

Judging Horsemanship

The western horsemanship class is designed to evaluate the rider's ability to execute, in concert with their horse, a set of maneuvers prescribed by the judge with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence, and maintaining a balanced, functional, and fundamentally correct body position. The ideal horsemanship pattern is extremely precise with the rider and horse working in complete unison, executing each maneuver with subtle aids and cues.

Exhibitors are to be scored from 0 to 20 with ½ point increments acceptable. The exhibitor's overall poise, confidence, appearance, and position throughout the class as well as the physical appearance of the horse will be evaluated. The exhibitor should perform the work accurately, precisely, smoothly, and with a reasonable amount of promptness. Increasing speed of the maneuvers performed increases the degree of difficulty, however accuracy and precision should not be sacrificed for speed. Exhibitors that perform the pattern sluggishly and allow their horse to move without adequate impulsion, collection, or cadence will be penalized.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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