

# EQUESTRIAN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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**All 4-H'ers showing in this class are required to wear an  
ASTM-SEI Equestrian Helmet at all times.**

# **GENERAL RULES**

## **Equestrians with Special Needs**

### **Guidelines, rules, and eligibility for showing.**

#### **About Equestrians with Special Needs**

The Equestrians with Special Needs Open Invitational Showmanship Class follows the American Quarter Horse Association rules for equestrian with disabilities. This class is open to 4-H'ers with physical or mental disabilities and is open to any breed of horse, or pony, including donkeys, mules and minis. Only geldings or mares may be shown - stallions are not allowed.

#### **Competition**

These classes provide an arena for everyone to enjoy the rewards of hard work, determination and perseverance.

**Each exhibitor must have a handler to help with the safety of the youth.**

#### **Rules**

- Exhibitor is not allowed to have been judged in a class at a recognized or non-recognized show that requires a lope or canter in which a participant performed the lope or canter. Academy classes are considered non-recognized shows.
- Participation in these approved events requires documentation from a physician, signed on letterhead paper, attesting on the 4-H'er disability.
- Eligible conditions include: amputation, anthrogyrosis, Asperger's syndrome, autism, Batten's disease, cerebrovascular accident (stroke), cerebella ataxia, cerebral palsy, Coffin Lowry syndrome, cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome, dwarfism, fragile X syndrome, Freidrick's ataxia, Guillan Barre syndrome, hearing impairment, Hunter's syndrome, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, mental retardation, microcephaly, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, post polio syndrome, Prader Willie syndrome, Rhett syndrome, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, Touretts syndrome, traumatic brain injury, trisomy abnormalities and visual impairments.
- Handlers are required for these classes, with one handler per entry in the ring to facilitate the safety of the youth. The handler must be sixteen years of age or older, and be close to the exhibitor at all times, without interfering with the exhibitor's performance. In the Showmanship class, the handler and the youth will exit the arena before the next exhibitor enters the arena. The handler's attire should match the division that the exhibitor is showing, whether English or Western.

- **Tack, Equipment and Attire**

Equipment should conform to the needs of the competitor and be suitable for the horse.

- Special adaptive equipment may be used where appropriate, and will be considered upon request.

**1. SHOWMANSHIP** - Class judged on appointments, fitting and grooming and method of showing (See Standards for Showmanship below). Tack and attire can be either Western or English, but not a mix of the two. Halters (leather, nylon or rope) and lead shank must be used if the exhibitor is wearing Western attire, and an English bridle can be used if the exhibitor is wearing English attire. The handler's attire should be either Western or English, to correspond to the exhibitor's attire.

## **STANDARDS FOR SHOWMANSHIP**

The real purpose of showmanship is to learn the best way to fit and train a horse or pony so that the best attributes of the horse/pony can be seen by the judge or potential buyer. Showmen are reminded that they are being judged on the fitting, training and showing of their horse/pony. The horse/pony's conformation is not to be considered in the judging of this class. Showmen must wear the appropriate attire for the division in which they are participating.

The procedure for judging large classes and the pattern to be used will be left to the discretion of the judge.

### **SCORING FOR SHOWMANSHIP CLASS**

#### **I. Appointments - 25%**

- **Personal Appearance:** Youth should be neat, clean, well groomed, attentive, courteous and wearing appropriate attire for the type of horse being shown.
- **Equipment:** Clean and properly adjusted equipment should be used. Halters (leather, nylon or rope) and lead shank must be used if the exhibitor is wearing Western attire, and an English bridle can be used if the exhibitor is wearing English attire.

#### **II. Horse and Pony (fitting and grooming) - 25%**

- The horse or pony should be clean and well groomed. Fitting for show is a year-round job. Daily grooming and good nutrition are very important to the hair coat and fitness of the horse/pony. Just before entering the ring, the showman should rub the horse/pony down with a grooming cloth to remove any dust which may have accumulated since brushing. Avoid using an oily grooming cloth since oil will attract dust. Wipe the ears,

around the eyes, nostrils, lip, sheath and anus with a damp cloth or sponge; or with a cloth that has a small amount of baby oil or Vaseline on it to add luster to these areas.

- Horses and ponies should be clipped approximately one week before showing to allow for some regrowth to cover up any minor mistakes. The long hairs inside the ears, around the muzzle, under the chin and jaw, on the bridle path, fetlocks and lower legs should be clipped.
- Horse or pony may be shown with either a full or clipped mane. Full manes should be thinned by pulling out the excess hair. Tails should hang well down below the hocks. The feet should be neatly trimmed or properly shod. The use of hoof polish or dressing is optional.

### III. Method of showing - 50%

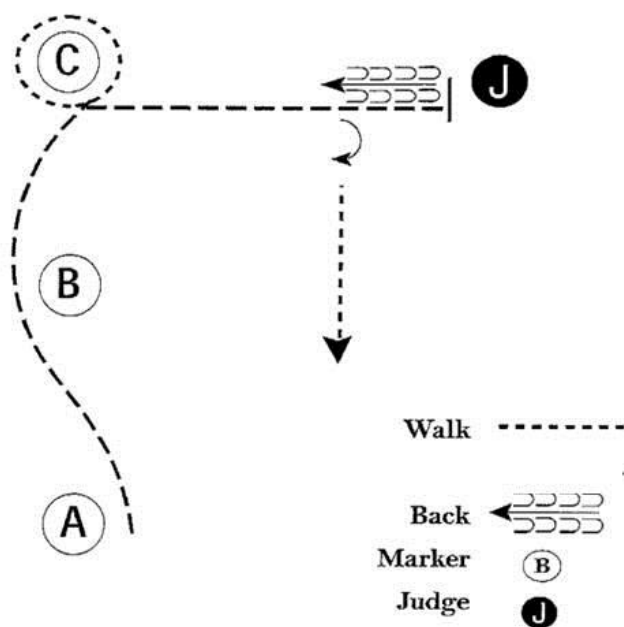
- **Leading:** Youth must be able follow the pattern, which may ask for a walk, turn, stop and back as directed by the pattern or ring officials. Always lead from the left side at a walk following the judge's direction, never in front of the horse/pony. The horse/pony's head should be about even or slightly in front of your shoulder. The horse/pony should travel willingly with his body in a straight line in the same direction being traveled. Youth must have the right hand on the lead when leading their horse/pony. The left hand will contain the remainder of the reins or lead in a loosely coiled loop or in a figure eight. The youth should walk and give the appearance that you and your horse or pony are a team.
  - The horse/pony should be traveling alertly and willingly with his head up (not too high).
  - The horse/pony should always be reversed by turning to the right. Turn in as small an area as possible and attempt to keep his hind legs in one place while turning (this allows you to keep the horse/pony lined up with the judge). Any turn requiring more than 90 degrees should, also, be made to the right.
  - Always move your horse/pony directly toward or away from the judge unless specific instructions are otherwise given by the judge.
- **Working the Judge:** When setting up your horse/pony, stand out diagonally from the horse/pony's shoulder but never directly in front of the horse/pony. Always be in a position where you can observe your horse/pony and the judge at the same time. As the judge moves around the horse, the youth must respond accordingly. When the judge is in front of the horse/pony the youth should be on the opposite side away from the judge, so as not to block the judge's view. When the judge moves down one side of the horse/pony and passes the middle of the withers the youth should cross over in front of the horse/pony so that he/she is now on the same side as the judge. This allows you to see your horse/pony and continue to have eye contact with the judge. As the judge passes behind the horse/pony and crosses over to the other side, the youth should cross in front of the horse/pony to remain on the same side with the judge. Once again when the judge approaches you and crosses the middle of the withers the youth should cross over to be on the opposite side from the judge, so as not to obstruct his/her vision of the horse/pony.

This procedure allows the judge an unobstructed view of the horse/pony and allows the youth to show their horses/ponies to the best of their ability. It also will allow youth to keep an eye on their horse/pony and the judge without having to look through, under or over their horse/pony.

VI. Recognize and correct any faults in your horse/pony. All communication between the youth and the horse/pony shall be through the lead shank or reins which may be accompanied by subtle voice commands. Youth cannot directly touch any part of their horse/pony unless the judge touches (i.e. disturbs the mane or moves the halter or bridle) the horse in front of the shoulder. At such time, the youth should correct the disarray created by the judge.

VII. Remember - Be courteous, respond promptly to directions and display good horsemanship at all times.

## Equestrian with Special Needs Showmanship Pattern



Be ready at A.

1. When acknowledged, walk from A, around B to C.
2. Walk a tight circle around C.
3. Walk to judge.
4. Stop and set up for inspection.
5. When dismissed, back 4 steps.
6. Perform a 90 degree turn to the right and walk away from judge.

Follow the directions of ring steward.

**2. WALK EQUITATION** - Each entry must have a handler to help with the safety of the rider. Judging criteria consists of rider's balance, rider's seat, use of aids, ability to follow directions, ring etiquette, safety and sportsmanlike conduct. Handlers are required, with one handler per entry in the ring to facilitate the safety of the rider. The handler must be sixteen years of age or older, and should be dressed according to the exhibitor's attire, whether English or Western. A halter must be on the horse either over or under the bridle for use by the handler. The handler must have a suitable lead line in hand. The lead line may not be fastened to the bit. Handlers will lead the horses on the rail, as exhibitors will be judged. Tack and attire can be either Western or English, but not a mix of the two. The handler's attire should be either Western or English, to correspond to the exhibitor's attire.

### **Tack, Equipment and Attire**

Equipment should conform to the needs of the competitor and be suitable for the horse.

- Special adaptive equipment may be used where appropriate. Acceptable adaptive equipment includes: audio communications, bareback pads, boot adaptations, dowel reins, hand holds (flexible and/or rigid), laces to tie stirrups or leathers to girth or cinch (not to the exhibitor), ladder reins, loop reins, rein handles, rein handle tethers, rubber bands, saddle blocks, wedges, cushions, safety stirrups, seat savers, surcingles. Other equipment will be considered upon request.
- Riders must wear a properly fitted and fastened ASTM® approved protective helmet with harness. No equipment is allowed that would in any way affix the rider to the horse or saddle with the exception of light rubber bands. Safety stirrups are required if rider is unable to wear boots with a heel.
- Exhibitor may choose to show in either Western or English tack and attire. Handler's attire should also be either Western or English, to correspond to the exhibitor's attire.