



**Oregon Family  
Equestrian Association  
Exhibitor's Handbook  
2026**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Oregon Family Equestrian Association (OFEA) Show Rules.

Whether you are preparing for your very first class or you've spent years in the show ring, this rulebook is designed to support you with clear, consistent, and exhibitor-friendly guidance.

OFEA hosts live shows and have OFEA approved shows, and these rules apply to all OFEA events and to ensure that every exhibitor - regardless of discipline, breed, or experience level - has a fair and enjoyable showing experience.

This rulebook includes information on the various OFEA classes and their procedures. The procedures included may include instructions for those that walk, jog/trot, and lope/canter. If you only walk and jog/trot you should follow the instructions but understand that any specific lope/canter instructions may not be required for your walk/trot/jog classes.

Our goal is to create an environment that is:

- **Fair** – Judging standards and class procedures are consistent across all OFEA events.
- **Educational** – Rules are written to help exhibitors understand *why* certain standards exist, not just what they are.
- **Inclusive** – We welcome riders and handlers of all backgrounds, disciplines, and experience levels.
- **Adaptable** – Non-OFEA shows may adopt these rules in full or in part, allowing for consistency across events while giving show management flexibility to meet local needs.
- **Evolving** – OFEA reviews and updates classes and rules annually to reflect exhibitor feedback, industry standards, and the needs of our growing community.

Whether you show for personal growth, competitive goals, or simply the joy of spending time with your horse, we're glad you're here. Let's get started.

## Key Objectives of the OFEA Show Rules:

The OFEA Show Rules are designed to create a fair, consistent, and enjoyable showing experience for exhibitors of all backgrounds.

These objectives guide how classes are structured, how judging is conducted, and how exhibitors prepare for competition.

1. **Consistency Across All OFEA Events** – OFEA strives to maintain uniform standards for judging, attire, tack, and class procedures.

2. **Clear Pathways for Year-End Awards** – The rulebook outlines which classes qualify for year-end points and how those points are earned. This helps exhibitors plan their show season and understand how their results contribute to awards.
3. **Flexibility for Non-OFEA Shows** – Non-OFEA shows may adopt these rules in full or in part. This allows local shows, partner shows, and independent events to benefit from OFEA’s structure while adjusting for their unique needs. When using OFEA rules, show managers must acknowledge OFEA as the source.
4. **Annual Review and Updates**- The horse industry evolves, and so do exhibitor needs. OFEA review its rules each year and may add, remove, or adjust classes and procedures to improve fairness, safety, and clarity.
5. **Support For All Experience Levels** – These rules are written to help both seasoned competitors and newcomers understand what judges look for, how classes operate, and how to prepare for success.

## Classes and Eligibility

OFEA offers a wide variety of classes designed to support exhibitors of all disciplines, experience levels, and goals. These rules help clarify which classes count toward year-end awards, how classes may change over time, and how exhibitors can plan their show season.

Year End Eligibility Classes listed in the OFEA Rulebook are eligible for the OFEA Year-End Awards Program. Exhibitors earn points based on their placings throughout the show year, and these points accumulate toward year-end recognition.

Some classes may be offered only at specific events and may not count toward year-end points. Exhibitors should review each show’s class list carefully to understand which classes qualify.

## Class Modifications and Updates

To keep the program fresh, fair, and aligned with exhibitor needs, OFEA may add, remove, or adjust classes each year. This includes updating class descriptions, judging criteria, or eligibility requirements.

Any changes will be announced prior to the start of the show year so exhibitors can plan accordingly.

## Use of External Rulebooks

When a situation arises that is not directly addressed in the OFEA rules, judges may refer to the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) or United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) rulebooks for guidance. This ensures that judging remains consistent, informed, and grounded in widely recognized industry standards.

## Judges and Evaluation:

OFEA judges are committed to providing fair, consistent, and knowledgeable evaluations across all classes. To support this, judges follow the OFEA Show Rules as their primary guide. When a situation arises that is not directly addressed in this rulebook, judges may refer to American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) or United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) rulebooks for additional guidance.

This ensures that judging remains grounded in widely recognized industry standards while still honoring the unique structure of OFEA events.

### Judging Philosophy

OFEA judging is based on three core principles:

1. **Fairness** – every exhibitor is evaluated against the same standards, regardless of breed, discipline, or experience level.
2. **Clarity** – Judges use established criteria for each class, allowing exhibitors to understand what is being evaluated and why.
3. **Education** – OFEA encourages judges to provide constructive feedback whenever possible. Feedback helps exhibitors grow, refine their skills, and better understand how their performance aligns with class expectations.

### Usage of Rules by Other Shows

The OFEA Show Rules are designed to be clear, adaptable, and useful beyond OFEA hosted events. Many local and independent shows choose to adopt OFEA rules because they provide consistent, exhibitor-friendly framework that works across multiple disciplines and experience levels.

### Use by Non-OFEA Shows

Non-OFEA shows – whether partnered with OFEA or operating independently-may use the OFEA Rulebook in full or in part. This helps create a familiar experience for exhibitors and ensures that judging standards remain consistent across events.

Show managers who choose to use OFEA rules must acknowledge OFEA as the source of the material. This protects the integrity of the rulebook and ensures that exhibitors understand which standards are being followed.

### Flexibility for Local Needs

While OFEA encourages consistency, non-OFEA show may adjust certain rules to fit their facility, class list, or exhibitor base. These adjustments should maintain the spirit of fairness, safety and clarity that OFEA promotes.

Examples of acceptable adjustments include:

- Modifying class offerings
- Adjusting age divisions
- Changing entry procedures
- Adapting rules for local safety regulations

However, core principles – such as human treatment of horses, sportsmanship expectations, and basic judging standards-should remain intact.

### **Benefits of Using OFEA Rules**

- Exhibitors know what to expect
- Judges have clear, structured guidelines
- Shows can run more smoothly
- Newcomers benefit from consistent education
- Multi-discipline events gain a unified rule set

**Conclusion** – The OFEA Rulebook provides the foundation for fair, consistent, and enjoyable competition across all the OFEA hosted events and these rules ensure that every exhibitor understands what is expected and how classes are judged.

By following these guidelines, exhibitors help create a positive environment where sportsmanship, safety, and respect for horses and fellow competitors come first. OFEA is committed to supporting exhibitors of all experience levels, and this rulebook is designed to be both a reference and an educational tool.

As you continue through the following sections, you'll find detailed information on attire, tack, class procedures, judging criteria, and discipline-specific expectations. Use these resources to prepare confidently, show responsibly, and enjoy your time in the ring-whether you're stepping in for the first time or returning as a seasoned competitor.

## **Good Sportsmanship**

OFEA is committed to creating a positive, respectful, and supportive environment for all exhibitors. Good sportsmanship is not simply encouraged-it is required. Exhibitors, family members, trainers, and anyone acting on behalf of an exhibitor are expected to uphold the values of fairness, kindness, and professionalism at all times.

These expectations apply to all interactions with judges, show staff, volunteers, and fellow exhibitors.

## Sportsmanship and Respect

### Expected Conduct

All exhibitors and associated persons must conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner. This includes:

- Treating fellow exhibitors, judges, and staff with kindness
- Accepting placings and feedback with professionalism
- Setting a positive example for newer exhibitors
- Communicating concerns calmly and appropriately

Disrespectful, hostile, or aggressive behavior-especially regarding placings, points, or results-undermines the integrity of the competition and will not be tolerated.

### Consequences of Poor Sportsmanship

If an exhibitor or associated person behaves inappropriately toward show staff or other exhibitors, OFEA may take disciplinary action, including:

- **Forfeiture of all points and awards** earned during that show day
- **No refunds** for entry fees, past shows, or membership dues
- **Possible suspension or removal** from OFEA programs for repeated or severe offenses

These policies ensure that all participants can enjoy a safe, fair, and welcoming show environment.

## Animal Welfare and Abuse Policy

### Commitment to Human Treatment

OFEA maintains a zero-tolerance policy for the abuse or inhumane treatment of horses or other animals shown in OFEA events. Exhibitors are responsible for ensuring that their animals are handled with care, respect, and appropriate training methods.

Abuse is defined as any cruel, excessive, or inhumane treatment as determined by individuals experienced in accepted equine training and handling practices.



#### Animal Welfare Reminder

If you're unsure whether a training method or piece of equipment is acceptable, choose the option that prioritizes your horse's comfort and safety. When in doubt, ask before you show.

## Disciplinary Action for Abuse

Exhibitors or associated persons found to have abused an animal may face serious consequences, including:

- Immediate disqualification
- Loss of points or awards
- Suspension or revocation of OFEA membership

OFEA's priority is the safety and well-being of all animals participating in its events.

### Summary:

OFEA's rules on sportsmanship, respectful conduct, and animal welfare are designed to uphold the integrity of the association and ensure that every participant, human and animal alike, is treated fairly and with respect.

- **Good sportsmanship** and **ethical behavior** are essential, with the consequences of forfeiting awards or points for inappropriate conduct.
- **Inhumane treatment of horses** is strictly prohibited, and violators may face severe disciplinary actions, including membership revocation.

These policies help maintain a positive, fair, and humane environment at OFEA events, encouraging a community of respect and professionalism.

## New to Showing?

Welcome! If you're new to horse showing, you're in the right place. OFEA is designed to be an inclusive, supportive environment where exhibitors of all experience levels can learn, grow, and enjoy the process of showing their horses.

Horse shows come with their own vocabulary, traditions, and expectations-and it's completely normal to feel unsure at first. This rulebook is here to guide you step-by-step, and you'll find helpful notes throughout the document to explain common terms, clarify procedures, and offer tips for success.

A full glossary of horse show terms will be available soon to help you understand the language of the show ring. Until then, don't hesitate to ask questions, learn from fellow exhibitors, and take your time exploring the classes that interest you the most.

Showing is a journey, and we're glad you're starting it with OFEA.



### Beginner-Friendly Classes to Consider

- **Showmanship** (great for learning patterns and ring etiquette)
- **Halter/Conformation** (no riding required)
- **Walk/Trot or Walk/Jog classes**

These classes help you learn the basics without the pressure of faster gaits or advanced maneuvers.

### **Common Newcomer Questions**

#### **“What should I wear?”**

Check the Attire section – OFEA allows flexibility, especially in schooling shows.

#### **“What tack do I need?”**

Check the Tack section – this section outlines what’s required for each discipline.

#### **“How do I know which classes I can enter?”**

Start with your horse’s training level and your comfort level. You can always add more classes as you gain experience.

## General Show Rules

The following rules apply to all OFEA hosted shows. These guidelines ensure fairness, safety, and consistency for every exhibitor and horse participating in OFEA programs.

### **Liability Disclaimer**

OFEA, its committees, partners, and team members are not responsible for any loss, injury, damage, or debts incurred in connection with any show or event. Exhibitors participate at their own risk and are responsible for the safety and conduct of themselves, their horses, and anyone assisting them.

## Eligibility and Registration

### **Membership Requirement**

There is no membership requirement to participate in OFEA shows; only if you want to participate in our year-end awards program and accumulate points from OFEA shows and OFEA approved shows throughout the year.

To participate in the Year-End Awards Program, you must fill out an application with a participation fee of \$55 per individual.

Points start accumulating after OFEA has received your application and participation fee.

### **Show Requirements**

If you have elected to participate in our Year-End Awards Program, you must compete in two OFEA Crazy Ribbon Schooling shows to keep your accumulated points from OFEA and OFEA approved shows for the schooling division category.

You must compete in two OFEA Silver Buckle Open Shows to keep your accumulated points from OFEA and OFEA approved shows for the open division category.

### **Breed Registration**

Horses do not need breed registration to compete.

### **Show Entry and Fees**

All class fees must be paid either online, by check with entry in the mail, or on day of the show. We accept cash, check, and card.

### **Judging**

All OFEA hosted shows use OFEA-carded judges. These judges are trained to evaluate performances consistently and professionally.

The judge shall have the final authority for all matters pertaining to the judging and rating of competition, eligibility for participation in a particular class based on tack and dress, type of horse, and other issues related to conduct within a class.

Judge or Show Management may stop a class if he or she observes an unsafe condition and may disqualify a competitor in matters of unsportsmanlike conduct, practices that involve inhumane treatment of the horse; and/or any action on the part of competitor that is disruptive or unsafe.

## Exhibition Rules

### Back Numbers

Competitors must wear their number on their backs or on BOTH sides of the horse on the saddle pad so that the number is always visible to the Judge.

- If you are entering an open show class as a paid entrant with the intention to school your horse during the class, your number must be turned upside down and you will not be placed in the class regardless of number of horses in class.

### Stallions

Stallions may be shown by exhibitors that are 18 years of age or older.

### Ponies

Ponies may compete in any class. However, the Judge or Show Management may disqualify a pony if it is determined to be disruptive or presents a safety hazard.

### Mini Horses

Mini horses may compete in halter or driving classes.

### Mules

Mules may compete in any class, other than a “breed” class at OFEA shows-SUBJECT TO DISCRETION OF SHOW MANAGEMENT. However, the Judge may disqualify and exclude any mule if the show is disrupted or a dangerous situation exists.

### Leadline

Any individual walking a leadline exhibitor must be at least 16 years of age. A halter must be underneath the bridle, and the lead can not be attached to the bit. The leadline exhibitor must be wearing a appropriately fitted helmet. Leadline is walk-trot only.

## Attire and Tack

OFEA's attire rules are designed to promote safety, clarity, and discipline-appropriate presentation while still allowing exhibitors flexibility. Whether you are showing in a schooling or open show, your attire should be neat, clean, and appropriate for the discipline you are riding or handling.

These guidelines help ensure that judges can evaluate your performance without distraction and that exhibitors present themselves professionally.

### General Attire Guidelines:

#### **Neatness and Cleanliness**

All exhibitors must wear clothing and have tack that is:

- Clean
- Neat
- Well-fitted
- Appropriate for the discipline

You do not need expensive or brand-name attire- simply present yourself in a way that reflects pride and respect for your sport.

#### **Torso Coverage**

The torso must be fully covered at all times.  
Bare midriffs are not permitted in any class.

#### **Helmets**

- Helmets may be worn in any class without penalty.
- Helmets are required for our Leadline exhibitors.
- Helmets are required in all jumping classes regardless of age of the rider.

#### **Footwear**

Riders must wear boots or shoes with a heel:

- At least ½ inch
- No more than 2 inches

Proper footwear is essential for safety and stability.

## Discipline Specific Attire

Discipline	Required Attire	Optional Attire	Prohibited/Notes
In Hand	Attire appropriate to the horse's style: Western, Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat, or Gaited. Footwear and headwear must match the discipline.	Gloves	Crops or bats except for a lunge whip in the lunge line class.
Western	Long sleeve collared shirt; Long pants or jeans; Boots; Western hat or helmet	Gloves; Chaps	Crops or bats
Hunt Seat	Coats: Any color (traditional: navy, dark green, black, brown, gray). Breeches/Jodhpurs: Any color. Boots: Tall or paddock boots. Shirts: Long sleeve with a tie or choker. Helmet: hunt cap or standard safety helmet.	Gloves, spurs; half chaps; crops/bats	Roweled spurs
Saddle Seat	Jacket, Long sleeve shirt with vest (no jacket) jodhpurs, derby or soft hat (or helmet), jodhpur boots.	Gloves, spurs; half chaps; crops/bats	Roweled spurs
Gaited	Boots; Attire appropriate for Western, Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat, or breed-specific native dress.	Gloves; spurs; chaps or half chaps; crops/bats	

## Tack

Tack plays a major role in safety, fairness, and discipline integrity. OFEA's tack rules ensure that exhibitors present their horses in equipment appropriate for the class, while also protecting the welfare of the horse.

### General Tack Rules:

#### Prohibited Equipment (All Classes)

The following items are **not allowed** in any judged class:

- Caustic chemicals (mustard oil, ginger, kerosene, etc.)
- Weighted shoes, boots, or wraps
- Any metal that touches the horse under a halter or bridle (tacks, pins, wire, barbed wire)

These rules protect the horse's comfort and ensure a level playing field.

The following items are **allowed** in schooling shows only or if there are special schooling classes at open shows.

- Martingale
- Draw Reins
- Training Forks

## Discipline-Specific Tack Rules:

### In-Hand Classes

- **Spurs and whips:** Not allowed, except:
  - Halter classes – dressage whip permitted for saddle-type horses
  - Lunge line classes – lunge whip permitted
  - Ground driving – driving whip permitted
- **Halters:** Leather (with or without silver), nylon, or rope
- **Lead ropes with chains:** Allowed under the chin or over the nose only
- **Bridles:** Permitted for hunter and saddle-type horses
- **Lunge line length:** Maximum 30 feet

### Western Tack

- **Bridle**
  - No cavesson or noseband
- **Bits**
  - Any standard western bit allowed
  - Snaffles and bosals permitted for horses who are five years old or younger as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of that show year
- **Hands**
  - One hand with leverage (shanked) bits
  - Two hands with snaffles or bosals which are only permitted if horse is five years old or younger
- **Reins**
  - Split reins or romels
  - Single roping/barrel reins allowed only in timed events
- **Curbed chains/straps**
  - Required with leverage bits and snaffle bits
  - Must be at least ½” wide and lie flat
  - Leather chin straps only on a snaffle bit

- No wire, rawhide and may not be rounded, rolled or braided
- **Not allowed in judged classes**
  - Gag bits
  - Mechanical hackamores
  - Twisted wire snaffle
  - Tiedowns
- **Allowed in timed events**
  - Gag bits
  - Mechanical hackamores
  - Tiedowns
- **Saddles**
  - Western saddle (leather or synthetic) required
  - Western side saddles are permitted
- **Horse Boots (bell, fetlock, knee and/or sports boots)**
  - Allowed only in reining, ranch, and timed events

### **Hunt Seat Tack**

- **Bridle**
  - Cavesson required (regular, flash, or figure 8)
- **Bits**
  - Any standard hunt seat bit allowed
  - Pelham or double bridle permitted
- **Crop**
  - Allowed
  - Must be used only on or behind the shoulder
- **Saddle**
  - Forward seat, all-purpose, close contact, or jumping saddle
  - Sidesaddles are permitted
  - Dressage saddles allowed in flat classes
- **Saddle Pads**
  - Any color
  - Shaped rounded, or square

### **Saddle Seat Tack**

- **Bridle**
  - Full bridle, pelham, or snaffle
- **Saddle**
  - Flat cutback saddle required
  - Dressage or hunt seat saddles not allowed
- **Shoes**

- Barefoot, shod, or padded allowed
- Weighted pads not allowed

### **Gaited Tack**

- Follow tack rules for the riding style (Western, Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat)
- Breed-specific native tack allowed
- Two hands allowed on any permitted bit

### **Prohibited Equipment**

- Boots or wraps are prohibited in conformation, showmanship, pleasure, or flat equitation classes
  - Bandages are permitted for minor injuries that do not render the horse to be unsound.
- Whips, crops only allowed in lunge line, hunt seat, saddle seat, and gaited classes.

These comprehensive tack rules help maintain consistency and fairness across disciplines and ensure the safety and well-being of both riders and horses. It's important for exhibitors to follow these rules to ensure smooth, fair competition.

## **Judging and Class Procedures**

### **Overview**

Judging at OFEA events is designed to be fair, consistent, and educational. Whether a class is rail-based, pattern-based, or scored maneuver-by-maneuver, judges follow OFEA rules first and may reference AQHA or USEF guidelines when needed. Exhibitors should understand how classes are run and how judges evaluate performances so they can prepare confidently.

### **General Class Procedures**

#### **Class Calls and Order of Go**

- Exhibitors must be prepared to enter the ring or begin their pattern when called.
- Failure to follow the correct pattern or class instructions may result in penalties or disqualification.

#### **Rail Classes (Flat Classes)**

Rail classes are judged as a group. Exhibitors perform gaits or maneuvers as instructed by the announcer or judge.

### **Typical Rail Class Flow**

1. Enter the ring and proceed in the designated direction
2. Perform requested gaits (walk, jog/trot, lope/canter)
3. Reverse direction when instructed
4. Line up or halt for final inspection

### **Judging Priorities**

- Correctness and quality of gaits
- Consistency and rhythm
- Rider/handler position and effectiveness
- Horse's manners, responsiveness, and overall picture

### **Penalties**

- Wrong lead
- Breaking gait
- Excessive speed or lack of control
- Poor manners (pinning ears, tail wringing, resistance)

### **Pattern Classes**

Pattern classes require exhibitors to complete a predetermined sequence of maneuvers. Accuracy and execution are key.

### **Pattern Requirements**

- Exhibitors must follow the posted pattern exactly
- Markes must be clearly visible
- Maneuvers must be performed at the designated locations

### **Judging Priorities**

- Precision and correctness
- Smoothness and flow
- Willingness and responsiveness
- Accuracy of transitions and maneuvers

### **Common Pattern Errors**

- Off-pattern (may result in disqualification)
- Missed markers
- Performing maneuvers out of order
- Over- or under-turning

## Class Placings

- All classes are placed through **fifth** place with a reserve.
- In the event of a disqualification, reserve will move up to 5<sup>th</sup> place and all others accordingly

## Conformation (Halter) Classes

### Purpose of the Class

Halter evaluates the horse's conformation which includes **balance, structural correctness, muscling, quality, type, and travel**. Exhibitors present their horses in hand, allowing judges to assess the horse's physical qualities without the influence of riding.

This class is about the **horse**, not the handler.

### General Rules

- Horses must be show in a halter or bridle appropriate for their type (Western, Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat, or breed-specific)
- Horses should be clean, well-groomed, and neatly presented
- Clipping is optional and not required for a competitive placing
- Exhibitors should stand their horse squarely and maintain control at all times.
- Excessive repositioning or fidgeting may be penalized

### Judging Criteria

#### 1. Balance

- Proportionality of body parts
- Smooth topline
- Correct hip-shoulder-neck relationship

#### 2. Structural Correctness

- Straightness of legs
- Correct angles
- Soundness indicators

#### 3. Muscling

- Appropriate muscling for age, breed, and discipline
- Even development

#### 4. Breed & Type

- Does the horse represent its type well?
- Does its build match its intended discipline?

## 5. Quality

- Refinement
- Well-defined features based on the breed type
- Free of faults

## 6. Travel

- Shown at walk and trot
- Balanced gaits
- Structural alignment and freedom of motion
- No lameness

## Penalties

- Poor manners (biting, striking, kicking)
- Excessive movement or inability to stand still
- Unsafe behavior
- Failure to show the horse properly (not exhibiting a walk or trot as required)

## Challenges in Judging Open Conformation Classes

- **Breed Variety:** In open horse shows, multiple breeds and grade horses (those of unknown or mixed heritage) may be shown in the same class. This presents a challenge for judges, as they must compare horses of different breeds and types. Despite this, judges typically focus on the fundamental principles of a well-made horse.
- **Ideal vs. Reality:** The judge must strive to compare each horse against the ideal for its breed while considering the differences in breed types. A “well-made” horse, regardless of breed, tends to have balanced proportions, correct structure, and an overall attractive and functional build.

## Class Procedure

- The handler should begin by walking the horse **directly toward the judge**, allowing the judge to evaluate the horse’s movement at the walk. As the handler passes the judge, the judge will ask handler to **jog or trot**, handler should transition smoothly into a **jog or trot**, continuing straight ahead for a few strides
- After the straight line, the judge will ask the handler to **turn left** and continue trotting into line. This allows the judge to view the horse’s movement from **behind** and from the **side**, ensuring a complete assessment of the horse’s travel.

- Once the movement portion is complete, the handler should position the horse for a conformation inspection. The judge will walk around all sides of the horse and view each side for a few seconds. This ensures the judge has adequate time to evaluate the horse’s structure, balance, and overall presentation.

#### Helpful Strategy

Practice setting up from both sides. Judges may walk around your horse, and you should be able to adjust smoothly without stepping into their path.

#### Training Insight

Teach your horse to “self-square” by stepping into position with minimal correction. This creates a polished, professional look.

#### Presentation Tip

Keep your lead rope organized and avoid excessive movement. Quiet hands and a calm presence help your horse look its best.

## Showmanship

### Purpose of the Class

Showmanship evaluates the **handler’s ability** to present the horse. Unlike Halter, this class is judged primarily on the **exhibitor’s skill**, not the horse’s conformation.

This is a precision class focused on:

- Pattern accuracy
- Handler’s body position
- Grooming and turnout
- Smoothness and confidence

### General Rules

- Horses may be shown in a halter or bridle appropriate for their type.
- Exhibitors must follow the posted pattern exactly.
- The horse should be clean, well-groomed, and neatly presented.
- The handler should demonstrate control, awareness, and ring etiquette.

## Judging Criteria

### 1. Pattern Execution

- Accuracy
- Straight lines
- Clean transitions
- Correct spacing at markers

### 2. Handler Position

- Correct quartering method
- Awareness of Judge's location
- Smooth, confident movement

### 3. Horse Presentation

- Grooming
- Responsiveness
- Manners

### 4. Overall Impression

- Professionalism
- Poise
- Execution
- Confidence

## Class Procedure

Handlers must perform the **posted pattern**, which will be posted at least 24 hours before the show. Patterns may include any combination of the following maneuvers:

- Walk
- Trot or Jog
- Turns of various degrees
- Stops
- Back-ups
- Setting up
- Visual inspection

During the inspection, handlers must use the standard quarter method. The exhibitor must maintain a position that is safe for both themselves and the judge at all times. The handler's position should never

obstruct the judge's view of the horse and must allow the handler to remain aware of the judge's location throughout the inspection.

When moving around the horse, the handler should change sides in front of the horse, then assume the same position on the right side that they previously held on the left side.

## Western Pleasure (2 and 3 gait)

### Purpose of the Class

Western Pleasure evaluates the horse's **manners, movement, consistency, and overall suitability as a pleasurable Western riding horse**. Horses should appear relaxed, responsive, and willing, maintaining a steady cadence and correct gaits appropriate to Western style.

This class rewards a horse that is **soft, quiet, and pleasant to ride**, not one that is overly slow, artificial, or forced into frame.

### General Rules

- Horses are shown on the rail at the walk, jog, and lope in both directions.
- Horses must maintain a consistent cadence and correct gait at all times.
- Transitions should be smooth, prompt, and without resistance.
- Excessively slow, "peanut-rolling", or four-beat lope movement may be penalized.
- Horses should carry their heads and necks in a natural, relaxed position appropriate for Western disciplines.
- Riders may be asked to extend the job, halt, or back up
- Tack and attire must follow Western rules.

### Judging Criteria

#### 1. Quality of Movement

- **Walk:** flat-footed, relaxed, forward
- **Jog:** smooth, two-beat gait with minimal knee action
- **Lope:** true three-beat gait, balanced, cadenced, and soft

#### 2. Consistency

- Steady rhythm at all gaits
- Even pace around the arena
- No rushing, dragging, or breaking gait

### 3. Manners and Responsiveness

- Quiet mouth and tail
- Soft transitions
- Willingness to guide
- No pinning ears, wringing tail, or resistance

### 4. Overall Picture

- Relaxed, pleasant expression
- Natural head carriage
- Rider's quiet hands and seat
- Horse appears enjoyable and comfortable to ride

## Western Horsemanship Pattern (2 and 3 gait)

### Purpose of the Class

Western Horsemanship evaluates the **rider's position, effectiveness, and ability to communicate with the horse**, both on the rail and through a posted pattern. Unlike Western Pleasure, which focuses on the horse's movement.

Horsemanship is judged primarily on the rider, with the horse's performance serving as a reflection of the rider's skill.

The ideal Horsemanship rider demonstrates:

- Correct and functional Western position
- Quiet, effective cues
- Balance, control, and confidence
- Smooth, precise execution of the pattern

### General Rules

- Riders must perform the posted pattern, which may include walk, jog, lope, stops, back-ups, turns, pivots, circles, and transitions.
- After the pattern, riders may be asked to work on the rail at a walk, jog, and lope.
- Riders should maintain a correct Western seat with:
  - Straight line from ear-shoulder-hip-heel
  - Quiet hands
  - Balanced posture
  - Subtle, effective cues

- Horses should respond willingly and maintain correct gaits, but the rider's form and effectiveness are the primary judging factors.
- Tack and attire must follow Western rules.

## Judging Criteria

### 1. Rider Position

- Balanced, centered seat
- Proper leg, hand, and upper-body alignment
- Quiet, steady rein contact
- Functional posture that enhances the horse's performance

### 2. Pattern Execution

- Accuracy and precision
- Smooth transitions
- Correct gait placement
- Controlled, confident maneuver execution

### 3. Effectiveness of Aids

- Subtle, clear cues
- No overuse of hands, legs, or spurs
- Horse responds willingly and softly

### 4. Overall Presentation

- Rider's confidence and poise
- Horse's responsiveness and manners
- Smoothness and flow of the pattern or rail work

## Penalties

- A rider using two hands or more than one finger between the reins on a shanked bit will be penalized in the scoring of the class and place no better than last place.
- Breaks of gaits
- Not performing required gait
- Touching the horse with your hand
- Holding saddle horn
- Loss of rein/dropping reins
- **Disqualifications**
  - Any bit or other tack element that the Judge determines to be inhumane
  - Willful abuse

## Horsemanship and Equitation on the Rail – All Seats (2 or 3 gaits)

### Purpose of the Class

Horsemanship/Equitation on the Rail evaluates the **rider's position, control, and effectiveness of aids** while working as a group on the rail. Unlike Pleasure classes, which focus on the horse's movement and way of going, Rail Horsemanship/Equitation is judged primarily on the **rider**, with the horse's performance reflecting the rider's skill.

### Riders should demonstrate:

- Correct and functional riding position
- Quiet, effective communication
- Balance, control, and confidence
- Smooth transitions and consistent form at all gaits

### General Rules

- Riders enter the arena as a group and work on the rail at the walk, jog/trot, and lope/canter as directed by the judge.
- Riders may be asked to extend the gait, halt, or back up.
- Riders should maintain a correct seat appropriate to their discipline (Western or English)
- Hands, legs, and upper body should remain quiet, steady, and effective.
- Horses should respond willingly and maintain correct gaits, but the **rider's form and effectiveness** are the primary judging factors.
- Tack and attire must follow the rules for discipline being shown.

### Judging Criteria

#### 1. Rider Position

- Balanced, centered seat
- Correct alignment for the discipline
- Quiet, steady hands
- Functional leg position and contact

#### 2. Effectiveness of Aids

- Subtle, clear cues
- Smooth transitions
- Ability to maintain gait and direction
- Horse responds willingly and softly

### 3. Consistency and Control

- Rider maintains form throughout the class
- No excessive movement or over-cues
- Horse remains steady and responsive

### 4. Overall Presentation

- Confidence and poise
- Harmony between horse and rider
- Professional, polished appearance

## Penalties

Penalties are the same as the pattern horsemanship/equitation classes.

## Hunt Seat Pleasure shown under English Pleasure (2 and 3 gait)

### Purpose of the Class

Hunt Seat Pleasure evaluates the horse's **manners, movement, consistency, and suitability as a pleasant and enjoyable English mount**. Horses should demonstrate a forward, ground-covering stride, a soft and willing attitude, and steady rhythm appropriate for Hunt Seat disciplines.

The ideal Hunt Seat Pleasure horse moves freely and naturally, showing the qualities of a comfortable, reliable riding horse.

### General Rules

- Horses are shown on the rail at the walk, trot, and canter in both directions.
- Horses should maintain a consistent, forward rhythm with a relaxed and a natural frame.
- Transitions must be smooth, prompt, and without resistance.
- Horses should carry their heads and necks in a natural, hunter-type position, avoiding exaggerated flexion or artificial headset.
- Riders may be asked to extend the trot, halt, and back up.
- Tack and attire must follow Hunt Seat rules

### Judging Criteria

#### 1. Quality of Movement

- **Walk:** relaxed, forward, and purposeful
- **Trot:** long, sweeping stride with minimal knee action

- **Canter:** rhythmic, balance and ground covering
- **Extension:** smooth lengthening without rushing

## 2. Consistency

- Even pace and rhythm
- Maintains frame and balance throughout the class
- No breaking gait, rushing, or dragging

## 3. Manners and Responsiveness

- Quiet mouth and tail
- Willing transitions
- Soft, pleasant expression
- No resistance or tension

## 4. Overall Picture

- Relaxed, natural head carriage
- Rider's quiet hands and seat
- Horse appears enjoyable and comfortable to ride

## Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat shown under English Equitation Pattern (2 or 3 gait)

### Purpose of the Class

The hunt seat/saddle seat equitation class is to judge the **rider's skill, posture, and subtle communication with the horse**, not just the horse's performance, establishing a foundation for jumping and creating an illusion of the effortless ride.

### Judging Criteria

Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat is judged on the **rider's ability to perform maneuvers in harmony with their horse**, using subtle, effective, and nearly invisible aids. The rider should demonstrate a calm, wfunctional seat, moving with the horse while maintaining correct alignment from heel to hip to shoulder.

- Overall appearance and polish
- Rider's position and balance
- Quiet, effective use of aids
- Ability to guide the horse smoothly and accurately through the pattern.

Communication should be soft and unobtrusive, reflecting a rider who is confident, balanced and in control.

### **Class Procedure**

Riders will perform the posted pattern. Patterns may include:

- Walk/Posting Trot/Sitting Trot
- Canter (for 3 gait riders)
- Lead changes
- Back ups
- Pivots or turns

### **Penalties**

- Break of gaits
- Not performing required gait
- Touching the horse with your hand
- Loss of rein
- **Disqualifications**
  - Willful abuse

## **Saddle Seat Pleasure shown under English Pleasure (2 or 3 gait)**

### **Purpose of the Class**

Saddle Seat Pleasure evaluates the horse's manners, performance, and suitability as a pleasurable, stylish English mount. Horses should exhibit brilliance, animation, and presence while remaining calm, responsive, and easy to ride. The ideal Saddle Seat Pleasure horse moves with elevated front action, a bright expression, and consistent, forward rhythm.

### **General Rules**

- Horses are shown on the rail at the walk, trot, and canter in both directions.
- Horses should maintain a steady, forward pace with animation appropriate to Saddle Seat style.
- Transitions must be smooth, prompt, and without resistance.
- Horses should carry their heads and necks in a high, natural, and stylish position, without overflexion or behind-the-vertical carriage.
- Riders may be asked to extend the trot, halt, back up
- Tack and attire must follow Saddle Seats rules, including appropriate bridle, saddle, and rider attire.

## Judging Criteria

### 1. Quality of Movement

- Animated, elevated front action
- Straight, ground-covering stride behind
- Consistent rhythm at all gaits
- Smooth transitions

### 2. Manners and Responsiveness

- Willing attitude
- Soft mouth and quiet tail
- No resistance, pinning ears, or tension
- Prompt response to rider cues

### 3. Presence and Style

- Bright, alert expression
- High head and neck carriage appropriate to Saddle Seat type
- Elegance and animation without loss of control

### 4. Consistency

- Maintains same pace and frame throughout the class
- No breaking gait or loss of rhythm
- Balanced, steady performance

### 5. Overall Picture

- Horse appears enjoyable, stylish and mannerly
- Rider maintains correct Saddle Seat position

## Conclusion

By using these rules, you will ensure your ultimate success in the ring. Build on your strengths and add classes to your knowledge. If you have any questions about these rules or need additional information please contact [oregonfamilyequestrian@gmail.com](mailto:oregonfamilyequestrian@gmail.com)