest balanced, poorest structured of the class, making my placing 2-1-3-4. Thank you.

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### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF HALTER MARES 2-1-3-4**

I started with an obvious top in 2 as she was the best combination of balance, quality and muscle; I found a closer middle pair in 1 and 3 and easily left 4 to the bottom as she was the poorest profiling.

2 overwhelmed the class today as she best combined balance, quality and muscling. The bay showed more refinement about her shorter, more feminine head. Additionally, she had a longer, leaner neck that tied in higher at the shoulder. This enabled her to have a much shorter back in relation to her underline.

Not to discredit the quality of 1, but I can find no suitable concession for her over 2; still, it is her balance and femininity that places her over 3 in the middle pair.

The sorrel had a broader forehead and was shorter down the bridge of her nose. To complement this, she had a thinner throatlatch and a longer leaner neck that tied in higher to her more sloping shoulder; this set her wither back farther over her heart giving her a shorter back in relation to her underline.

Undoubtedly, 3 was a more expressively muscled mare.

In the bottom pair it is 3 over 4. The buckskin was heavier muscled as she was wider when viewed from both front and behind and had more flare and bulge to her forearms and gaskins. Additionally, she carried more volume of muscling to the upper, central and lower portions of the hip.

Certainly 4 was more feminine about her head, with more refinement and quality. Nevertheless, I left her last as she was not only the lightest muscled and poorest structured, but also she was the poorest balanced. She was the straightest in her shoulder and longest over her back. Therefore, she is last in this class placed 2-1-3-4. Thank you.

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# Chapter Five

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## WESTERN PLEASURE, HUNTER UNDER SADDLE

### **WESTERN PLEASURE**

Western pleasure is an event judged on a horse's ability to be a pleasure to ride. To be a pleasure to ride, a horse must be broke and quiet, soft and smooth, and go with little restraint. In addition, a horse must meet the requirements of the class.

The Official Handbook of the American Quarter Horse Association describes the western pleasure class in the following manner:



*A good pleasure horse has a free-flowing stride of reasonable length in keeping with his conformation. He should cover a reasonable amount of ground with little effort. Ideally, he should have a balanced, flowing motion, while exhibiting correct gaits that are of the proper cadence. The quality of the movement and the consistency of the gaits is a major consideration. He should carry his head and neck in a relaxed, natural position, with his poll level with or slightly above the level of the withers. He should not carry his head behind the vertical, giving the appearance of intimidation, or be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance. His head should be level, with his nose slightly in front of the vertical, having a bright expression with his ears alert. He should be shown on a reasonably loose rein, but with light contact and control. He should be responsive, yet smooth, in transitions when called for. When asked to extend, he should move out with the same flowing motion. Maximum credit should be given to the flowing, balanced and willing horse that gives the appearance of being fit and a pleasure to ride. (Rule 402; AQHA Handbook of Rules & Regulations)*

## **Gaits**

**Walk.** The walk is a natural, flat-footed four-beat gait. The horse must move straight and true at the walk. The walk must be alert, with a stride of reasonable length, in keeping with the size of the horse.

**Jog.** The jog is a smooth, ground-covering two-beat diagonal gait. The horse works from one pair of diagonals to the other pair. The jog should be square, balanced and with a straight, forward movement of the feet. Horses walking with their back feet and jogging on the front are not considered to be performing the required gait. When asked to extend the jog, the horse should move out with the same smooth way of going.

**Lope.** The lope is an easy, rhythmical three-beat gait. Horses moving to the left should lope on the left lead. Horses moving to the right should lope on the right lead. Horses traveling at a four-beat gait are not considered to be performing at a proper lope. The horse should lope with a natural stride and appear relaxed and smooth. He should be ridden at a speed that is a natural way of going. The head should be carried at an angle that is natural and suitable to the horse's conformation at all gaits.

### **Faults to be taken into consideration for final placings:**

Excessive speed (any gait); being on the wrong lead; breaking gait (including not walking when called for); excessive slowness in any gait, loss of forward momentum (resulting in an animated and/or artificial gait at the lope); failure to take the appropriate gait when called for (during transitions, excessive delay will be penalized); touching horse or saddle with free hand; head carried too high; head carried too low (tip of ear below the withers); over flexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical; excessive nosing out; opening mouth excessively; stumbling; use of spurs forward of the cinch; if a

horse appears sullen, dull, lethargic, emaciated, drawn or overly tired; quick, choppy or pony-strided; if reins are draped at the point that light contact is not maintained; overly canted at the lope (when the outside hind foot is further to the inside of the arena than the inside front foot).

**Faults that will be cause for disqualification (except in Level I amateur or Level I youth classes, which shall be faults scored according to severity):**

Head carried too low (tip of ear below the withers consistently); over flexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical consistently; use of more than one hand on the reins when using a bit for senior horses

Western Pleasure classes are placed on three main criteria (with smaller criteria falling under each category):

**1. Correctness**

- functional correctness
- cadence
- soundness

**2. Performance**

- overall attitude
- manners
- consistency

**3. Quality**

- quality of movement

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## **HUNTER UNDER SADDLE**

Hunter Under Saddle horses should be suitable to purpose, having their gaits be free-flowing in movement, while exhibiting correct gaits that are of the proper cadence. They should be obedient, alert and responsive to their riders. Quick, short strides should be penalized. Horses which move in an artificial frame, are over flexed and behind the bit should also be penalized.

The Official Handbook of the American Quarter Horse Association describes the hunter under saddle class in the following manner:

Hunters under saddle should be suitable to purpose. Hunters should move with long, low strides reaching forward with ease and smoothness, be able to lengthen stride and cover ground with relaxed, free flowing movement, while exhibiting correct gaits that are of the proper cadence. The quality of the movement and the consistency of the gaits is a major consideration. Horses should be obedient, have a bright expression with alert ears, and should respond willingly to the rider with light leg, and hand contact. Horses should be responsive and smooth in transition. When asked to extend the trot or hand gallop, they should move out with the same flowing motion. The poll should be level with, or slightly above, the withers to allow proper impulsion behind. The head position should be slightly in front of, or on, the vertical. (Rule SHW601; AQHA Handbook of Rules & Regulations)



## Gaits

**Walk.** The walk should be a forward, working walk, rhythmical and flat-footed; extremely slow, or “jiggy” walk, to be penalized.

**Trot.** The trot should be long, low and have ground-covering, cadenced and balanced strides. Smoothness is more essential than speed. Extreme speed should be penalized. Excessive knee action is not desirable.

**Canter.** The canter should be smooth, free-moving, relaxed and straight on both leads. The stride should be suitable to cover ground following hounds. Over-collected, or a four-beat canter, should be penalized. Excessive speed is to be penalized.

**(Optional) Hand Gallop.** The hand gallop should be a definite lengthening of the stride with a noticeable difference in speed. The horse should be under control at all times and be able to pull up (not a sliding stop).

Hunter Under Saddle classes are placed on three main criteria (with smaller criteria falling under each category):



### **1. Correctness**

- functional correctness
- cadence
- soundness

### **2. Quality**

- overall attitude
- manners
- consistency

### **3. Quality**

- quality of movement
- length of stride

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## **TERMS TO COMPLIMENT WESTERN PLEASURE HORSES**

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### **OPENING STATEMENTS**

- Overwhelmed the class with her style and easy, quiet way of going
- A placeable top, as he was the easiest, freest moving, most stylish horse that more closely typified the ideal
- Considered a placeable top, as he was the most consistent and efficient performer
- Was a quieter horse, that slipped down the rail showing more brilliance and style
- Easier moving, showing more ability and a quieter pleasure horse disposition
- Appears to give a more comfortable ride
- Was the most consistent and most stylish mover today

### **CONSISTANT AND QUIET**

- Most obedient, consistent and relaxed horse
- A more relaxed, obedient mare
- Was more consistent and efficient throughout the performance
- Was a steadier, nicer mannered gelding
- Showed less resistance and hesitation to the rider's aids and cues
- Simply a more steady, solid and consistent performer
- Was the most obedient and honest performer in the class
- Required less fixing and checking on the part of the rider
- He was more mindful of the bit and carried his head more correctly.
- Was quieter and calmer going both ways of the ring
- Showed with a more pleasing ride, as she was more relaxed and less nervous
- Quieter, calmer and more consistent performer
- Going both ways of the ring in a quieter and calmer fashion
- Was more responsive to his rider
- Was more consistent

### **BACK**

- Backs easily without being forced

- More responsive when asked to back, responding by dropping off the bit, backing faster and straighter
- Backed straighter and faster
- Backed with less mouthing of the bit
- Was more willful when asked to back

## **TRANSITIONS**

- Quicker to make transitions through the gaits
- Smoother transitions
- Smoother and quicker in his transitions from the walk to canter
- Accepted transitions with less resistance
- Smoother, faster, more prompt transitions
- He was more prompt and exact in the transitions of gaits.
- Stopped squarely and easily
- Took leads without hesitation
- Responsive to rider's wishes
- Was more responsive to the rider's aids and cues
- Showed more response to his rider, picking up his leads quickly and more correctly, going both ways in a quieter fashion
- Was smoother and more prompt in his transitions
- More readily picked up the correct lead

## **ATTITUDE**

- More acceptance to the bit, evidence of being quieter at the bit
- Was a willing worker
- Performed in a more workman like manner
- More willing and obedient
- More obedient down the side rail
- More alert and attentive
- Appeared more pleasant
- More pleasant and willing attitude
- Expressed a kinder, more agreeable attitude
- Showed more expression while working, showing more willingness and alertness out of the eyes
- Gives the appearance that he enjoys his work
- Readily yielded to her rider's commands
- Was lighter and more responsive to the rider
- Moved with less restraint
- Reined readily, without hesitation
- Shows more feeling in his/her mouth
- Responsive and agreeable to aids
- Performed his duties in a more willing and positive manner

## **QUALITY OF MOVEMENT**

- He/she had a more stylish way of going

- Was a lighter, softer traveling horse
- Moved in a more rhythmic way of showing more brilliance and style
- She was the most stylish, fluid and softest traveling horse in the class
- She had a more polished, stylish performance, being steady and correct throughout the class.
- She slipped across the ground staying lower and more level, showing greater reach of forearm at the walk, jog and lope.
- Was a lower, flatter, smoother moving horse
- Was a flatter moving horse that appeared to give a more comfortable ride as she hit the ground; softer and lighter on all fours
- More extended and freer moving
- Had a more defined trot
- Had a more definite 2-beat trot
- Goes more collected at the lope
- More supple at the jog, hitting the ground softer and smoother with all four feet
- Had more length and spring to his stride
- More nicely balanced, more athletic gelding
- Moved in a more collected way at a more ideal speed
- More cadenced at the walk and trot and had a more precise 3-beat lope
- Traveled in a softer, more supple fashion
- Had a more stylish way of going, moving with more balance
- Showed to be a more athletic gelding, having greater length of stride, as well as softness
- Especially flashier in her movements
- Engaging his hindquarters with greater drive and impulsion
- Moved along the rail in a more collected way of going at a more ideal speed
- Moved in a more collected manner
- Had more drive from behind
- Was more lifted and elevated through the back and shoulder
- Was lighter on the forehand and thus had a softer stride
- Was a more rhythmic mover at the lope
- Had more drive off his hocks

## **REIN**

- Moved on the loosest rein with the softest contact from his rider
- Traveled straighter down the rail at a more desirable speed
- More desirable drape of rein
- More level over the topline, more perpendicular in his headset as he went straighter down the rail on a much longer, more trusting rein
- Showed more flexion at the poll, looking straighter through the bridle while working off a loose rein
- Went on the longest rein with the lightest contact
- Went on a longer, more trusting rein

## **FRAME**

- Looked straighter through the bridle
- He carried his head so that his eyes were in the same plane or above his withers.
- Was more mindful of the bit and carried his head more correctly (naturally)
- Carried his head with his eyes more nearly level to his withers
- His head was held more nearly perpendicular to the ground.
- Had more contact with the bit
- More correct headset, traveling with more flexion to the poll
- Held head more naturally and showed more alertness and expression about the head
- Carried his/her head more desirably
- Carried a more natural flex at the poll
- More relaxed through the jaw, yet more attentive about the head and ears
- Her head held closer to the vertical.
- Cleaner throatlatch and a longer, more naturally arched neck
- Carried his head in a more natural way
- Had a more natural head carriage
- Was more level from poll to withers
- Remained more level over the top line
- Had more self-carriage

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## **TERMS TO COMPLIMENT HUNTER UNDER SADDLE HORSES**

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(Many of the terms used for obedient and quiet and soft and smooth from Western Pleasure can be used for Hunter Under Saddle)

## **WAY OF GOING**

- Freer moving in her shoulder as she showed with more extension of stride in all her gaits
- Brisker moving horse that maintained more extension of stride throughout the class
- Showed more impulsion and drive off his hocks
- Was a lighter, softer traveling horse that showed more spring and animation of stride
- Longer, more ground covering, purposeful stride
- Showed more spring and flash in his movements
- Bolder moving horse that showed more length of stride, as well as more impulsion and drive off his hocks
- A brisker-moving horse that maintained more extension throughout the duration of the class
- Lengthening equally from shoulder and stifle, achieving greater length with

each stride

- Kept his hocks well underneath him showing greater drive from the hocks
- Moved forward into the trot with more impulsion, more willingly without hesitation
- More sweeping trot
- Showed more energy and purpose of stride
- Exhibited greater forward impulsion from the hindquarters while at the canter
- Engaged rear quarters with more drive
- Had a longer, more ground covering stride
- Was a more stylish mover with a longer softer stride
- Was a bolder mover with a longer stride
- Had greater freedom of movement through his shoulder, thus producing a longer softer stride
- Was more deeply engaged off his hindquarters

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## **TERMS USED TO CRITICIZE A WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE**

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### **GENERAL STATEMENTS**

- Lacks style
- Lacks a pleasure horse disposition
- Simply could not compete with the style and movement of the top three horses
- Was the least broke, poorest mover in the class
- Could not compete in today's class
- Lacked the style and movement of the ideal pleasure horse
- Failed to perform his/her duties in a pleasurable manner
- Did not display a pleasurable ride
- Lacked the consistency and efficiency of the horses placed above him
- Appeared to give an uncomfortable ride
- Lacked the ability of a pleasure horse

### **CONSISTANT & OBEDIENT**

- Was the least obedient horse in the class
- Simply not consistant
- Was a high-headed, nervous horse
- Inconsistent throughout the class
- Required the most restraint from his rider
- Travels with excessive speed and must be controlled with undue restraint
- Needed excessive restraint
- Was unresponsive to his/her rider
- Bucks
- Breaks gait
- Became more excited as the work progressed

- Lacks consistency at the lope (trot, jog)
- Missed his/her left (right) lead
- Afraid of other horses
- Required the most handling
- Was the least correct in his lead
- Broke gait

### **BACK**

- Did not back
- Was forced to back
- Was unwilling to back
- Hesitated and swished his tail excessively when asked to back
- Raised his head and mouthed the bit, lacking flexion and give to the bit when asked to back
- Backed crooked and unwillingly
- Opens his mouth when asked to back
- Was the most resistant when asked to back

### **TRANSITIONS**

- Has slow transitions
- Has rough transitions
- Was slow and ill in the transitions of gaits, throwing his head and wringing his tail
- Was the least responsive in his transitions

### **QUIET**

- Works sour
- Was an unwilling performer
- Anticipated his rider's aids
- Hard mouthed, fights the bit
- Fighting bit, swishing tail
- Was an unwilling performer, evidenced by wringing his tail and chewing the bit
- Excessively mouthed the bit
- Poorly mannered about the head
- Jawing and fussing at the bit
- Showed the least ability and the worst pleasure horse disposition
- Mouthed the bit

### **QUALITY OF MOVEMENT**

- Rough in her way of going
- Lacks smoothness
- Lacks suppleness
- Traveled rough, lacked smoothness
- He was rough at the walk (jog, lope).

- Had a short, choppy stride
- Lacks animation
- Lacked a definite two-beat trot
- Four beating
- Was disunited at the lope
- Was lame
- Was the poorest mover
- Was the least cadenced
- Had the least drive from behind
- Was heavy on the forehand
- He was the least stylish at the lope

### **REIN**

- Was ridden on the tightest rein
- Lacked the desirable length of rein
- Required the most restraint from the rider
- Rider had to ride with too tight of a rein.

### **HEADSET**

- Carried his head too high (low)
- Traveled with her nose stuck out
- Heavy on the bit
- Was hard mouthed, fighting the bit throughout the class
- Is behind the bit
- Was over-flexed and heavy on his front end
- She is a heavy fronted horse.
- Is above the bit and hollow down her back, lacking collection at the lope
- Is over-collected and behind the vertical
- Too high in his head carriage
- Nosed out, as he was lacking flexion at the poll
- Was ridden behind the vertical

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## **TERMS TO CRITICIZE HUNTER UNDER SADDLE HORSES**

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### **WAY OF GOING**

- She had the shortest stride.
- Had a short, choppy stride
- Lacked drive from behind
- Was heavy on the forehand
- Was the least rhythmic
- Travelled with excessive knee action
- Was a rough and choppy mover



- Had the hardest hoof to ground contact
- Was the least engaged off his hindquarters
- Was the roughest mover
- She was the least stylish.
- He was the poorest mover.
- Lacked the consistency of movement
- Had the least workman like stride
- Covered the least ground at the trot
- Was the poorest at the canter

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## **THE FOLLOWING ARE SAMPLE SETS OF REASONS FOR WESTERN PLEASURE AND HUNTER UNDER SADDLE CLASSES.**

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### **Western Pleasure**

#### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF WESTERN PLEASURE 1-2-3-4**

Starting with the most stylish mover in 1, and ending with the poorest moving, least correct horse in 4.

In my initial pair, I placed 1 over 2. 1 had more impulsion and drive from his hocks while being flatter up front. Additionally, the palomino moved with more balance and cadence at all gaits.

I admit that 2 was quieter about the bit; however, he moved with excessive knee at the lope.

Nevertheless, I placed 2 over 3 in my middle pair. 2 was more consistent and calmer going both ways of the arena. The bay had a more correct head and neck carriage, showing more flexion at the poll and looking straighter through the bridle while working off a looser rein.

I do admit that 3 was deeper in his hocks at the lope; however, he was extremely inconsistent in his speed, pace and frame throughout the class.

Still, it is correctness that finds 3 over 4 in my bottom pair. The bay was simply able to maintain the correct leads and gaits throughout the class.

I left 4 last as the sorrel broke gaits several times, as well as picked up the incorrect lead going to the right, making him by far the least broke, least correct of the class. Thank you.

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### **Western Pleasure**

In the western pleasure, I started with an obvious top in the most responsive, most stylish mover 1; found a closer middle pair in 2 and 3 and left 4 to the bottom as he was the least broke, thus making my placing 1-2-3-4.

In the initial pair, it is 1 over 2. The more stylish moving sorrel remained more level over his top line and had greater drive from behind. Additionally, he remained more lifted through his shoulder, producing a softer, more fluid stride,

especially at the lope. To complement this, 1 was more responsive to his rider.

I acknowledge the fact that 2 was smoother in his upward transition to the lope to the right.

In the closer middle pair, I preferred 2 over 3. The bay was more deeply engaged from behind. Additionally, he was a smoother and more rhythmical mover at the lope and was more distinctly cadenced at the jog. Moreover, 2 looked straighter through the bridle and was ridden on a longer, more trusting drape of rein.

Certainly, 3 was smoother and more willful when asked to back.

In the final pair, it is 3 over 4. The buckskin was much more willful to his rider, as he required less handling at the jog and lope. As well, he more efficiently picked up and maintained the correct gaits and leads particularly to the left.

Due to the apparent differences in this pair, I can find no suitable concession for 4 as he was not only the shortest and choppiest strided, but he was the least broke. The palomino was on the incorrect lead and broke gait the first direction of the arena, making my placings for the Western Pleasure 1-2-3-4. Thank you.

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## **Hunter Under Saddle**

### **I PLACE THE HUNTER UNDER SADDLE 3-4-1-2.**

Starting with the most consistent, highest quality mover in 3, and ending with the most resistant in 2.

In my initial pair, it is consistency and manners that finds 3 over 4. 3 was more responsive to his rider's less obvious aids and cues. Additionally, the sorrel was steadier in his speed, pace and frame a higher percent of the time.

I do admit that 4 was an effortless mover; however, he was mouthy about the bit.

Nevertheless, it is his advantage in movement that finds him over 1 in my middle pair. 4 was a bolder moving, longer strided hunter who performed with more drive and impulsion off his hocks. Additionally, the grey was flatter through his knee at both the trot and canter

I do admit that 1 has a more correct head set and carriage; however, he was short strided and moved with excessive knee.

Still, it is his advantage in correctness and willfulness that finds him over 2 in my bottom pair. 1 was a more responsive performer, simply performing and maintaining the correct gaits when asked.

I left 2 last as the grey receives excessive handling from his rider, but also broke gait numerous times, making him by far the most resistant, least consistent of the class. Thank you.

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## **Hunter Under Saddle**

### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF HUNTER UNDER SADDLE 1-2-3-4.**

I found an exceptional top horse in 1, and a bottom pair of 3 and 4.

Concerning the top pair, 1, the bay, over 2, 1 was a more brisk, lighter moving

horse that maintained more extension and elongation of stride throughout the class, as well as more impulsion and drive from his hocks. Additionally, I render the fact that 2, the sorrel, was a more solid and consistent horse; however, he was a lower quality mover.

Regarding the middle pair, I preferred 2 over 3 simply because he contributed a quieter, more consistent performance. Furthermore, 1 was more willing to back as he did respond by getting off the bit, flexing at the poll and backing straighter and faster.

I do admit that 3 was flatter in his knees; however, he was inconsistent in his speed and pace.

In the bottom pair, it is 3 over 4, primarily because the grey was more responsive to his rider and a lighter, more cadenced mover. Moreover, he was freer moving in the shoulder, as he showed more extension in all gaits, especially at the hand gallop.

I close with 4 at the bottom of the class, for the bay was extremely heavy fronted, as he stumbled badly when trotting to the right and was over-flexed throughout the duration of the class. He required the most aid from the rider and was the most resistant horse in the class today.

It is for these reasons I placed this class of hunter under saddle 1-2-3 and 4.

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# Chapter Six

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## REINING



The National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) and the American Quarter Horse Association have developed the following guidelines for judging reining.

In an approved reining class, any one of 13 approved AQHA reining patterns may be used. Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually and separately.

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

## Scoring

Scoring will be on the basis of 0 - infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. The individual maneuvers are scored in 1/2 point increments from a low of -1 1/2 to a high of +1 1/2 with a score of 0 denoting a maneuver that is correct with no degree of difficulty.

### **The following will result in a no score:**

- Abuse of an animal in the show arena and/or evidence that an act of abuse has occurred prior to or during the exhibition of a horse in competition
- Use of illegal equipment, including wire on bits, bosals or curb chains
- Use of illegal bits, bosals or curb chains; when using a snaffle bit, optional curb strap is acceptable; however, curb chains are not acceptable
- Use of tack collars, tie down or nose bands
- Use of whips or bats
- Use of any attachment which alters the movement of or circulation to the tail
- Failure to provide horse and equipment to the appropriate judge for inspection
- Disrespect or misconduct by the exhibitor
- Closed reins are not allowed except as standard romal reins.

### **The following will result in a score of 0:**

- Use of more than index or first finger between reins
- Use of two hands (exception in Junior, Snaffle Bit or Hackamore classes designated for two hands) or changing hands
- Use of romal other than as outlined in WESTERN EQUIPMENT (AQHA Rulebook)
- Failure to complete pattern as written
- Performing the maneuvers other than in specified order
- The inclusion of maneuvers not specified, including, but not limited to
  - Backing more than 2 strides
  - Turning more than 90 degrees
- Equipment failure that delays completion of pattern, including dropping a rein that contacts the ground while horse is in motion
- Balking or refusal of command where performance is delayed
- Running away or failing to guide where it becomes impossible to discern whether the entry is on pattern
- Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena
- Overspins of more than 1/4 turn
- Fall to the ground by the horse or rider

### **The following will result in a reduction of five points:**

- Spurring in front of cinch
- Use of free hand to instill fear or praise
- Holding saddle or touching horse with free hand
- Blatant disobedience, including kicking, biting, bucking, rearing and striking

**The following will result in a reduction of two points:**

- Break of gait
- Freeze up in spins or rollbacks
- On walk-in patterns, failure to stop or walk before executing a canter departure
- On run-in patterns, failure to be in a canter prior to the first marker
- If a horse does not completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position
- Jogging more than two strides, but less than half the length of the arena or half of a circle
- Exiting a rollback at a jog more than two strides, but less than half of the arena

**The following will result in a reduction of one point:**

- Being out of lead for each one quarter of a circle (including in run arounds in approach to stop or rollback)
- Over or under spinning more than 1/8 but less than 1/4 of a turn

**The following will result in a reduction of one-half point:**

- Starting a circle at a jog for up to two (2) strides
- Exiting a rollback at a jog for up to two (2) strides
- Over or under spinning more than a shoulder-width but less than 1/8 of a turn
- Failing to remain 20 feet (6 meters) from wall or fence when approaching a stop or rollback
- Delayed change of leads by one stride where described in pattern

**Faults against the horse to be scored accordingly, but not to cause disqualification:**

- A.** Opening mouth excessively when wearing bit
- B.** Excessive jawing, opening mouth or head raising on stop
- C.** Lack of smooth, straight stop on haunches, bouncing or sideways stop
- D.** Refusing to change leads
- E.** Anticipating signals
- F.** Stumbling
- G.** Backing sideways
- H.** Knocking over markers

**Faults against the rider to be scored accordingly, but not to cause disqualification:**

- A.** Losing stirrup
- B.** Failure to run circles or figure eights within the markers is not considered a fault depending on arena conditions and size; however, failure to go beyond markers on rollbacks and stops is considered a fault.

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## **TERMS USED TO COMPLIMENT A REINING HORSE**

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### **OPENING STATEMENTS**

- Exhibited the most agility and control
- Ran the fastest pattern with more control and authority
- He showed more willingness and precision in executing the prescribed pattern.
- He accomplished more in the pattern.
- He was simply more fundamentally correct throughout the pattern.
- She ran a more difficult and demanding pattern, and yet showed a more positive expression.
- Exhibited more athletic ability and handle throughout the pattern
- Rider had a greater degree of handle on the horse, thus requiring less excessive reining and leg cues.
- Was more stylish in the pattern, which was a more definite, well-blended combination of fast and hard, soft and slow
- Her pattern was quicker and more correct, and she was obviously the top horse in today's class.
- Placed at the top of the class because she exhibited a more complete picture of control, smoothness and speed
- Was a more natural, athletic horse, being a brighter, cleaner mover, holding a steadier rhythm and cadence
- The pattern was more accurate and was run with more effort and control from horse and rider.
- He was a more suitable reiner, being more broke, accepting the rider's control without resistance.
- Smoothly achieved control
- Accepted the rider's contact, staying lighter and more supple through his neck and jaw
- Flowed through the pattern
- More accurate in his pattern
- More exciting and pleasing form
- Showed more finesse and control
- More relaxed throughout the pattern
- Had the most authority and control through the pattern

### **STOPS**

- More controlled ideal stops
- Fell deeper into the ground
- Dropped deeper into the ground
- Dropped his hocks deeper into the ground
- Stopped with her haunches deeper in the ground
- Her stops were deeper and more completely shut down.



- His stops were more stylish, being deeper with a longer slide.
- Deeper, straighter slides
- Performed a more correct sliding stop
- Had longer slides
- Stopped in a more relaxed manner
- Was more confident in his stops
- Was a smoother, longer stopping horse
- Exhibited a more controlled and relaxed sliding stop
- Stopped squarer
- Worked off his haunches and maintained movement in his front end, allowing him to have a more relaxed stop
- Dropped his hocks deeper in the ground, while remaining more mobile up front, allowing for longer, deeper stops
- Dropped his hindquarters deeper into the ground, while keeping his front legs relaxed, allowing him to execute a more correct sliding stop
- He slid further in the stops with his hindquarters more squarely beneath him and his head more tucked as he stayed relaxed with his front legs.
- His stops were executed with his being more over his haunches and more relaxed through his mouth, poll, neck and loin.
- Was a smoother stopping horse that stayed more relaxed and supple down his spine, thus allowing him to also slide further
- Moved into the stop with greater authority and confidence, sinking deeper, curving his spine and crawling up front, thus sliding further and smoother
- Used the ground more, stopping deeper and staying in the stop longer
- She was a softer, prettier moving mare, with stops that were deeper and longer.
- For she was more correct and responsive in the stops, which were longer, harder and deeper
- He eased down into the dirt, holding both hocks steady in his longer slides, while moving more up front.
- Stopped with his haunches deeper in the ground, walking further up front
- He ran harder in his rundowns, which enabled him to drive his hocks deeper and farther in the ground while remaining freer and more supple up front.
- Was a harder and deeper stopper

## **RUNDOWNS**

- Drove out harder in the runs, stopped smoother and slid further
- Moved more freely into the rollback, driving out harder over the hocks
- Ran with greater speed and dispatch from end to end, rolling back cleaner over the hocks
- Ran harder with less hesitation into his stops
- Ran with more authority and aggressiveness into her stops
- Ran harder with less anticipation in the straight-aways
- Came out of her rollbacks with more speed
- Ran harder and faster into his stops

## **CIRCLES AND LEAD CHANGES**

- Showed more size and speed variation to her circles
- Ran harder and faster circles
- Ran with more control and confidence in his circles
- His circles were performed more in the center of the arena.
- Performed her circles in a more correct and precise manner
- Held his nose to the inside of the circle
- Ran rounder circles
- Rated the circles more uniformly
- Drops back more obediently into the slow circles, holding his body more correctly, while keeping a more steady pace
- Circled with a more correct arc through his body
- Performed his circles in a quieter and calmer manner
- Ran flatter and smoother circles
- Showed a more released arc through his body, setting his nose more to the inside of each circle
- Was more balanced in his circles, staying lighter and more responsive between the reins with his neck, shoulder and hip more arced
- Circled with her head, shoulder and hip more desirably arced in the direction of her circles
- Showed more variation of size and speed of circles
- Showed greater control of the arena and ground by staying more within the markers while displaying smoother and more balanced circles
- Had a more correct degree of flex through his neck and shoulder
- She was softer in the bridle, following a lighter rein in her more precisely executed circles.
- Ran his eights with more speed and was more fluid in the lead changes
- Greater contrast in the speed and size of his circles
- Was more balanced in the circles, opening his stride without hesitation in the fast circles, while slowing down more promptly into more evenly shaped small circle
- His figure eights were more symmetrical.
- Higher continuity of speed and size as he traveled through his circles
- Flowed through his circles
- Size, speed and smoothness of circles
- More alignment and glide to circles
- Kept his nose tipped to the inside of his circles
- More prompt and exact lead changes
- Smoother and more direct lead changes
- Exhibited smoother, simultaneous lead changes with less anticipation and hesitation
- Was more proficient in his lead changes, stops and turns
- Exhibited more natural, effortless lead changes
- Was more precise in the placement of his lead changes

## **SPINS AND ROLLBACKS**

- Turned faster in the spins with his front loose and low
- Kept a lower center of gravity in his faster spins
- Faster spins while remaining flatter and holding a more stationary pivot foot
- Held his body straighter in the spins, keeping his pivot foot in place while staying looser and lower in front as he reached around
- Each of his spins was faster than the preceding one.
- Stayed down more, being more level in the spins, crossing over cleaner with more reach, while maintaining faster speed
- Faster, flatter spins with her pivot foot firm to the ground
- Showed more desirable spins, turning more ideally over his haunches, while maintaining a lower center of gravity
- Flatter, more consistent spins
- Smoother, flatter spins
- He stayed down lower in his more brilliant spins.
- Faster spins
- She put in snappier spins.
- Had more flexion to his hocks, maintaining a lower center of gravity while spinning
- More correct and agile spins in terms of his planting the pivot foot, shifting his weight more to his haunches, making his forehand maneuverable, exhibiting cleaner, faster spins
- He maintained a more stationary pivot foot and gained more speed with each revolution.
- Was a faster, flatter spinner
- He remained more level over his top line with cleaner more cadenced cross-overs up front in his spins.
- Showed more snap to her spins
- He was more precise in the completion of his spins.
- More readily shut down after four revolutions to the right (left)
- She was more exact in the completion of her spins.
- Ran harder from rollback to rollback
- Rolled back more over his haunches
- Performed his rollbacks in a more correct and willing manner
- Performed more correct rollbacks, with them being more over his haunches
- Performed a more correct 180-degree rollback
- Rolled over the hocks more correctly, with a more stationary pivot foot
- Rolled back cleaner over the hocks
- Rolled back harder over the hocks
- Kept his hocks underneath him more in each rollback, pushing off with greater power and drive
- As he executed his rollback, he showed more control, aggression and a higher degree of difficulty.
- He came back cleaner out of his rollbacks.
- He snapped back harder and faster over his rollbacks.

## **BACK**

- Was a faster and cleaner backing horse, with each foot falling equi-distant of the last
- Backed more readily over his tracks
- Faster, straighter back and settled more readily
- Lowered his head, tucked his nose and backed straighter and squarely over the hocks
- Backed faster and with more ease
- Flexed her poll, relaxed her jaw and backed in a straighter fashion
- Was a faster, straighter backing horse
- Was more willing to settle after backing (or spinning)
- Backed straighter and faster when asked
- Was faster and more willful when asked to back

## **MANNERS**

- Was more responsive to the slightest cue
- Worked more efficiently and with a more cooperative attitude
- Was a more willing worker, performing in a more positive manner
- More readily yielded to his rider's cues and aids
- Moved on a looser rein with less restraint on the part of his rider
- Performed with greater willingness
- Was quieter about the mouth and tail
- Was a more willing worker and was under more control by her rider
- Was quieter and calmer
- Performed her duties in a more workmanlike manner, showing more response and obedience to her rider
- Stood calmer after backing
- Showed more response to the rider
- Had less mouthing of the bit
- Was a more suitable reiner, as he was more broke
- Performed duties on a looser rein
- Was more responsive to his rider requiring less handling particularly through his circles

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## **TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE FAULTS IN A REINING HORSE**

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### **GENERAL STATEMENTS**

- He lacked the overall correctness and finesse of those I placed above him.
- Lacked the control, finesse and style
- Was the least willing, least athletic horse in the class
- He showed to be under the least control by his rider.
- Had the poorest run today

- She was the heaviest penalized.
- Received a penalty score of zero
- He was the most resistant.
- Showed the least challenge over the pattern

### **STOPS AND RUNDOWNS**

- Did not stop
- Failed to stop
- Came out of his stops early
- Popped on his front end
- Was heavy on his front end
- Failed to completely stop on every stop
- Ran through his stops
- Was bouncy in his stops
- Stopped on his front end
- Extremely rough in his stops
- Flipped his head in the stops
- Crooked stops
- Stopped short, splaying out, thus losing his balance in the stops
- Did not use the ground efficiently when stopping, as he stopped on his front end while popping out the ground too early each time
- Came out of each stop too soon
- Anticipated in the runs
- Was sluggish and resistant in the runs
- Ran slow and with greater resistance
- Anticipated the stops, setting up early at each end
- Bolted into each run and was uncontrollable
- Took the bit and bolted coming out of the rollbacks
- Flipped his head and ran away in the runs
- Changed leads continuously, anticipating going into each stop
- He was short and shallow in his stops.

### **CIRCLES AND LEAD CHANGES**

- Dropped his shoulder, drifting in and out of the circles
- Flipped her head, swinging her body off course in the circles
- Was stiff, lacking the desirable arc through her body
- Lacked size and speed variation
- Was slow and unwilling in the circles
- Shouldered out in each circle
- Was over-bent in the circles, shouldering out each way
- Was high and chargy
- Lack of control in the circles
- Showed no change of speed in circles

## **LEAD CHANGES**

- Was late in his changes of leads
- Anticipated the lead changes, dropping his shoulder to the inside of the new circle
- Was chargy and rough in his lead changes
- Changed leads early each time
- Missed his hind lead three-quarters the way around the first circle
- He missed his hind lead change one-fourth the way of the third circle.
- Missed a lead for three strides going into his second circle
- Was late in his lead change from left to right

## **SPINS AND ROLLBACKS**

- Lost her pivot foot, ending the spins far off center
- Hopped around in the spins
- Backed out of his spins
- Walked out of the spins
- Came up and out of the spins too soon
- Hung in the spins
- Froze up in the spins
- Shoulder out in the spins
- Was over-bent in the spins, losing his pivot foot, thus spinning over his middle
- Was too elevated and unaggressive in the first set of spins
- Stuck in the second set of spins
- Was slow in his rollbacks
- Hung in his left rollback
- Stuck in the right rollback
- Froze up in his rollback
- Was slow and resistant during the pivots
- Flipped his head in the spins
- He was the most resistant in his spins.
- She was the slowest spinner.
- Received a penalty score zero for over (under) spinning to the right (left)

## **BACK**

- Did not back
- Refused to back
- Was hesitant to back
- Her front legs were sluggish when backing.
- Flipped his head and wrung his tail when asked to back
- He was the most resistant when backing.

## **MANNERS**

- Was ill and resentful throughout the class
- Wrung his tail
- Flipped her head

- Opened his mouth and chewed the bit throughout the duration of the pattern
- Constantly mouthed the bit
- Mouthy about the bit
- Lacked a positive expression and willingness
- Did not yield to the rider's demands
- Required undue restraint on the part of the rider
- Required the most restraint
- Was ridden on the tightest, least obedient rein
- She was the most resistant to her rider.

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## **THE FOLLOWING ARE SAMPLE SET OF REASONS FOR REINING.**

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### **I PLACE THE REINING 1-2-3-4.**

I started with the best stopping horse 1. The palomino ran harder into his stops and drove his hocks farther into the ground. Additionally, 1 was a faster and flatter spinner.

Certainly 2 placed his lead changed more directly in the center of the pen.

In the middle pair, it is 2 over 3. The buckskin showed more size and speed variation to his circles. Also, he required less handling from his rider and was quieter about the bit.

I give credit to 3 as he was a longer stopper.

In the bottom pair, it is 3 over 4. The branded sorrel had a more correct run. She was more precise in her spins and was more correct in her lead in her circles.

I grant that 4 was more stationary in his pivot foot. However, the bay required the most handling and had the most penalties. 4 received a 1 point penalty for overspinning to the left and a 2 point out of lead penalty as he dragged his lead after the first change.

For these reasons, I place the Reining 1-2-3-4.

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### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF REINING 4-2-1-3.**

Starting with a pair of more athletic performers in 4 and 2, and ending with a penalty score of 0 in 3.

In my initial pair of higher quality reiners, it is pattern precision that finds 4 over 2. 4 was more exact in the placement of his lead changes and more correct in the completion of his spins. Additionally, the sorrel initiated each stop more correctly placed after the markers.

I will admit that 2 showed good size and speed variation to his circles, however he incurred a ½ point penalty for overspinning to the right and a 2 point marker penalty.

Nevertheless, it is 2's advantage in a more athletic and harder run pattern that finds him over 1 in my middle pair. 2 dropped his hocks deeper into the ground

while remaining more mobile up front, allowing for longer, deeper slides. Additionally, the bay was faster and flatter in his spins, crossing over with more cadence and reach.

I will admit that 1 placed his lead change more nearly centered in the pen; however, he came out of his stops and was slow and sluggish in his circles.

Still, it is 1's advantage in correctness that finds him over 3 in my bottom pair. 1 was simply able to perform a more penalty free pattern, performing the correct number of spins to the left.

I left 3 last as the bay spun 5 times to the left, receiving a penalty score 0, making him by far the heaviest penalized of the class. Making my placing 4-2-1-3. Thank you.

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### **I PLACED THE REINING 3-4-2-1.**

In a class of athletic and aggressive reining horses, I favored 3 over 4 in the top pair. 3 ran a harder, more demanding pattern by showing greater size and speed variation in his circles. He ran more flowing circles, keeping his nose and shoulder to the inside of his circle while maintaining a more relaxed and natural arc to his body. Additionally, the sorrel executed more correct rollbacks with greater finesse.

I will concede that 4 backed straighter and faster; however, he incurred a ½ penalty for jogging out of his right roll back.

In the middle pair, I placed 4, over 2. 4 was a more willing worker that performed his duties in a more positive manner, specifically in his lead changes. Additionally, the gray was a more relaxed reiner that readily yielded to his rider's cues and aids.

I recognize that 2 showed greater snap to his rollbacks; however, he was poorly mannered, mouthing the bit excessively.

Moving to the bottom pair, it is 2 over 1. The bay performed a more precise pattern, readily and correctly picked up his lead changes between circles. Additionally, 2 ran with greater authority into his stops, melting his haunches deeper into the ground while maintaining movement on his front end, allowing him to slide further and deeper into the ground on every stop.

I grant that 1 was fast and flat in his spins; however, I left him last as he received a 5 point penalty for kicking out his lead change from left to right, making him by far the poorest mannered and heaviest penalized of the class. For these reasons, I placed this reining class 3-4-2-1.

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For this class of reining, I found an obvious top in the best stopping and spinning horse 2; a closer middle pair in 1 and 3; and easily left 4 to the bottom as he received a penalty score of zero, thus making my placing 2-1-3-4.

2 overwhelmed the class today as he had the most authority and control over the pattern. The palomino was the fastest and flattest in the spins with a more stationary pivot foot. Over and beyond this, 2 ran harder into his stops, which



allowed him to drive his hocks deeper into the ground while remaining freer and more supple up front, thus producing a longer and more stylish slide.

1 came back cleaner over his hocks in the rollbacks. However, it was his responsiveness and aggressiveness in the pattern that places him over 3 in the closer middle pair.

The hip-branded sorrel was more responsive to his rider as he required less guidance through the circles on a longer drape of rein. He showed more size and speed variation while more correctly following the path of the circle with more arc to his body. Additionally, 1 came back harder and faster over his hocks especially in his rollback to the right and took off with more power and impulsion.

Indeed, 3 was faster and more stationary in his spins; however, it is greater adherence to the pattern that must place him over 4 in the final decision.

The blaze-faced bay simply was more correct in the number of revolutions when spinning to the right as 4 added an extra spin. Moreover, 3 was more willing to his rider as he required less handling from his rider. As well, the bay was faster and flatter in his spins as he maintained a lower center of gravity and gained more speed with each rotation.

Yes, 4 was faster and straighter when asked to back; nevertheless, the buckskin is at the bottom of the class as she not only was the poorest, slowest spinner, but she required the greatest amount of handling from her rider and added a full rotation in her spins to the right; thus, receiving a penalty score of zero and must be last in the reining placed 2-1-3-4. Thank you.

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# Chapter Seven

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## WESTERN RIDING

Western riding is an event where the horse is judged on quality of gaits, lead changes at the lope, response to the rider, manners and disposition. The horse should perform with reasonable speed and be sensible, well-mannered, free and easy moving.

Credit shall be given for and emphasis placed on: smoothness, even cadence of gaits (i.e., starting and finishing pattern with the same cadence) and the horse's ability to change leads precisely, easily and simultaneously both hind and front at the center point between markers. In order to have balance, with quality lead changes, the horse's head and neck should be in a relaxed, natural position, with his poll level with or slightly above the level of the withers. He should not carry his head behind the vertical, giving the appearance of intimidation, or be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance. The horse should have a relaxed head carriage showing response to the rider's hands, with a moderate flexion at the poll. Horses may be ridden with light contact or on a reasonably loose rein. The horse should cross the log both at the jog and the lope without breaking gait or radically changing stride.

In an approved western riding class, any one of 8 (five traditional and three green patterns) approved AQHA western riding patterns may be used. One of these 8 patterns is to be selected by the judge of the class and used by all contestants in the class. Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually and separately.

Scoring will be on a basis of 0-100 with 70 denoting an average performance. The individual maneuvers are scored in 1/2 point increments from a low of -1 1/2 to a high of +1 1/2 with a score of 0 denoting a maneuver that is correct with no degree of difficulty.

A contestant shall be penalized each time the following occur:

### **One-half (1/2) point**

- Tick or light touch of the log
- Hind legs skipping or coming together during lead change
- Non-simultaneous lead change (front to hind or hind to front)

### **One (1) point**

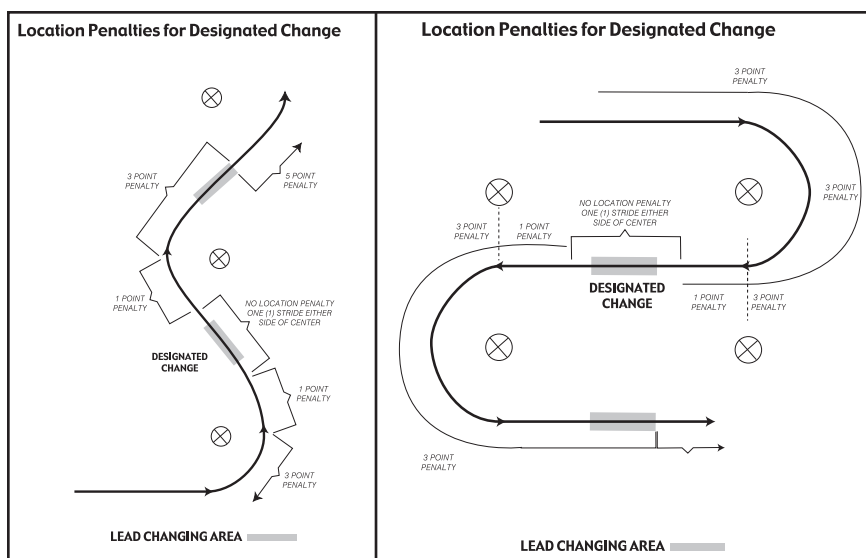
- Hitting or rolling log
- Out of lead more than one stride either side of the center point and between the markers
- Splitting the log (log between the two front or two hind feet) at the lope
- Break of gait at the walk or jog up to two strides

### Three (3) points

- Not performing the specific gait (jog or lope)
- Not stopping when called for in the pattern, within 10 feet (3 meters) of the designated area
- Simple change of leads
- Out of lead at or before the marker prior to the designated change area or out of lead at or after the marker after the designated change area
- Additional lead changes anywhere in the pattern (except when correcting an extra change or incorrect lead)
- In pattern one failure to start the lope within 30 feet (9 meters) after crossing the log at the jog
- Break of gait at the walk or jog for more than two strides
- Break of gait at the lope

### Five (5) points

- Out of lead beyond the next designated change area (note: failures to change, including cross-cantering. Two consecutive failures to change would result in two five point penalties)
- Blatant disobedience, including kicking out, biting, bucking and rearing



### Disqualified – 0 score

- Illegal equipment
- Willful abuse
- Off course
- Knocking over markers
- Completely missing log
- Major refusal – stop and back more than 2 strides or 4 steps with front legs
- Major disobedience or schooling

- Failure to start lope prior to end cone in pattern #1
- Four or more simple lead changes and/or failures to change leads (Except for Level 1 classes)
- Failure to start lope within 30 feet of designated area in patterns 2, 3, 4, 5 and Green Western Riding patterns 1, 2 and 3 (except for Level 1 classes).
- Overturn of more than 1/4 turn

Fault, which will be cause for disqualification, except in Level 1 amateur or Level 1 youth classes, which shall be faults scored according to severity:

- Head carried too low (tip of ear below withers consistently)
- Over flexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical consistently.

### **Credits**

- Changes of leads, hind and front simultaneously
- Change of lead near the center point of the lead change area
- Accurate and smooth pattern
- Even pace throughout
- Easy to guide and control with rein and leg
- Manners and disposition
- Conformation and fitness

### **Faults (to be judged accordingly in maneuver scores)**

- Opening mouth excessively
- Anticipating signals
- Stumbling
- Head carried too high
- Head carried too low (tip of ear below the withers)
- Over-flexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical
- Excessive nosing out

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## **TERMS TO DESCRIBE THE WESTERN RIDING HORSE**

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### **GENERAL STATEMENTS**

- Was the most stylish lead changer
- He had the smoothest and most correct lead changes.
- Was the most precise in the pattern
- She was the most willfully guided.
- She was the highest quality mover and had the most stylish changes.
- He was the most correct in his frame.
- She was the most consistent in her pace and frame.
- Most credit earning lead changes

- Flatter, smoother changes

### **JOG AND JOG OVER THE LOG**

- Was a more cadenced jogger
- She was a more stylish mover at the jog.
- He jogged over the log more cleanly.
- He maintained a more ideal frame at the jog and crossed the log more in stride.

### **LOPE OVER THE LOG**

- He loped the log with less hesitation.
- He remained more level over his frame when loping over the log.
- He loped the log more nearly in stride.
- He was cleaner when crossing the log at the lope.

### **QUALITY OF LEAD CHANGES**

- He was a more stylish lead changer.
- She was a more fluid mover and produced a more stylish lead change.
- She had more drive from behind, which enabled her to be smoother and more fluid when changing leads.
- She was smoother and more stylish when changing leads.
- Was a more simultaneous lead changer
- Traveled at a more desirable pace with greater drive from behind, thus allowed him to swing through with a flatter knee and a more stylish lead change
- She was more simultaneous in her lead changes.
- She had greater forward momentum with more drive from behind, thus enabling her to be a more stylish mover and have more effortless changes.

### **PLACEMENT OF LEAD CHANGES**

- He was more precise in the placement of his lead changes.
- Was more exact in the placement of his lead changes
- She changed leads more evenly between the markers.
- He more efficiently changed leads down the line.
- He was more correct placing his lead changes between the cones.
- She had a more precise pattern.
- He was freer of penalty points due to his more correct placement of lead changes down the line.
- Placed his lead changes more equi-distant between the markers

### **MANNERS**

- He was more willfully guided.
- He was more responsive to his rider.
- She was quieter about the bit.

- Required less handling from the rider
- Was more attentive to the rider
- She went on a longer drape of rein.
- He was more mindful of the bit.
- She was quieter about the bit and tail, especially when asked to change leads.

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## **THE FOLLOWING ARE SAMPLE SETS OF REASONS FOR WESTERN RIDING.**

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### **I PLACE THE WESTERN RIDING 3-4-2-1.**

In the top pair, it is 3 over 4. The black was a more stylish lead changer. Moreover, he was more simultaneous and required less handling through his changes.

I grant that 4 backed straighter when asked; however, he received a ½ penalty to a non-simultaneous change in his second crossing change.

In the middle pair, it is 4 over 2. The bay had more drive from behind, being smoother and flatter in each switch. Additionally, the bay went on a longer drape of rein while being more responsive to his rider.

Certainly 2 was more simultaneous in his third change down the line; however, I left him third as he was resistant and heavily handled by his rider.

In the bottom pair it is 2 over 1. 2 simply was more penalty free, jogging over the log cleaner and being more precise in the placement of his lead changes.

I recognize that 1 was ridden on a longer rein; nevertheless, the palomino received a ½ point penalty for ticking the log at the jog and was late in his first and third line changes for two 1 point penalties. Therefore, he is last in the Western Riding placed 3-4-2-1.

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### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF WESTERN RIDING 3-1-2-4**

Starting with a pair of more effortless, higher quality changers in 3 and 1, and ending with a penalty score 0 in 4.

Ideally, 3 could be more prompt when asked to back; however, it is 3's advantage in pattern precision that finds him over 1 in my close top pair. The sorrel was simply freer of penalty points due to his more correct placement of lead changes down the line.

I do admit that 1 was a fluid, smooth changer; however, he incurred a 1 point penalty for being late in his third line change.

Nevertheless, it is 1's advantage in quality of changes and movement that finds him over 2 in my middle pair. 1 performed with more drive and impulsion off of his hocks, while being rounder over his topline, allowing him to be freer in his shoulder and flatter through his knee. Additionally, the bay was more effortless and flatter in each of his changes.

I do admit that 2 was correct in the placement of each switch; however he was

simply more labored in each change.

Still, it is 2's advantage in being more willful, while having a more penalty free pattern that finds him over 4 in my bottom pair. 2 was more responsive to his riders less obvious aids and cues. Additionally, the sorrel was simply able to complete the pattern as written.

I left 4 last as he not only was extremely poor mannered, but he also performed four simple lead changes, receiving a penalty score of 0, making him the heaviest penalized of the class placed 3-1-2-4. Thank you.

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### **THE WESTERN RIDING PLACED 4-1-3-2.**

I started with an obvious top in the most consistent and responsive 4; found a logical second in 1 and left 3 and 2 to the bottom as they were the least responsive and most penalized.

4 overwhelmed the class as he was the most responsive and stylish performer today. The blaze-faced sorrel was more correct in his frame and pace as he remained more level over his topline and had greater forward momentum. Additionally, 4 required less handling and was smoother and more simultaneous in his lead changes.

I give credit to 1 as he was a more stylish mover at the lope, but he stays second as he performed a non-simultaneous change in his fourth line change, for a ½ point penalty.

In the intermediate pair, it is 1 over 3. The bay moved with more elevation through his back and shoulder, this resulted in a more fluid lead change. Beyond this, 1 was more precise in the placement of his crossing changes and loped over the log more nearly in stride.

Due to the differences in this pair, I could find no suitable concession for 3 as he received two 3 point penalties for being late in his crossing changes and a 1 point penalty for splitting the log at the lope. Still, it is his more correct pattern that places him over 2 in the closer final pair.

The buckskin was more willfully guided by his rider and was ridden on a longer drape of rein. Additionally, he was more correct in picking up the lope after crossing the log, and he more efficiently maintained the lope through the line changes.

Yes, 2 was more correct in the placement of his crossing changes; nevertheless, the black is at the bottom of the class because he required the most handling and guidance from his rider; and he performed simple lead changes in the first and third changes down the line, resulting in two 3 point penalties. Thus, he was the least responsive and heaviest penalized and is last in the Western Riding placed 4-1-3-2.

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# Chapter Eight

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## TRAIL

Trail is judged on the performance of the horse over obstacles, with emphasis on manners, response to the rider and quality of movement. Credit will be given to horses that negotiate the obstacle with style and some degree of speed, providing correctness is not sacrificed. Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to the obstacles and the capability of picking their own way through the course when obstacles warrant it, and willingly responding to the rider's cues on more difficult obstacles. Horses shall be penalized for any unnecessary delay while approaching or negotiating an obstacle. Horses with artificial appearance over obstacles should be penalized. As there is no rail work in trail, the course must be designed to show all three gaits (walk, jog, lope) either between obstacles or as part of its work, while quality of movement and cadence should be considered as part of the maneuver score. While on the line of travel between obstacles, the horse shall be balanced, carrying his head and neck in a relaxed, natural position, with the poll level with or slightly above the withers. The head should not be carried behind the vertical or excessively nosed out. Gait between obstacles shall be at the discretion of the judge.

### Scoring

Scoring will be on the basis of 0-infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Each obstacle will receive an obstacle score that should be added or subtracted from 70 and is subject to penalties that should be subtracted. Each obstacle will be scored on the following basis, ranging from negative 1 1/2 to positive 1 1/2: -1 1/2 extremely poor; -1 very poor; -1/2 poor; 0 correct; +1/2 good; +1 very good; +1/2 excellent. Obstacle scores are to be determined and assessed independently of penalty points. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **The following deductions will result:**

##### **One-half (1/2) Point**

- Each tick of log, pole, cone, plant or any component of the obstacle

##### **One (1) Point**

- Each bite of or hit of or stepping on a log, cone, plant or any component of the obstacle
- Incorrect or break of gait at walk or jog for two strides or less
- Both front feet or hind feet in a single-strided slot or space at a walk or jog
- Skipping over or failing to step into required space



- Split pole in lope-over

### **Three (3) Point**

- Incorrect or break of gait at walk or jog for more than 2 strides
- Out of lead or break of gait at lope (except when correcting an incorrect lead)
- Knocking down an elevated pole, cone, barrel, plant, obstacle or severely disturbing an obstacle
- Stepping outside the confines of, falling or jumping off or out of obstacle with designated boundaries with one foot once the foot has entered obstacle; including missing one element of an obstacle on a line of travel with one foot

### **Five (5) Points**

- Dropping slicker or object required to be carried on course
- First or second cumulative refusal, balk, or evading an obstacle by shying or backing
- Letting go of gate or dropping rope gate
- Use of either hand to instill fear or praise
- Stepping outside the confines of, falling or jumping off or out of an obstacle with designated boundaries with more than one foot once the foot has entered obstacle; including missing one element of an obstacle on a line of travel with more than one foot
- Blatant disobedience, including kicking out, bucking, rearing, and striking
- Holding or touching the saddle with either hand

### **Disqualified 0 – Score**

- Use of two hands (except on snaffle bit or hackamore classes designated for two hands) or changing hands on reins, except for junior horses shown with hackamore or snaffle bit; only one hand may be used on the reins, except that it is permissible to change hands to work an obstacle
- Use of romal other than as outlined
- Performing the obstacle incorrectly or other than in specified order
- No attempt to perform an obstacle
- Equipment failure that delays completion of pattern
- Excessively or repeatedly touching the horse on the neck to lower the head
- Entering or exiting an obstacle from the incorrect side or direction
- Working obstacle the incorrect direction; including overturns of more than 1/4 turn
- Riding outside designated boundary marker of the arena or course area
- Third cumulative refusal, balk, or evading an obstacle by shying or backing
- Failure to ever demonstrate correct gait between obstacle by shying or backing
- Failure to ever demonstrate correct gait between obstacle as designated
- Failure to follow the correct line of travel between obstacles

### **Faults Scored According to Severity**

- Head carried too high
- Head carried too low (tip of ears below the withers)

- Over-flexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical
- Excessive nosing out
- Opening mouth excessively

### **Setting the course**

At least six obstacles must be used, three of which must be from the mandatory list of obstacles and at least three others selected from the list of optional obstacles.

(For a complete list of approved and prohibited obstacles and complete listing of rules, please reference the current AQHA handbook of rules and regulations)

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## **TERMS USED TO COMPLIMENT A TRAIL HORSE**

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### **OPENING STATEMENTS**

- He was the most responsive.
- Had the smoothest and most stylish pattern
- Was the most willingly guided through the course
- He was a more effortless performer.
- She had the cleanest and most correct run.
- Was the least penalized
- He was a more confident individual.
- She was more relaxed through the pattern.
- She had more challenge and style to the pattern.
- He had a more correct frame.
- Moved through the course more carefully

### **BACK**

- Was worked through the back with less hesitation
- He was more responsive to his rider in the back.
- She required less guidance when backing through the L.
- Was straighter and smoother in the back through

### **BOX**

- Turned faster in the box
- Required less handling when turning in the box
- Was smoother and faster in the box
- She added difficulty as she turned faster in the box.

### **LOPE AND LOPE OVERS**

- He took the poles more nearly in stride.
- He was cleaner over the right lead lope poles.
- She maintained a more consistent pace when loping over the poles.

- Was more willingly guided across the lope-overs
- He was a more stylish mover especially in the right lead lope-overs.
- She maintained a more natural frame particularly in the lope overs.
- She loped the logs with less visible cues from her rider.
- Was slower legged at the lope
- He maintained a more even pace, specifically in the left lead lope-over logs.

### **JOG AND JOG OVERS**

- She was cleaner and more correct in the jog-overs.
- He jogged over the logs cleaner.
- She was more distinctly cadenced at the jog, especially in the jog serpentine.
- Maintained a more correct, more natural frame when jogging over the logs
- Smoother and more cadenced through the serpentine
- Took the jog poles more nearly in stride

### **GATE**

- Was smoother and quicker when working the gate
- He was more effortless when working the gate.
- Was quicker through the gate
- Showed less hesitation at the gate and had more confidence through the course
- She was more responsive when working the gate.
- Was tighter and more efficient when working the gate

### **BRIDGE**

- Was more confident and responsive over the bridge
- Crossed the bridge more willfully
- She crossed the bridge with less hesitation.
- He was more attentive when crossing the bridge.
- Was more alert in the approach to the bridge
- Approached the bridge with less guidance from his rider

### **SIDEPASS**

- Was smoother in the side pass
- Side passed with less handling from his rider
- She was quieter about the mouth in the side pass.
- He was quicker when asked to side-pass.
- Was straighter and more willful in the side-pass
- Crossed over more efficiently, being smoother in his sidepass

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## **TERMS USED TO CRITICIZE A TRAIL HORSE**

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### **OPENING STATEMENTS**

- He was the least responsive.

- Had the least stylish pattern
- Required the most guidance through the course
- Was the heaviest penalized
- He was the least confident.
- Was the poorest mannered

### **BACK**

- Was more hesitant in the back through
- He was the least responsive to his rider in the back.
- She required the most guidance when backing through the L.

### **BOX**

- She was the slowest in the box.
- Required excessive handling when turning in the box
- He stepped out of the box when turning to the right.
- Was the least correct in the box

### **LOPE AND LOPE OVERS**

- She was inconsistent in her pace when loping over the poles.
- Was least willfully guided across the lope-overs
- He was the least stylish mover, especially in the right lead lope overs.
- She required more handling when loping over the logs.
- Was the poorest quality mover
- He was uneven in his pace and frame, especially in the left lead lope overs.

### **JOG AND JOG OVERS**

- She was the least correct in the jog overs
- He jogged over the logs with the most handling.
- She was uncadenced at the jog.
- He was inconsistent in his frame when jogging over the logs.

### **GATE**

- Was hesitant and resistant when working the gate
- Was slow and lethargic through the gate
- She was the least responsive when working the gate.

### **BRIDGE**

- Was the least confident and responsive over the bridge
- Crossed the bridge with more hesitation
- He was inattentive when crossing the bridge.
- Required more guidance from his rider when approaching the bridge

### **SIDEPASS**

- Was resistant in the side-pass
- He needed more handling from his rider in the side-pass.

- Was slow and resistant in the side-pass
- He was the slowest when asked to side-pass.

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## **THE FOLLOWING ARE SAMPLE SETS OF REASONS FOR TRAIL.**

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### **I PLACED THE TRAIL 3-2-4-1.**

In the top pair, it is 3 over 2. The sorrel was more responsive to his rider, and he was more correct through the obstacles. Moreover, 3 required less handling from his rider, and he jogged smoother through the serpentine.

I grant that 2 was a more stylish mover at the lope; however, he recieved a ½ penalty for a tick in the serpentine.

In the middle pair, it is 2 over 4. The dark bay was ridden on a longer drape of rein and was smoother and faster in the back. Additionally, he was more willing when working the gate and crossed the bridge with fewer aides from her rider.

Indeed, 4 was cleaner in his jog overs; however, he knocked over an elevated pole in the back chute, resulting in a 3 point penalty.

In the bottom pair, it is 4 over 1. The gray more efficiently maintained the correct gait through the lope overs and was more willing when asked to turn in the box.

Certainly, the palomino was cleaner in the back through. Nevertheless, 1 received the most penalties as he broke gait in the lope overs for a 3 point penalty and had numerous ticks in the box. Therefore, he is last in the trail placed 3-2-4-1.

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### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF TRAIL 4-3-2-1.**

Starting with cleanest, most stylish pattern in 4, and ending with the poorest mannered, heaviest penalized in 1.

Ideally, 4 could have working the gate faster; however, it is his advantage in movement and correctness that finds him over 3 in my initial pair. 4 was a higher quality mover, having more drive and impulsion from behind while being freer and flatter up front. Additionally, the bay took each pole more nearly in stride while maintaining a consistent cadence and pace.

I will admit that 3 was prompt when working the gate; however, he was inconsistent in his speed and pace in his lope overs.

Nevertheless it is his advantage in responsiveness that finds him over 2 in my middle pair. 3 more willingly negotiated the course while being quieter about the bit. Additionally, the grey responded more readily to his rider's less obvious aids and cues.

I do admit that 2 was steadier in his frame through the lope overs; however, he received a 3 point penalty for stepping out of the box.

Still, it is his advantage in a more penalty free pattern that finds him over 1 in my bottom pair. The sorrel was simply able to maintain the correct gaits while being freer from contact of each obstacle.

I left 1 last as the bay not only incurred numerous ½ and 1 point penalties for hits and ticks, but also broke gait in both his left and right lead lope overs for two 3 point penalties, making him by far the heaviest penalized of the class. Making my placing 4-3-2-1. Thank you.

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#### **THE TRAIL IS PLACED 1-2-3-4.**

I started with an obvious top pair of more responsive, more correct individuals in 1 and 2 and just as easily left 3 and 4 to the bottom as they accumulated the greatest number of penalties.

In the closer top pair, it is 1 over 2. The bay was a more stylish mover and was cleaner and more correct over the obstacles. More specifically, he maintained greater forward momentum over the jog poles and was quicker in the box.

I recognize that 2 was quicker and more efficient when working the gate. And it is this that helps to place him over 3 in the middle decision.

The chestnut was more correct through the pattern as he received fewer penalty points, particularly over the lope poles. 2 took the logs more nearly in stride while maintaining a more correct frame, as 3 split numerous logs in the left lead lope overs.

Certainly 3 was straighter and faster in the back through. However, it was his responsiveness that places him over 4 in the heavier penalized bottom pair.

The buckskin was more willfully guided while going on a longer, more trusting rein. Beyond this, 3 was more correct when turning in the box. Additionally, he was smoother in the back through and was more willful when working the gate.

Indeed 4 took the left lead lope overs more nearly in stride; nevertheless, the black broke gait in the jog serpentine, required the most handling and stepped out of the box numerous times, thus making him the heaviest penalized and bottom in the Trail placed 1-2-3-4.

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# Chapter Nine

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## HUNTER HACK

The purpose of hunter hack is to give horses the opportunity to show their expertise over low fences and on the flat. Horses are first required to jump two fences, two feet three inches (68.5 cm) to three feet (90 cm) in height. The distance between the fences will be set in 12 feet (3.5 meters) increments. There will be a 6 feet. allowance for departure and landing, and there will be a minimum distance between the fences of 36 feet (11 meters). Horses are then shown at a walk, trot and canter both ways of the ring.

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

Placing for the class shall be determined by allowing a minimum of 70 percent for individual fence work and a maximum of 30 percent for the work on the flat. Contestants should emphasize manners and safety of the exhibitors.

Credit will be given to horses with correct jumping style that meet fences squarely, jumping at the center of fence. Judges shall penalize unsafe jumping and bad form over fences, whether touched or untouched, including twisting.



Any error which endangers the horse and/or its rider, particularly refusals or knockdowns, shall be heavily penalized.

## **Scoring**

Scoring shall be on a basis of 0-100, with an approximate breakdown as follows:

- 90-100: an excellent performer and good mover that jumps the course with cadence, balance and style
- 80-89: a good performer that jumps the fences reasonably well, an excellent performer that commits one or two minor faults
- 70-79: the average, fair mover that makes no serious faults, but lacks the style, cadence and good balance of the scoper horses; the good performer that makes a few minor faults
- 60-69: poor movers that make minor mistakes; fair or average movers that have poor fences but not major faults or disobediences
- 50-59: a horse that commits one major fault, such as a hind knock down, refusal, trot, cross canter or drops a leg
- 30-49: a horse that commits two or more major faults, including front knock downs or refusals, or jumps in a manner that otherwise endangers the horse or rider
- 10-29: a horse that avoids elimination but jumps in such an unsafe and dangerous manner as to preclude a higher score

## **Faults**

- Faults over fences will be scored as in a working hunter class.
- Faults during the rail work (to be scored accordingly, but not necessarily cause for disqualification):
  - Being on the wrong lead and/or the wrong diagonal at the trot
  - Excessive speed (any gait), excessive slowness (any gait), breaking gait
  - Failure to take gait when called, head carried too low or too high
  - Nosing out or flexing behind the vertical
  - Opening mouth excessively
  - Stumbling

## **Elimination**

- A total of three disobediences that can include refusal, stop, run out or an extra circle
- Bolting from the arena
- Off course

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## **TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE HUNTER HACK HORSES**

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### **GENERAL STATEMENTS**



- He was a more responsive performer.
- She was the most stylish over the fences.
- Was the most confident
- Was the safest and most effortless performer
- Had the smoothest and most correct course work
- She was the most consistent in her pace and frame.
- Was the most correct over the fences
- He was the most willingly guided.

### **SAFETY AND MANNERS**

- He was steadier in his approach to the fences.
- Showed less hesitation prior to his takeoffs
- Maintained a more consistent pace down the line
- Was a safer performer as he was more correct in the placement of his departure and landing
- Was more respectful of his rider
- He worked more efficiently with a more cooperative attitude.
- Was a more willing worker who performed in a more positive manner
- Performed with greater willingness
- Was a more confident willing performer
- More relaxed and attentive in his approach to the first fence
- Stayed more evenly between the reins
- Was more responsive to his rider
- He required less preparation before each fence.
- Was more willing to his rider

### **FORM OVER FENCES**

- Exhibited more tuck to his front legs, with higher and more even knees
- More tuck to his knees
- Remained straighter between the standards
- Was softer in her landing
- Had more scope over the fences
- He had more style over the fences.
- Higher and more even in her knees over the fences
- Had more arc to his spine
- Cleared the fence with more ease and style
- Was a more stylish performer with a more correct bascule over the fences
- She was a more confident performer with more tuck to her lower leg and more curve to her spine.
- Had a more correct form over the fences
- Was more expressive over the fences
- She was safer and more stylish over the fences.
- Had a more correct frame over the fences with more arc to his body and a more pleasant expression
- He was more stylish over the fences with more scope to his neck and body and

was higher and more even in his knees.

### **PACE, POSITION AND APPROACH TO FENCES**

- Maintained a more even pace down the line
- More direct in his approach to the first fence
- More correct down the line, as he did not change leads
- More balanced in his stride to and from fences
- Met the fence with less stride interruption
- He was squarer in his approach to the fences.
- Was more confident in the approach to the first fence
- Was more easily guided to the fences
- She was more expressive in her approach to the fence.
- He cleared the fences more equally between the standards.
- Crossed the rails more in the center
- Was squarer and more even over the fence
- Maintained a more even pace through the course
- More efficiently maintained a more appropriate pace
- Was more consistent in his pace over the fences
- Was steadier in his pace down the line

### **QUALITY OF MOVEMENT BOTH ON THE FLAT AND OVER FENCES**

- Extended more into the hand gallop
- Freer moving in her shoulder as she showed with more extension of stride in all her gaits
- Showed more impulsion and drive off his hocks
- Was a lighter, softer traveling horse that showed more spring and animation of stride
- Longer, more ground covering, purposeful stride
- Bolder moving horse that showed more length of stride, as well as more impulsion and drive off his hocks
- Lengthening equally from shoulder and stifle, achieving greater length with each stride
- Kept his hocks well underneath him showing greater drive from the hocks
- Moved forward into the trot with more impulsion, more willingly without hesitation
- More sweeping trot
- Showed more energy and purpose of stride
- Exhibited greater forward impulsion from the hindquarters while at the canter
- Engaged rear quarters with more drive
- Had a longer, more ground covering stride
- Was a more stylish mover with a longer softer stride
- Was a bolder mover with a longer stride
- Had greater freedom of movement through his shoulder, thus producing a longer softer stride

- Was more deeply engaged off his hindquarters

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## **TERMS USED TO CRITICIZE HUNTER HACK HORSES**

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### **GENERAL STATEMENTS**

- He was the least stylish over the fences
- The least confident
- She was the most resistant
- Was the least safe
- Lacked the confidence and style of the others in the class
- He was the least correct
- The least responsive

### **SAFETY AND MANNERS**

- Required more handling
- He was the least safe as he rushed down the line.
- Traveled with excessive speed over the fences
- Was the least safe as he knocked down a rail
- Changed leads between the fences
- Uncontrolled at the hand gallop
- Hesitant to stop
- Required excessive handling
- Was the least safe as he rushed the line
- She was the least consistent in her pace.

### **FORM OVER FENCES**

- Showed more separation at the knees
- Exhibited more twist of the hindquarters when jumping
- Was less effective with his hocks
- Less use of the hocks
- Had less balance and control over the fences
- Flat over the fences
- Lacked the arc and bascule over the fences
- Had the least arc to his spine
- He was uneven in his knees.
- He was loose in his lower leg.
- Had a front rub over the first fence because he lacked the drive from behind

### **PACE, POSITION AND APPROACH TO FENCES**

- Was crooked in his approach
- Increased his speed when approaching the fences
- Increased her pace between the fences

- Was short to the first (second) fence
- Chipped in on the second (first) fence
- Took off long to the first fence
- Added a stride between the fences
- Was long to the first fence

### **QUALITY OF MOVEMENT BOTH ON THE FLAT AND OVER FENCES**

- Was the lowest quality mover
- Had the least stylish stride
- Was the shortest and choppiest strided
- She was the poorest mover.
- Had the least drive from behind
- He was heavy on the forehand.
- Shortest strided
- Lacked impulsion from behind
- Had the least drive from behind

---

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE SAMPLE SETS OF REASONS FOR HUNTER HACK.**

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### **I PLACE THE HUNTER HACK 2-4-1-3**

In the initial pair, it is 2 over 4. The bay was a more stylish mover and had more correct form over the fences. 2 had a longer, more ground covering stride with more drive from behind. Additionally, he had more scope and arc to his body over the fences.

I recognize that 4 was quieter about the bit on the flat.

In the middle pair, it is 4 over 1. The gray was more responsive to his rider as he required less handling from his rider and maintained a more correct frame on the flat.

I grant that 1 was more attentive in his approach to the first fence.

In the final pair, it is 1 over 3. 1 was a safer and more correct performer. The sorrel was more correct in his approach to the fences as he required less handling. As well, he was more correct in the number of strides between the fences.

Due to the apparent differences, I could find no grant for 3 as he was not only the shortest strided, but he was the least safe as he switched leads immediately before the first fence and added a stride between the fences. Thus, he was the least safe and must be last in the Hunter Hack placed 2-4-1-3.

---

### **I PLACED THIS CLASS OF HUNTER HACK 3-2-1-4.**

Starting the class with an obvious winner in 3, and ending with an elimination in 4.

In my initial pair, it is quality of movement and consistency that finds 3 over 2. 3 was a bolder moving, longer strided hunter that performed with more drive and impulsion off of his hocks, allowing him better round his topline and lift his shoulder, thus making him flatter through the knee. Additionally, the grey was steadier in his speed and pace down the line.

I do admit that 2 was quieter about the bit in his approach to the first fence; however, he rushed down the line.

Nevertheless, in my closer middle pair, it is rail work that finds 2 over 1. The bay was simply able to remain quieter about the bit and more consistent in his pace and topline while working on the rail.

I will admit that 1 was longer and freer flowing in his stride; however, he switched leads before the first fence and had a hard rub on the front in his second.

Still, it is his advantage in correctness that finds him over 4 in my bottom pair. The sorrel was simple to complete the course, being free from elimination.

I left 4 last as the grey received three refusals, resulting in an elimination, making my placing for this class of Hunter Hack 3-2-1-4. Thank you.

---

#### **I PLACE THE HUNTER HACK 4-3-2-1.**

There was a closer initial pair in 4 and 3 as they were more stylish and more correct and an obvious bottom pair in 2 and 1 as they lacked the positive characteristics of those placed above them.

In the closer initial pair, I preferred the style and confidence of 4 over 3. The dark gray was a high quality mover with more drive from behind and a longer, more ground covering stride. Moreover, 4 was more correct in his form over fences as he had more arc to his spine and was higher and more even in the tuck to his knees.

I recognize that 3 was more level over his topline when on the flat; however, it is his more correct course that places him over 2 in the intermediate pair.

The bay with three socks was more correct in the placement of his departure and landings and was more precise in placing five strides between the fences. To complement this, 3 had more tuck to his knees and was more responsive to his rider, especially in his approach to the second fence.

Indeed, 2 was longer strided at the trot on the flat; however, as he added a stride between the fences, he is third; but his quality of movement places him over 1 in the closer final pair.

The dark chestnut was longer strided at the trot. He had more drive off of his hocks and had more freedom of movement through his shoulder. Beyond this, 2 had more arc to his frame over the fences and was more correct in his frame, keeping his head more nearly perpendicular to the ground.

Yes, the sorrel mare was quieter about the bit when rounding the end of the arena at the hand gallop; but 1 was the shortest strided and least safe as she was long to the first fence, added a stride and chipped into the second fence; therefore, she is last in the Hunter Hack placed 4-3-2-1.

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# Chapter Ten

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## HORSEMANSHIP, EQUITATION

### **Western Horsemanship**

Western horsemanship is designed to evaluate the rider's ability to execute, in concert with his/her horse, a set of maneuvers prescribed by the judge with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence and maintaining a balanced, functional and fundamentally correct body position.

The ideal horsemanship pattern is extremely precise with the rider and horse working in complete unison, executing each maneuver with subtle aids and cues. The horse's head and neck should be carried in a relaxed, natural position, with the poll level with or slightly above the withers. The head should not be carried behind the vertical, giving the appearance of intimidation, or be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance.



## Position

**Overall Position** - The rider should sit in the center of the saddle and the horse's back with the legs hanging to form a straight line from the ear, through the center of the shoulder and hip, touching the back of the heel or through the ankle.

**Upper Body** - The rider's head should be held with the chin level and the eyes forward, and may be directed slightly toward the direction of travel. Excessive turning of the head to the inside of the circle, or down at the horse's head or shoulder will be penalized. The shoulders should be back, level and square. Both hands and arms should be held in a relaxed, easy manner. The arm holding the reins should be bent at the elbow forming a line from the elbow to the horse's mouth. The free hand and arm may be carried bent at the elbow in a similar position as the hand holding the reins. The rider's wrist is to be kept straight and relaxed. The rein hand should be carried immediately above or slightly in front of the saddle horn. The reins should be adjusted so that the rider has light contact with the horse's mouth, and at no time shall reins require more than a slight hand movement to control the horse. Excessively tight or loose reins will be penalized.

**Middle/Base of Support** - The rider should appear natural in the seat and ride with a balanced, functional and correct position. The rider's back should be flat, relaxed and supple. An overly stiff and/or overly arched lower back will be penalized.

**Lower Leg** - Light contact should be maintained with the saddle and horse from the knee to mid-calf. The knee should point forward and remain closed with no space between the exhibitor's knee and the saddle. The exhibitor will be penalized for positioning the legs excessively behind or forward of the vertical position. Regardless of the type of stirrup, the feet may be placed home in the stirrup, with the boot heel touching the stirrup, or may be placed with the ball of the foot in the center of the stirrup. The rider's toes should be pointing straight ahead or slightly turned out with the ankles straight or slightly broken in. Riding with toes only in the stirrup will be penalized. The heels should be lower than the toes, with a slight bend in the knee and the lower leg should be directly under the knee.

## Scoring

Exhibitors are to be scored from 0 to 100. One-half point increments are acceptable. Run content scores will be indicated as follows:

+ = Above Average

√ = Average

- = Below Average

An additional + (excellent) or - (well below average) may be given.

FINAL SCORING shall be on a basis of 0-100, with an approximate breakdown as follows:

**90-100 Excellent** rider, including body position and use of aids. Completes pattern accurately, quickly, smoothly and precisely while demonstrating a high level of professionalism.

**80-89 Very good** performance in execution of the pattern as well as correct horsemanship and use of aid. Excellent horseman who commits a minor fault.

**70-79 Good** pattern execution and average horsemanship lacking adequate style and professional presentation to merit elevating to the next scoring range. A very good rider who commits a minor fault or an excellent rider who commits a major fault.

**60-69 Fair** pattern that lacks quickness or precision or rider has obvious position and/or appearance faults that prevents effective horsemanship; or a good horseman who commits two minor faults in the performance of the pattern. An excellent rider who commits a major fault.

**50-59** One major fault or multiple minor faults in the performance. A rider who demonstrates a lack of riding ability and knowledge of correct body position.

**40-49** A rider who commits a severe fault, two or more major faults or multiple minor faults in the performance or the exhibitor who demonstrates a lack of riding ability and knowledge of correct body position.

**10-39** Rider who commits more than one severe fault or multiple major faults in performance or exhibits poor riding skills, but completes the class and avoids disqualification.

Once the pattern is scored, rail work is used to break any ties or extremely close scores from the pattern work.

## **FAULTS**

Faults can be classified as minor, major or severe. The judge will determine the appropriate classification of a fault based upon the degree and/or frequency of the infraction. An exhibitor who incurs a severe fault avoids elimination, but should be placed below all other exhibitors who complete the pattern correctly. A minor fault can become a major fault, and a major fault can become a severe fault when the degree and/or frequency of the infraction(s) merits.

### **Minor Faults (5 point deduction)**

- Tick or hit of cone
- Over or under turn from 1/8 to 1/4
- Break of gait from a walk, jog or trot up to two strides
- Obviously looking down to check leads

### **Major Faults (10 point deduction)**

- Not performing the specific gait or not stopping when called for in the pattern within 10 feet (3 meters) of the designated location
- Incorrect lead or break of gait (except when correcting an incorrect lead) at the lope
- Break of gait at walk, jog or trot for more than two strides
- Loss of stirrup
- Head carried too low and/or clearly behind the vertical while the horse is in motion, showing the appearance of intimidation

### **Severe Faults (20 point deduction)**



- Loss of rein
- Use of either hand to instill fear or praise while on pattern or during rail work
- Holding saddle with either hand
- Spurring in front of the cinch
- Blatant disobedience including kicking, pawing, bucking and rearing
- Cueing with the end of the romal

**Disqualifications (should not be placed) include:**

- Failure to display correct number
- Abuse of horse or schooling
- Fall of horse or exhibitor
- Illegal equipment or illegal use of hands on reins
- Off pattern, including: knocking over or wrong side of cone or marker; never performing designated gait or lead; over or under turning more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn.

**Faults scored according to severity, which may be cause for disqualification, except in Level I amateur or Level I youth include:**

- Head carried too low and/or clearly behind the vertical excessively and consistently while the horse is in motion, showing the appearance of intimidation

## Hunt Seat Equitation

The purpose of Hunt Seat Equitation is to evaluate the ability of the hunter rider to perform various maneuvers on his/her horse, which provides a base for natural progression to over fence classes.



The communication between horse and rider through subtle cues and aids should not be obvious. Equitation is judged on the rider and his/her effect on the horse. The poll should be level with, or slightly above the withers, to allow proper impulsion behind. The head should not be carried behind the vertical, giving the appearance of intimidation, or be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance.

## **POSITION**

**Overall Position** - The rider should have a straight line from the ear, through the center of the shoulder and hip, touching the back of the heel or through the ankle. Hands should be over and in front of horse's withers, knuckles 30 degrees inside the vertical, hands slightly apart and making a straight line from horse's mouth to the rider's elbow. The eyes should be up and shoulders back. Toes should be at an angle best suited to rider's conformation; heels down, calf of leg in contact with horse. Iron should be on the ball of the foot and must not be tied to the girth.

**THE WALK:** Should be a four-beat gait with the rider in a vertical position with a following hand.

**THE POSTING TROT:** At left diagonal, rider should be sitting the saddle when left front leg is on the ground; at right diagonal, rider should be sitting the saddle when right front leg is on the ground. The rider should close his/her hip angle to allow his/her torso to follow the horizontal motion of the horse. The upper body should be inclined about 20 degrees in front of the vertical.

**SITTING TROT AND CANTER:** At the sitting trot, the upper body is only slightly in front of the vertical. At the canter, the body should be positioned slightly more in front of the vertical. As the stride is shortened, the body should be in a slightly more erect position.

**TWO-POINT POSITION:** The pelvis should be forward, but relaxed, lifting the rider's weight off the horse's back and transferring the weight through the rider's legs. In this position the two points of contact between horse and rider are the rider's legs. Hands should be forward, up the neck, not resting on the neck.

**HAND GALLOP:** A three-beat, lengthened canter ridden in two-point position. The legs are on the horse's sides while the seat is held out of the saddle. When at the hand gallop, the rider's angulation will vary somewhat as the horse's stride is shortened and lengthened. A good standard at a normal hand gallop should be about 30 degrees in front of the vertical.

## **Scoring**

Exhibitors are to be scored from 0 to 100. One-half point increments are acceptable. Run content scores will be indicated as follows:

+ = Above Average

√ = Average

- = Below Average

An additional + (excellent) or - (well below average) may be given.

FINAL SCORING shall be on a basis of 0-100, with an approximate breakdown as follows:

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**80-89 Very good** rider who executes the pattern as well as correct equitation and use of aids.

**70-79 Good** pattern execution and average equitation but lacking adequate style and professional presentation to merit elevating to the next scoring range. A very good rider who commits a minor fault or an excellent rider who commits a major fault.

**60-69 Fair** pattern that lacks quickness or precision. Rider has obvious position and/or appearance faults that prevent effective equitation. A good rider who commits one minor fault, or a very good rider who commits a major fault in the performance of the pattern.

**50-59** One major fault or multiple minor faults in the performance. A rider who demonstrates a lack of riding ability and knowledge of correct body position.

**40-49** Severe fault, two or more major faults or multiple minor faults in the performance of the exhibitor that demonstrates a lack of riding ability and knowledge of correct body position.

**10-39** Exhibitor commits more than one severe fault or multiple major faults in performance, exhibits poor riding skills, but completes the class and avoids disqualification

Once the pattern is scored, rail work is used to break any ties or extremely close scores from the pattern work.

## **FAULTS**

Faults can be classified as minor, major or severe. The judge will determine the appropriate classification of a fault based upon the degree and/or frequency of the infraction. An exhibitor who incurs a severe fault avoids elimination, but should be placed below all other exhibitors who complete the pattern correctly. A minor fault can become a major fault, and a major fault can become a severe fault when the degree and/or frequency of the infraction(s) merits.

### **Minor Faults (5 point deduction)**

- Tick or hit of cone
- Over or under turn from 1/8 to ¼
- Break of gait from a walk or trot up to two strides
- Obviously looking down to check leads or diagonals

### **Major Faults (10 point deduction)**

- Not performing the specific gait or not stopping when called for in the pattern within 10 feet (3 meters) of the designated location
- Missing a diagonal for 1 to 2 strides in the pattern or on the rail
- Incorrect lead or break of gait (except when correcting an incorrect lead) at the canter
- Complete loss of contact between rider's hand and the horse's mouth

- Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two strides
- Loss of iron
- Head carried too low and/or clearly behind the vertical while the horse is in motion, showing the appearance of intimidation

#### **Severe Faults (20 point deduction)**

- Loss of rein
- Missing a diagonal for more than two strides
- Use of either hand to instill fear or praise while on pattern or during rail work
- Holding saddle with either hand
- Spurring or use of crop in front of the girth
- Blatant disobedience including kicking, pawing, bucking and rearing

#### **Disqualifications (should not be placed) include:**

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- Fall of horse or exhibitor
- Illegal equipment or illegal use of hands on reins
- Off pattern, including: knocking over or wrong side of cone or marker; never performing designated gait, lead or diagonal; over or under turning more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn.

#### **Faults scored according to severity, which may be cause for disqualification, except in Level I amateur or Level I youth include:**

- Head carried too low and/or clearly behind the vertical excessively and consistently while the horse is in motion, showing the appearance of intimidation

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## **TERMS TO COMPLIMENT HORSEMANSHIP AND EQUITATION RIDERS**

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- She presented the most desirable picture of a horse and rider working in unison, as she was a more effective rider who showed her horse to its fullest potential.
- Executed her aids with more discretion which complemented the overall appearance of control
- Gave a more complete picture of horse and rider working in unison
- Maintained a picture of confidence and control
- Rode with more style and confidence
- Showed a more correct posture
- Maintained a smoother and more controlled ride throughout the class
- Was a stronger rider
- Was a stronger, more capable and confident rider
- Sat deep in the saddle with her weight more evenly distributed

- Was quieter and deeper in her seat
- More effortless in her overall position
- Was squarer in her shoulders, yet more relaxed in her back, which allowed her to more easily absorb the horse's motion
- Maintained a correctly straight line from her shoulder through her hip and down to her heel
- Kept the proper vertical line from shoulder to heel at all gaits
- Lighter, more efficient hands
- Smoother and more effective execution of each maneuver
- Had a more secure leg that maintained closer contact with the sides of the horse, which allowed her to be discrete with her aids
- Stronger, more effective lower leg, with more depth to her heel
- Deeper in her heel
- More secure in her lower leg
- More functionally correct, maintaining correct diagonals at the trot
- Was quieter with her hands and lower leg
- Was smoother at the \_\_\_\_\_
- Maintained a smoother and more controlled ride throughout the pattern
- Sat her transitions more smoothly

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## **TERMS TO FAULT A RIDER**

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- Was a sloppy rider, with less control of her leg
- Carried his legs too far forward
- Failed to maintain contact with the knee lower leg
- Was rough and unsteady with her hands
- Exhibited less balance and control
- Took the wrong diagonal when trotting
- Took the wrong lead when loping (cantering)
- Was loose and uncontrolled in her lower leg and failed to keep her weight in her heels
- Lost her stirrup at the \_\_\_\_\_
- Looked down to check her leads (diagonals)
- Lacked control and confidence
- Carried her hands too high and with her wrists broken
- Was loose in her middle
- Showed no control of her lower leg at the \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE SAMPLE SETS OF REASONS FOR WESTERN HORSEMANSHIP AND HUNT SEAT EQUITATION.**

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# HORSEMANSHIP

## I PLACED THIS CLASS OF WESTERN HORSEMANSHIP 4-1-2-3

I placed 4 at the top as she appeared to have the greatest control and most correct riding position of the class.

In my initial pair, I placed 4 over 1 as she had more complete control with a more correct riding position. 4 was taller and stronger in her middle and down through her lower leg, having a greater depth to her heel. Additionally, the rider of the sorrel showed more control by being prompt and smooth in all her transitions.

I admit that 1 was slightly smoother in her transitions on the rail; however, she was over arched in her back.

Nevertheless, it is her advantage in pattern precision that finds her over 2 in my middle pair. 1 performed a smoother more effortless pattern, being quicker in her turns and exact with the placement of each transition. Additionally, the rider of the palomino performed the correct gaits when specified.

I concede that 2 was a strong rider; however, she received a minor fault for breaking at the jog.

Still yet, it is her advantage in overall correctness that finds her over 3 in my bottom pair. 2 was simply able to complete the pattern as written and be freer from major and severe faults.

I left 3 last as the rider of the bay received a major fault for breaking at the lope, as well as a severe fault for losing her stirrup in her extended lope circle, making my placing for this class of horsemanship 4-1-2-3. Thank you.

---

# HUNT SEAT EQUITATION

## HUNT SEAT EQUITATION 2-4-1-3

Starting the class with the most complete in equitation and pattern precision, and ending with the poorest rider, I placed the hunt seat equation 2-4-1-3.

In my initial pair, I placed 2 over 4. 2 was squarer in her shoulders, stronger in her middle, and maintained more contact with her lower leg, profiling a straighter line from shoulder, hip, to heel. Moreover, the rider of the bay was smoother and more effortless in her posting trot.

I realize 4 laid down a correct pattern; however, she was rounded in her shoulders.

Still yet, it is her advantage in her pattern that finds her over 1 in my middle pair. 4 was more functionally correct by being more prompt picking up and maintaining her diagonals. Additionally, the rider of the grey was smoother through the forehand turn into the lope departure.

I concede 1 had more depth to her heel; however, she was picked up the wrong diagonal to the right, resulting in a major fault.

Nevertheless, in my closer bottom pair, it is rail work that sorts her over 3. 1 was steadier in her speed in pace both ways on the rail, while being smoother and

more supple into her transitions.

I let 3 last as the rider of the sorrel received a major fault for overturning in her forehand turn, making my placing for this class of hunt seat equitation 2-4-1-3. Thank you.

---

# Chapter Eleven

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## CONNECTIVE TERMS

### GRANTS

- I realize
- I allow
- I concede
- I recognize
- I fully realize
- I appreciate that fact
- I am aware
- I do respect
- I will admit
- I do not disregard the fact
- I acknowledge
- I agree
- I saw
- I certainly credit
- I realize and appreciate the fact
- It was obvious
- It was apparent

### CONNECTIVE TERMS

- In addition
- Moreover
- Plus
- Besides this
- Also
- Furthermore
- Additionally
- Aside from this
- Beyond this
- I was also very apparent
- He/she has the advantage being
- Still yet
- Nevertheless
- However

### ACTION WORDS

- Exhibited
- Displayed
- Showed
- Demonstrated
- Performed
- Possessed
- Executed
- Presented

### OPENING PAIRS

- In reference to the middle pair
- Coming to the bottom pair
- Proceeding to
- Moving to
- Drawing your attention to
- In regards to
- In the discussion of my middle pair
- In discussing my initial pair
- In analyzing my final pair
- In closing
- Focusing your attention on
- In the top pair
- Continuing
- Finally
- Concerning the top pair
- In the final and bottom pair
- In justifying my middle pair
- After closely analyzing my bottom pair
- Now, in closing



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### **Horseback Riding Program**

AQHA members can earn recognition, gifts and awards by logging hours spent riding any American Quarter Horse. There's also a level offering rewards for members who ride other breeds.

### **Ride Program**

Saddle up on any horse and join us as we tour private ranches and great getaways as part of AQHA's Ride Program. More than 70 rides are held across the globe each year.

### **Regional Championship**

It's the ultimate American Quarter Horse experience. These shows are the best way for exhibitors to get their feet wet in AQHA championship shows. The shows also give Level 1 exhibitors who place in the top 10 of a Level 1 call the opportunity to qualify for the AQHA Level 1 Championships, depending on when in the calendar year their Regional Championship falls. Exhibitors can compete in any Regional Championship; however, competitors may only compete in one Regional Championship each year.

### **Junior Master Horseman**

Junior Master Horseman is a youth educational program established by AQHA and the American Youth Horse Council. It is a multi-level, experience-based curriculum that leads youth through lessons about horses. JMH is not breed specific, and it includes a book and interactive Web site. For more information, visit [juniormasterhorseman.com](http://juniormasterhorseman.com).

### **AQHA Incentive Fund**

The Incentive Fund is a multimillion-dollar awards program for the American Quarter Horse show industry. The Incentive fund has distributed more than \$2 million to enrolled horse owners and nominators each year since 1990 and more than \$3 million each year since 1997.

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AQHA has experts who can help you find a horse or achieve your riding goals. Log on to [aqha.com/findatrainer](http://aqha.com/findatrainer) or call (877) 4aHORSE to locate breeders, riding instructors and professional trainers.

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The Challenge is a multimillion-dollar series with nearly 60 races throughout the year in 11 regions across the United States, Canada, Mexico and South America. For more program details, call the Challenge Hotline at (877) AAA-RACE.

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## **Ranching Heritage Breeder Program**

Ranches must be members of AQHA, and their ranch remudas must consist of Quarter Horses, which must be used primarily to work ranch cattle. The ranch must own at least five Quarter Horse mares that are used to produce the remuda, and the ranch must have received at least an AQHA 10-year breeder award. Ranches that are members of the Ranching Heritage Breeders will also be able to enter their horses in exclusive competitions and sales. For more program details, call 806-376-4811. [www.aqha.com/ranching/ranching-heritage](http://www.aqha.com/ranching/ranching-heritage)

## **AQHA Resources**

Web site – Download many forms and applications, and learn more about AQHA and American Quarter Horses at [aqha.com](http://aqha.com).

Downloads – View and print AQHA informational and educational materials at [aqha.com/resources.aspx](http://aqha.com/resources.aspx).

Educational DVDs – Purchase educational DVDs from AQHA on various topics from horse health to training and showing. Visit [aqha.com](http://aqha.com) to see what's available and to place your order.

## **AQHA Publications**

*The American Quarter Horse Journal* – a monthly magazine including a list of shows, entry information and informative articles on all aspects of American Quarter Horse ownership

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