

PARK HORSE



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and

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PARK HORSE

DESCRIPTION

Good Park Horses have a brisk and vigorous stride that allows them to move forward with cadence, authority, elegance, and brilliance. Their gaits result from a balanced, cadenced motion that emanates from impulsion created by the hindquarters. It is this impulsion that generates the energy for the strong, extreme movement in their shoulders and front legs to implement the range of motion required in this class. It is imperative that the horse maintains cadence while performing its gaits. The horse's natural conformation should allow it to carry its head and neck in an upright position.

The ideal Park horse is brilliant, confident, responsive, and ambitious. They should be balanced in all gaits and perform in a willing manner. Ultimately these horses should have great expression and should be an exciting individual to watch.

GAITS

Judges are required to consider the performance of each gait equally when adjudicating this class. The horse is to give a brilliant performance, with style, presence, finish, balance and cadence; with proper cadence and balance being paramount. For entries in Park, English Pleasure, country English Pleasure, Combination and Saddle Seat Equitation classes, the transition from the trot to canter is not permitted.

Walk: A true, cadenced, four-beat walk, with horse collected. The motion should be brisk and vigorous with the horse showing animation and brilliance. The walk should be straight and true with no hesitation or compromising of stride. The horse should maintain forward motion in the walk at all times.

Trot: a two-beat gait. Animated, natural and cadenced, with impulsion and power from behind, the front airy and light. The animated natural trot is extremely bold and brilliant, characterized by free shoulder action. The trot should appear effortless and be executed willingly with apparent ease. The horse to have leg flexion with extension, (foreleg extending fully forward at full stretch with airy motion combined with hock action that is powerful and well raised, the hind leg being brought forward with a driving stride). The action should be balanced and cadenced. Loss of form due to excessive speed shall be penalized. The trot should be a true two-beat diagonal gait. Mixed gaits, pacing or racking must be considered major faults.

The trot should be a cadenced gait performed with brilliance. It should be a powerful gait with its energy originating from the hindquarters. The front end of the horse should be elevated with equal motion in both front limbs. There should be an extreme degree of collection with the horse maintaining balance. Loss of form due to extreme speed should be penalized. Each horse should perform at the rate of speed that allows them to maintain cadence, balance and form.

Canter: a three-beat gait. True, collected, animated, smooth and unhurried. The movement light and airy with more elevation than in Pleasure classes. The horse to be balanced, supple and mobile. To be straight on both leads. Loss of form due to excessive speed shall be penalized. The canter should be a fluid, forward moving gait. It should have balance, collection and impulsion. It should be a straight and true gait, not compromised or restricted.

TACK

Bridle shall be light, show type; either single curb, curb and bridoon, or pelham bit. Junior Horses are eligible to compete in single snaffles (defined as a smooth, rounded snaffle bit that is at least 3/8" in diameter as measured 1/2" from the ring, half cheeks permitted. The snaffle bit may be wrapped with Guardtex, Latex, Sealtex or similar materials.) No martingales or tie-downs. English-type saddle required.

ATTIRE

Informal saddle seat attire is suggested; no hunt attire. Suggested are conservative colors such as black, blue, grey, beige or brown jacket with matching jodhpurs. Day coat with jodhpurs also permitted. Derby, soft hat or protective headgear required. Protective headgear may be worn without penalty. Contrasting vests and/or ties are acceptable. Formal attire is suggested for classes held after 6:00 p.m. or Championship classes. Formal attire consists of tuxedo-type jacket and formal jodhpurs, boots and top hat; or dark saddle suit and derby. Spurs, whip or crop optional at the exhibitor's discretion.

PARK HORSE SPECIFICATIONS

BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE:

Brilliant performance is the style and enthusiasm that the horse exhibits while performing all of the required gaits of the class. The execution of all transitions should also be considered.

PRESENCE:

Presence is that something special that makes you look at that horse. Its expression is also considered presence. It should have bright eyes. Its ears should be up and the tail carried quietly. It should demand your attention.

QUALITY:

Quality is your overall impression of the horse. Do you look at the horse and think you are looking at a beautiful Arabian horse? Is the horse in good condition, well groomed, and well turned out?

MANNERS:

Manners refer to how willingly the horse performed its duties. The horse should be responsive to the rider's cues. There should be a willingness to perform all gaits without being distracted by its surroundings. An unruly horse would be considered to have bad manners.

CONFORMATION:

Conformation refers to whether the horse is structurally built to perform in the division where it is competing.

SUITABILITY OF HORSE TO RIDER:

Suitability is the horse's appropriateness for its rider. First and foremost is safety. Is the horse a safe mount for its rider? Is the rider able to maintain control of the horse? These things should be considered when this specification is listed as part of a class description.

CONDUCT

1. Competitors enter the ring in a counterclockwise direction, at a trot.
2. The horse is to give a brilliant performance, with style, presence, finish, balance and cadence; with proper cadence and balance being paramount.

A judge may not request that gaits be performed only on snaffle or curb.

Judges are required to consider the performance at each gait equally in adjudicating the class.

The transition from the trot to canter is not permitted.

Park Horse classes will be judged by these specifications:

OPEN. To be shown at a walk, trot and canter. To be judged on brilliant performance with proper cadence and balance, presence, quality, manners and conformation.

AMATEUR. To be shown at a walk, trot and canter. To be judged on brilliant performance with proper cadence and balance, manners, quality and suitability of horse to rider.

LADIES, GENTLEMEN. To be shown at a walk, trot and canter. To be judged on brilliant performance with proper cadence and balance, manners, quality and suitability of horse to rider.

JUNIOR HORSE. (five years old and under). To be shown at a walk, trot and canter. To be judged on quality, brilliant performance with proper cadence and balance, and manners.

CREDITS OF A PARK HORSE

PERFORMANCE:

A park horse must give a brilliant performance. It should be a naturally upright horse with an uphill appearance. The Park horse should move with extreme power from behind and maintain balance and cadence. A bright and willing expression is important. The Park horse performs with a higher degree of difficulty.

MOVEMENT:

The Park horse should move forward with ease. The front limbs should show extreme motion with high elevation. Both front legs should move evenly with flexion in all joints. The rear end should have enough thrust and balance to support the extreme motion up front. Each horse has its own speed at which it best performs. Extreme speed that results in loss of form or cadence should be penalized.

PRESENCE:

A Park horse should have that LOOK AT ME attitude. A Park horse should be a brilliant athlete performing at the highest level. It should have its ears up, have bright eyes, and a quiet tail. A Park horse demands attention.

FAULTS OF A PARK HORSE

POOR MOVEMENT:

Poor movement includes horses that appear labored. A horse that is over shod and looks heavy footed would be labored. Poor movement is any gait that appears to be artificial.

UNTRUE GAITS:

Untrue gaits include any gait in which the horse is not moving straight and true. Another example of untrue gaits is a horse not trotting even up front. Skipping, racking or pacing are also untrue gaits. Loss of balance and loss of cadence are also undesirable. Overriding can result in untrue gaits. Mystery gaits should be penalized.

BAD ATTITUDE:

Bad attitude includes sour ears, fussy mouth and an active tail. Balking or not responding to the rider's requests are also signs of a bad attitude.

CLASS MANAGEMENT

The Park class by nature is a high energy class. The lack of cadence and balance has become a big concern in the Park horse division. The intensity that is often present in a Park class does not allow these horses to perform at their best. One way to help maintain cadence and balance is how we as judges call the gaits. The walk is a gait that is often overlooked or skipped over. While we are not suggesting calling for a prolonged time at the walk, it is important to allow these horses time to catch their breath and reestablish their balance. Do not take away from the brilliance of the class, but call the class in a manner that allows the horses to perform at their best. No athlete can maintain performance at the highest levels without some let down.

In the Arabian and Half-Arabian/Anglo Arabian Park Horse Classes, when the judge calls for the line up, exhibitors must continue in the same direction the class is working when bringing their entries to the line up. Judges must penalize entries that do not comply. Horses must come to the line up at the gait requested. In the line up, horses must stand quietly and may be asked to back individually or as a group. Horses not to stretch in the line up.

CONCLUSION:

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

Judging is based on certain established criteria and rules. However, in judging performance everything is relative. Each horse must be judged against the performance of the others in the class. Other criteria, such as manners, attitude and quality, must also be considered. All of the faults should be considered according to their severity and the depth of competition. Good judging depends upon correct observation of the finer points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose of the class. The best horse, performing the most correctly as established by the class criteria and specifications, should be the winner.