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# American Saddlebred Junior Judging Guide

## What does a Judge do?

“Judges are responsible for judging a horse or riders performance in the competition area.”- US Equestrian

- To tie the best horse in the class in accordance to the class specifications, and the performance of the horse on that day. The Rulebook is the standard by which we judge – Learn how to use it!

## Judging Criteria

- There are different specifications for each division, these specifications are listed in order of importance.
- Always consult the class specifications, which can be found in the rulebook!

	Most Important				Less Important
Open, Junior, Maiden, Novice, Limit	Performance	Presence	Quality	Manners	Conformation
Ladies	Manners	Quality	Presence	Performance	Conformation
Junior Exhibitor	Manners	Performance	Presence	Quality	Conformation
Amateur, Masters, Owners	Manners	Performance	Presence	Quality	Conformation
Park-Open, Junior, Maiden, Novice, Limit	Performance	Manners	Presence	Quality	Conformation
Park-Ladies, Junior Exhibitor, Amateur, Owners, Masters	Manners	Performance	Presence	Quality	Conformation

## How to Scan the Ring

- Judging begins when the gate closes. As horses enter, the judge will begin to sort the entries. A judge should be organized and have a system for placing horses.
- Judges should be respectful and are to be attentive without wasting time. They should never ignore any horse and remember that every exhibitor has paid the same to be there.
- When things go wrong:
  - A judge MAY call for a walk and allow entries to regain control.
  - A judge MUST order from the ring any unruly horse or one whose actions threaten to endanger the rider, driver, handler, other exhibitors or their entries.

## The Line Up

- A judge will tie the class when they go to the line up. Judges can and will make final changes prior to turning in their final card.

## Specific Class Information

### Open Classes

- The OPEN horse should be the ultimate representative of the breed and as nearly perfect as possible.
- Should perform all gaits with animation, brilliance and extreme action at both ends.

### Ladies Classes

- Manners are the MOST important!
- Expression is important and quality is a prime consideration. Gaits should be performed with brilliance on command.
- Horses should walk and stand quietly.

### Junior Exhibitor Classes

- A **JUNIOR EXHIBITOR'S** horse should be mannerly, willing and expressive with balanced action.
- Gaits should be performed with brilliance on command.
- Horse should walk and stand quietly.

### Amateur, Master and Owner Classes

- The **AMATEUR'S, MASTER'S** and **OWNER'S** horse can be a bit stronger and perform in a **bolder** manner than a Ladies' or Junior Exhibitor's.
- More action and animation are desired.
- Less emphasis can be put on manners than in Ladies and Junior Exhibitor classes.

### Park Classes- Specs are determined by division!

- Three Gaited Park. Open, Junior, Maiden, Novice, and Limit; and Championships: To be judged on **performance, manners, presence, quality and conformation.**
- Three Gaited Park. Ladies, Jr. Exhibitor, Amateur (Ladies and/or Gentlemen) Owners, A/O, Masters and Championships. To be judged on **manners, performance, presence, quality and conformation.**

### Three Gaited Classes

- Epitome of beauty, brilliance, elegance, refinement and expression
- Gaits are collected, energy directed toward animation and precision
- Shown at the animated walk, park trot, and canter
- Park trot:
  - **Highly Collected, Speed to be penalized**

### Five Gaited

- Should possess beauty, brilliance, elegance and refinement
- Energy directed toward speed in an animated form
- Shown at the animated walk, trot, slow gait, rack, and canter
- Trot:
  - Should show speed in form with control and balance
- Canter:
  - Acceptable (but not encouraged) to be bolder and stronger in classes where manners are not paramount
- Slow Gait:
  - Highly collected, propulsion coming from behind
  - Executed slowly but with true and distinct precision. **SPEED IS TO BE PENALIZED**
  - High, lofty, brilliant and restrained denoting the style, grace and polish of the horse
- Rack:
  - Smooth and highly animated
  - Performed with great action and speed in a slightly unrestrained manner (must remain in form with a good headset)
  - TO BE PENALIZED- any tendency to become trotty, pacey or hitchy gaited

### Fine Harness

- Should possess all of the elegance and refinement of the ideal Saddlebred
- Energy directed toward animation rather than speed
- Should stand quietly in line-up but shall not be required to back
- Shown at the **animated walk, park trot, and “show your horse”** (exception: “show your horse” is not called for in Ladies, Jr. Exhibitor, Amateur, Masters, Owners, or Amateur Owners classes)

### Park Horse

- Should be stylish with finish and quality, well-mannered. Should be animated and graceful in all gaits

- Three Gaited Park- Ladies, Jr. Exhibitor, Amateur, Owners, A/O, Masters and respective Championships- Horses to stand quietly in the lineup.
- Gaits
  - Animated walk or flat walk, Trot, Canter
  - Slow gait and rack in Five-Gaited classes
  - Fine Harness Park- park trot and animated walk

### Park Pleasure

- Park Pleasure
  - Stylish with finish and quality, well-mannered
  - Shown at flat walk, trot, and canter
- Country Park Pleasure
  - Must be obedient with prompt transitions
  - Must be asked to halt and stand quietly on the rail both ways of the ring
  - Shown at the true flat walk, trot, extended trot, and canter

### English Show Pleasure

- Judged 75% on manners, performance, presence, and quality; 25% on conformation.
- Manners and suitability as a Pleasure mount are **paramount**. Must stand quietly and back readily in line up. Must be asked to halt and stand quietly on the rail both ways of the ring
- Special emphasis is placed on a **true, flat walk**
- Easy, ground covering action is desired
- TO BE PENALIZED: pulling, head tossing, laboring action, going sideways and tail switching
- Must be plain shod or unshod.

### Western

- Horse should have more **substance**, especially in the quarters
- Shown on a **reasonably loose rein** without undue restraint
- Manners are **paramount**, must have prompt, smooth transitions
- Must halt and stand quietly on rail both ways
- Must stand quietly and back in the lineup
- TO BE PENALIZED: pulling, head tossing, laboring action, going sideways and tail switching
- Shown at the **flat walk, jog-trot, and lope**
- Reins
  - No fingers allowed between reins
  - Only one hand may be used and may not switch hands unless to negotiate an obstacle in a trail class.