



USA EQUESTRIANSM

Hunter Seat Equitation Manual

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PREFACE

The purpose of this manual is to create a comprehensive set of standards for everyone who judges Hunter Seat Equitation. There is a clear need for a tool such as this. Due to the continuing and rapid growth of our sport we need to have clear guidelines for judges in order to maintain uniformity and a high level of quality in the show ring. Our system of equitation, “Hunter Seat Equitation” is the envy of the world. This manual is being presented by the Continuing Education committee of USA Equestrian, our national governing body. It will be reviewed and updated annually by the USA Equestrian Hunter Seat Equitation Committee and will be part of the curriculum that all judges must address before they are granted our national judges card through the Federation’s Licensed Officials Committee.

It is hoped that by adding this uniformity and stability in the show ring that we will not only raise the standard of riding, training, and judging, but we will also be able to better preserve this high level for future generations.

This Manual is a joint contribution from the following organizations:

- ✧ WCE, West Coast Equestrians, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting our sport on the west coast,
- ✧ PCHA, Pacific Coast Horse Shows Association, from members of the PCHA Hunter Seat Equitation Committee,
- ✧ USA Equestrian Hunter Seat Equitation Committee.
- ✧ USA Equestrian Continuing Education Committee
- ✧ USA Equestrian Licensed Officials Committee

This is not intended as a definitive text on the subject – this material is intended to be a starting point of thought and discussion during clinics and between peers.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED READING

Learn to Ride, Hunt, and Show – Gordon Wright. (currently out of print but available at many public libraries)

Hunter Seat Equitation – George Morris. Doubleday, 1985.

Judging Hunters and Hunter Equitation – Anna White-Mullin. Trafalger Square Publ., 1993.

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GUIDELINES FOR RIDER POSITION

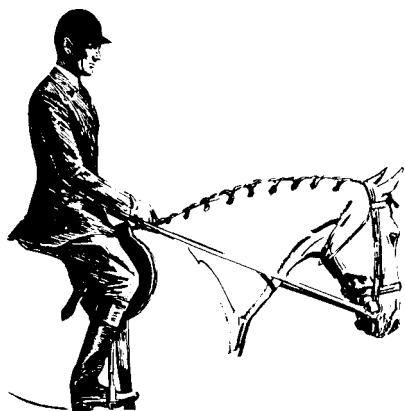
Any comprehensive work on our sport has to begin with the rider's position. A study of our discipline is somewhat difficult because there is no one work that pulls together the evolution of the accepted style of riding in the U.S.A. today. Our roots go back to the beginning of riding history; today's seat and style is a composite that best suits modern needs in the show ring.

The definition of equitation is "that position which allows the rider to perform a function with the least amount of energy."

Statement from the 2002 USA Equestrian rulebook:

Article 2208. Position.

1. General. Rider should have a workmanlike appearance, seat and hands light and supple, conveying the impression of complete control should any emergency arise. Exhibitors may ride sidesaddle in Adult Equitation classes but not in classes restricted to Juniors.
2. Hands. Hands should be over and in front of horse's withers, knuckles thirty degrees inside the vertical, hands slightly apart and making a straight line from horse's mouth to rider's elbow. Method of holding reins is optional and bight of reins may fall on either side. However, all reins must be picked up at the same time.
3. Basic Position. The eyes should be up and shoulders back. Toes should be at an angle best suited to rider's conformation: ankles flexed in, heels down, calf of leg in contact with horse and slightly behind girth. Iron should be on the ball of the foot and must not be tied to the girth.
4. Position in Motion. At the walk, sitting trot and canter, body should be a couple of degrees in front of the vertical; posting trot, inclined forward; galloping and jumping, same inclination as the posting trot.
5. Mounting and Dismounting. To mount, take up reins in left hand and place hand on withers. Grasp stirrup leather with right hand and insert left foot in stirrup, toe in girth and mount. To dismount, rider may either step down or slide down. The size of rider must be taken into consideration.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHILE JUDGING

The drawing from the USA Equestrian rulebook represents an ideal rider's position. However, there are certain pitfalls in judging that you should strive to avoid.

1. A rider should not look too stiff.
2. When evaluating a rider's skill a judge must make an effort not to be overly influenced by the body shape or attractiveness of the contestant. Some riders have a build that is more appealing on a horse. A lovely overall appearance cannot and should not be discounted but a judge should also emphasize technical ability.
3. Try to keep your attention on the overall picture of the each rider. Guard against putting too much emphasis on any one detail. Do not waste time on petty personal dislikes you may have.
4. When evaluating a group remember that your task is to compare one rider to another, not each rider to some special ideal. What you want to determine is which rider comes closest to an ideal in comparison to the other contestants in the class. Do not take each rider apart, criticizing them individually. Your job is to separate the winners. It is not expected of a judge to recall each rider in a flat equitation class.
5. In the lower level of the equitation division (such as Maiden, Novice, Limit) you should emphasize form in your decision-
6. Remember that the judge has two options in how riders are called aside before you ask for a work-off. You can either call all the riders into the middle of the ring before the work-off is announced or you can line the riders up anywhere else in the ring. This allows the judge to keep an eye on each rider in the work-off without the line obstructing the view. Either require all riders to remain in the ring until the work-off is complete or organize start/finish of test so that the last rider is not left alone in the ring.
7. Remember if you are going to request riders to drop their stirrups you must allow enough time for them to cross their stirrups.

JUDGING ON-THE-FLAT EQUITATION -MISCELLANEOUS ADVICE

DIRECTIONS TO THE RIDERS

A judge should always be specific with his requests. He should listen to make sure the announcer has conveyed the instructions correctly.

OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE FROM TRAINERS/PARENTS/COACHES

Coaching assistance from outside the ring should always be penalized. Article 2210 states: Outside assistance will be penalized at the judge's discretion.

TOO MANY RIDERS IN A CLASS – an option

The judge should quickly run the first direction of the ring and pull the better riders into the middle. He should then reverse the remainder of the class and give a good look at the rest of the riders. After the second direction he should call any additional riders into the middle and excuse the remaining riders that he feels do not meet the level of those already selected. He can then send the riders in the middle back on the rail in the second direction. This method may take a few minutes more but gives all the contestants the feeling they were given full consideration.

CHAMPIONSHIP OR HIGHLY COMPETITIVE CLASSES – an option

Some judges find it helpful in this category of class to run it in an elimination type format. This permits all riders to know exactly where they stand. The first part of the class is run to separate out the best riders. The second part of the class is a series of tests done collectively. When a rider makes a mistake he is pulled into the middle of the ring. The last rider on the rail is the winner. Do not rely on your memory in this situation; fill in your card rider by rider or use a scribe.

“WORKING” A CLASS

A judge should not hesitate to work a class, making riders show their ability to ride their horses at different rates of speed or lengthening of stride. A good rider should have not only a correct position but also should be able to keep his horse on the bit through a variation of gaits and during transitions to them.

TESTS

If time permits, or in competitive classes, judges are encouraged to call in the top four contestants and ask tests of them. If a judge calls on a certain number of riders to work off, and he has the other riders in the ring, his work off tests should end in the ring with the riders returning to the line up; this is a safety issue. If the judge has not been specific as to his/her preferences in a work off (i.e. a simple vs. flying change of lead) then either execution well done could win the class. The equitation is judged on the rider, who will therefore decide whether their horse has an easier time doing a simple or flying change. If you, as the judge, want the test done in a specific or more difficult manner it is your obligation to state that preference. Do not expect riders to be mind readers. Tests should be appropriate for the type of class (hunter vs. jumper emphasis), the age group, and the level of expertise (maiden vs. open) of the class. Make sure you know which tests may be used for various age groups (i.e. 11 & under, under 14, 15-17) or rider classification ((.e. maiden, novice, limit, etc.). They change yearly with the Rule Book and it is the judge's responsibility to stay current and not break the rules. Use correct terminology for various levels of expertise. Make sure you know current wording of specific classes such as the U.S.E.T.

REVERSING DIRECTION

A rider may reverse in either direction and in any manner he chooses. (Riders should be penalized for movements done improperly.)

UNCONVENTIONAL TACK

A judge should be consistent in assessing any penalties against riders with unconventional tack.

TESTS 1 THROUGH 19

Article 2213. Tests from which judges must choose. (Quote from 2002 USA Equestrian Rulebook)

Tests may be performed either collectively or individually but no other tests may be used. Instructions must be publicly announced. NOTE: In Hunter Seat Medal classes, any exhibitor who does not participate in the testing is placed last of those competitors called back to test. Should more than one exhibitor fail to return for testing they will be placed at the judge's discretion. (Note: Judges should refer to the Dressage division rules for the correct

definitions). If exhibitors are called back collectively to test, they must remain in the ring until all exhibitors have completed the test.

1. Halt (4 to 6 seconds) and/or back.
2. Hand gallop.
3. Figure eight at trot, demonstrating change of diagonals. At left diagonal, rider should be sitting the saddle when left front leg is on the ground; at right diagonal, rider should be sitting the saddle when right front leg is on the ground; when circling clockwise at a trot, rider should be on left diagonal; when circling counterclockwise, rider should be on the right diagonal.
4. Figure eight at canter on correct lead, demonstrating simple change of lead. This is a change whereby the horse is brought back into a walk or trot and restarted into a canter on the opposite lead. Figures to be commenced in center of two circles so that one change of lead is shown.
5. Work collectively at a walk, trot or canter.
6. Jump low obstacles at a trot as well as at a canter. The maximum height and spread for a trot jump is 3' for horses, 2' for ponies.
7. Jump obstacles on figure eight course.
8. Question(s) regarding basic horsemanship, tack and equipment and conformation.
9. Ride without stirrups, riders must be allowed option to cross stirrups. *BOD 1/14/01 Effective immediately*
10. Jump low obstacles at a walk as well as at a canter. The maximum height and spread for a walk jump is 2'.
11. Dismount and mount. Individually.
12. Turn on the forehand.
13. Figure eight at canter on correct lead demonstrating flying change of lead.
14. Execute serpentine at a trot and/or canter on correct lead demonstrating simple or flying changes of lead.
15. Change leads on a line demonstrating a simple or flying change of lead.
16. Change horses. (Note: this test is the equivalent of two tests.)
17. Canter on counter lead. (Note: no more than twelve horses may counter canter at one time.)
18. Turn on the haunches from the walk.
19. Demonstration ride of approximately one minute. Rider must advise judge beforehand what ride he plans to demonstrate.

Article 2214. A pre-described flat-work ride may be offered as part of a competition upon application and approval from the Hunter Seat Equitation Committee.

GUIDELINES FOR TESTS #1-19

1. **HALT AND BACK** – Use aids effectively to halt smoothly and straight. Then back in a straight line with even strides. A halt should be from 4-6 seconds.
*FAULTS: horse resistance, crookedness, unevenness, abruptness in the halt
2. **HAND GALLOP** – Use aids effectively to perform gallop with longer rhythmic strides. Rider belongs in half seat/2 point contact at the hand gallop.
*FAULTS: extreme crookedness, quicker strides or resistance at hand gallop. No variation of speed, rider seated at hand gallop.
3. **FIGURE EIGHT AT THE TROT** – Use aids to demonstrate bending in both directions with one horses length of straightness between circles.
*FAULTS: wrong bending, bending only in neck, haunches, not following forehand, rider on wrong diagonal, circles not same size, center point varies
4. **FIGURE EIGHT AT THE CANTER** – Use aids to demonstrate correct bending with a smooth transition from one lead to another. The horse should be straightened for one horses length between circles with the horse bent properly on the canter departures.
*FAULTS: wrong leads, incorrect bending, circles not the same size, center point varies
5. **WORK COLLECTIVELY AT A WALK, TROT, OR CANTER.**
6. **JUMP OVER LOW OBSTACLES AT A TROT AS WELL AS A CANTER.**
7. **JUMP OBSTACLES ON FIGURE EIGHT COURSE.**
8. **QUESTION(S) REGARDING BASIC HORSEMANSHIP, TACK AND EQUIPMENT AND CONFORMATION**
9. **RIDE WITHOUT STIRRUPS.**
10. **JUMP LOW OBSTACLES AT A WALK AS WELL AS AT A CANTER.**

11. DISMOUNT AND MOUNT – To mount, take up reins in left hand and place hand on withers. Grasp stirrup leather with right hand and insert left foot in stirrup, toe in girth and mount. To dismount, rider may either step down or slide down. The size of the rider must be taken into consideration.

*FAULTS: sticking toe into ribs, dropping reins, hitting saddle or horses back with leg, allowing horse to walk away or move a lot

12. TURN ON THE FOREHAND – Use aids effectively to produce a smooth turn with even step. Horse should be bent around the rider's inside leg, moving away from the outside leg. Forehand should stay in place but horse should pick his feet up with each step.

*FAULTS: backing, resistance, walking forward or sideways, or pivot

13. FIGURE EIGHT AT THE CANTER ON CORRECT LEAD DEMONSTRATING A FLYING CHANGE OF LEAD – Effective use of aids producing correctly bent circles and clean flying changes of leads. Flying changes should be clean and straight with the hind legs well separated. In the sequence of footfalls of the canter stride the hind legs change ahead of the forelegs.

*FAULTS: changing late behind/early, both hind legs jumping together, getting faster, circles not the same size

14. EXECUTE SERPENTINE AT A TROT AND/OR CANTER – Effective use of aids demonstrating correct bending and transitions.

*FAULTS: wrong bending, no change of bend, rough transitions, uneven pattern, uneven loops. (figure #4, page 24)

15. CHANGE OF LEADS ON A LINE – Effective use of aids to perform straight, smooth transitions.

*FAULTS: crookedness, resistance, coming off line, wrong leads, lack of symmetry.

16. CHANGE HORSES (Should only be used at highest level of competition and with care.)

17. CANTER ON COUNTER LEAD – Effective use of aids to produce balanced counter canter with horse bent slightly toward the lead.

*FAULTS: wrong bend, haunches falling sideways, rushing, weight on forehand, rider forward

18. TURN ON HAUNCHES FROM THE WALK – Effective use of aids demonstration a correctly bent turn with the rhythm and sequence of footfalls of the walk maintained. Must be done from the walk, NOT the halt. Judge should specify whether turn should be 90, 180, 270, or 360 degrees.

*FAULTS: losing rhythm, backing, sticking a step with the hind legs, crossing the legs one behind the other.

19. DEMONSTRATION RIDE

GUIDELINES FOR OVER FENCES CLASSES

INSPECTING THE COURSE A judge should always inspect a course before it is jumped. He can get technical advantage from this and must also be certain that it has been set correctly and meets the specifications of the class. It is often a good idea to walk the course in the morning and then walk the new lines if they are reset or changed.

RUNNING TABULATION If you keep a running tabulation while judging a class it is easier to compare one performance to another quickly. This eliminates having to wait for results after the class is complete. You can use a separate sheet for this tabulation, or use the top or right margin of the judge's card. To avoid confusion later, it is suggested that each performance receive a final score.

WORK OFFS When calling for a work off a judge should be specific about his commands. He should go over them first with the announcer before they are announced publicly, which is mandatory. Ask for any questions before the first rider starts.

LINING UP RIDERS FOR A WORK OFF If a judge chooses to line up riders for their instructions he should remember to speak to them only as a group. Check before work off starts that instructions are clear and understood.

TROT FENCES It is at the judge's discretion whether he wishes a trot fence executed at the sitting or posting trot. His preference should be announced.

SUGGESTIONS FOR JUDGING EQUITATION OVER FENCES BY THE NUMERICAL SYSTEM

The following suggestions are meant only as a guide for judges. The intention is to help a judge to standardize scores by grouping certain types of trips and errors. These comments are not intended to take away your personal perspective as a judge nor your individuality. However, these are some of the basic ground rules you should follow:

1. **THE NUMBER YOU GIVE** is somewhat arbitrary; it is relative to other rounds you judged in that class and the level of that specific event (maiden, novice, limit, open, etc.) It may also be relative to the general level of competence at any given show.
2. **WHENEVER YOU START WITH** a certain range of scores do not change midstream. If you have started with high scores, **STAY HIGH** for that class. Do not penalize the rider that comes later in the class by dropping your scale. Be consistent with whatever range you begin.
3. **IF YOU ARE SHARING JUDGING HONORS** do not spend any time second-guessing what the other judges are doing.
4. **REMEMBER YOU ARE JUDGING AN EQUITATION ROUND:** for the most part your eyes should be directed to the rider. The horse is only a vehicle. An animal is more than acceptable if it allows the rider to properly execute the specific tests in the course.
5. **TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY** try to concentrate on watching the round that is being performed in front of you.
6. **JUDGES SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID** to use the "whole scale" and reward or penalize riders according to their respective trips (i.e. the first person in the ring may be your best round.)
7. **JUDGES SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM PAT SCORES** and use their feelings and instincts to arrive at their results.
8. **JUDGES SHOULD BE AWARE OF SPECIFIC RULES OF SPECIAL COMPETITIONS:** For example you should know how many points a rider needs to return for the second round, or within how many points of the leader any rider must be before there is a mandatory work off.

9. **WHEN WORKING WITH A PANEL** of two or more judges sitting together, all judges should remember they are to act as one person. There should be constant communication between or amongst them while the rider is on course. In some instance there will not be enough time between the riders to discuss the performance and reach a mutual decision. If there is a strong difference of opinion the rider should get the benefit of the doubt by a further work off, if possible. If one judge is not sure of his/her opinion about the performance, and the other judges share a definite and different view, then it is perfectly reasonable for the judge in the minority to leave the decision to the majority for the sake of competition.

10. **A WORD ABOUT KNOCKDOWNS:** Sloppiness or laziness on the part of the horse who is correctly ridden (i.e. in the proper style) should not be penalized. If on the other hand the rider has obviously gotten ahead or behind the horse's motion and thereby caused the knockdown, then the penalty is deserved. If a judge's preference is to differentiate between well ridden clean rides and well ridden trips with a rail down, then he/she should make this known by the consistency of his scores.

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL CLASSES

There are specific requirements for the various medal classes. Each medal class has its own special niche that it tries to fill. Unfortunately there is no clear definition of these special classes anywhere.

The following guidelines, along with the specifications from the current USA Equestrian rulebook may be helpful when judging various medal classes.

If a competition for which are contracted offers regional medal type classes, the class specifications are to printed in the prize list. If they are not, request a copy of the complete rules from competition management prior to the class and read them carefully.

USA HUNTER SEAT MEDAL CLASS - The emphasis on this class is on smoothness over a course of hunter type fences. Even though it is not a hunter class, the rider should plan his strategy as if it were.

Article 2212.7. . Open to Junior Active Members of USA Equestrian who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. Application for membership can be made direct to the Federation office or the exhibitor can join prior to the class through the steward. To be shown over a course of not less than eight obstacles at 3'6" which must include one combination including an oxer and two changes of direction (change of lead) after the first obstacle. In CT, NJ, NY a rider must win 50 pts.; in MA, PA, and RI 38 pts.; in AL, CA, DE, FL, GA, IA, IL, MD, MN, NC, NE, ND, NV, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, VA and WI 25 pts.; in all other states, Canada and Puerto Rico 13 pts. to qualify for the final ride-off. On qualifying a rider will receive a Silver Medal. Two or more tests of the top four competitors are required. Tests 1-19. Any exhibitor who does not participate in the testing is placed last of those exhibitors called back to test. Should more than one exhibitor fail to return for testing they will be placed at the judge's discretion. Only one rider per horse. To fill a class six competitors must complete the course (five in Zones 8, 11 and 12). If there are 50 or more entries at the beginning of this class, it must be divided by every other number and run as two separate classes. A class with fewer than 50 entries cannot be split. *BOD 1/14/01 Effective 10/2/00*

Increment Chart:

NUMBER OF EXHIBITORS WHO COMPLETE
THE COURSE.

PLACINGS	6-15	16-30	30+
1st	10	20	30
2nd	6	12	18
3rd	4	8	12
4th	2	4	6

USA PONY MEDAL CLASS.

Article 2212.8. Open to Junior Active Members of USA Equestrian who have not yet reached their 18th birthday, on ponies 14.2 hands and under. No Junior over 12 years of age may compete on a small pony. No Junior over 14 years of age may compete on a medium pony. Application for membership can be made directly to the Federation, or the exhibitor can join prior to the class through the Federation steward. Riders entered in this class cannot cross enter into a USA Medal Class at the same competition. Suitability of a pony to rider will be emphasized. To be shown over a course of not less than six obstacles 2'3" for ponies not exceeding 12.2 hands; 2'6" for ponies over 12.2 hands and not exceeding 13.2 hands; and 3' for ponies over 13.2 hands. If an in and out is used, the suggested distance for small ponies is 20'; for medium ponies 22'; and for large ponies 24'. The distance must be altered for each height division. Two tests (1-9) are required during the first round. Only one rider per pony. To fill a class six competitors must complete the course (five in Zones 8, 11, and 12). This class may be judged as one class, with all height sections run consecutively; or management may elect to divide and pin this class in three separate sections, small, medium and large or to divide into two sections, small-medium and large or small and medium-large. In no case may sections be divided into small-large and medium. When classes are divided as outlined above an exhibitor may only ride in one section per competition. Ribbon winners in each section will receive qualifying points. The USA Pony Medal class may not be combined with or held back to back with any other class. A rider who accumulates 30 pts. will receive a silver medal from the Federation and will qualify for the Finals which is held in conjunction with the USA Equestrian Pony Competition. 1st place = 30 pts.; 2nd place = 15 pts.; 3rd place = 10 pts. A rider that has qualified for the Finals can continue to compete in qualifying classes. The winner of the Finals may no longer ride in the Finals or in qualifying classes. Classes held after July 15 will count toward the next year's Final. Riders cannot enter both the Hunter Seat Medal Finals and the Pony Medal Finals in the same year. If there are

50 or more entries at the beginning of this class, it must be divided by every other number and run as two separate classes.

USA ADULT EQUITATION CLASS.

Article 2212.9. Open to Amateur Senior Members of USA Equestrian. Application for membership and amateur certification can be made directly to the Federation, or the exhibitor can join prior to the class through the Federation Steward. Only one rider per horse. To be shown over a course of not less than eight obstacles at 3'3". The course must include one combination which includes an oxer and two changes of direction after the first obstacle. Two or more tests of the top four competitors are required. Tests 1-19. To fill a class six competitors must complete the course (five in Zones 8, 11 and 12). The winner will receive an embossed certificate from the Federation. Points will count 7, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 toward the annual USA High Point Adult Equitation Rider Award. If there are 50 or more entries at the beginning of this class, it must be divided by every other number and run as two separate classes.

ASPCA HORSEMANSHIP CLASS - The emphasis on this class is on an equitation type course. This means turns, complicated lines, fences without wings, and jumper type fences. A rider should use whatever style he feels will get the job done, while still trying to maintain as smooth a hunter type trip as possible. In this class a rider may sit a little deeper seat while negotiating a tight turn or a tight combination. The flat phase of this class is to count 50%.

Article 2212.10. Open to Junior Riders who have not reached their 18th birthday. Rider and trainer must be current members of the ASPCA and must show their ASPCA numbers on the entry blank. Junior rider annual contributions shall be \$25. Trainer annual contribution shall be \$35. Application for membership in the ASPCA must be made directly to the National Horse Show, P.O. Box 386, Greenvale, NY 11548. All contestants are required to perform over at least eight fences not exceeding 3'6" with or without wings. A minimum of twelve riders, if available, are required to show at a walk, trot and canter. To be judged on seat, hands, guidance and control of horse. The Under Saddle performance of those riders selected to show under saddle shall count 50%. Only one rider per horse. USA Equestrian Tests 1-19. To fill a class six (6) competitors must complete the course (five in Alaska and Hawaii). If 50 or more entries are received three hours prior to the class, the class must be divided by every other number and run as two separate classes. In order to qualify for the Regional Finals conducted by the National Horse Show, a contestant must win three blues in CT, MA, NJ, NY, PA and RI, two blues in DE, FL, IL, IN, MD, MI and OH and one blue in all other states, Canada and Puerto Rico. For permission to offer this class and for complete details, and for sending your results, contact the National Horse Show, 516-484-1865. The fee for holding this class is \$50. Classes held after August 31 will count toward next year's finals. *BOD 1/14/01 Effective immediately*

BET/USET SHOW JUMPING TALENT SEARCH CLASS - The judge is supposed to pick the best overall rider. The course is a jumper type course; the rider should make decisions that are to his horse's best advantage. A rider should plan the go as if it were a first round of a jumper class, without wasting time in corners and with wide turns. A rider's position is important but the course should be hard enough to be the real judge. Only running martingales are allowed in the jumping phase. *See Article 2212.11 for complete rules.)*

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are used during the course of any equitation class or work off.

GAITS: Judges are requested to specify precisely what gaits they want to see. The term "working" gait is synonymous with the terms "normal", "regular", or "ordinary", but "working" is the only term that should be used. The following are recognized gaits:

WALK – divided into COLLECTED, WORKING, EXTENDED

TROT – divided into COLLECTED, WORKING, STRONG, EXTENDED (lengthening of stride). All done either posting or sitting. Judge must specify speed and type when calling for a sitting trot.

CANTER – divided into COLLECTED, WORKING, STRONG, EXTENDED (lengthening of stride) all done in the sitting position and HAND GALLOP (done in the Half seat/2 point contact).

HALT: A halt is held for approximately 5 seconds.

FIGURE EIGHT:

Two concentric circles of the same size.

It may be started facing toward or away unless specified.
It may be started to either right or left.
Rider should start and complete figure eight with a halt unless specifically asked to do something else.

SERPENTINE:

Specified number of half circles connected by a straight line.
When crossing the center line, the horse should be parallel to the short side.
The straight line can vary in length depending on the size of the half circles.



SIMPLE CHANGE OF LEAD: This is a transition that is done either through the walk or the trot.

LENGTHENING OF STRIDE: This refers to an increase in the horse's stride and impulsion. This should be accomplished with only a slight change in the horse's pace or frame.

COMPLETE (or FULL) TURN ON THE HAUNCHES is 360 degrees.

HALF TURN ON THE HAUNCHES is 180 degrees.

Recommendation: read Article 1912.9 for a description of Turn on the Haunches.

COMPLETE (or FULL) TURN ON THE FOREHAND is 360 degrees.

HALF TURN ON THE FOREHAND is 180 degrees.



HUNTER SEAT EQUITATION JUDGING SYMBOLS

The chart that follows shows symbols used by some of the top judges across the country. This chart is included here to help a judge organize his or her own system. Use it as a starting point in developing/refining your current

<i>Descriptors</i>	<i>Judge 1</i>	<i>Judge 2</i>	<i>Judge 3</i>	<i>Judge 4</i>	<i>Judge 5</i>	<i>Judge 6</i>
Hit in mouth	Mo		STH	TR	Left	
Stiff arms	Sf	Stf am	ST	Rigid	Stff	
Long reins	Lg. r.	LR	R + L	R L	Lng rein	
Short reins	Sh. r.	SR	R + S	Sht R	Sh rein	
Twisted rein	ΣR	Twist R	Tw rein	Tw Rn	Twist	
Limp wrists		wrst.		PPD	Wrists	
Rests on neck	on neck	LOH		FOH	Lng Rel	
No release	no rel	—NR—	No rel	WR	No Rel	
Break in wrists		wrst ?		Pdh	Wrists	
Good release	gd. rel.	+ Rel		+ HD	+ Rel	
Good basics	HAC			NR	X Rel	
Rotating hand release	Rot.	Rel ←	Rot rel	Rot	Rot	
High hands	hi. H.	HH	HH	H Hd	High hnds	
Elbows out	elbows	Elb.	ELB →	Elb O	Elbows	
Toes up/heels down	Toes ↑	expected		+ Leg	G leg	
Toes down/heels up	Toes ↓	Heel ↑	No heels	+ d	No leg	
Toes out	e/w	TO	Toe →	+ O	Toes out	
Lost stirrup	ST	stirp	Lost stp	L Rom	L st	
Twisted leather	leather	twst S.	Tw strp	Tw lr	Twist st	
Long stirrups	lg. st.	LS	Long st	Strp +L	Lng st	
Short stirrups	sh. st.	SS	Sh st	Strp +S	Sh stp	
Foot home in stirrup	ft. home		foot home	Home	“Home”	
Braced leg	brace	BL	Br leg	Bd Leg	Leg fore	

Loose leg	LL	LL	LL	Leg slip	Loose	
Lower leg forward	L. fwd.	LF	L →	LLF	Leg fore	
Lower leg back	L. bk.	LB	L ←	LLBk	Leg back	
Stiff back	Stf. B	stff bck	ST	Rigid	Stff, Hol	
Good back	gd. bac	expected	GB	GBk	+ posture	
Round back	Rd. bac	roach	RB	RB	Roach	
Sat back too soon	s. quick	←	Oe	SIT	DB	
Ducks	D/D	Duck	D	DK	Dks	
Left behind	Left	LB	L	L	L	
Jumped ahead	ah	JA	A	A	JA	
Eyes down	eye ↓	eyes	E ↓	L d	Eyes	
Looks before turn	Early eyes			↻LK	Eyes	
Wrong lead	X ld.	WL	WL	W	LD!	
Late change	Late chg.	LC	P CHG	L Chg	Late	
Missed change	?	NC	E	∞Chg	X Ld	
Cross cantered	Xc	XC	Xc	X C	CC	
Trotted	T	trot	T	Tr	Tr	
Wrong diagonal	X diag.	WD	WD /	WD	X Diag	
Deep Distance	∧	∩		D	∧	
Distance – too long	→	→	—	✓→	∩	
Good distance	∩	—	↘	✓	/	
First refusal	R ¹	Stp	R	R	R	
Second refusal	R ²	2X	R2	2 R	R R	
Third refusal/Elimination	R E	3X	X	X	El	
Flirts with death	FWD			X	Stupid	
Jumps in corner			↙ ↘			

TABLE OF COMMON FAULTS

While there is no overall accepted standard of point values for each of these four categories, the following guidelines may be useful to learner judges and licensed judges in establishing a consistent method of “scoring” riders: Good: 80 – 100 points; Minor Faults: 60 – 79 points; Major Faults: 60 and below.

Whether a fault should be considered a minor or a major fault can depend on the context of the situation during which it occurred as well as the degree of occurrence (once, consistently, etc.). This table is meant to be a guideline – not necessary “written in stone.” Portions are included directly from the 2002 USA Equestrian Rulebook.

	GOOD	MINOR FAULTS	MAJOR FAULTS	ELIMINATION
LEGS	Close contact Secure Proper angles Ankles flexed in Heels down, ball of foot on iron	Legs swinging Stirrups long/short Insufficient weight in stirrups Legs too far in front/behind girth Uneven stirrups Stirrup leather twisted Toe on stirrup	Insecurity Loss of contact with saddle/stirrup Uncontrolled position and/or spurring. Loss of stirrup	
SEAT	Supple, balanced Close contact when called for Proper hip angle for each gait Effectiveness	Ahead of or behind motion Off-center Rigidity, stiffness Excessively rounded/swayed back	Loss of contact when needed Loss of proper rhythm Excessive motion	
HANDS	Hands over and in front of withers. Angled 30-45° inside vertical, slightly apart. Straight line from horse’s mouth to riders elbow. Quiet, light, elastic, with compassion for the horse. Should follow horse’s mouth in the air. Should demonstrate proper head carriage.	Improper positioning. Rigidity. Too light/loose rein Fall on hands. Improper or no release.	Roughness. Catching horse in mouth. Loss of/dropping reins.	
CONTROL	Maintaining horse in good form. Demonstrating harmonious blending of even, rhythmic gaits, impulsion, balance and flexion.	Fussing, head tossing. Gapping of mouth. Uneven gaits Improper flexion (over flexed or above bit)	Break of gaits. Incorrect lead. Incorrect diagonal. Bolting. Trotting on course when not part of test. Horse not on bit.	
		Cont. next page		

OVER FENCES	Secure, solid position demonstrating proper angles. Even pace. Flying changes. Connection – flexion and bending. Proper number of strides. Riding “out of hands”	Fall on hands, opening too soon, leaning forward, swinging. Cross cantering/wrong lead a few steps. Acceptable distance errors. Late changes. Weak/no release. Ducking/eyes down. Legs flying forward/back Unacceptable distance errors.	Unsafe fence. Adding strides in a combination. Weaving between fences. Loss of stirrup or rein. Breaking gait. Ahead of/behind motion Sliding on saddle. Posting to the canter.	Fall of horse or rider. Three cumulative refusals. Off course.
OVERALL APPEARANCE	Workmanlike appearance. Horse clean, well groomed, presented properly for show purposes.	Outside assistance penalized at judge’s discretion.	Refusal Loss of stirrup Trotting on course when not part of a test Loss of reins Outside assistance penalized at judge’s discretion.	
ATTIRE	Correct, clean, well fitted hunt clothes.	Ill-fitting clothes. Dirty boots, clothes.	Inappropriate attire – management or judge may eliminate rider.	Lack of mandatory protective headgear in accordance with Article 318.
TACK	Clean, well fitted, in good repair.	Ill-fitting tack. Dirty tack. Judge may penalize horse with non-conventional types of bits or nosebands.	Judge may penalize horse with non-conventional types of bits or nosebands.	Use of martingale on the flat in any class or phase. (Adding or taking off a martingale from one phase to another is not considered a change.)



Judging Procedures, Responsibilities, and Protocol

(approved by Licensed Officials Committee)

A. General Procedures and Responsibilities

1. Attire: Dress in layers; bring rain gear, hat or visor, sunglasses, sunscreen, “what if” clothes...what if it’s hot, what if it’s cold, what if it rains, etc. It is important to present yourself in a professional manner. No jeans!
 - a. Find out if you need formal wear, and if so, to what extent.
 - b. Women, be sure to pack a slip for dresses. Arena lighting and the setting sun can have amazing visual effects.
 - c. Wear comfortable shoes
 - d. If flying, wear something suitable to judge in, just in case the airline loses your luggage.
2. Materials to bring: USA Equestrian Rule Book, pens and pencils, clipboard, scratch paper, reading material, snacks, and any supplemental materials.
3. **No** cell phones!
4. How to score: Symbols are your own form of shorthand. How much should you write? Enough to enable you to recall the performance totally. Be sure to watch the turns. Use whatever system works for you.
5. Keep your order of preference out to the side or on scratch paper. Write your results legibly, initial or sign the card. Have results ready immediately. Don’t wait until the end of class to sort out numbers...know how many to pin in every class...know whether or not you have to split the class and which system to use if you do (i.e. 2 firsts, 2 seconds, etc. or the first 25, 2nd 25 etc.).
6. Have knowledge of the USA Equestrian rules and the divisions you are judging. Do not over-face yourself.
7. Have knowledge of class specifications and procedures.
8. Do not socialize while you are judging. “Perception”
9. Don’t do business with exhibitors/trainers before or during a horse show you are judging. (See Article 1040.3)
10. Decide whether the steward(s) can show your cards to exhibitors without you being present. Stewards will make an appointment with you for an exhibitor to speak with you concerning their performance and placing if it is requested.
11. Know the rules and decide beforehand how you are going to adjudicate soundness – using a veterinarian’s counsel or determining soundness for yourself.
12. Tack, bits and equipment – know what is considered conventional tack and equipment. Decide what your priorities are concerning penalizing non-conventional tack and equipment.

13. Show radios are for official use only! No chitchat.

B. How to Get Jobs

1. Let competition managers know about you.
2. Tell managers and other officials that you have your license.
3. If you live near a show ground, and have the time, volunteer to judge some classes with another judge or by yourself (once you are licensed).
4. Be available as much as you can when you are starting out in your judging career.

C. Judging Responsibilities (once you get the job)

1. Put the date on the calendar, include location, manager's name and phone numbers.
2. Discuss fee and per diem.
3. Find out if you are judging independently or on a panel and be prepared to handle the responsibility either way.
4. Find out if the show is being held indoors or outdoors.
5. Make sure that you understand thoroughly all travel arrangements:
 - a) Ask about airline ticket and who is making reservations, what airport to fly in to, and transportation to and from the hotel. If driving discuss fee per mile.
 - b) Ask about departure time regarding the last day of the show. (Never, never make the last day departure time before 6 p.m. unless told otherwise).
6. Request a written contract ASAP. Contracts should include: (see AHSA sample contract)
 - a) Competition name and dates
 - b) Location
 - c) Fee and per diem
 - d) Mileage or airfare
 - e) Hotel name and phone number
 - f) Manager's name, telephone number and horse show office number
 - g) Divisions being hired to judge
7. Do not book shows too close together with regards to mileage, or calendar date (too many shows in any one area).
8. If you have not received a prize list within a few weeks prior to the show, ask for a copy.. You need to know what classes you are judging. (See Article 1214.1)
9. Prepare workouts to be used at show. Have several workouts to choose from based on the class talent and ring orientation. Have at least 3 copies: one to post, one for the announcer, and one for you.

On the Day of the show:

1. Arrive at least ½ hour before the show begins
2. Check in with the manager, secretary, and steward(s)
3. Pick up judges' cards, clipboards, radios, etc.
4. Go to ring, make sure that everything is suitable for showing and make a decision as to your judging location.
5. Find the location of the lavatories.
6. Learn the names of your announcer and your in-gate person.
7. Learn when to ask and whom to ask for amenities (i.e. drinks, lunch, etc.)
8. Settle all accounts with competition management prior to leaving grounds.

After the show:

1. Check with the show management prior to leaving the show grounds to verify that all class cards have been signed, etc. Also, verbally thank them for having you at their show.
2. Sending a short thank you note following the show to the show management always leaves a good impression.

Summary

It takes time and practice to become comfortable and confident with your judging. It is important for you to establish a style of judging that is consistent and easy for you. Always show respect and interest for the exhibitor in the ring. Be courteous, responsible, attentive, and treat everyone equally. As a judge you are the one in control of the class. Do not let your support staff interfere with the outcome of your class.