

# Guidelines for Judges Who Have Never Judged an ASHA Show

## A summary on how ASHA rules may differ from other horse show rules.

1. Disqualify horses **ONLY** for obvious lameness, illegal equipment, inhumane treatment or misconduct by rider.
2. Any horse, of any age, can be shown two-handed with a snaffle bit. Tie-downs, running martingales, mechanical hackamores, gag bits and cavessons are not allowed.
3. If a horse is shown in a curb bit, only one hand is allowed on the reins – with customary finger rules and exceptions for proper use of Rommel reins. Putting the second hand on the reins is not a D.Q., but receives a penalty of 2 pts per occurrence per maneuver. This simply reduces the maneuver score by the amount of penalties that occurred. If rider uses two hands on a curb for the entire maneuver, maneuver score should be a maximum of a “1”.
4. Even if a horse places last in a class they still get 1 point. This is important for High-Point Awards and Year-End calculations.
5. The ASHA pleasure class is worked individually and numerically scored. There are ten maneuver scores – five in each direction- for a total of 100 points. Transitions are included in the score for the next gait. Show management will have markers to place around the arena to indicate each change of gait. It is the judge’s responsibility to assure that adequate distances, as outlined in the rule book, are allowed so that quality of gaits may be adequately evaluated. Establish what you will accept as an average score for each gait and score horses above or below this standard. Think about this and be ready to call a walk score before the first horse trots. Maneuvers come pretty fast, but if you have your average in mind beforehand, and keep this in mind, both directions, you will be pleased with the results. Be sure to spread your scores when the performance warrants. Do not be afraid to award a 9 or 10 to deserving horses. In order to allow adequate point spreads on the lower end, some judges use a point value of “7” for what they view as average.’
6. The ASHA trail and reining classes both use a positive 1-10 points range for each obstacle or maneuver.
7. In reining, if a horse under or over spins he is not disqualified. Simply reduce the maneuver score by two points. In case of complete omission of a maneuver or the wrong maneuver, assign a score of “0” for that maneuver. Make other deductions according to the severity of the deviation. Try to give a horse credit for what is done correctly. Be positive and use both ends of the point scale. A “plus 1” NRHA score should equate to a “10” in ASHA scoring.
8. The ASHA working cow horse classes are scored differently and have different time limits. Open, Non-Pro and Limited Non-Pro are scored in three equal parts, with two different category scores each. The Novice and Youth pattern only has two parts. Except for the Novice & Youth class, the ASHA cow horse classes are divided into increments of 20 with 20 being the maximum for each part. Please study the Limited Non Pro and Novice and Youth patterns and score sheets as they are a different than most. Youth and Novice also do a short dry work pattern which requires cones in the arena.
9. ASHA rules state that a judge should place the entire class – without any ties. This can get pretty sticky in a 40+ horse class. **USE THE WHOLE RANGE OF POINTS ALLOWED** and use 1/2 points to give you a wider distribution.
10. Show participants have increased so much that we have implemented a tie breaker system to speed up the classes and to help break ties. **On each class sheet, rank the maneuvers of the class in the order that you would like to have them used to break ties.** In pleasure and trail, use at least 6 tie breakers. With this system, you will not have to total maneuver scores and break ties. You simply need to mark each maneuver as objectively as possible. Sign your sheet and turn it in to the show secretaries. They will total scores and break ties using your ranking order of maneuvers or obstacles. They will get back to you if there is a problem – so check with them before you leave. **However, it is still the judge’s responsibility to judge and place each class. Do not use the tie-breaker system as a crutch to make decisions for you in small or medium-sized classes. You are getting paid for your judgment, so do your job.**
11. Keep in mind that your class score sheets showing each maneuver or obstacle score of each exhibitor are posted for exhibitors at the end of each class. This helps us meet our goal of helping exhibitors know their strengths and weaknesses and set goals to improve their ability and their performance. They study the maneuvers on which they scored low and work to improve their next performance. They also compare their scores and rankings from one show to another.
12. Judges should bring a whistle and use if needed. Stop unsafe and dangerous runs, especially in the cow horse classes. Exhibitors may school in a class as long as they are not abusive to their horse or have not used up the time allotted for their run. In this case, reduce scores on specific maneuvers. If over time, abusive behavior or unsafe situations arise, blow the whistle and dismiss the rider. Score them on what they have done up to that time, except in the occurrence of abuse or misconduct, in which case they would be disqualified from that class. The judge also has the right to disqualify riders from the entire show in the case of gross abuse or misconduct.

(Revised January, 2013)