

Kansas 4-H State Horse Judging Contest Guidelines

The primary objective of the 4-H Horse Judging Contests is to provide an opportunity for youth to demonstrate their knowledge of equine-related subject matter, including structure and movement, in a competitive setting where attitudes of friendliness and fairness prevail. These contests will provide an educational experience for both participants and spectators.

CONTESTANTS AND ELIGIBILITY

- I. There will be two age divisions.
 - a. Intermediate: 9-13 years of age before January 1 of the current year
 - b. Senior: 14-18 years of age before January 1 of the current year
- II. There is no limit to the number of individuals and teams Extension units may enter in each age division. Teams are to be made up of three or four members. When four members are entered; the three team members with the three highest overall scores will make up the team's score.
- III. Any 4-H member who has participated in a post-secondary (university, college, junior college, or technical school) competitive event that would be of a similar nature and in the same subject matter area is ineligible to compete in the state horse judging contest. *A competitive event is defined here as an event open to more than one educational institution (or its students) in which scores are kept and awards are offered to any or all participants.*
- IV. Previous Kansas State Horse Judging Contest senior winners are eligible for state competition, but may only participate at the national contest one time.

TEAM REQUIREMENTS

- I. Teams are to be made up of three or four members.
- II. All individuals on the team must be in the same age division.
- III. When county/district does not have enough participants to fill a team, composite teams are accepted with members from bordering counties/districts **provided agents are aware of composite teams prior to entry**. Counties/districts should establish a composite team prior to the contest and be practicing together.
- IV. Team member changes can be made the morning of contest at check-in provided agent(s) are aware and approve of changes.

METHOD OF CONDUCT

- I. All contestants will check in the morning of the contest and receive placing cards. All contestants will remain with their assigned group throughout the contest. Reasons and official placings will be given at a location to be announced.
- II. Dress code is casual and industry appropriate.
- III. No talking between contestants or contestants and coaches is allowed during the contest. Questions from contestants are to be directed to the contest officials.
- IV. Cell phone and electronic device use is prohibited. **Anyone caught with cell phone or electronic device will be disqualified.**

- V. Contestants are responsible for their own writing instruments (No. 2 pencils) and notepads for the purpose of taking notes for reasons classes.

CONTEST FORMAT

- I. Judging contest will have 6 – 8 classes (2-6 halter and 2-6 performance).
 - a. Intermediate division will give 2 sets of oral reasons.
 - b. Senior division will give 4 sets of oral reasons.
- II. The animals and showmen will be designated by numbers 1-2-3-4.
- III. Halter classes may be represented by the following breeds and types including, but not limited to: Quarter Horse, Conformation Hunter, Appaloosa, Arabian, Paint, Morgan, Miniature, and Draft breeds.
- IV. Performance classes may include Western Pleasure, Reining, Ranch Riding, Hunter Under Saddle, Hunter Hack, Trail, Hunt Seat Equitation, and Horsemanship.
- V. Halter horses will be judged as sound. Performance will be judged as seen (unsoundness to be penalized accordingly).
- VI. Horses will not be handled by the contestants, but time will be provided in halter classes for close inspection and to observe the horses at a walk and trot.
- VII. AQHA Novice Amateur rules will be used in all performance classes.
- VIII. All tack and attire will be considered legal, provided it is used properly.
- IX. All classes will be considered potential reasons classes with at least one set of oral reasons coming from the halter classes.
- X. Ten to fifteen minutes will be given to contestants for each class to make their observations, take notes, and fill out their placing cards. Reasons classes will be announced after all classes have concluded.
- XI. Contestants are advised to take notes on all classes.
- XII. Two minutes will be allowed for each contestant to give oral reasons to the judge (over 2 minutes will be severely penalized by an automatic 25 point deduction).
- XIII. Contestants are not permitted to use notes while giving oral reasons. Contestant's placing card will not be offered to them upon entering the reasons area.

JUDGES

- I. Judges will place classes while contestants are working in the arena. The judges shall determine placings and cuts to be made.
- II. When contestants are finished giving reasons, the reasons listener will place the reasons score on the reasons score card for tabulation.

DESCRIPTION OF CUTS

- I. Cuts, as specified in the National Horse Judging Team Coaches Association Handbook:
 1. Horses are extremely similar; no obvious reason why one should be placed over the other; or, both horses have numerous faults and none supersedes the others; placing is strictly a matter of personal preference.

2. Horses are very close, but one horse has one or two qualitative or quantitative advantages; the majority of official judges would not switch the pair, but half of the contestants could logically switch the pair.
3. Horses are of unequal quality, but there is a logical placing in favor of one horse; either one horse has several faults or several advantages; no more than one third of contestants would be expected to switch the pair.
4. Horses are not of similar quality; one horse has several decided advantages based on many points; all experts would quickly see the placing; no guesswork or personal preference required to make placing; no more than 10% of contestants would be expected to switch the pair.
5. Large number of extreme differences between the horses; placing is obvious to everyone on first, quick observation; careful study not required for the placing; pair consists of an inferior horse vs. a consistent winner; only very inexperienced, unformed contestants would switch the pair.

DETERMINATION OF RATINGS

- I. Fifty points shall constitute a perfect mark on placing and 50 points shall constitute a perfect mark on reasons.
- II. Priority order for breaking ties:
 - a. If tied for an award in Placings, the contestant/team having the highest reason score will be listed first.
 - b. If tied for an award in Reasons, the contestant/team with the highest placing score on the reason classes will be listed first.
 - c. If tied for an individual or team overall award, the contestant/team having the highest overall reason score shall be listed first.
 - d. If still tied for (c) above, the contestant/team having the highest score in placing reason classes shall be listed first.
 - e. If still tied, the contestant/team with the highest overall placing score will be listed first.
 - f. If still tied, the contestant/team with the highest single class reasons score will be listed first.

AWARDS

- I. Division awards will be given for the top 5 individuals and top 3 teams in the Intermediate and Senior divisions. There will be awards given for the top 10 individuals and top 3 teams overall.
- II. Only Senior Teams are eligible for the national contest. The top senior team is offered an opportunity to compete at the 4-H designated National Contest held in conjunction with the Western National in Denver, CO.
- III. When determining eligibility for the national contests, the regional and national rules will supersede the Kansas State 4-H Horse Judging Contest rules.
- IV. Senior contestants may compete multiple times in the State Contest, but may only participate at the national contest one time.