

4-H HORSE SHOW JUDGING STANDARDS

JUDGING SYSTEMS

- 1) Rank all exhibits within a class from first place to last place.
- 2) Recognize the top group and may or may not provide recognition to the other entries.
- 3) Divide the exhibits into groups, based on similar quality or efficiency. The process of dividing exhibits into groups is known as the Danish system. The Danish system, or a variation of it, is used in judging Iowa 4-H exhibits. It provides educational and developmental opportunities consistent with goals and objectives of youth development in the Iowa 4-H program. In general the ribbons are awarded one of two ways.
 - a) Purple, blue, red and white ribbons are awarded to the designated groups.
 - b) Blue, red, and white are awarded to the designated groups with purple being used to represent an outstanding exhibit.

THE DANISH SYSTEM

Advantages of the Danish system:

- 1) Standards can be more clearly established in the minds of the judges and of the 4-H'ers. However, judges do need to know and use established and recognizable differences in making decisions between the groups.
- 2) Judges do not have to make hair-splitting decisions without clear-cut differences. Exhibits are evaluated individually and placed in equivalent groupings, not ranked in comparison with each other.
- 3) It is easier to judge classes since grouping similarities is easier than separating individual differences.
- 4) The Danish system tempers the emphasis on champions, as well as the emphasis on competing with peers.
- 5) Judges may omit a ribbon placing or grouping of awards if there are not exhibits in the class that merit these placing, based on established standards. All exhibits may be placed in one or two groupings.
- 6) All 4-H'ers receive recognition for their exhibits. All exhibits meeting the class requirements are placed in some ribbon group.
- 7) 4-H'ers is recognized as part of a group, rather than being singled out for individual recognition, a concept that can contribute significantly to youth development.

Disadvantages of the Danish system:

- 1) Judges must be educated to learn and use uniform standards so that ribbon placing has consistency among shows and fairs.
- 2) It may not adapt itself well too small classes where there are not enough exhibits to establish groupings.
- 3) Unless adapted, the Danish system does not allow for selecting exhibits for special recognition or for representing that class at a higher level show.

Purple Ribbons - In some counties these ribbons may be used where the judge feels that within the blue ribbon exhibits there are one or more that are truly outstanding and merit special recognition

Blue Ribbon - Indicates that in the judge's opinion the 4-H'er shows above average workmanship, knowledge, and effort in the project based on the conference judging criteria.

Red Ribbon - Indicates that in the judge's opinion the 4-H'er shows expected or average workmanship, knowledge, and effort in the project based on the conference judging criteria.

White Ribbon - Indicates that in the judge's opinion the 4-H'er shows below average workmanship, knowledge, and effort in the project based on the conference judging criteria.

EVALUATION PRINCIPLES USED IN JUDGING 4-H HORSE EXHIBITS

The evaluation or judging can be thought of as a sequence of four steps, each one leading to the next:



The following information is provided to help gain some common understanding and uniformity throughout the state on the judging of 4-H horse shows.

SHOWMANSHIP

Scoring

Exhibitors will be scored from 0 to 20. Ten points should be allocated toward the overall appearance of the exhibitor and horse, and 10 points toward performance.

Suggested Scoring (based on 0-20 points)

- 20: Excellent performance. Completes pattern accurately, quickly, smoothly, and precisely; and demonstrates a high level of professionalism. Horse is fit and groomed well. Exhibitor is neat, clean, and appropriately dressed.
- 18-19: Generally excellent performance with one minor fault in the execution of the pattern or in the appearance of exhibitor or horse. Overall execution of the pattern is excellent and exhibitor is highly professional.
- 16-17: Good pattern execution with one or two minor faults in performance or appearance of exhibitor and horse. Exhibitor is reasonably professional in presentation of horse.
- 14-15: Average pattern that lacks quickness and precision, or commits two or more minor faults in performance or appearance of exhibitor and horse. Horse is not presented to its best advantage.
- 12-13: One major fault or several minor faults in the performance and/or appearance that prevents an effective presentation of the horse.
- 10-11: Two major faults or many minor faults in the performance and/or appearance of exhibitor and horse
- 6-9: Several major faults or one severe fault in the performance and/or appearance of exhibitor and horse.
Exhibitor demonstrates complete lack of professionalism in showing the horse or commits a severe fault.
- 1-5: Exhibitor commits one or more severe faults, but does complete the class and avoids disqualification.

EXAMPLE OF USING THE DANISH SYSTEM FOR SHOWMANSHIP CLASSES

Rating	Project Quality	Grooming	Presentation	Description
Purple (Blue)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent-high quality. Qualified for a blue even though the 4-H'er needs help showing
	Excellent	Excellent	Good	
	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Qualified for a blue even though the 4-H'er needs help in growing.
	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Grooming & presentation made up for lack of quality in the project.
Blue (Red)	Good	Good	Good	Good - A level below excellent.
	Excellent	Good	Good	Needs help in grooming & presentation so that the judge can appreciate quality.
	Good	Good	Excellent	Even though the presentation was excellent, the project quality and grooming limited the project.
	Good	Excellent	Good	O.K. in grooming but, project quality and presentation held project to red.
	Good	Good	Average	Deserving of red in the majority of areas.
	Good	Average	Good	Deserving of red in the majority of areas.
Red (White)	Average	Good	Good	Deserving of red in the majority of areas.
	Average	Average	Average	Average – A level below good or not good.
	Average	Average	Poor	Lower quality project plus more work is needed.
	Average	Poor	Average	Lower quality project plus more work is needed.
	Poor	Average	Average	Quality of project limits rating.
	Poor	Poor	Poor	4-H'er deserves the lowest possible rating.

WESTERN HORSEMANSHIP

- 1) The western horsemanship class is designed to evaluate the rider's ability to execute maneuvers set by the judge with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence, and maintaining a balanced, functional and fundamentally correct body position. The ideal horsemanship pattern is extremely precise with the rider and horse working in complete unison, executing each maneuver with subtle aids and cues.
- 2) Riders should be able to perform not only the ring routine but also any additional tests the judge may request. It is recommended that judges ask for at least two additional tests of the top award contenders.
- 3) The pattern to be used should be posted at least one hour before the class begins. Instructions should be publicly announced.
- 4) Exhibitors are to be scored from 0 to 20 with ½ point increments acceptable. Ten points should be allocated toward overall appearance of exhibitor and horse and 10 points allocated toward performance of the pattern.

Suggested Scoring

20: Excellent equitation including body position and use of aids. Pattern is performed promptly, precisely, and smoothly.

18-19: Generally excellent performance with one minor fault in appearance and position of exhibitor or execution of the pattern (performance).

16-17: Generally good pattern execution and equitation with one minor fault in precision or execution of pattern (performance), or appearance and position of exhibitor.

14-15: Average pattern that lacks quickness or precision, or rider has obvious equitation flaws that prevent effective horsemanship, or commits two or three minor faults in the performance, or appearance and position of exhibitor.

12-13: One major fault or several minor faults in the performance and or appearance and position of exhibitor that precludes effective communication with the horse.

10-11: Two major faults or many minor faults in the performance or appearance and position of exhibitor.

6-9: Several major faults or one severe fault in the performance, or appearance and position of exhibitor. Exhibitor demonstrates a complete lack of riding ability or commits a severe fault in the performance, or appearance and position of exhibitor.

1-5: Exhibitor commits one or more severe faults in the performance, or appearance and position of exhibitor, but does complete the class and avoids disqualification

HUNT SEAT EQUITATION

- 1) The hunt seat equitation class is designed to evaluate the rider's ability to execute maneuvers set by the judge with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence, and maintaining a balanced, functional and fundamentally correct body position. The ideal equitation pattern is extremely precise with the rider and horse working in complete unison, executing each maneuver with subtle aids and cues.
- 2) Riders should be able to perform not only the ring routine but also any additional tests the judge may request. It is recommended that judges ask for at least two additional tests of the top award contenders.
- 3) The pattern to be used should be posted at least one hour before the class begins. Instructions should be publicly announced.
- 4) Exhibitors are to be scored from 0 to 20 with ½ point increments acceptable. Ten points should be allocated toward overall appearance of exhibitor and horse and 10 points allocated toward performance of the pattern.

Suggested Scoring:

Scoring may be on a basis of 0-20 with ½ point increments acceptable, an approximate breakdown follows:

20: Excellent equitation including body position and use of aids. Pattern is performed promptly, precisely and smoothly.

18-19: Generally excellent performance with one minor fault in appearance and position of exhibitor or execution of the pattern (performance).

16-17: Generally good pattern execution and equitation with one minor fault in precision or execution of pattern (performance), or appearance and position of exhibitor.

14-15: Average pattern that lacks quickness or precision, or rider has obvious equitation flaws that prevent effective equitation, or commits two or three minor faults in the performance or appearance and position of exhibitor.

12-13: One major fault or several minor faults in the performance and /or appearance and position of exhibitor that precludes effective communication with the horse.

10-11: Two major faults or many minor faults in the performance or appearance and position of exhibitor.

6-9: Several major faults or one severe fault in the performance, or appearance and position of exhibitor. Exhibitor demonstrates a complete lack of riding ability or commits a severe fault in the performance or appearance and position of exhibitor.

1-5: Exhibitor commits one or more severe faults in the performance, or appearance and position of exhibitor, but does complete the class and avoids disqualifications.

GUIDELINES FOR HORSEMANSHIP/EQUITATION CLASSES

GUIDELINES ONLY			
	Good	Minor Faults	Major Faults
Seat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Keeping center of balance 👉 Complete contact with saddle 👉 Straight back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Sitting off center 👉 Sway back 👉 Round back 👉 Losing center of balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Excessive body motion 👉 Popping out of saddle 👉 Falling out of saddle (At judge's discretion)
Hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Quiet, light hands 👉 Maintaining consistent head position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Unsteadiness 👉 Restriction causing untrue gaits. 👉 Excessively loose or extremely tight reins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Horse's mouth gaping 👉 Heavy hands 👉 Constant bumping 👉 Two handing reins (for senior horses) 👉 Touching saddle 👉 Touching horse 👉 Finger between romal reins
Legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Secure leg position 👉 Proper weight in stirrups 👉 Controlling motion 👉 Weight evenly on ball of foot 👉 Heels lower than toes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Uneven stirrups 👉 Motion in legs 👉 Insufficient weight in stirrups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Interfering with another rider 👉 Excessive spurring 👉 Loss of contact between legs & saddle/foot & stirrup 👉 Coming in contact with fence or other riders 👉 Loss of stirrup 👉 Touching in front of cinch
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Maintaining horse in good form at consistent gaits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Breaking from walk to jog 👉 Breaking from jog to lope 👉 Not standing in line-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Breaking from jog to walk 👉 Breaking from lope to jog 👉 Allowing horse to back crooked 👉 Missing leads 👉 Failure to back 👉 Failure to correct leads
Overall appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Suitable, well-fitted outfit 👉 Well-groomed horse 👉 Clean equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Saddle not suitable to rider's size 👉 Unfitted outfit 👉 Dirty boots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Unclean equipment 👉 Ungroomed horse 👉 Untrimmed horse
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Good attitude towards horse & judge 👉 Consistency of rider's form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Equipment not fitting horse 👉 Failure to use corners and rail 👉 Suitability of horse & rider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Excessive voice commands 👉 Excessive circling 👉 Major delays in transitions 👉 Falling off 👉 Failure to pass individual tests 👉 Schooling horse 👉 Romaling horse 👉 Off pattern (At judges discretion)

Examples of ribbon placing

Blue - Awarded to strong riders that maintain a balanced, secure seat throughout the class and any individual work asked of them. The rider is confident and in control of his or her mount throughout the entire class and shows the horse to its best advantage. Tack and attire are appropriate, well-fitting, and clean. Few, if any, faults are recognized.

Red- Given to intermediate riders that typically have faults in position or control. One or two significant errors or a succession of minor mistakes characterize a red-ribbon performance. Tack and attire may be suitable but in need of attention.

White- Given to riders that are insecure in their position or have little knowledge of class routine, or failure of helmet to stay on top of head during a class. The performance is typically marred by several major faults. Inappropriate attention to proper fit, repair, and cleanliness of tack is sometimes apparent.

WESTERN PLEASURE & HUNTER UNDER SADDLE

GUIDELINES FOR FLAT CLASSES – WESTERN PLEASURE, HUNTER UNDER SADDLE

PLEASURE	GOOD	MINOR FAULTS	MAJOR FAULTS	ELIMINATION
WALK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Ground covering 👉 Flat footed 👉 Good attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Slow 👉 Disinterested/lethargic 👉 Not attentive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Nervous 👉 Jogging 👉 Not walking 	
JOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Easy riding 👉 Good motion 👉 Consistent 👉 Steady 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Too slow 👉 Too fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Not performing a two beat jog 👉 Failing to jog both front and back 👉 Hard or rough riding 	
LOPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Easy riding 👉 Good motion 👉 Consistent 👉 Steady 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Too slow 👉 Too fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Wrong lead 👉 Pulling 👉 Not performing a 3 beat lope 👉 Hard or rough riding 	
EXTENDED JOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Easy riding 👉 Good motion 👉 Consistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Inconsistent speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Breaking gaits 👉 Pulling 👉 Hard or rough riding 👉 No increase in speed 	
BACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Proper flexion 👉 Readily responsive 👉 Back in straight line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Hesitant 👉 Not backing straight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Throwing head 👉 Gaping 👉 Pulling 👉 Not backing 👉 Rearing 	
GENERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Smooth 👉 Steady 👉 Easy riding 👉 Proper flexion & balance 👉 Good attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Sour ears 👉 Switching tail 👉 Inconsistent speed 👉 Out of balance 👉 Improper or incomplete appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Over or under flexion. 👉 Throwing head. 👉 Poll too high or too low. 👉 Constant bumping the bit. 👉 Gaping. 👉 Constant breaking of gaits. 👉 Obvious schooling. 👉 Two hands on reins (except with bosal or snaffle) or fingers between closed reins or more than 1 finger between splint reins. 👉 Cueing horse in front of cinch. 👉 Excessively loose or extremely tight rein. 👉 Cutting off another exhibitor on rail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Kicking 👉 Illegal equipment 👉 Lameness (AAEP score>0) 👉 Fall of horse or rider - at judge's discretion. 👉 Bleeding mouth 👉 Body condition score of 1-3.

EXAMPLES OF RIBBON PLACINGS

Blue- Obedient horses that show properly at all three gaits are awarded blue ribbons. Slight bobbles (such as slow transitions, slight, almost imperceptible, break in gait, etc.) can be excused if the performance is generally excellent and the horse is mannerly.

Red- Awarded if there is a significant deficiency in performance or manners. If a horse jigs incessantly or pulls unmercifully, a red ribbon is appropriate. A quickly corrected wrong lead or multiple instances of breaking gait, for instance, may also qualify a horse for a red ribbon.

White- A horse that fails to perform the required gaits, including a true flat walk, earns a white ribbon. An egregious lack of manners (balking, bolting, spinning, etc.) would also characterize a white ribbon performance. Lameness and inappropriate tack are also grounds for a white ribbon, or failure of helmet to stay on top of head during a class.