

# Horse Judging Rules & Resources

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## CONTESTANTS AND ELIGIBILITY

1. Each state is invited to enter one 4-H Horse Judging Team.
2. Teams may be selected by any procedure which a state deems appropriate.
3. Contestants must be at least 14 years of age, but not have reached his or her 19th birthday as of January 1 of the year in which this event is held.
4. All contestants must be members of 4-H in the state they are representing during the year in which this event is held and participation eligibility must be certified by the State 4-H Leader.
5. Certification of participation eligibility should consider the following: “This contestant has not participated in post-secondary course work in the subject area of the national 4-H competition, nor has he or she participated in training for post-secondary competition in the subject area of the national 4-H competition.” See details below.
  - A. Post-secondary undergraduate students may participate in and/or complete freshman and sophomore level equine management or communications courses. Students completing a junior, senior or graduate level equine and/or communications course are ineligible to participate in the National 4-H Horse Competition.
  - B. Students are ineligible to participate in a National 4-H Horse Competition if they are currently enrolled in courses that provide specific training for the competitive event in which they are participating. For example, student participation in collegiate horse judging events, on intercollegiate horse judging teams and in intercollegiate communication events would eliminate a 4-Her’s eligibility to participate in the National 4-H Horse Competition.
6. If a State decides to change whether it will attend the Eastern or Western National Contest from its participation the previous year, the Contest Management Committee Chair of both events are to be notified of the decision by April 1 of the current year. All representative teams of that state must attend that same event.

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## THE CONTEST

1. A team may have three or four members; when four are entered, the three highest scores will make up the team totals for team totals and overall.
2. All contestants will report to the Superintendents at Broadbent Arena, Kentucky State Fair & Exposition Center, at 8 a.m., Saturday, where they will receive full instructions regarding the contest. Each will be assigned a number, group, and be given placing cards. All contestants will remain with the assigned group throughout the contest.
3. Contestants shall not wear any clothing, pins or badges that will, in any way, reveal their identity or the state they represent. Hats are prohibited in the judging arena.
4. While the contest is in progress, there shall be no conferring between the contestants or anyone else except as directed by the Contest Superintendents or their representative.

5. Four to six halter classes will be judged. The following breeds may be represented in halter classes: American Saddlebred, Tennessee Walking Horse, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred (Hunters), Appaloosa, Arabian, Paint, Pinto, Morgan, POA, Warmbloods, Hunter ponies and Draft Breeds. Contestants will give oral reasons on two halter classes. All halter classes will be judged as sound of limb, eye, wind, mouth and reproductive organs.

6. Four to six performance classes will be judged. The performance classes will be chosen from Western Pleasure, English Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Hunter Pleasure, Hunter Hack, Western Riding, Reining, Pleasure Driving, Western Horsemanship, Hunt Seat Equitation, Saddle Seat Equitation, Saddlebred Three-Gaited and Country English Pleasure and Flat Shod Walking Horse (Country Pleasure, Trail Pleasure, Lite Shod &/or Park Plantation Pleasure). Oral reasons will be required on two performance classes. Performance horses will be judged as seen (Unsoundness to be penalized accordingly). All tack and attire is considered legal.

7. The animals will be designated 1-2-3-4 worn by the handler/rider.

8. 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.

9. Fifteen (15) minutes will be allowed contestants to judge non-reasons classes and 17 minutes will be given contestants during reasons classes to make their observations, take notes, and fill out their placing cards.

10. Two minutes will be allowed to give oral reasons to the judge. Contestants may use notes when judging, but are not permitted to use notes while giving oral reasons. The Contestant's placing card will be made available to them upon entering the reasons room if they request it. A total of four sets of Oral Reasons will be presented.

11. OFFICIAL placings will be given immediately after reasons are completed.

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## **CONTEST SUPERINTENDENTS**

1. It shall be the duty of the Superintendents to see that all rules and regulations are carried out.
2. They shall have a committee to assist them.
3. The Superintendents will take no part in rating the contestants.
4. They shall have charge of all records and shall have all ratings received, tabulated, and totaled.
5. The Superintendents will be responsible for monitoring all cuts on official placings.

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## **JUDGES**

1. Classes will be placed in accordance with the rules of the United States Equestrian Federation or the respective breed association rules, if applicable.

2. The judges shall place the classes while the contestants are working in the arena. The judges shall enter their placings on the placing card, indicate the cuts to be made, and file that card with the Superintendents for final review and approval. Referee judge(s) may be used at the discretion of the Superintendents.

3. When the contestant has finished their reasons, the reasons listener will place the reasons score upon the contestant's placing card and turn it in for tabulation.

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## **DETERMINATION OF RATINGS**

Fifty (50) points shall constitute a perfect mark on placing and fifty (50) points a perfect mark on reasons.

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## **CUTS**

The Eastern National 4-H Horse Judging Contest has adopted the recommended Cut Scale of the National Horse Judging Team Coaches' Association, That scale is given below and we encourage all states to consider its adoption.

### **Cuts Description**

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; placing varies among the official judges.

2 Horses are very close, but one horse has one or two qualitative or quantitative advantage; the majority of official judges would not switch the pair, but half of the contestants could logically switch the pair.

3 Horses of similar quality, but there is some logical placing in favor of one horse; either one horse has several advantages or one has several faults; all official judges would agree on the placing; 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 the contestants would be expected to switch the pair.

5 Large numbers 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, uninformed contestants would switch the pair.

6 Horses not even comparable; differences reflective of a champion quality horse or performance vs. a horse or performance that is not of show quality.

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Awards will be announced and presented to the top ten individuals and teams.
2. A Coaches' Meeting is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. on Friday night, in the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center. Judging Contest registration will start promptly at 6:00 p.m. and will be followed by the coaches meeting.
3. For further details or information, contact the Superintendents.

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