

ENGLISH SHOW HACK



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ENGLISH SHOW HACK

The good English Show Hack horse is neither a dressage horse (although extended and collected gaits are required) nor an English Pleasure rail horse. The English Show Hack horse is, however, the epitome of the well-trained rail horse. It has the ability to perform with uninterrupted cadence of all the required gaits in three forms: normal, collected, and extended. When asked to extend, the horse's entire frame lengthens and not merely the stride. When asked to collect, the entire body becomes supple and round resulting in shorter, higher strides. The English Show Hack horse performs all of its tasks willingly with light contact.

The ideal English Show Hack horse possesses the best qualities of many other types of show horses into one horse: vitality, presence, animation, supreme quality, excellent performance and impeccable manners. Every dimension of this individual is balanced. The English Show Hack horse is a great athlete that performs softly at times and boldly other times, always with strength and finesse. This horse earns the respect of the horseman by leaving the impression it is fit, highly trained and capable of any task within reason. The English Show Hack Horse is a true joy to ride.

English Show Hack is a class for the very well trained horse. Although extended and collected gaits are required, it is necessarily a class for just Dressage horses. Elevation and high knee action are not to be emphasized so an English Pleasure horse may not necessarily be the ideal horse for this class. It is a class for the very well trained brilliant performance horse.

An English Show Hack horse must be able to perform all of the gaits with a noticeable transition between the normal, collected and extended gaits. The horse must be under complete control and easily ridden. Obedience to the rider is of prime importance. If the horse exhibits clear transitions in a balanced and level manner, appearing to be giving a comfortable and pleasurable ride, he is performing correctly for this class.

English Show Hack horses must be balanced and show vitality, animation, presence, clean fine limbs and supreme quality. Soundness is required.

The English Show Hack horse must first be a very well trained horse performing all of the gaits and transitions correctly and obediently in a balanced, easy manner. The English Show Hack horse must remain light and responsive to the rider while performing with brilliance and with animation.

TRANSITIONS

Transition is the moving from one gait to another gait, a change in the extension or collection of a particular gait or a halt. Horses should move through the gaits without heavy pulling on the bridle, gapping on the bit, tossing the head or moving sideways. The horse must not collapse, stiffen or lose rhythm or cadence when asked to collect, nor should the horse pull downward, drop its shoulders and lose the connection from the hindquarters when asked to extend.

As transitions are performed, the horse should appear almost elastic as it moves through the collected to extended gaits. Remaining balanced, cadenced and obedient throughout, the horse should not lose rhythm or cadence through the transitions. The gaits should maintain the same cadence in all phases. The English Show Hack horse should exhibit an

energetic thrust from the hindquarters to propel itself into collected gaits by further engagement of the hindquarters, rounding the back, dropping the haunches, stepping further underneath the body and elevating the forehand, always remaining light in the rider's hands, responding easily with no resistance.

Transitions should be clear and immediate with no resistance to the rider. The horse should remain light between the rider's hand and leg demonstrating smooth and straight forward or downward transitions.

BALANCE

Balance is the horse's bodily poise, the state of equilibrium or equal relationship front to rear, the equality of movement between front end and rear end. The English Show Hack horse must never give the impression of traveling downhill or on the forehand. The shoulders should be free with proper engagement and impulsion from the hindquarters to carry the horse.

CADENCE

Cadence expresses the quality of locomotion in which the steps follow each other in a uniform sequence, rhythm and measure. Cadence is the sequence of well regulated strides where the steps are resolute, lively, even and progressive in their purpose. When strides are cadenced, they are pronounced, clear, decisive and elastic. A well schooled horse should be able to perform strides considerably longer or shorter than their normal length without losing their resoluteness or evenness.

RHYTHM

Rhythm denotes the quickness or slowness of the sequence of strides in which the gaits are performed. It is the rate at which the horse keeps its legs moving in a constant sequence of strides and the repetition of the steps in a regular pattern.

ENGAGEMENT

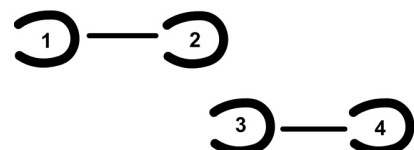
Engagement is the connection from the horse's hindquarters through the back and neck to the bit and the rider's hand with light contact on the bit. This engagement gives the horse's forward movement a sense of energy. Proper engagement is necessary for an English Show Hack horse. The hindquarters should be nicely engaged, the hind legs working under the horse's body with moderate power, never strung out or trailing behind. This engagement is the appropriate amount of energy created by the hip, stifle and hock, resulting from the development of the physique and ability of the horse. How deeply a horse reaches its hind legs under the body depends on its conformation, training, confidence and relaxation. Conformation enables the horse to engage the hindquarters and back. Training teaches the horse and develops the muscular structure enabling it to engage the hindquarters. Confidence is created by the horse understanding the training. Relaxation allows the neck, back and hindquarters to work together.

GAITS

Judges are required to consider the performance at each gait equally in adjudicating this class. In Park, English Pleasure, Country English Pleasure, Combination and Saddle Seat Equitation classes, the transition from the trot to canter is not permitted.

WALK

The walk is a four-beat gait; straight, true and flat-footed. The sequence of foot falls are (1) left hind, (2) left fore, (3) right hind, (4) right fore.



Normal Walk

The normal walk: regular and unconstrained, moving energetically and calmly forward. At the normal walk, the horse should stride with lively, regular steps. The length of stride is determined by the natural length of leg and swing of each horse as the horse moves forward from one foot to the other with no period of suspension, remaining on a light but steady contact with the bit.

Collected Walk

The collected walk: strides are shorter and higher than at the normal walk. The head approaches vertical but should never move behind it. Pacing is a serious fault.

The steps are more cadenced and should cover less ground than the normal walk without any loss of elasticity or activity in the gait. The hind feet touch the ground slightly behind the imprints of the front feet as the strides are shorter and the horse propels itself upward rather than forward. Horses should remain straight while maintaining the same rhythm of the normal walk.

Extended Walk

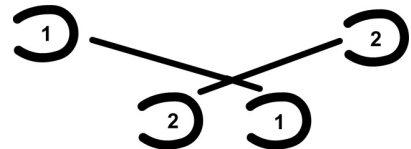
The extended walk: the horse is allowed to lengthen the frame and stride while the rider maintains light contact. The horse should cover as much ground as possible without rushing.

The horse should perform with the utmost effort to gain ground, moving forward with regular rhythm and cadence. Complete loss of rein contact is not desired, nor allowed by rule.

However, the neck and back should stretch slightly as the horse reaches with longer steps propelling itself forward. Ideally, the hind feet should step well in front of or over the imprints of the front feet.

TROT

The trot is a two-beat gait free-moving, straight, rider maintaining light contact with the horse's mouth at all times. The sequence of footfalls are (1) left hind and right fore, (2) right hind and left fore.



Normal Trot

The normal trot is light, crisp, balanced and cadenced, with rider posting. The horse should move straight forward with free, lively, energetic reps. Elevation and high knee action is not to be emphasized. The trot should show elegant carriage and strength from the hindquarters while moving in an easy, natural manner.

Collected Trot

In the collected trot, the horse's stride is shorter and lighter, maintaining balance and impulsion. The neck is more raised and arched than at the normal trot as the head approaches the vertical line, but never moving behind it. The rider is sitting. Cadenced strides in a proud carriage are characteristics of the collected trot. The engagement or stepping under of the hind feet and rounding of the back should show the transfer of the horse's weight to the hindquarters allowing the horse to propel itself forward and upward, lightening and elevating through the shoulders. The neck should lift and arch slightly according to the horse's conformation. The connection or engagement of the hindquarters and a supple back creates suspension or a light, springy step. There should be

no loss of forward propulsion, straightness, or too prolonged a period of suspension or be too slow.

The collected trot should remain straight and true showing light, springy, cadenced steps and forward movement in a balanced manner.

Extended Trot

Maintaining the same cadence and performing at medium speed, the horse lengthens its stride as a result of greater impulsion from the hindquarters in the extended trot. The horse should remain light in the rider's hand as it lengthens its frame. The rider is posting. The extended trot should show considerable length of stride without pulling down on the rider's hands or losing balance and rhythm. The brilliance of the extended trot depends upon an energetic thrust from the hindquarters and a distinct forward swinging movement of the shoulders. The ground covered will vary among horses due to the difference in natural length of stride and conformation. Speed and high knee action should not be determining factors. However, the quality of the extended trot and trueness of gait of each individual should be evaluated.

CANTER

The canter is a three-beat gait: straight on both leads and smooth.

Normal Canter

The normal canter has light, even strides and should be moved into without hesitation. The horse should show a moderately arched neck, suited to its own conformation, should maintain light contact on the bit and show impulsion, balance and engagement. The horse's back must be relaxed and supple allowing the hindquarters to reach under and work with moderate power. The sequence of footfalls for a canter on the right lead are (1) left hind, (2) right hind and left fore, (3) right fore.



Collected Canter

Marked by the lightness of the forehand and the engagement of the hindquarters, the collected canter is characterized by supple, free shoulders. The neck is more raised and arched than in a normal canter, as the head approaches the vertical line while never moving behind it. The collected canter should show a proud posture giving the impression of cantering uphill. The horse becomes more engaged as the hindquarters reach further underneath the body, allowing the neck and shoulders to elevate by lifting itself at the withers. The collected canter should not just be slower, and slower is not always better. The quality and trueness of the gait must be evaluated. The collected canter must maintain a clear three-beat, remaining straight with activity and drive.

Extended Canter

Maintaining the same cadence, the horse lengthens its stride as a result of greater impulsion from the hindquarters in the extended canter. The horse should remain light in the rider's hand as it lengthens its frame. The extended canter should show a longer stride due to greater impulsion or thrust from the hindquarters, propelling itself forward. The horse's neck and back may stretch slightly as it reaches for more ground, but must never pull downward or become out of balance onto the forehand. Speed is not the determining factor when judging the extended canter. Quality of gait, responsiveness to the

rider, willingness to go forward while remaining calm, and maintaining the cadence of the canter should be considered when evaluating the extended canter.

HAND-GALLOP

The hand-gallop is performed with a long, free, ground covering stride. The amount of ground covered may vary between horses due to differences in natural length of stride. The distinction between the hand-gallop and the extended canter is that the extended canter is the ultimate linear extension of stride within the hand of the rider while the hand-gallop is a looser, more free elongation of stride and frame of the horse. A decided lengthening of stride should be shown while the horse remains controlled, mannerly, correct and straight on both leads. Extreme speed is penalized.

The hand-gallop is not just a faster extended canter, but a true elongation or lengthening of the horse's stride and frame. The hindquarters should reach well underneath the horse with long, powerful strides, the shoulders should reach forward freely and the neck and back should show stretch as the horse truly moves to a hand-gallop. The whole horse should have a longer appearance. The horse must remain balanced, obedient, calm and light in the rider's hand while actually reaching forward to a true hand-gallop.

FALL

Entries will be eliminated by fall of horse or rider during the class.

APPOINTMENTS

The bridle shall be of light show type; either single snaffle, double (full) bridle or pelham. Kimberwicke bit is acceptable. Certain bits may not be discriminated against as long as they are acceptable bits. The judge must not have any preconceived ideas as to which bits are more desirable or have personal preference. The exhibitor is allowed to choose the bit most appropriate for that horse and each horse should be judged as an individual according to the performance it is giving and how it is presented, not by the bit it is wearing.

Browbands and cavesons other than hunter or dressage types are prohibited. Unconventional tack, such as figure eight, drop or flash nosebands are not permitted.

English saddles of any type are allowed. Martingales, breast plates or breast collars are not allowed. Spurs, whip or crop are optional at the exhibitor's discretion.

ATTIRE

Acceptable Hack attire is required. Acceptable attire consists of a conservatively colored coat, breeches and boots. A conservatively colored hunting cap, derby, or protective headgear is mandatory. Formal attire consisting of white breeches, a top hat and tails or shadbelly coat, may be worn; it is usual to wear such attire after 6:00 p.m. or in Championship classes. Horses may be shown with braided mane and/or tail, but it is not required. Decorations are prohibited. Braided manes are usual; however, tails usually are not braided if the mane is not braided.

SHOW HACK CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

Manners

Manners are the conduct and behavior with which the horse performs. Manners are evidenced by obedience and responsiveness to the rider and a willingness to be guided and controlled. A well-mannered horse accepts its surroundings and other horses in the arena.

Performance

Performance is the physical act of doing all of the gaits, the transitions from one gait to another, the collected, normal and extended gaits, and the halt. The execution or accomplishment of carrying out all the requirements of the class constitutes performance.

Quality

A quality horse possesses the presence, carriage, athleticism, balance and strength required to perform effortlessly and with finesse. A quality horse is pleasing to the eye with a high degree of excellence, depth of conditioning and muscle tone.

Conformation

Conformation is the horse's correct structural form as it relates to the functions and performance of a Show Hack horse.

English Show Hack classes will be judged by the above definitions/specifications in this order:

OPEN, AMATEUR, LADIES, GENTLEMEN. To be shown at a walk, trot, canter, and hand gallop; collected and extended and normal gaits to be called for, to stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on manners, performance, quality and conformation.

FAULTS

Bad Manners

Bad manners include wringing tail, pinned ears, cutting to the center of the arena, balking, bolting kicking, bucking, gapping on the bit, and not responding to the rider.

Bad Attitude

A bad attitude is indicated by sour ears, swishing tail, avoiding contact with the big, not performing with ease, smoothness and confidence, stress or agitation, resistance.

Poor Performance

Poor performance includes wrong leads, breaking gait, resistance, rough or abrupt transitions, heavy on the rider's hands, lack of response to the rider's aids.

Untrue Gaits

Untrue gaits include uneven steps, out of cadence or rhythm.

Failure to Maintain Light Contact

Failure to maintain light contact includes pulling down or pulling too heavily on the reins or behind the big with loose reins or vertical position.

Failure to Maintain Quality of Gaits

Failure to maintain quality of gaits includes being too slow, or lack of impulsion or engagement, going too fast, going downhill, being out of balance, or trailing out behind.

Lack of Straightness in Gaits, Tracking Crooked, Haunches to the Inside

Abrupt, Rough Transitions

CREDITS

- | | |
|--|---|
| ❖ Good manners and good attitude | ❖ True, quality gaits, straight and even |
| ❖ Good performance | ❖ Maintaining light contact |
| ❖ Balance and cadence | ❖ Presence and self-carriage |
| ❖ Smooth, clear, accurate transitions | ❖ Brilliance, animation, vitality |
| | ❖ Obedience and responsiveness |

English Show Hack is not a fault and out class. You should not try and trick the exhibitor into a mistake by calling for the gaits in an unrealistic manner. The gaits and transitions should be called for in a manner which allows you to properly evaluate the performance of the horse, the quality of gaits and the execution of transitions.

Calling the gaits properly will allow you to see which horses remain supple, balanced, cadenced and obedient without resistance to the rider. Transitions should be clear and immediate. The definition and accuracy of the transitions should be judged. Normal gaits should be free and easy. When asked for a collected gait, you should see the horse's haunch drop under, the back ground, the hocks bend and step under, the withers, shoulders and neck lift and steps become shorter and more cadenced. When asked to extend a gait, the stride lengthens, the neck and back stretches slightly, the horse drives with powerful steps from behind covering more ground remaining light in the rider's hand and never losing balance.

As a rule of thumb, allow the horses to move into a normal gait, then ask for collected or extended transitions. It is acceptable to move from a collected gait to another gait, but it is not acceptable to call for a canter from the extended trot. Use logic when judging and calling the gaits and make sure the class flows smoothly. Remember, you are not there to trick the exhibitor.

The winner should be the horse that correctly does the class requirements with animation, vitality and a bit of arrogance. The winner is very well trained with impeccable manners, a brilliant attitude and dignified presence.

Judging is not an absolute.
It is a matter of observation and evaluation.