

University of Illinois 4-H Horse Judging Manual



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INTRODUCTION

The knowledge to correctly evaluate a horse's conformation and performance is an essential part of any equine program. This information allows the horseman to make sound decisions in the selection of horses for purchase, breeding, showing, etc. Horse judging has evolved through the years along with the changes in the types and uses of the horse; however, the basic criteria that make up the foundation for evaluating horses has not changed. As a judge, it is critical that you know and understand these criteria and are clear on their order of importance as they relate to each class. The correct evaluation of a class depends on the judge's ability to properly determine and weigh all information and make sound decisions based on set standards of excellence set forth by the different breed associations. Horse judging is not about personal preference. This applies to horsemen both in and out of the ring. The decision to breed or purchase a horse needs to be based first on the evaluation of the horse before you allow personal preference to play a part in the decision making process. The more a horseman understands about judging horses correctly, the better he or she will be able to breed, show, sell, and purchase higher quality horses. This understanding will also give horsemen a better idea of what the judge is looking for in the show ring, which could aid in the selection and training of horses for the ring.

This manual will cover conformation and a number of performance classes with detailed instructions on how to evaluate each class. This manual also provides lists of judging terminology and sample sets of reasons for judging team members. Hopefully, this publication will provide a comprehensive explanation on how to properly evaluate horses in a way that is easy to understand.

CONFORMATION

The evaluation of a horse's conformation is extremely important because form is related to function. In other words, the way that horse is put together or conformed is directly related to the way a horse will perform. Therefore, you should first know how to judge a horse at halter.

The six (6) criteria for judging conformation are:

- 1) Balance
- 2) Structure
- 3) Muscle
- 4) Quality
- 5) Breed and Sex Character
- 6) Travel.

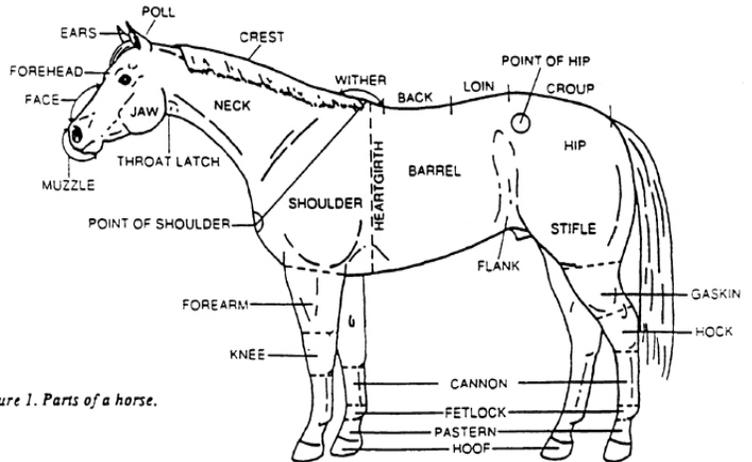


Figure 1. Parts of a horse.

These criteria are listed in order of importance and should be weighed accordingly when judging horses. If there are any questions about parts of the horse as they are being discussed, please refer to Figure 1.

1. BALANCE

Balance refers to how the parts of the horse fit together. A horse that is well balanced looks like all parts blend together correctly. To determine whether or not a horse is well balanced, we will look at a number of individual parts and their characteristics. Balance is determined from the side view or profile of a horse because this gives you the best overall picture and allows you to examine the characteristics that make up balance.

Angle of Shoulder and Hip: The shoulder should be long and sloping (Figures 2 & 3) with approximately a 45 degree angle. The length of the shoulder is measured from the top of the withers down to the point of the shoulder. The angle of the shoulder is often times hard to see but you can get a good idea of what the angle is by looking at the angle of the pastern. The hip should be long and level (Figures 2 & 3) and is measured from the point of the hip to the point of the buttocks. The angle of the shoulder is extremely important because a horse carries 65% of its weight on its front end. A horse with a long sloping shoulder will be better able to carry this weight. This, along with a long level hip, will enable the horse to perform at a higher level by giving it more strength and power and will allow for a smoother gait and a longer stride.

Additionally, the slope of shoulder often influences the length of the horse's back, as well as the overall proportionality of the horse (to be discussed shortly). Common faults of horses with incorrect balance are a short straight shoulder (Fig. 4) and a short steep hip.

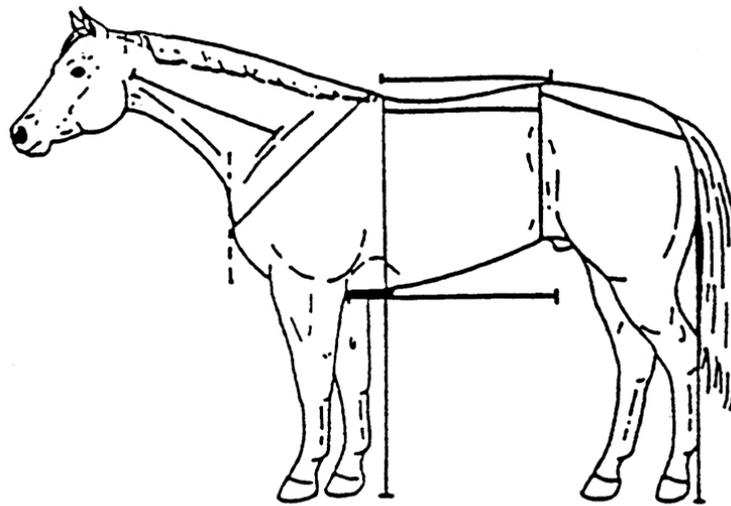


Figure 2. Evaluation of balance

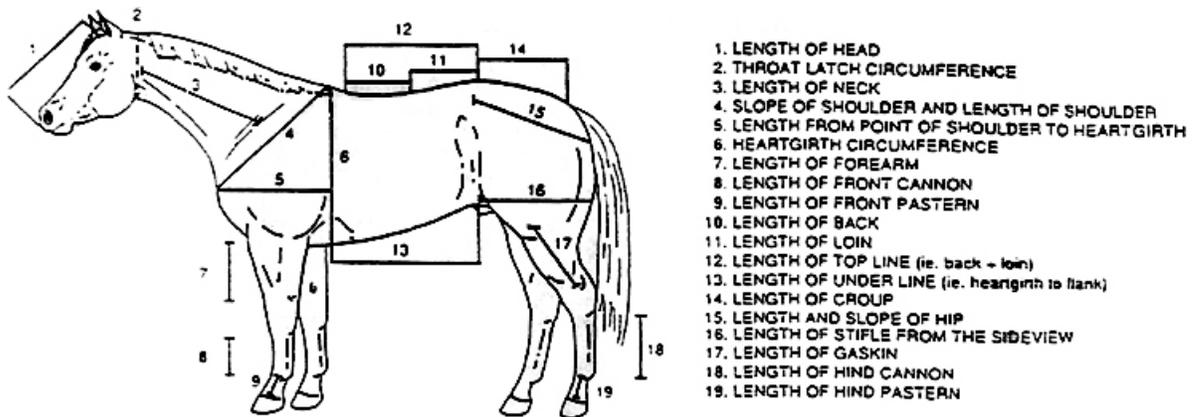


Figure 3. Length and slope of parts

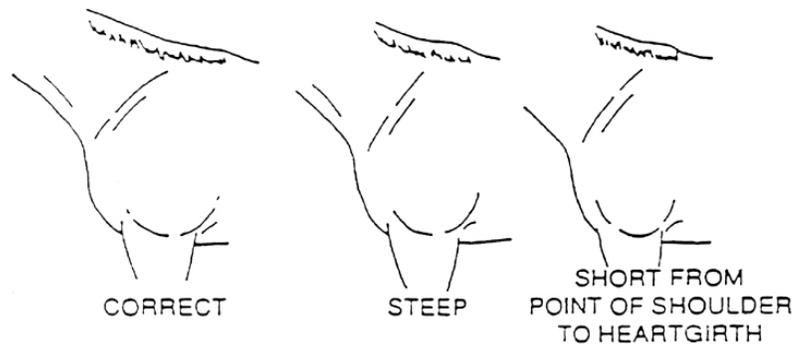


Figure 4. Shoulder conformation

Back and Underline: The back should be short in relation to a long underline. The back should also be strong. The strength over the top is determined by how level a horse's back is directly behind the withers. There should NOT be a significant dip in the topline where the withers blend into the back. The most common fault is a horse with a weak top (swayback) or a long back (Fig. 5).

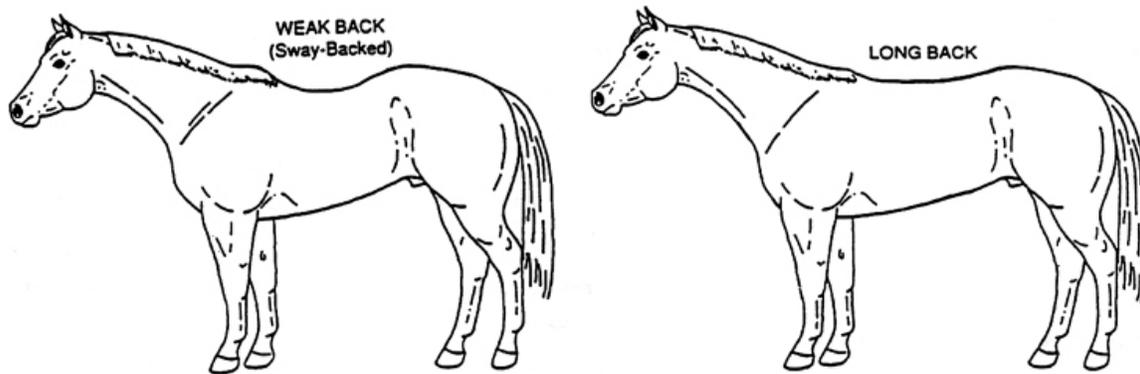


Figure 5. Back conformation

Level Stance: When viewing a horse from the side, it should stand taller at the withers than at the croup or at least level. The most common fault is where the withers are lower than the top of the croup, which is referred to as running down hill.

Proportionality: The length from the top of the withers to the bottom of the barrel directly behind the front leg should be approximately the same as the length from the bottom of the barrel to the ground (Fig.2). Most often you will see horses that are narrow bodied with a long length of leg, which is not in proportion. A horse should be approximately the same width across the chest as it is across the stifle when viewed from the rear.

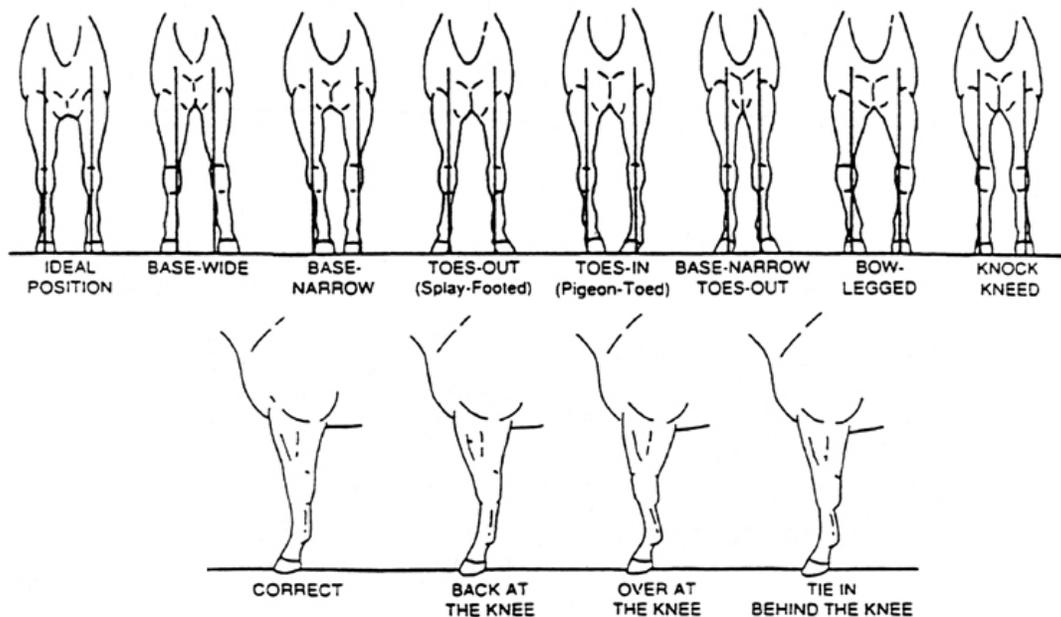
Horses should also divide up evenly into thirds (Fig. 3). The 1st third is measured from the point of the shoulder across to the heart girth, the 2nd third is measured from the heart girth to the flank, and the 3rd is from the flank to the point of the buttocks.

2. STRUCTURE

Sound structure is an extremely important consideration and plays a major role in how a horse will perform. Good structure improves the way horses travel, reduces the chance of injury, and enables them to perform at a higher level for a longer period of time.

Front Leg: From the side, you should be able to draw a straight line from the top of the forearm through the knee and cannon bone down to the ankle. The pastern should be long and sloping at approximately a 45 degree angle. From the front view, you should be able to draw a straight line from the top of the forearm down through the center knee and cannon bone and straight through the center of the pastern and toe. The knee should appear to be flat.

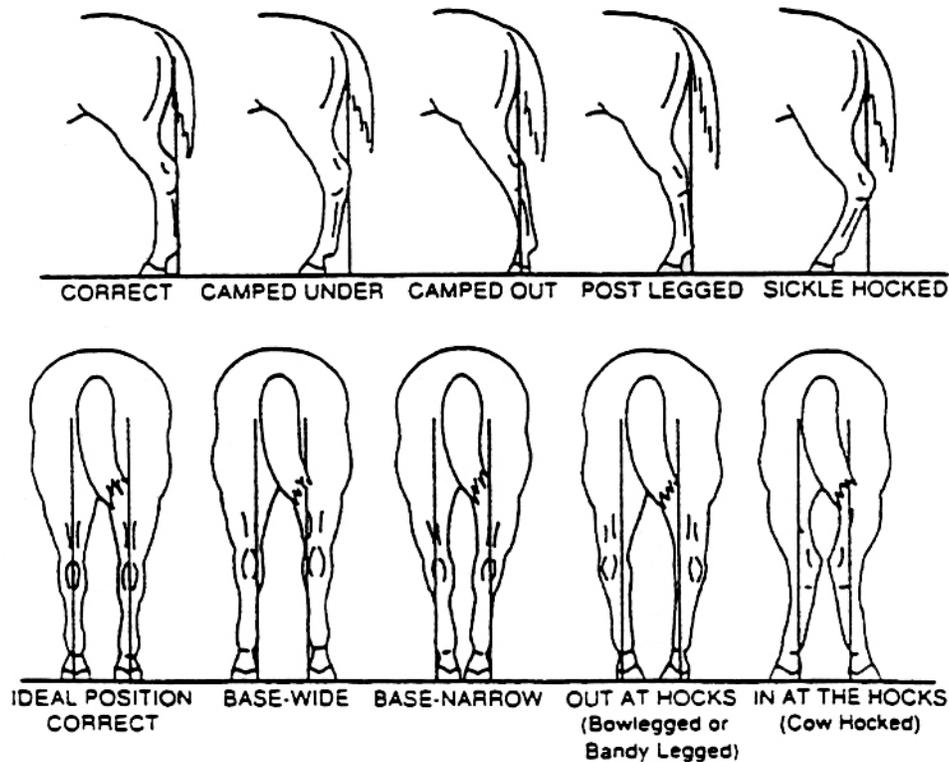
The most common faults (Figures 6 & 7) in structure are horses that are either over (buck kneed) or behind (calf kneed) in the knees, knees turned in or out, and cannon bones not coming squarely out of the knees. Other problems include toes that turn in or out and pasterns that are too short and steep.



Figures 6&7. Foreleg conformation

Hind Legs: The correct structure from the side and rear can be evaluated by dropping a plumb line from the point of the buttock to the ground. There should be a straight line from the point of the buttock down to the hock and down the back of the cannon to the ground. Additionally, from the rear the hocks should point straight back and should be bisected by an imaginary vertical line down the center of the leg and foot. The correct structure of the pastern, cannon, and toe is the same as that described for the front legs.

Common faults (Figures 8 & 9) are horses with excessive angle in the hocks so that the hock is set out behind the point of the hip (sickle hocked) and insufficient angle in the hocks so that the hock is set in front of the point of the hip (post legged). Other faults include horses that are in at the hocks (cow hocked) and out at the hocks (bow legged).



Figures 8&9. Hind leg conformation

Shoulder, Withers and Neck: Shoulders should lay in flat and come to a point at the withers. Withers should be prominent. Faults would be horses that have open shoulders and rounded withers (mutton withered). The neck should tie in smoothly and correctly at the withers. Necks that dip in along the top line directly in front of the withers (Fig. 13) are said to be on upside down (ewe necked).

3. MUSCLING

Muscling is an important part of conformation and is responsible for strong coordinated movement of the skeletal system. As a judge, it is important that you take note of this but be careful that too much emphasis is not placed on this one aspect. As long as the horse is adequately muscled, then it should not be heavily penalized. Muscle is evaluated by three characteristics, which are length, mass, and quality. These characteristics are listed in order of importance and should be weighed accordingly. Length is determined by the points of attachment of the muscle groups such as forearm, gaskin, and stifle. Mass is the circumference, bulge or volume of muscling. Quality refers to the definition of the muscle which is seen by the creases in the muscle. The seven muscle groups to evaluate are: chest, shoulder, forearm, loin, hip stifle, and gaskin.

Chest: The chest muscles or pectorals should be large and bulging with well defined muscles that carry well down the inside of the leg forming a definitive upside-down "V" shape between the front legs. The chest should be wide when measured from point of shoulder to point of shoulder. Faults (Fig. 10) are chests that are too narrow or flat.

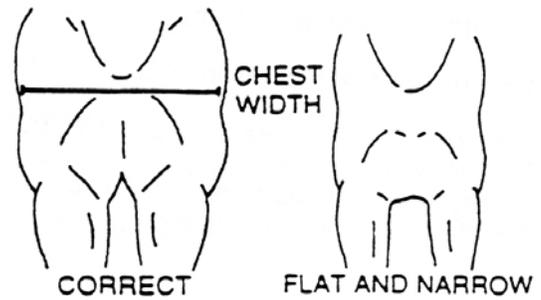


Figure 10. Chest width and muscle.

Shoulder and Forearm: The shoulder muscle should be large, round and bulging. It should also be wide when measured horizontally from the point of shoulder across to the heart girth. The forearm should show adequate length by attaching down low towards the knee and should be large and bulging with sufficient circumference. These muscles are important because they are responsible for movement and support of the front end.

Loin: The length of the loin is measured from the back to the croup. It should be well muscled for support and strength. A strong loin will appear full and smooth from the back to the croup and should have a slight bulge. A weak loin will appear depressed directly in front of the croup.

Hip: The hip, which extends from the point of the hip to the point of the buttocks, should show adequate length and should be wide when measured across from the flank to the upper buttocks. Horses with short narrow hips should be faulted.

Stifle: The stifle (Fig. 11), which is just below the hip, should appear large and bulging. When viewed from the rear, this muscle should be wider across the center than the width between the points of the hip. From the side, the stifle should be wide when measured from the flank across to the lower buttocks. Horses that are narrow behind and/or short across should be penalized.

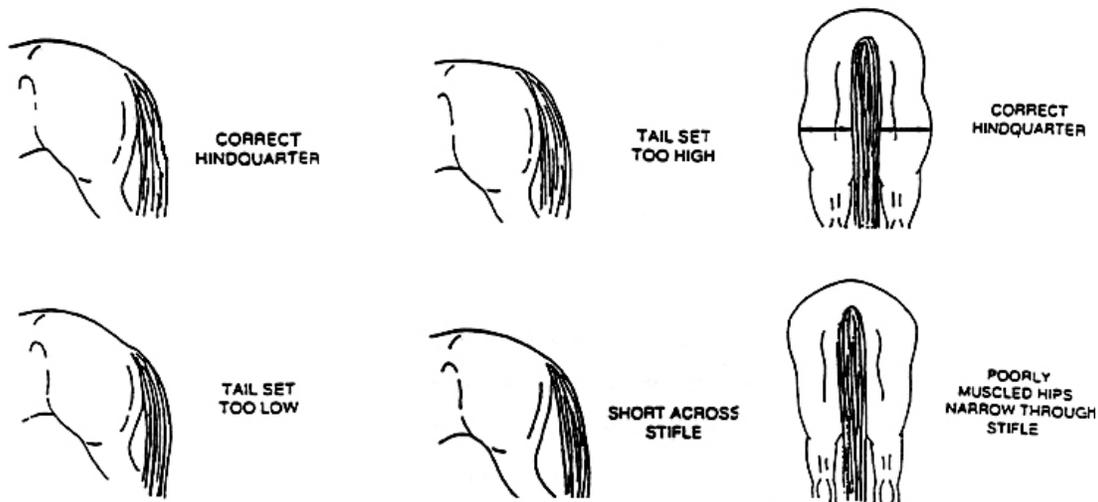


Figure 11. Hindquarter conformation

Gaskin: This muscle lies just below the stifle and should be large round and budging with adequate length by typing in low near the front of the hock. This muscle should appear this way both inside and outside the leg. Gaskins that are short, flat, or small should be faulted.

4. QUALITY

This criterion refers to the overall refinement and style of the horse. Quality is evaluated by examining the head, neck, throat latch, coat, and bone. Quality does not play an important role in the performance of the horse but does contribute to its aesthetic value by making it more eye appealing.

Head and Neck: The head should be well chiseled with a triangular shape. The eyes should be set wide apart while appearing bold and bright. The ears should be small and fox-like. The head should be short from eye to muzzle, and flat down the bridge of the nose with a small refined muzzle. The jaw should be round and bulging and the teeth should meet square in front. The throat latch should be clean and thin. The neck should be long and clean down the crest while tying in high at the shoulder.

Coat and Bone: The coat should appear slick and shiny, showing plenty of bloom and vigor. The bones should be free of blemishes and should not appear too large or coarse.

The most common faults (Figures 12 & 13) are horses with long heads, Roman noses, thick short necks, thick throat latches or low typing necks. Other faults include overshot jaws (parrot mouth), undershot jaws (monkey mouth) and blemishes to bone such as splints, ring bone, and capped hock.

Figure 12. Head conformation

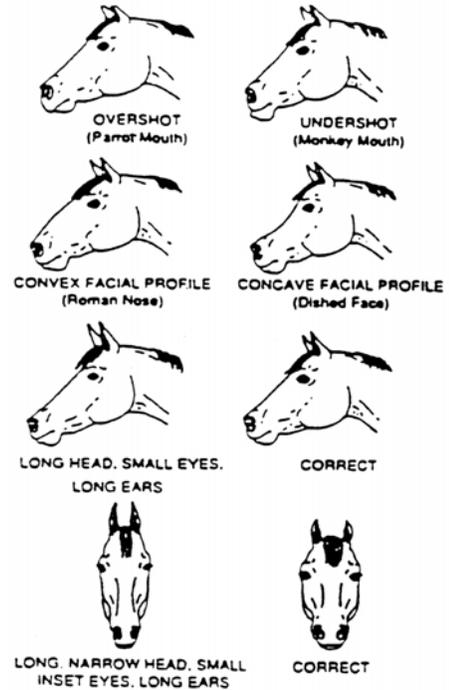
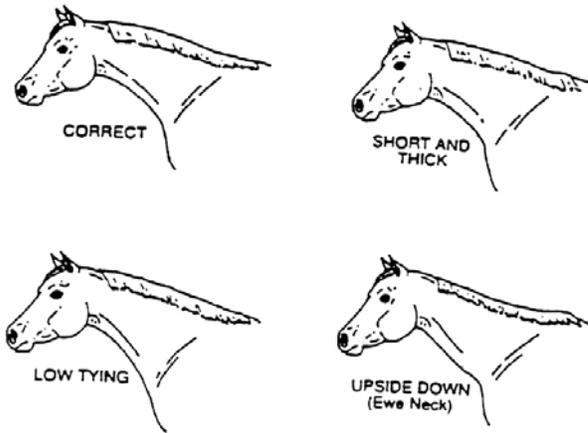


Figure 13. Neck conformation



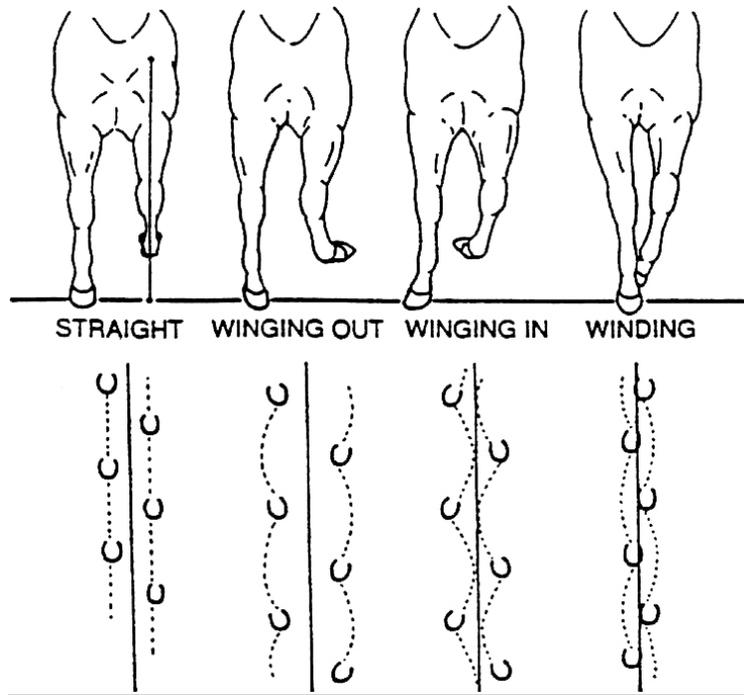
5. BREED and SEX CHARACTER

Horses should first of all exhibit qualities of their sex. Males should show masculinity and females should show femininity. This is evaluated primarily about the head. Males', especially stallions, should have larger heads and more bulging jaws than mares. Females should exhibit more refinement about the head. It is important that horses also exhibit the characteristics of their breed and meet the standards set forth by the breed associations.

6. TRAVEL

The way a horse travels is directly related to the horse's structure. The horse should travel straight and true by picking its feet up and setting them down in a straight line both front and rear. Common faults (Fig. 14) include winging in and winging out.

Figure 14. TRAVEL FIGURES
FRONT VIEW



BLEMISHES and UNSOUNDNESS

A blemish is usually caused by an injury and may be permanent or temporary. These usually do not affect the performance of the horse. An unsoundness may also be temporary or permanent, but will affect the actual performance of the horse. It is important that horsemen and judges are able to recognize these faults because they will play a part in the evaluation of a horse for purchase or placing in a class. (Figure 15) Horses that are unsound in the show ring in performance classes will be faulted heavily; however, in the judging contests all horses shown at halter are judged as sound.

Bog spavin- soft swelling occurring on inner front part of the hock

Bone spavin (jack spavin)- a bony enlargement on the inside front of the hock; due to faulty conformation or strain.

Bowed tendon- inflammation and swelling of the tendon sheaths posterior to the cannon bone; due to over extension of the tendons.

Bucked shins- inflammation and swelling anterior to the cannon bone due to the tearing of the membrane that covers the bone; due to stress.

Capped hock- swelling at the point of the hock; due to an injury.

Curb- an enlargement of the hock tendon or ligament at cannon hock junction; results from injury or strain.

Fistulous withers- inflamed condition of the withers accompanied by drainage; due to injury and bacteria infection.

Founder- inflammation of the sensitive lamina of the hoof; caused by high fever.

Navicular disease- degeneration of the navicular bone; associated with excessive concussion or faulty conformation.

Poll evil- inflamed swelling of poll between ears.

Ring bone- bony enlargements near the coronary band; related to stress or faulty conformation.

Shoe boil (capped elbow)- soft, flabby swelling at the point of the elbow.

Sidebone- bony growth above and toward the rear quarter of the hoof head

Splint- calcification of the splint bone along the inside of the cannon bone; due to injury or stress.

Sweeny- atrophy or degeneration of the shoulder muscles; due to loss of nerve supply; caused by injury.

Thoroughpin- puffy swelling which appears on upper part of hock and in front of the large tendon.

Toe crack- vertical split in the wall of the hoof located at the toe.

Windpuff- a fluid filled, soft, puffy swelling in the points; caused by stress

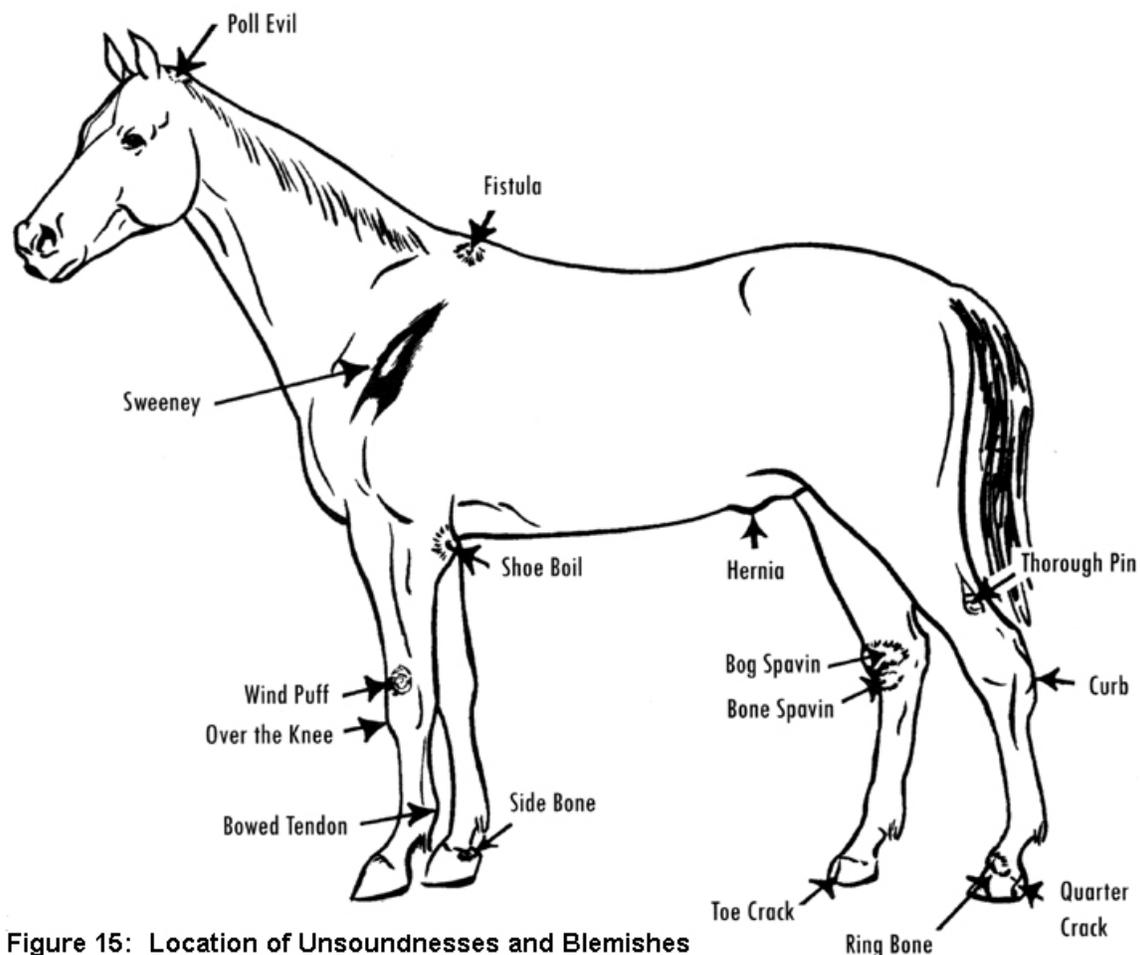


Figure 15: Location of Unsoundnesses and Blemishes

PERFORMANCE

The performance classes are designed to test a horse's athletic ability, while remaining under the control of the rider. There are several factors that contribute to the performance of a horse such as level of training, environment, ability of the rider, and genetics. As a judge, you are charged with the job of objectively evaluating the actual performance of the horse and making a judgment based solely on the class criteria excluding all of these outside forces. This next section will discuss these performance classes: Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Reining, Western Riding, and Hunter Hack.

Judging Criteria

Before discussing the classes, we will cover in detail the five (5) criteria used in evaluating the performance classes which include: Functional Correctness, Attitude, Quality of Movement, Head and Neck Carriage, and Manners. These are listed in order of importance and should be weighed accordingly. **All horses must be serviceably sound before they can be considered for placing in a class.**

1. FUNCTIONAL CORRECTNESS

This refers to the ability of the horse to pick up and maintain the correct leads and the prescribed gaits. To determine if the horse is in the correct lead, you will first have to see which direction they are going at the lope. If, for example, the horse is loping to the left then it should be in the left lead with the left front and hind leg extending out farther than the right front and hind leg. This action is a result of a specific pattern in which the feet hit the ground at the lope. For example, when loping to the left the right hind hits the ground first, then the left hind and right front hit simultaneously, followed by the left front which hits the ground last. To be functionally correct, horses also have to perform the requirements of the class and make the proper gait transitions. They must travel straight down the rail in classes that require rail work. Additionally, the horse should look straight through the bridle throughout the class

Some common faults are horses that pick up incorrect leads and break gait. Cross firing refers to a horse that is in the correct lead in front but is in the wrong lead behind or vice versa. Counter cantering refers to a horse that is in the wrong lead both front and rear.

2. ATTITUDE

Along with functional correctness, the next most important criteria for performance horses is that they appear to be broke. Horses that run off with the rider or buck in the ring are not broke and they should be heavily penalized. Other characteristics of attitude include responsiveness to the rider in which horses should require as little aid as possible while working with a pleasant expression and showing willingness towards the riders cues. Horses should also be relaxed and work consistently throughout the class. Horses with unacceptable attitudes will pin their ears back, use their tails, tense up, and be unresponsive to the rider. Concerning consistency, once a horse is performing the listed criteria in an acceptable manner it should work this way throughout the entire class.

3. QUALITY OF MOVEMENT

This criterion also plays a major role in the overall evaluation of a horse's performance. It is a direct reflection of structure and balance. Horses that have good conformation will be able to perform at higher levels and be higher quality movers. There are several characteristics that describe quality of movement starting with length of stride and speed. Horses should have a good even stride while performing at a slow controlled speed. There are some classes that require horses to move at a fast lope or extended gait. Acceptable length of stride will vary somewhat between classes which will be discussed later. All horses should move smooth and soft while being cadenced and fluid. There are several characteristics to evaluate when the horse is performing each gait which will now be discussed.

Walk- At the walk, horse should be brisk and sharp with a definite 4 beat cadence. The walk should not be too slow or sluggish.

Trot- The trot or jog should appear to be square, balanced and cadenced. Horses should move symmetrically and soft. They should move with their knees flat and their feet close to the ground.

Canter or lope- Should be balanced, collected and cadenced while maintaining a level topline. It should be a distinct 3 beat gait, with a lot of drive from behind evident by the hind leg reaching far underneath the horse. The horse should also be flat kneed and slow legged.

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE MOVEMENT

Square- Take equal strides with diagonal pairs of legs.

Balanced- Carry an equal amount of weight on both the front and hind end.

Symmetric- Take equal strides with lateral pairs of legs.

Cadenced- 4-beat walk, 2-beat trot, and 3-beat lope.

Collected- Front end elevated while moving with drive and impulsion in hindquarters. Horses should reach far up underneath themselves with hind legs. Distinct & Cadenced.

Common faults are excessive speed and horses moving uncollected at the lope. Most often seen are horses that four beat at the lope. This simply means that horses are loping with four beats instead of three. It gives the appearance as though they are shuffling their feet. Horses that are uncollected will also hollow their backs and they will not drive the hocks underneath themselves very far. Additionally, when trying to jog too slow, horses will lose the 2 beat diagonal cadence of the jog and execute a 4 beat gait instead. Excessive knee and hock action should be penalized except for those classes that require action and elevation of the feet and legs.

4. HEAD and NECK CARRIAGE

The neck should be carried parallel to the ground and the head should be perpendicular to the ground or up to 30 degrees out. Head and neck carriage should be steady and consistent. Horses should NOT bob heads up and down and they should look straight through the bridle and not from side to side. Faults are necks being carried too high or low and heads being behind the perpendicular or too far out past 30 degrees. Horses should travel with the correct head and neck carriage to allow for higher quality movement and better control. Furthermore, horses should maintain the same head and neck carriage at all gaits both ways of the ring.

5. MANNERS

A horse's manners are small characteristics that add to the overall appearance of the performance. Good manners will allow for a more controlled ride and are characterized by horses that are alert with their ears and quiet with the mouth and tail. A horse's manners will reflect its attitude toward the task being performed. Common faults will be horses that chew or mouth on the bit or wring the tail.

Western Pleasure

The horses in this class should appear to be a pleasure to ride just as the class name states. This class requires western tack and attire and is worked only on the flat. This class should be evaluated using the five (5) criteria for judging performance. The horses are expected to perform at all three (3) gaits both directions of the ring with little or no aid from the rider. Horses should have a slow, but not sluggish walk. This gait should be judged, but with not as much emphasis placed on it as the jog or lope. At the jog, horses should have a distinct 2 beat gait. The lope should also be performed at a slow rate of speed while collection and cadence are the two main characteristics to be evaluated. This class is a relatively simple test of the horse's skill and it is important to weigh heavily the functional correctness and attitude of the horses in this class. Once these have been assessed, then the other 3 criteria can be evaluated. It is also important to remember that once horses are performing correctly, they must do this consistently throughout the class. Horses are to travel with their polls even with or slightly above the withers. One of the most common faults is where horses get their necks below parallel. This should be heavily penalized especially if this is done to a great degree and for the majority of the class. The same holds true for horses that carry their head behind the perpendicular. This is referred to as being behind the bridle. Another common fault of western pleasure horses is that of four beating. This is where the diagonal pairs of legs are not hitting the ground at the same time. This should be penalized.

The ideal western pleasure horse works on a loose drooping rein with little or no contact from the rider. The only time the rider should have contact with the horse besides when backing or reversing is in the downward transitions. Excessive handling from the rider shall be faulted, especially if the horse requires a lot of aid to stay on a straight course down the rail. One thing that is important to remember is that as a judge you have to not only assess the faults, but you also have to evaluate the degree to which the horse faulted. Judges must also stay objective and guard against getting tunnel vision. Tunnel vision is where you get transfixed by one characteristic or fault of the horse and you place the horse based on that one observation. Judges must always see the "big picture" and place the class based on how and to what degree the horses combine the previously mentioned qualities.

Hunter Under Saddle

This class will be performed exactly like western pleasure and the same five (5) criteria will be used to evaluate the horses. However, there are a few differences that will now be discussed. First of all, the riders will have different appointments. Appointments refer to the dressing attire of the rider. They will also be using English tack. The horses in this class should appear to be hunter type horses. These are horses that look as though they can work over fences. The horses will only work on the flat, but some emphasis should be placed on the type of horse being shown. Riders should have light contact with the horse's mouth and the reins should NOT be loose as in western pleasure. When horses are working at the trot, they will be moving faster than western horses because hunter horses are expected to move with a long length of stride. These horses should move squarely and be extremely flat in their knees while moving with their feet close to the ground. They should perform at the trot with a fluid ground covering stride. Horses with short choppy strides should be faulted. At the canter (lope), horses are expected to be collected and cadenced. They will again be moving faster because of their longer length of stride. Head and neck carriage along with manners are the same as for western pleasure and, of course, functional correctness remains the same throughout all performance classes.

Western Riding

Western riding is a patterned riding class where one of four possible patterns will be executed by the horse. The horses will work at all three (3) gaits however, the majority of the class will be performed at the lope. 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. Horses are expected to work at a slow rate of speed and execute a controlled pattern. Additionally, the horse should cross the log both at the jog and the lope without breaking gait or radically changing stride.

Scoring is done on a basis of 0-100 with 70 denoting an average performance. Scoring guidelines to be considered: points will be added or subtracted from the maneuvers on the following basis, ranging from plus 1.5 to minus 1.5: -1.5 extremely poor, -1 very poor, -.5 poor, 0 average, +.5 good, +1 very good, +1.5 excellent. Maneuver scores are to be determined independently of penalty points.

A contestant shall be penalized accordingly each time the following occur:

Five (5) points penalties:

1. 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).
2. Blatant disobedience including kicking out, biting, bucking rearing

Three (3) points penalties:

1. not performing the specific gait (jog or lope) or not stopping when called for in the pattern, within 10 feet (3 meters) of the designated area
2. simple change of leads
3. 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
4. additional lead changes anywhere in pattern (except when correcting an extra change or incorrect lead)
5. in pattern one and three failure to start the lope within 30 feet (9 meters) after crossing the log at the jog
6. break of gait at walk or jog for more than two strides (7) break of gait at the lope

One (1) point penalties:

1. hitting or rolling log
2. out of lead more than one stride either side of the center point and between the markers
3. splitting the log (log between the two front or two hind feet) at the lope
4. break of gait at the walk or jog up to two strides

One-half (1/2) point penalties

1. tick or light touch of log
2. hind legs skipping or coming together during lead change
3. non-simultaneous lead change (Front to hind or hind to front)

Disqualified - 0 score

1. illegal equipment
2. willful abuse
3. off course
4. knocking over markers
5. completely missing log
6. major refusal - stop and back more than 2 strides or 4 steps with front legs
7. major disobedience or schooling
8. failure to start lope prior to end cone in patterns #1 and #3
9. four or more simple lead changes and/or failures to change leads
10. overturn of more than 1/4 turn

Faults, which will be cause for disqualification, excepting novice amateur or novice youth classes, which shall be faults scored according to severity:

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

Credits

1. changes of leads, hind and front simultaneously
2. change of lead near the center point of the lead change area
3. accurate and smooth pattern 4)even pace throughout
4. easy to guide and control with rein and leg
5. manners and disposition
6. conformation and fitness

The following characteristics are considered faults and should be judged accordingly in maneuver scores

1. opening mouth excessively
2. anticipating signals
3. stumbling
4. head carried too high
5. 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

*****(NOTE: please refer to current AQHA rules as penalty points are subject to change each year)*****

Hunter Hack

In this class, horses will work on the flat and over two fences. The flat work will be judged exactly as hunter under saddle. The flat work will account for 30% of the total score while the fence work will constitute 70%. The two (2) fences shall measure 2'3" to 3'0" in height. 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. Horses should maintain an even hunting pace throughout the course while exhibiting correct jumping style. Horses should approach the jumps squarely and jump over the fences in the center point between the standards. Horses should leave the ground a safe distance from the jump to avoid hitting or knocking over the top element or the standards. Jumps should be performed smoothly and without hesitation. When leaving the ground, the horse's front feet and legs should be tucked squarely and tightly underneath its body. Horses should also keep their bodies square over the jumps. Unsafe jumping or bad form shall be penalized along with incorrect leads around the ends of the course.

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

- A. 90-100: an excellent performer and good mover that jumps the entire course with cadence, balance and style
- B. 80-89: a good performer that jumps all fences reasonably well; an excellent performer that commits one or two minor faults.
- C. 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.
- D. 60-69: poor movers that make minor mistakes; fair or average movers that have one or two poor fences but no major faults or disobediences.
- E. 50-59: a horse that commits one major fault, such as a hind knockdown, refusal, trot, cross canter or drops a leg.
- F. 30-49: a horse that commits two or more major faults, including front knockdowns and refusals, or jumps in a manner that otherwise endangers the horse and/or rider.
- G. 10-29: a horse that avoids elimination but jumps in such an unsafe and dangerous manner as to preclude a higher score

Elimination:

- 1. A total of three disobediences that can include any of the following: refusal, stop, run out or extra circle.
- 2. Jumping an obstacle before it is reset.
- 3. Bolting from the arena.
- 4. Off course.
- 5. Deliberately addressing an obstacle.
- 6. Fall of horse or rider

Disobediences.

- 1. Refusal: When a horse stops in front of an obstacle and takes one step back. If horse is moved toward the obstacle after a refusal without attempting to jump, it is considered another refusal. In case of refusal on an in-and-out jump, the horse must return to the start and re-jump all previous obstacles.
- 2. Run-out: this occurs when the horse evades or passes the obstacle to be jumped; jumps an obstacle outside its limiting markers, or when the horse or rider knocks down the standard, wing or other limiting obstacle (without obstacle being jumped).
- 3. Loss of forward movement: Except during refusal or run-out.
- 4. Unnecessary circling on course: Horses are allowed one (1) circle before starting jumps and after jumps are completed.
- 5. Knockdown of obstacle, standard or wing with any portion of horse rider or equipment, when jumping an obstacle- 4 faults.
- 6. First disobedience anywhere on course- 3 faults.
- 7. Second cumulative disobedience- 6 faults.

Faults (to be scored accordingly, but not necessarily cause disqualification during the rail work) include:

- Being on wrong lead and/or 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

******(NOTE:** *please refer to current AQHA rules as penalty points are subject to change each year*)****

Reining

Reining is a pattern class that tests a number of the horse's skills. This class is to be performed in western attire and tack. Horses will be asked to perform one (1) of eleven (11) possible patterns. Horses will perform the entire pattern at the lope showing some variance in speed as specified by the pattern. Each pattern can be divided into a series of maneuvers which should be scored individually. The five (5) criteria for judging performance classes will still be used to evaluate the overall execution of the pattern.

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

Horses will be awarded and faulted points based on the execution of the various maneuvers. Scoring will be on the basis of 0-Infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Each maneuver will be scored from +1.5 to -1.5 [+1.5 excellent, +1 very good, +1/2 good, 0 average, -1/2 poor, -1 very poor, -1.5 extremely poor]. The various maneuvers that horses will be required to perform are: rollbacks; sliding stops; spins; circles; flying lead changes; and back.

Horses should run hard into stops without anticipation and stop hard. They should drop their haunches deep into the ground while showing mobility in front. The sliding stop should be long and straight. Common faults are anticipation of stops, short slides, swinging hindquarters to one side or the other, and planting front feet in the ground. Rollbacks should be quick and prompt out of the stops. Horses should roll back over their tracks and promptly pick up the lope. Faults include slow rollbacks, taking wide turns, and trotting out of rollbacks.

In the spins, horses should keep a stationary pivot foot while spinning quickly and low to the ground. Horses must perform the correct number of spins as stated by the pattern. They should stop the spin promptly where specified being careful not to over or under spin. Their front feet should cross over while spinning with cadence and the horse should remain flat as well. Horses should keep their heads to the inside of the spin while spinning with little or not resistance. Horses that have slow spins with an unstationary pivot foot should be faulted. Other faults include: not crossing over in front; raising head; and hanging head to the outside of the spin.

Horses should perform the correct size of circles at the designated speed. Horses should keep their heads to the inside of the circles with their body arched out away from the inside of the circle. Circles should be round and kept proportionate by making both small circles the same size and both large circles the same size. Horses that do NOT exhibit the proper change in size and speed of the circles should be penalized. Flying lead changes should be performed smoothly and promptly while changing leads both front and rear simultaneously. Horses should also work with few visible aids and cueing from the rider.

Horses will also be asked to back. They should drop their heads and honor the bit while moving quick and straight at the back. Slow crooked backs will be faulted. Horses should exhibit a pleasant attitude throughout the class while working on light contact from the rider. They must be functionally correct and quiet with the bit and tail.

Point Penalties7

The following will result in a score of 0:

1. Failure to complete pattern as written;
2. Performing the maneuvers other than in specified order;
3. The inclusion of maneuvers not specified, including, but not limited to
 - a. Backing more than 2 strides
 - b. Turning more than 90 degrees
4. Equipment failure that delays completion of pattern; including dropping a rein that contacts the ground while horse is in motion.
5. Balking or refusal of command where pattern is delayed;
6. Running away or failing to guide where it becomes impossible to discern whether the entry is on pattern;
7. Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena;

8. Overspins of more than 1/4 turn;
9. Fall to the ground by horse or rider

The following will result in a reduction of five points:

1. Spurring in front of cinch;
2. Use of either hand to instill fear or praise;
3. Holding saddle with either hand;
4. Blatant disobediences including kicking, biting, bucking, rearing and striking.

The following will result in a reduction of two points:

1. Break of gait;
2. Freeze up in spins or rollbacks;
3. On walk-in patterns, failure to stop or walk before executing a canter departure.
4. On run-in patterns, failure to be in a canter prior to the first marker.
5. If a horse does not completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position.

Starting or performing circles or eights out of lead will be judged as follows:

- Each time a horse is out of lead, a judge is required to deduct one point. The penalty for being out of lead is accumulative and the judge will deduct one penalty point for each quarter of the circumference of a circle or any part thereof that a horse is out of lead. A judge is required to penalize a horse one-half point for a delayed change of lead by one stride.
- Deduct 1/2 point for starting circle at a jog or exiting roll-backs at a jog up to two strides. Jogging beyond two strides, but less than 1/2 circle or 1/2 the length of the arena, deduct two points.
- In patterns requiring a run-around, failure to be on the correct lead when rounding the end of the arena will be penalized as follows: for 1/2 the turn or less, one (1) point; for more than 1/2 turn, two (2) points.
- Deduct 1/2 point for over or under spinning up to one-eighth(1/8) of a turn; deduct one (1) point for over or under spinning from one-eighth to one-fourth (1/8 to 1/4) turn.
- A 1/2 point penalty deduction will be given for failure to remain a minimum of 20 feet (6 meters) from the wall or fence when approaching a stop and/or rollback.

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

1. Opening mouth excessively when wearing bit;
2. Excessive jawing, opening mouth or head raising on stop;
3. Lack of smooth, straight stop on haunches-bouncing or sideways stop;
4. Refusing to change leads;
5. Anticipating signals;
6. Stumbling;
7. Backing sideways;
8. Knocking over markers.

****(**NOTE:** please refer to current AQHA rules as penalty points are subject to change each year)****

ORAL REASONS

Oral reasons are a verbal defense of your placing decision within a 2 minute time limit.

- Teaches students to become analytical.
- Teaches students to become objective and biased.
- Teaches students to defend a decision with an oral presentation.

ORDER OF REASONS

INTRODUCTION

- Placing
- Name of Class
- Partitioned- state how the class divided up; for example: obvious top or bottom
- Salutation- Sir or Ma'am

BODY

- Top pair
- Middle pair
- Bottom pair
- Grant- this is a statement that allows you to point out a quality that one horse possesses over another horse that placed over him/her.
- Criticism of last placed horse
*DO NOT CRITISIZE ANY HORSE EXCEPT LAST PLACED HORSE!!!

CONCLUSION

- Class name
- Placing

CRITERIA FOR GIVING ORAL REASONS

RELEVANCY

- Does it pertain to the horse
- Talk the important things
- Be thorough
- Do not talk a canned set

ACCURACY

TELL THE TRUTH

- 1 pt. deduction for leaving big point out
- 2 pt. deduction for lying

TERMINOLOGY

- Proper grammar
- Do not use the same term twice in a given set
- Use terms related to the horse industry
- Use past tense
- Use comparative terminology (words that end in '-er')
- Do not use good or better
- Get numbers straight

PRESENTATION

- Stand straight
- Take card and put it behind your back
- Hands behind your back
 - Poised
 - Confident
 - Convincing
 - Authoritative
 - Smooth
 - Relaxed
 - Conversational
 - Courteous
 - Pleasant
 - Never Abrasive

ORGANIZATION

- Order of importance
- From front to rear (head to tail) or front, side, rear

HALTER TERMINOLOGY

1. GENERAL APPEARANCE

The greatest combination of...
Overwhelmed the class with balance, size and muscling
Dominated the class in terms of...
Greater depth and length
More masculine or feminine
Larger
Taller
Stood on more substance (or circumference) of bone
Higher quality
More stylish
More structurally correct
Heavier muscled
Exhibited more breed or sex character
Larger boned

2. BALANCE

More proportionate
Nicer profiling
Better balanced
More uniform in body parts
Smoother blending of body parts
More equal in body parts
More evenly divided up into thirds
More proportionate in relation of depth of body to length of leg

Shoulder:

Longer, more desirable slope to the shoulder
Showed more proper angulation to the shoulder
More sloping shoulder
More correct angle to the shoulder
More sloping shoulder and more prominent at the withers
Exhibited greater length and slope to the shoulder
Shoulders tied in more smoothly at the withers

Croup and Hip:

Longer over the croup
Longer, more level over the hip
Had a more desirable slope to the hip
Flatter over the croup
More nicely turned over the croup
Showed more horizontal extension over the croup
Wider through the hip
Greater length of hip

Topline:

- Shorter and stronger over the top
- Shorter over the top in relation to a longer underline
- Had a more desirable slope to the shoulder and was longer and more level in the hip which lended to a shorter, stronger back and loin
- Stronger coupled
- Stronger backed
- More powerful topline
- Greater strength over the top
- Shorter topped
- Shorter backed
- More level from the withers to the top of croup
- More level down the topline

Heart girth, Chest and Body:

- Deeper through the heart girth
- Showed more overall size and capacity
- Stood on greater substance
- Taller at the withers
- Longer from withers to sternum
- Greater circumference of heart girth
- Wider through the floor of the chest, exhibiting more internal capacity
- Exhibited more spring of rib
- Deeper ribbed
- Stood on a wider foundation
- Wider through the chest
- More prominent at the withers
- Deeper bodied
- Deeper barreled
- Wider ribbed
- Showed more uniformity of height from withers to croup

3. STRUCTURE

- Stood straighter on both front and hind legs
- Stood more structurally correct
- Stood on straighter legs
- Stood on a straighter column of bone
- Straighter in the feet and legs
- Straighter legged
- Stood more squarely on all fours

Knees:

- Straighter through the knee
- More square in the knees
- More symmetrically placed knees
- Straighter down the knees
- Knees set more squarely above the cannon

Cannon:

- Shorter, flatter cannon bones
- Straighter down the cannon
- Low in the knees and hocks
- Cannon coming more squarely out of the knee
- Cannon placed more squarely beneath the knee
- Cannon more centrally located below the knee
- Cannons coming more nearly out of the center of the knee

Hocks:

- Straighter down the hock when viewed from the side or rear
- More desirable set to the hocks
- Straighter and more symmetric in the hocks
- More correct angle in the hock
- Stood wider between the hocks when viewed from the rear

Bone:

- Cleaner, showing fewer blemishes
- Joints were freer of swelling and blemishes
- Cleaner in the legs
- Stood on more rugged bone
- Cleaner boned
- Displayed a heavier denser bone
- More substance of bone

Pasterns:

- Greater length of pastern
- More desirable slope to the pastern
- More correct angle to the pastern
- Longer more sloping pasterns
- More sloping pasterns

Foot:

- Larger, more rounded foot
- Straighter in the toes when viewed from the front or rear
- More desirable shaped heel
- Hoof was more open at the heel

4. QUALITY

- Higher quality hair coat
- Finer hair coat
- Exhibited more bloom and vigor
- Was more stylish and eye appealing
- Showed more refinement and style
- Exhibited more overall style and beauty

Head and Neck:

- Showed more quality about the head
- Exhibited more refinement of the head
- Sharper chiseled features
- More alert about the head
- Shorter headed

Shorter from eye to muzzle
Wider between the eyes
More width between the eyes
Flatter down the bridge of the nose
Wider from eye to eye
Cleaner and shorter through the muzzle
Finer featured
More elegant and refined head and neck
Larger more bulging jaw
More chiseled head
More prominent through the jaw

Eyes

Brighter eye
Bolder eye
Brighter about the eyes
More open eyes
More prominent eye
More expressive with the eyes
Softer, kinder eye

Ear:

Shorter, neater ear
More fox-like ear
Smaller ear
More erect ear

Throat latch:

Cleaner
Neater

Neck:

Longer, leaner neck that tied higher into the chest
Longer and cleaner down the crest
Longer and cleaner in the neck
Higher tying
Tied in higher at the shoulder
Trimmer in the neck
Leaner down the top of the neck
Thinner neck
More desirable shape of the neck
Tied in smoother at the withers

5. MUSCLING

Showed more tone and power of muscling from end to end
Heavier muscled from end to end
Stood on more substance on muscle
Showed a greater total volume of muscle over a larger frame
More heavily muscled
More defined
Showed more overall definition of muscle
More bulging

More powerfully developed
More expressively muscled
More expressive musculature
Had more muscling throughout
Longer, more modern muscle pattern

Forearm:

More forearm muscle
Longer
Tied in lower at the knee
More circumference of forearm
Heavier muscled forearm
More bulging

Pectoral:

Greater separation and delineation of the pectoral
More evidence of V muscling
More prominently V-ed up in front
More muscling through the pectoral region
V-ed up deeper in front

Hind leg:

Exhibited more muscle development in the hindquarter
Wider through the hips
Wider through the center of the stifle when viewed from the rear
Stood wider from stifle to stifle
Greater width through the stifle
More uniformly muscled in the hind leg
Thicker and more bulging through the stifle
Longer in the hip
Showed more thickness through the center of the stifle
Exhibited more inside and outside gaskin
More circumference of the gaskin
More bulging gaskin
Stifle tied in deeper to the gaskin
Longer muscling pattern that tied in lower into the hocks
Showed more total dimension of hip
More definition of muscling in stifle and gaskin
Gaskin tied in deeper toward the hock
Greater width and depth of stifle
Greater length of stifle when viewed from the side

6. BREED AND SEX CHARACTER

Showed more breed character in the head and neck
Showed more breed character and femininity
Showed more femininity
Showed more masculinity
Larger, more bulging jaw
More prominent, deeper jaw
More bulge of jaw

7. TRAVEL

Moved out with more clearance between the knees and hocks
Wider traveling
Moved out straighter when viewed from the front rear
Tracked out straighter with a longer stride
Moved with a more agile stride
Moved with greater softness of stride
More forceful stride
Moved out with a more forceful stride showing more freedom of movement
More fluid
Sounder moving
Exhibited more brilliance of movement
More flexion to the hocks and more elevation and reach from the forehand
More animation at the trot
Truer tracking
Tracked out wider between the hocks
More correct
Less lateral movement
Greater freedom of movement
More collected stride
More flexion of the knee and hock
More snap and flexion

8. TRANSITION WORDS

Furthermore
Even so
Nevertheless
And
Moving to
Therefore
Coming to
Continuing with
Admit
Moreover
Also
In addition
Additionally
Closing with
Fully realizing
Granting that

Sample Halter Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

In this class of Aged Mares, I preferred the alignment of 3-1-2-4, finding a close top and bottom pair. I initiated the class with two well balanced, high quality mares in 1 & 3 as they were larger and heavier muscled than 2 & 4.

In my top pair it was 3 over 1, 3 was a higher volumed mare exhibiting more depth of heart and had a stifle that tied deeper into the gaskin. 3 was also cleaner down the crest of her neck, stood straighter in her cannons in front, and tracked out straighter when viewed from the rear.

I fully realize that 1 was flatter down the bridge of the nose, taller at the withers, and moved out straighter in front.

Coming to my middle pair it was 1 over 2. 1 was nicer balanced mare that had a more desirable angle to her shoulder and was more level in her hip which lended to a shorter, stronger back and loin. Additionally, 1 was heavier muscled from end to end with a larger, more bulging shoulder and forearm. 1 was also wider through the stifle while standing on more circumference of gaskin.

I concede that 2 was neater and cleaner in her neck.

In my bottom pair, I placed 2 over 4 in that 2 was more structurally correct. 2 stood straighter in her toes when viewed from the rear and had cannons that came more squarely out of the knees. Furthermore, 2 was wider through her chest, longer in her hip and had a deeper tying stifle.

Granting that 4 was more feminine about her head being more refined in her muzzle and shorter in her head.

Nevertheless, I would criticize 4 for being the smallest, lightest muscled mare in the class that was also the poorest tracking.

For these reasons, I placed this class of Aged Mares 3-1-2-4.

Sample Halter Reasons

Sir and Ma'am,

I placed this class of yearling Geldings 1-2-3-4 finding an obvious top and bottom horse with a relatively close middle pair.

In my top pair I found it to be 1 over 2 in that 1 stood more structurally correct in both front and hind legs. 1 was especially straighter down the knees and toes when viewed from the front and was straighter down the hock when viewed from the side. Additionally, 1 had more length of neck, was shorter in the back and loin and longer and more nearly level in the croup. 1 also had more length of hip and greater size and expression of stifle.

I realize that 2 had a greater circumference of forearm and was deeper in the heart girth.

Coming to my middle pair I placed 2 over 3. 2 had a more desirable head by being shorter from eye to muzzle, wider between the eyes, and cleaner in the muzzle. 2 was more prominently V-ed up front and had a larger forearm. Further, 2 was longer in the shoulder and shorter over the back in relation to the underline.

I admit that 3 had a longer neck and was cleaner down the top of the neck.

In closing with my bottom pair, I place 3 over 4 in that 3 stood on more substance with greater depth and width of body having a larger overall volume of muscling.

3 was larger and more prominent in the pectoral region exhibiting more separation and delineation. 3 also was wider through the center of the stifle, tying in lower to a more bulging inner and outer gaskin. In addition, 3 was taller at the withers, deeper in the heart girth, and wider through the floor of the chest.

I grant that 4 was smaller in the head, and stood straighter down the hock as seen at the profile.

However, I criticize 4 and leave him at the bottom of the class for being the lightest muscled, lowest volumed horse in the class that stood out in the toes in front and was weak over the top.

It is for these reasons that I placed this class of yearling Geldings 1-2-3-4.

WESTERN PLEASURE TERMINOLOGY

1. FUNCTIONAL CORRECTNESS

- Better fulfilled the requirements of the class
- More efficient in maintaining the leads
- More correct in picking up the maintaining the leads
- Traveled straighter down the rail
- Maintained gaits with less anticipation of leads
- More efficient in utilizing the leads
- Easier to show
- More prompt in picking up leads and proper gaits

Gait transition:

- Smoother, more prompt
- Efficient
- More responsive
- Worked with less aid and cueing from the rider
- More prompt and precise in the transition of gaits
- Stopped with greater ease and with less resistance
- Departed more quickly
- More fluid in the upward and downward transitions
- More correct in the transition of gaits going both ways of the ring

2. ATTITUDE

- More responsive and willing
- Quieter, more relaxed
- Steadier
- More alert with the ears
- Softer in the mouth
- Quieter with the bit
- Kinder
- More attentive
- Worked with a more pleasant attitude
- More consistent
- Appeared more broke
- Required less obvious cues from the rider
- Worked with fewer visible cues from the rider
- Performed with a greater consistency throughout the class
- More pleasant and willing attitude
- Performed in a more workman-like manner
- More mindful of the bit
- Worked on a looser rein with less obvious clues
- Kinder in the mouth
- Honored the bridle more
- More broke and honest performer
- More solid performance
- More obedient to the riders cues
- More readily yielded to the riders commands

Moved with less restraint
Worked with lighter contact from the rider
Performed with a greater expression of kindness and obedience
Appeared more pleasant
Yielded with less hesitation to the rider's demands
Reined more readily
Handled with less restraint from the rider
Expressed a more willing attitude
Mouthed the bit less
Quieter with a bit

3. MOVEMENT

More desirable frame
Freer and easier
Stylish
Lighter, softer traveling
Exhibited more brilliance of movement
Lighter way of going
Move more rhythmically while showing more brilliance
Moved out with a longer, freer stride
More athletic
Traveled with a longer, more ground covering stride
Flatter moving
Traveled with the feet closer to the ground
Moved with a more effortless stride
More collected and cadenced
Exhibited more drive and impulsion from the hindquarters
Moved at a more desirable rate of speed
Has a more stylish way of going
Moved across the ground staying lower and more level
Exhibited a greater extension of stride
Traveled more effortlessly down the rail
Moved out with greater reach of the front leg
Moved in a more collected manner

Walk:

Freer
Flatter footed
More consistent
Moved with a more definitive 4-beat walk

Jog:

More distinct
More deliberate
Softer
Squarer
More definite 2-beat jog
More cadenced

More attractive
Slower
Flatter in the knees
Moved with a greater softness of stride
Has a more defined jog
Greater engagement of the hocks
Cleaner
Worked with more impulsion

Lope:

All previously mentioned characteristics plus:
Rounder
More natural
Exhibited more drive and impulsion in the hocks
More fluid
More flowing
Greater engagement of the hocks
Carried hocks farther up underneath
More cadenced and distinct 3 beat lope

Back:

Honored the bridle more
Moved straighter and quicker at the back
Softer mouth
Backed more freely and promptly
Backed with less effort
Backed with less aid and cueing

4. HEAD AND NECK CARRIAGE

Steadier head carriage
Traveled with neck more parallel to the ground
Moved with head more perpendicular
More consistent
Held head at a more desirable height
More flexion at the pole
More natural
Performed with less movement of the head and neck
Head was held closer to the vertical
Carried neck nearer to the horizontal
Head set was more nearly perpendicular to the ground

5. MANNERISMS

More pleasant attitude
Less resistant to rider
Less objectionable to the rider
Quieter with the bit and tail

Sample Western Pleasure

Sir or Ma'am,

Starting the class with the most functionally correct and highest quality moving horse that best fulfilled the requirements of the class., my placing for the class of Western Pleasure was 1-2-3-4.

In my top pair it was 1 over 2. 1 was more functionally correct in picking up and maintaining the desired lead and gait while working in both directions of the ring. 1 traveled straighter down the rail and worked on a looser rein. 1 also carried its head more near the vertical and moved straighter at the back. Further, 1 moved with more drive and impulsion from the hocks and was softer at the jog.

I do grant that 2 was quieter with the bit and smoother in the transition from the lope to the walk when working to the left.

The preferred alignment in my middle pair was 2 over 3. 2 was more consistent with its head and neck carriage and worked with less aid and cueing from the rider. Additionally, 2 was flatter in its knees and moved with its feet closer to the ground at the trot and the lope. 2 worked at a more desirable rate of speed while being smoother in the upward transitions.

Admittedly, 3 did show more natural flexion at the pole and traveled straighter down the rail.

Moving to my bottom pair, I placed 3 over 4. 3 was more responsive to the rider while honoring the bridle more. 3 was rounder and more fluid at the lope and traveled with its neck more parallel to the ground. 3 also was squarer at the jog and exhibited a more pleasant attitude by being more alert with the ears and working with lighter contact from the rider.

4 did move quicker at the back, nevertheless, I criticize 4 and leave him last for being inconsistent in its head carriage, uncollected at the lope, and for failing to work on a loose rein.

It is for these reasons that I placed this class of Western Pleasure 1-2-3-4.

Sample Western Pleasure Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

My placing for this class of Western Pleasure was 2-3-1-4 finding this to be a two pair class.

In a close top pair of high quality moving horses, I found it to be 2 over 3. 2 was more fluid and cadenced at the lope and moved more symmetrically at the jog. 2 also was freer at the walk and worked with a more natural headset while exhibiting a greater willingness to the rider. Additionally, 2 was quieter with the bit and traveled straighter down the rail.

I admit 3 was more consistent in its rate of speed and was softer at the jog.

Moving to my middle pair, 3 over 1, 3 worked on a looser rein and looked straighter through the bridle while showing more natural flexion at the poll. 3 was rounder and more fluid at the lope and was smoother in the upward transitions when working to the left. Further, 3 was slower at the jog and was kinder in the bridle by being more mindful of the bit.

I did fully realize that 1 traveled with its neck nearer the horizontal throughout the class.

In closing with my bottom pair, 1 over 4, 1 was calmer and more relaxed while performing in a more workman-like manner. 1 required fewer aids and cues from the rider and was more cadenced and collected at the lope. 1 moved greater impulsion in the hocks and had a more distinct 2-beat jog.

I grant that 4 was slower at the lope nevertheless, I criticize 4 and placed him last for showing resistance to the rider while being ridden on excessive contact and for being inconsistent with its head and neck carriage.

Therefore, my placing for this class of Western Pleasure is 2-3-1-4.

HUNTER UNDER SADDLE TERMINOLOGY

1. FUNCTIONAL CORRECTNESS

Same as Western Pleasure

2. ATTITUDE

Same as Western Pleasure plus:

Bolder

More desirable contact on the reins

Was ridden on more desirable contact

3. MOVEMENT

Freer moving in the shoulder, showing more extension of stride

Brisker moving

Maintained greater extension of stride throughout the class

Showed more spring and animation of stride

Longer, more ground covering, more purposeful stride

Bolder moving

A brisker moving horse

Maintained more extension and fluidness of stride

Lengthened the stride more equally from the shoulder and stifle

Achieved a greater length of stride

Exhibited more purpose of stride

Longer, more stylish stride

Traveled with more elegance

Lower, more horizontal stride that covered more ground

Showed greater brilliance

Engaged the hindquarters with more drive

Moved with the feet lower to the ground

Trot:

Longer

More extended

Lower frame

More forward moving in the trot

More elastic

Greater softness of stride

More reaching stride

More sweeping stride

More elevation and reach from the forehead

More energetic trot

More efficient ground covering stride

Showed more freedom of movement

Canter:

Same as lope for Western Pleasure

More ground covering

4. HEAD AND NECK CARRIAGE

Same as for Western Pleasure

5. MANNERS

Same as for Western Pleasure

Sample Hunter Under Saddle Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

1-2-3-4 was my placing for this class of Hunter Under Saddle starting the class with two higher quality moving and more consistent working horses and ending the class with two horses that worked with less collection and consistency.

In my top pair, 1 over 2, 1 was steadier with its head and neck carriage while maintaining a flatter topline and showing more natural flexion at the poll. 1 moved out with a greater extension of stride at the trot and was flatter in the knees while working with greater symmetry behind. Additionally, 1 more readily yielded to the bit and moved straighter and quicker at the back.

I did realize that 2 was more alert about the ears and quieter with the tail.

In my middle pair, I placed 2 over 3. 2 showed a more pleasant attitude, worked with less resistance to the rider and was ridden on a more desirable amount of contact from the rider. 2 also traveled at a slower pace at the canter and moved with greater collection at the trot and canter. In addition, 2 carried its neck more parallel to the ground and was smoother in the upward transitions.

In my bottom pair, 3 over 4, 3 was bolder moving, exhibiting a more sweeping stride at the trot with more elevation and reach from the forehand. 3 also worked with less obvious cues from the rider.

I will admit that 4 moved at slower rate of speed at the canter.

However, I would criticize 4 and place 4 last for showing resistance to the rider and for being short strided and inconsistent with its head position.

For these reasons I placed this class of Hunter Under Saddle 1-2-3-4.

Sample Hunter Under Saddle Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

My placing for this class of Hunter Under Saddle was 3-2-1-4 finding an obvious top horse in 3 as it was the steadiest performing and highest quality moving horse in the class.

In my top pair, 3 over 2, 3 exhibited greater suitability to purpose by showing more responsiveness to the rider and a more desirable degree of flexion of the poll a higher % of the class. Further, 3 traveled with greater collection at the canter and was ridden with more desirable contact on the reins. 3 also looked straighter through the bridle and backed straighter.

Finding no obvious grant for 2, I move to an extremely close middle pair, I found it to be 2 over 1. 2 worked with less restraint from the rider and moved out with a more ground covering stride at the trot. 2 also carried the head more near the vertical and was quieter with the bit.

However, 1 did travel at a more consistent rate of speed and moved with more drive and impulsion from behind at the canter.

In closing with my bottom pair 1 over 4, 1 had a more desirable attitude that showed more willingness to the rider. 1 was smoother in the gait transitions and was more balanced and collected at the canter showing more fluidness of stride.

Additionally, 1 backed with less resistance to the rider.

I will admit that 4 showed more extension of stride at the trot.

Nevertheless, I criticize 4 and leave 4 at the bottom of the class for being uncollected at the canter and resistant to the rider.

It is for these reasons that I placed this class of Hunter Under Saddle 3-2-1-4.

WESTERN RIDING TERMINOLOGY

1. FUNCTIONAL CORRECTNESS

Same as for Western Pleasure

More correctly maintained the lope, walk, or job over the log.

LEAD CHANGES

Flatter

Smoother

More prompt

With greater ease

With less hesitation

More balanced

More nearly in the center of the markers

More nearly between the markers

Slower, more controlled

More simultaneously front and rear

Straighter

More fluid

More precise

Exhibited more natural, effortless lead changes

Changed leads with greater dispatch

Changed at a more desired location between the markers

More proficient lead changes

More effortless lead changes

Labored less in the lead changes

With the feet closer to the ground

Flatter in changes with less elevation

2. ATTITUDE

Same as for Western Pleasure

3. HEAD AND NECK CARRIAGE

Same as for Western Pleasure

4. QUALITY OF MOVEMENT

Same as for Western Pleasure

5. MANNERISMS

Same as for Western Pleasure

6. LOG

Cleaner over the log

Smoother

Maintained a more correct rhythm and stride over the log

Sample Western Riding Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

I placed this class of Western Riding 4-1-2-3 finding an obvious top and bottom horse and a close middle pair.

Beginning with my top pair 4 over 1, 4 changed leads smoother and with greater ease and nearer the center point between the markers down the line. 4 also worked on a looser rein being more responsive to the rider and maintained a steadier head and neck carriage.

I do grant that 1 was more collected at the lope and moved straighter at the back.

In a close middle pair 1 over 2, 1 was a better mannered horse being quieter with the tail and bit. Additionally, 1 was more prompt in its lead changes down the line and in the crossings changing more simultaneously front and rear. 1 also crossed the log more smoothly at the lope.

I admit that 2 did change at a more desired location between the markers a higher percentage of the class.

Concluding with my bottom pair 2 over 3, 2 worked in a more relaxed manner and was more functionally correct by more promptly picking up and maintaining the lope. Furthermore, 2 did change leads more nearly at the center of the cones, especially at the 2nd and 3rd line changes.

I grant that 3 carried its neck more parallel to the ground while looking straighter through the bridle.

I would fault 3 and place 3 last for anticipating the lead changes, failing to maintain the lope, and being rough in the transition into the lope.

For these reasons I placed this class of Western Riding 4-1-2-3.

Sample Western Riding Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

1-2-3-4 was my placing for this class of Western Riding, finding a close bottom pair.

Starting with my top pair 1 over 2, 1 performed slower and more controlled lead changes with less hesitation and with the feet closer to the ground. 1 was a higher quality loping horse by being more collected and more symmetric in rear stride length. 1 also had a more desirable neck carriage holding the neck more parallel to the ground and was quieter with the bit throughout the class.

However, 2 did move straighter at the back and was smoother over the log at the lope.

In my middle pair 2 over 3, 2 worked in a more relaxed manner with a more pleasant attitude throughout the pattern. Additionally, 2 performed at a slower more consistent rate of speed during the changes down the line. 2 was more functionally correct in picking up and maintaining the lope and was more precise in the location of changes between the markers.

I do admit that 3 was quieter with its tail and moved squarer at the jog.

Finally, in my bottom pair I placed 3 over 4. 3 was more proficient in the lead changes down the line and in the crossings. 3 also changed at a more desirable location between the markers and moved with more collection and symmetry at the lope.

I grant that 4 performed the pattern in a more relaxed manner being more responsive to the rider while working on a looser rein. 4 also was more consistent with its head and neck carriage and honored the bridle more while moving straighter at the back.

I criticize 4 and leave 4 last for changing late behind on all lead changes and for anticipating the changes of lead.

It is for these reasons that I placed this class of Western Riding 1-2-3-4.

REINING TERMINOLOGY

1. OPENING STATEMENTS

The pattern was more accurate and was run with more effort and control
Ran a harder more aggressive pattern
Exhibited more precision in executing the pattern
Ran a faster pattern with more control
Ran a more correct pattern under greater control
Exhibited more athletic ability
Showed more agility
Showed more quickness in the pattern
Ran a more fundamentally correct pattern
More Fluid through the pattern
Worked with lighter contact while showing a more aggressive manner
More suitable reiner, being more broke

2. FUNCTIONAL CORRECTNESS

The pattern was more accurate and was run with more effort and control
Ran a harder more aggressive pattern
Exhibited more precision in executing the pattern
Ran a faster pattern with more control
Ran a more correct pattern under greater control
Exhibited more athletic ability
Showed more agility
Showed more quickness in the pattern
Ran a more fundamentally correct pattern
More fluid through the pattern
Worked with lighter contact while showing a more aggressive manner
More suitable reiner, being more broke

3. STOPS

Stopped with haunches deeper in the ground
Longer stops
Dropped hocks deeper into the ground
Stops were straighter, being deeper and longer
Performed a longer sliding stop
Stopped in a more relaxed manner
Stopped squarer
Kept the hocks more even in the stops
Fell deeper into the ground
More controlled
Dropped deeper into the ground
More controlled
Dropped deeper into the ground
Worked off the haunches more while showing more mobility in front
Stopped with hindquarters deeper in the ground while staying more relaxed up front
Smoother stopping

Ran harder into the stops with greater authority
Stayed in the stop longer
Held the hocks more squarely underneath while sinking deeper into the ground
Stopped harder while crawling more in front

4. RUNS

Ran harder with less anticipation from end to end
Ran with more aggression into the stops
Ran quicker and harder out of rollbacks
Built speed more smoothly in the runs
Drove out harder in the runs

5. CIRCLES

Showed more size and speed variation in the circles
Ran harder faster circles
Performed circles more in the center of the ring
Ran flatter and smoother circles
Held head more toward the inside of circles
Performed circles in a more precise manner
Rated the speed in the circles more uniformly
Ran rounder circles
Held a more correct arc in the body while running circles
Was more balanced in the circles
Circled with the head, shoulder and hip more desirably arched in the direction of the circles
Showed more difference in size and speed of the circles
Exhibited greater contrast in the speed and size of the circles
Ran circles in a more controlled manner staying within the markers
Ran more balanced circles
Executed more correct circles
Figure eights were more symmetrical
Higher continuity of speed and size traveling through the circles
Ran harder in the fast circles while slowing down more promptly in the small circles

6. LEAD CHANGES

Changed more promptly both front and rear
Changed leads more simultaneously both front and rear
More prompt and exact lead changes
Exhibited smoother lead changes with less anticipation and hesitation
Exhibited more effortless lead changes
Changed leads with greater dispatch
Changed leads with less cueing from the rider

7. SPINS

Turned faster in the spins and closer to the ground
Performed faster, flatter spins
Kept a lower center of gravity in faster spins
Showed quicker spins while crossing over more in front

Performed quicker spins while maintaining a more stationary pivot foot
Stayed down lower, being more level in the spins
Held the body straighter in the spins
Had more brilliant spins with a more stationary pivot foot

8. ROLLBACKS

Rolled back more over the haunches
Performed rollbacks in a more correct and willing manner
Rolled back cleaner over the hocks
Ran straighter out of the rollbacks
Rolled back harder over the hocks
Kept the hocks underneath more in the rollback
Rolled over the hocks more with a more stationary pivot foot

9. BACK

Moved straighter at the back
Backed more readily
Backed quicker, honoring the bridle more
Was a faster and cleaner backing horse
Showed more flexion in the poll while backing more squarely over the hocks

10. HESITATION

Stood in amore relaxed manner
Stood quieter and more relaxed
Settled more easily
Paused with greater relaxation
Hesitated more desirably
Stood calmer
Settled easier and more desirably

11. ATTITUDE

Same as for Western Pleasure

12. QUALITY OF MOVEMENT

Same as for Western Pleasure

13. MANNERS

Same as for Western Pleasure

Sample Reining Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

My placing for this class of reining was 4-1-3-2 finding an obvious top horse in the class.

Starting with my top pair 4 over 1, 4 ran a harder, more aggressive pattern while working with less aid from the rider. 4 ran harder into the stops, dropping its hocks deeper into the ground while sliding farther. 4 also was faster and flatter in the spins, keeping a more stationary pivot foot. Additionally, 4 showed more size and speed variation in both sets of circles.

I grant that 1 did have a more desirable arc in the body while performing the circles and backed more quickly.

In moving to my middle pair, 1 over 3, 1 stopped harder and straighter in the 1st and 2nd stops and showed more mobility in the front. 1 ran a more difficult pattern while working on a looser rein and maintained a more stationary pivot foot in the spins.

I do fully realize that 3 ran more balanced circles and changed leads more simultaneously, both front and rear.

In closing with my bottom pair 3 over 2, 3 ran harder between rollbacks and stopped with the haunches deeper in the ground. 3 also showed greater variation in the size of the circles and kept a lower center of gravity in faster spins.

I admit that 2 worked with a more pleasant attitude being quieter with the bit and tail.

However, I criticize 2 and leave 2 last for showing anticipation in the runs, having short stops, and hopping in front in the spins.

For these reasons I placed this class of Reining 4-1-3-2.

Sample Reining Reasons

Sir or Ma'am,

3-1-2-4 was my placing for this class of Reining finding an obvious top horse and a close bottom pair.

Opening with my first pair, 3 over 1, 3 was a more willing performer that worked with less resistance to the rider. 3 departed more promptly into the lope out of both sets of spins and more correctly maintained the lope in the circles to the left. 3 also maintained a more stationary pivot foot while performing quicker spins that were lower to the ground.

I grant that 1 did turn faster in the spins and backed more quickly.

In my middle pair I placed 1 over 2. 1 showed a greater willingness to work and performed the pattern with fewer cues from the rider. 1 ran a bolder pattern, running harder into the stops dropping the hocks deeper into the ground while crawling more in front. Furthermore, 1 rolled back harder over the hocks and ran harder between stops.

I realize that 2 did turn faster in the spins.

In closing with my bottom pair 2 over 4, 2 exhibited more agility and control while running a more correct pattern. 2 was more prompt in picking up the lope out of the rollbacks and had deeper straighter slides. 2 also ran flatter, smoother circles while holding the nose more to the inside of the circle.

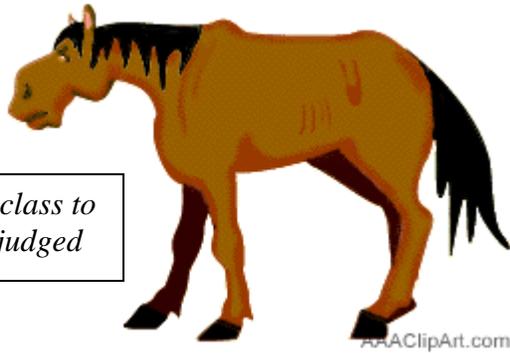
I readily admit that 4 did show more difference in the size and speed of the circles and performed faster spins while remaining flatter and holding a more stationary pivot foot.

I criticize 4 and leave 4 last for trotting out of the rollbacks, having short slides, and requiring excessive contact from the rider.

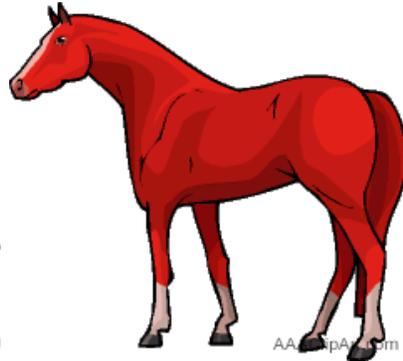
For these reasons I placed this class of Reining 3-1-2-4.

How to Correctly Mark a Horse Judging Contest Placing Card

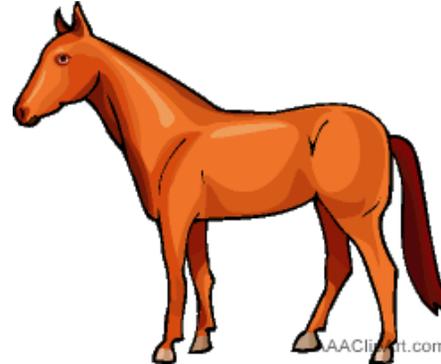
The class to be judged



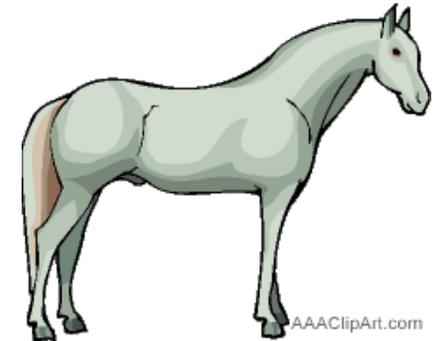
Horse #1



Horse #2



Horse #3



Horse #4

If you like horse #2 the best, horse #4 second best, horse #3 third best & you like horse #1 the least you would mark your card as shown below

If you like horse #4 the best, horse #3 second best, horse #2 third best & you like horse #1 the least you would mark your card as shown below

If you like horse #3 the best, horse #2 second best, horse #4 third best & you like horse #1 the least you would mark your card as shown below.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION HORSE JUDGING CONTEST PLACING CARD	
MARK YOUR PLACING WITH AN 'X'	
CONTEST INFORMATION	1 2 3 4
<i>Senior Judging Division</i>	1 2 4 3
TEAM I.D.	1 3 2 4
CONTESTANT I.D.	1 3 4 2
CLASS NAME	1 4 2 3
CLASS NUMBER	1 4 3 2
REASONS CLASS: YES NO	2 1 3 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 1 4 3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 3 1 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 3 4 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 4 1 3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 4 3 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 1 2 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 1 4 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 2 1 4
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<input type="checkbox"/>	4 2 3 1
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<input type="checkbox"/>	4 3 2 1
REASONS SCORE	PLACING SCORE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION HORSE JUDGING CONTEST PLACING CARD	
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TEAM I.D.	1 3 2 4
CONTESTANT I.D.	1 3 4 2
CLASS NAME	1 4 2 3
CLASS NUMBER	1 4 3 2
REASONS CLASS: YES NO	2 1 3 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 1 4 3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 3 1 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 3 4 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 4 1 3
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REASONS SCORE	PLACING SCORE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION HORSE JUDGING CONTEST PLACING CARD	
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<i>Senior Judging Division</i>	1 2 4 3
TEAM I.D.	1 3 2 4
CONTESTANT I.D.	1 3 4 2
CLASS NAME	1 4 2 3
CLASS NUMBER	1 4 3 2
REASONS CLASS: YES NO	2 1 3 4
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<input type="checkbox"/>	4 2 3 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 3 1 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 3 2 1
REASONS SCORE	PLACING SCORE

Additional Judging Resources:

Kansas State Horse Judging Manual http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/pr_eyas/horseman.pdf

Kentucky Horse Judging Manual <http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/AnimalSciences/extension/pubpdfs/asc118.pdf>

Oklahoma State Horse 4-H Judging Manual <http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu/projects/literature/horsejudging.pdf>

Washington State 4-H Judging Manual <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/pnw0575/pnw0575.pdf>

AQHA Horse Judging Handbook Phone (806) 376-4811

Horse Judging DVD's – Colorado State <http://equineextension.colostate.edu/ythhorsejudging/index.html>

Horse Judging Videos http://www.nhjtca.org/video_dvdsales.asp

<http://www.cev-inc.com/index.php?Nav=search.php&Category=Agriculture%20Science%20and%20Technology&SubCat=Judging>

Horse Judging On line <http://www.judging101.com/>

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agripedia/agmania/horse/>