



How Judging Contests Works

Horse judging contests challenge youth and young adults to learn basic horse judging principles and develop their decision-making, public speaking, and reasoning skills. Contests are composed of two parts: placings and oral reasons. The Arabian Horse Judging Contest is one of the longest standing in the nation, having been held at the U.S. National Championship show since 1970.

Placings

Contestants judge classes of four horses, both in-hand (halter) and performance; at the Arabian Horse Judging Contest at U.S. Nationals, contestants place four halter and six performance classes. Horses are provided entirely on a volunteer basis, and we are extremely grateful to our wonderful supporters who help make the contest possible.

Contestants' placings of the four horses in each class are compared to the ideal placing, decided on by a panel of official judges, and scored out of a maximum of 50 points. Points are deducted based on how differently the contestant placed the class in comparison to the official placing.

Reasons

Throughout the contest, the officials choose four classes for the contestants to give oral reasons on. These reasons are an approximately two minute speech, given without notes, defending the contestant's logic for placing the class the way he or she did. Reasons are given to volunteer judges, who give scores out of a maximum of 50 points based on accuracy, organization, relevancy, terminology, and presentation.

Awards

Three divisions are available to contestants at the Arabian Horse Judging Contest: 4-H/FFA, Junior AHA, and Senior AHA/Collegiate. Winning teams in each division are determined by the high overall scores of the top three (for 4-H/FFA and Jr. AHA) or top four (for Sr. AHA/Collegiate) team members. Overall individual rankings are determined by the contestant's composite scores in both placings and reasons, while top individuals in Halter Placings, Performance Placings, and Reasons are also recognized. Every year, the Arabian Horse Judging Contest awards over \$10,000 in scholarships, saddles, plaques, trophies, ribbons, and prizes; it has the reputation as one of the top national contests in terms of prizes awarded. The overall high individual of the contest (highest score across the three divisions) is also awarded entry to the Arabian Horse Judges School and provided the opportunity to judge a finals class in center ring at the U.S. National Championship.

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