

## **AHA JUDGES GUIDANCE CRITERIA FOR SPORT HORSE DIVISION**

### **PURPOSE OF THE SPORT HORSE DIVISION**

To evaluate and encourage the breeding of horses, suitable for Dressage, Working Hunter, Eventing, Jumper, Driving, Competitive Trail or Endurance, and to provide an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of breeding programs. Form to function will be emphasized.

### **IN-HAND CLASSES**

**Age:** Show management will decide age groupings. We do not allow foals at foot. In the Arabian division, only the horses being judged are allowed in the ring. However, we do allow mature geldings, because we want to see the results of a breeding program represented by mature horses.

**Gender:** Classes are split by gender (note - colts and geldings are shown separately). **(EAAHSC will not split by gender.)**

**Presentation:** One horse - one handler (no hazers); although a handler may show multiple horses in any given class.

#### **Some reasons for mandatory elimination:**

- a. removal of eyelashes
- b. changing the natural colour of the mane and/or tail
- c. balding the area around the eyes or proximal to the muzzle and nostrils. A judge may penalize an entry with excessive amounts of oil, grease or other substances so as to cause an unnatural appearance.
- d. no product shall be applied to a horse's hoof to hide or conceal a conformation defect. Only clear or transparent products may be used on hooves of horses being shown in the in-hand classes.
- e. judges must excuse from the ring, any horse that has a whip mark (welt) anywhere on its body.
- f. horses wearing non-conforming appts. will be eliminated from judging consideration.

**Appointments:** Snaffle bridle mandatory on horses 3 years and over, and optional on 2 year olds. Nosebands are optional. Reins or lead with/without chain must be attached to both sides of the bit. Two year olds have the option of showing in a plain, leather stable halter. Horses under the age of 2 must be shown in a plain leather stable halter.

**Attire:** Casual sport horse attire (long pants and polo type shirt) or handlers may be dressed in riding boots, breeches, etc. Jackets, vests, hats, gloves are optional. If a whip is used it must be no longer than six feet, including lash, no appendages.

**Score Sheets:** Our in-hand score sheets, both individual and group, differ from the DSHB sheets. Copies are attached. Use of decimals is acceptable.

**Conduct:** We use the triangle to show our horses. The explanation on the use of the triangle is printed in the USEF/EC subchapter rules. Horses are judged individually and do not return as a group. Champions and Reserve Champions are determined by points, with no further showing allowed.

Open cards are used quite frequently, which means you could be seeing horses out of order from the class list. Be sure your scribe notes the exhibitor number and class number on each score sheet. Show management may schedule the in-hand goes, just as they do in dressage, commonly on four or five minute intervals.

## **SPORT HORSE UNDER SADDLE**

This is a group rail class, with horses judged at the walk, trot and canter; NO HAND GALLOP. You may ask for a lengthening of stride at any gait and you may request horses to back while lined up. Classes are split by breed (Arabian; Half/Anglo-Arabian) and by rider (open, amateur, junior, etc.) and by age of horse (junior horse is 5 yrs. & under).

Specifications vary by class and are listed in order of priority (U.S.E.F. AR162.3 and E.C. B2404.3).  
i.e.

- (i) **Open horses** are judged on performance (purity & quality of gaits) first, then manners, conformation, suitability as a sport horse and quality.
- (ii) **A junior horse** is judged on quality first, then suitability as a sport horse, performance, conformation and manners.
- (iii) **An amateur or junior to ride** horse is judged first on manners, followed by performance, suitability as a sport horse, conformation and quality.

**Appointments and Attire:** Please refer to U.S.E.F. AR159 or E.C. B2402. Please note that snaffles or pelham bits are the only bits to be used. If it is a **Junior Horse** under saddle class, then **snaffle bits only** are to be used. If a pelham is used (in the open, amateur or junior to ride classes), converters are not allowed and there must be two reins used. **Kimberwicks and double bridles are prohibited.**

**Bookkeeping:** We DO NOT use score sheets for our sport horse under saddle and sport horse show hack classes. You will be given a judge's card for each class. The card will give you the specs for the class. You may choose to use a pad of paper to track your placings for the class. Bookkeeping for the rail classes can be easily managed. One method suggested is as follows:  
As the class proceeds, you take "visual snapshots" of horses that you like, and write those numbers down on the left side of your pad. These classes are not necessarily fault and out. A high quality horse can make a mistake and still be used on your card. By the end of the class, you should have a final placings list on the right side of your pad. Then transfer those numbers onto your judge's card. Show management will inform you how many placings are required for each class. Resist the temptation to take copious notes and over-analyze. Pick the horses you like in the order that you like them. Your ringmaster is not your scribe.

**A sport horse under saddle class should take no more than 10-12 minutes to judge.**

### **Sport Horse Class Specifications**

IN-HAND CLASSES. Horses shall be shown at the walk and trot on the triangle. The AHA Score Sheet is divided as follows:

Movement - 40% (20% for walk and 20% for trot) Conformation - 40% Expression, Manners, Willingness - 10% Quality, Balance and Harmony, Suitability as a Sport Horse - 10% Transmissible weaknesses or predisposition to unsoundness shall be penalized commensurate with severity.

UNDER SADDLE CLASSES. To be shown at the walk, trot, and canter both directions of the ring. Judge may request lengthening of stride at any gait and may request horse to back in the line-up.

- a. OPEN. To be judged on performance (purity and quality of gaits), manners, conformation, suitability as a Sport Horse and quality.
- b. AMATEUR. To be judged on manners, performance (purity and quality of gaits), suitability as a Sport Horse, conformation and quality.
- c. JUNIOR HORSE. To be judged on quality, suitability as a Sport Horse, performance (purity and quality of gaits), conformation and manners.

## FROM USEF

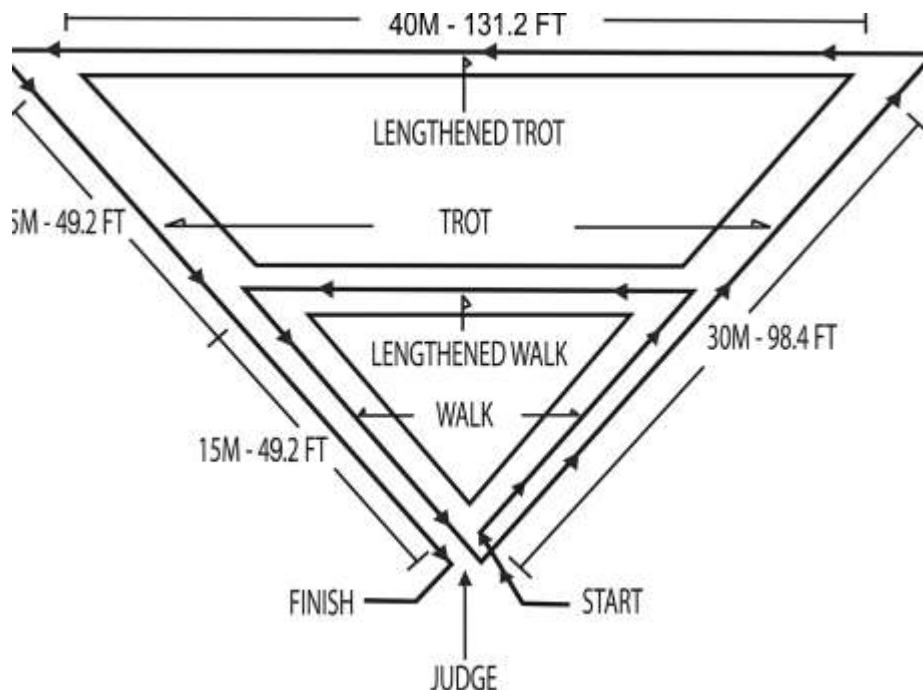
SHUS - Dressage type - displays the conformation and movement qualities as follows: Horses of this type carry a higher set-on neck than the Hunter type with sufficient length and flexion of the poll. Movement should be free, elastic, active and regular with good push from behind without tension and with a tendency toward an uphill balance.

Hunter type - displays the conformation and movement qualities as follows: Horses of this type carry a more level frame than the Dressage type horse, yet must display a natural looking carriage. Movement should have good ground cover and tend to be long and low with good push from behind, free of tension and showing good balance.

SHIH - Conformation is to be evaluated in terms of potential trainability, potential performance and predisposition to soundness. Form to function is to be emphasized. Blemishes are not to count unless resulting from conformation faults. Gaits are to be evaluated in terms of purity, quality and correctness. Correct gaits which contribute to ease in training and the horse remaining sound and useable are most important. Purity and quality are judged mainly in profile. Correctness is judged mainly while the horse is coming to and going from the judge's position. Colts and stallions two years and over must have both testicles descended.

Following a posted or announced order, or on request from the judge, entries in each class will approach the judging area one at a time, walk to the apex of the triangle. Conformation judging may take place before or after performance on the triangle, so wait for the judge's instructions. Wait for the judge's request to proceed on the triangle. The handler will lead the horse on the perimeter of the triangle at the walk and trot, returning to the apex and wait for further instructions. At the completion of the judging, the handler will lead the horse away from the judging area. The triangle may be adjusted to fit local conditions.

Triangle: Corners should be well defined. A marker will be used at the apex and at each corner to define placement of the turn for the exhibitor. Use of plants or flowers is allowed.



The horse is to be shown in an "open position," for conformation judging. The traditional way of showing open position would be with the right front leg slightly back and the right hind leg slightly forward; but as long as all four legs of the horse are visible to the judge when standing on either side of the horse, this would be acceptable. The horse's head and neck should be allowed to show in a natural and comfortable carriage, and the handler should stand away from the horse with a loose lead line.

Judge must excuse from the ring any unruly horse or one whose actions threaten to endanger other exhibitors or their entries.

A whip may be used to guide the horse.

An entry must be penalized for:

- a. Excessive amounts of oil, grease or other similar substances.
- b. Balding the area around the eyes or proximal to the muzzle and nostrils.
- c. Excessive use of the whip or actions that may disturb other entries shall be severely penalized.

### **Sport Horse In-Hand Appointments**

Tack: Bridles are mandatory on horses three years and older. A bridle shall be a dressage-type snaffle bridle or hunter-type snaffle bridle. Snaffle may be with or without cheeks, keepers allowed. Use of a noseband is optional but if used, it must be a cavesson, flash, figure 8, mexican, dropped, or crescent style noseband. A split or single lead made of either leather or chain (or a combination of both) may be used, attached through both sides of the bit, with/or instead of reins. Horses aged two years may be shown in a bridle (as listed above), or a plain leather stable halter. Horses under age two years must be shown in a plain leather stable halter.

Attire:

- a. Conservative casual attire is recommended for the handler. This would include casual pants and shirt. Also acceptable would be Dressage or Hunter attire including breeches, boots, shirt with tie, stock tie or choker collar. Jackets, hats, vests, and gloves are optional.
- b. The handler may carry only one whip, maximum length of six feet, including lash and without attachments (i.e. plastic bags, ribbons, etc.).

### **Sport Horse Under Saddle Appointments**

Tack:

- a. Bridle shall be a dressage-type snaffle bridle with snaffle bit, or hunter-type snaffle or Pelham bridle is acceptable. Converters on Pelham bridle are not permitted and two reins are required. Unconventional bits may be penalized at the discretion of the judge, BUT kimberwicks and double bridles are prohibited. In junior horse under saddle classes, snaffle bits are mandatory. Snaffles may be with or without cheeks, keepers allowed. Cavesson nosebands are to be used, but flash nosebands would be acceptable when using a snaffle bridle with snaffle bit.
- b. A dressage, forward seat or English all purpose saddle is to be used. No saddle seat type saddles allowed.
- c. Martingales are not permitted.

Attire:

- a. Dressage or Hunter attire acceptable. Dressage attire will be defined as white or light colored breeches, short riding coat of conservative color, with tie, choker or stock tie, boots, a hunt cap, derby, top hat or protective headgear. Hunter attire will be defined as light colored breeches, short riding coat of conservative color, with tie or choker, boots or smooth leather half-chaps, and hunt cap or protective headgear. It is recommended that attire reflect the tack used on the horse.
- b. Gloves of conservative color are optional for either style of attire.
- c. Spurs and whip are optional. If a whip is carried, it may not exceed the length requirements in DR120.

