

**Colorado Obstacle Challenge Series Judging Matrix**

1. All judges will use the following COCS approved scoring matrix.
2. Horsemanship is of the highest importance at ANY of our Events!
3. There is a 30 second time limit per obstacle. **If a horse shows hesitation or refusal, the 30 second time will begin**. If the obstacle has not been completed within that 30 second time frame, they will be told to move on, If a rider is completing an obstacle they will not be called off.
4. All judges will dictate a comment regarding completion of each obstacle. If a rider is marked down on any maneuver, there ***shall*** be a comment explaining the score.
5. No judge will coach any rider on the field while judging.
6. A judge may speak to participants off the field so long as the course or navigation of any obstacle is NOT discussed. The only time a judge may speak to any participants regarding the course will be during the walk through prior to the run, at the end of the Event or when discussing a competitors scoresheet.
7. In the result of a tie between riders, the total on course time will go into effect as a tie breaker. In case of an obstacle AND time combined, there will be a 2 obstacle ‘Ride Off”
8. COCS makes safety a first priority when designing obstacles.
9. If an obstacle is deemed unsafe for riders by COCS personnel,the Event will be stopped and the issue will be remedied. This will be accomplished by either A.) Obstacle made safe. If this can not happen, then, B.) A suitable replacement obstacle will be substituted for the original. This is ***non negotiable*** as the safety of our riders and their horse partners are of utmost importance.
10. Show host will be notified if anyone notices what is perceived as a horse exhibiting lameness. The show host will immediately notify the judges and the judges at that time will make a determination on whether that horse will be allowed to compete that race day.
11. Judges will focus on overall horsemanship and partnership between each horse/rider team.
12. Rising Stars judging slightly different parameters.
13. Rising Stars will be allowed assistants on the course during their ride. Appropriate tack adjustments allowed.

**Possible score as follows**

**10**  is the highest, given for **perfect** execution

**10 RS-**perfect execution, no assistance.

**8**  if slightly less than perfect

**8 RS-** went through obstacle as expected (with expected support)

**6** if completed with minor issues

**6 RS-** went through obstacle with 1 fault or medium support ( a little more help for

rider than expected.

**4** if completed with major issues

**4RS-** went through the obstacle with faults or full support (if the rider is able to

ride individually.)

**2** if attempted but not completed

**2RS-** attempted \ timed out

1. if skipped, deliberate or by omission

**0RS-** if skipped, deliberate or by omission, not attempted

**Scores defined**

**10**  **A score of 10** is given if the obstacle was completed with absolutely no issue.

* A perfect execution of obstacle would include a gait transition if needed.
* Loose rein, light hands, no gaping mouth on horse, no excessive tail swishing or pinned ears when cued.
* Relaxed posture of both horse and rider
* Approach and obstacle accomplished on correct lead.
* No excessive kicking, spurring, use of reins, quirt, etc.
* The approach, execution of the obstacle, and the departure should be fluid, smooth.
* No hesitation when approaching, performing the obstacle, or on departure.
* The rider should pick up the same gait they originally transitioned from prior to reaching the obstacle. ie if they were at a lope, transitioned to a trot, they should pick up the lope once again upon departure of the obstacle.
* Horse is relaxed, confident, willing.

**8 A score of 8** is given if the execution was slightly less than perfect as spelled out under 10 score

parameters, but had no minor issues as spelled out in the 6 score. This ***must*** be

articulated on the score sheet.

**6**  **A score of 6** is given if the execution has minor issues

* Gait transition too close to the obstacle will be deemed a hesitation.
* Minor rearrangement of obstacle, ie ground poles. Slightly moved, ticked multiple times, etc.
* Hesitation on part of the horse, DO NOT confuse this with the horse picking it’s way through an obstacle.
* Rider not picking up the prior gait upon departure of obstacle when appropriate to do so.

**4 A score of 4** is given if execution has major issues

* Refusal on the part of the horse, seemingly unwilling to move forward as asked by the rider.
* Excessive spurring, kicking, use of reins on horse.
* Tight reins, gaping mouth, use of reins for balance, heavy handed, excessive tail swishing or pinning of ears when cued.
* Rider not relaxed, horse posture tense, high head, flight posture
* Incorrect lead or cross firing in any part of the obstacle, approach, execution, or departure.
* Major rearrangement of obstacles, ie ground poles clearly moved out of location, horse stepping out of ground pole pattern, etc.

**2 A score of 2** will be given to any horse rider team attempting an obstacle, using the full

30 seconds of allotted time in assisting the horse to accomplish the obstacle. Riders are

encouraged to dismount and help the horse work through the obstacle.. If the 30

second time is given without completion of the obstacle,OR the rider dismounted to work through the obstacle it will result in a score of 2 for that particular obstacle. **A horseman dismounting to assist the horse through the obstacle will be deemed as good partnership and perceived as the rider assisting the horse and this will be acknowledged in the *overall horsemanship*  *score.***

1. **A score of 0** will ONLY be given for any obstacle passed, either by omission on the part of the rider, or a deliberate bypass.

**Grounds for Disqualification:**

* Not wearing proper attire as listed in the Rules
* Inappropriately crossing timer barrier
* Running course out of order, off course.
* Disqualification shall result in forfeiture of registration fees.
* Use of inappropriate tack, as listed under Tack on Page 6 of the Rules.

**Definition: Gait Transition or Rate of Gait**

A successful gait transition would be completed within 5 to 8 paces prior

to reaching the obstacle, It will be a deliberate act on the part of the

rider, showing rating from one gait to one the rider deems safe for his horse

to complete the obstacle.

**Definition of Hesitation or Refusal**:

An act of balking repeatedly or shying away from an obstacle.

**Definition of Gaping Mouth**:

A horse holding their mouth open from incorrect use or heavy pressure

on the reins by the rider. (not considered gaping mouth if rider is riding

with a loose rein.)

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**Overall Horsemanship**

There will be an overall horsemanship score given to each horse and rider team.

***Recognize if tail swishing or gaping mouth is a horse habit or rider error***

***ie horse tail swishes even though no over cue took place, Horse has a gaping mouth even***

***though rider rides with loose rein.***

***Following are*** ***general guidelines on obtaining the overall horsemanship score.***

**The scores will be on a scale as follow:**

**Overall Horsemanship scores of 1 – 10 may be awarded. Below is a general idea of where**

**certain behaviors should fall. Scores will fall within the parameters and be awarded**

**accordingly.**

**10 A score of 10** is given to the teams showing clear partnership,

The horse is confident, willing. No tail swishing or ear pinning when given cues,

Horse responds with minimal amount of cueing Rider relaxed, calm, confident

Respect is given on both sides, Rider does what is needed to ensure the wellbeing

of their horse, dismounting, slowing down, letting their horse work through it.

**5 A score of 5** is given is given to horse rider teams whose partnership does not have

quite the finesse of a 10 score. The partnership is there. More cues needed to gain the

required response or action. Some hesitation during obstacles, inability to obtain

correct leads. Horse hesitates at some obstacles., but they quickly work through it.

Horse not as relaxed, rider not as confident. Rider using tighter rein. What could make it

better tips should be given.

**1 A score of 1** is given if horse and rider do not present unity as a team Horse appears

resentful when asked to complete a task as cued by the rider. Heavy tail swishing.

pinning of ears, when cued. Rider not as relaxed, not confident in either their or the

horses ability. Incorrect leads, hesitation at obstacles. Heavy handed on the reins.

Excessive use of leg cues and rein cues. Gaping mouth as a result of heavy hands.

Rider not transitioning speed when warranted to safely execute an obstacle. Rider

forcing a horse through the course, vs partnering with their horse. What could make

it better tips should be given.

**Jackpot Event**

1. Jackpot IS a speed event.
2. *Judging will be in terms of time additions,(penalties), rather than points awarded.*
3. There are no class divisions in the Jackpot event, everyone runs the same course.
4. Payout is 100% of fees collected for the jackpot race,, paid to 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, 50%, 30%, 20% respectively.
5. Only one penalty will be issued per obstacle if a penalty is deemed necessary, ***Penalties will not be stacked***. Normal judging, as in Divisions will not apply, Ticked poles, minor infractions are irrelevant.

* **Rushing an obstacle**  Any rider rushing through an obstacle with NO regard for the safety of the horse or rider goes against *everything* Colorado Obstacle Challenge Series stands for. While yes, this is a speed event, it stands that strong partnership and taking care of your horse is still paramount. While a horse may be able to run through an obstacle without slowing down, it doesn’t mean they should. For ANY obstacle that is executed without the horse’s best interest in mind such as slowing to a lope from a run, where really, a trot would have been much safer will result in a ***120 second***  time penalty. If a horse is slipping, sliding, losing footing, sliding off bridges, just to name a few examples as a result of too fast for obstacle. This is not to be confused with an occasional natural trip, slip, etc.We want this to be the speed event of the day, but not at the horse’s expense.
* **Pass an obstacle entirely**, will result in a ***30 second*** time penalty **addition** to the overall time per obstacle.
* **Rider / Horse Error** will result in a ***15 second*** time penalty **addition** to the overall time per obstacle, Can include, but not limited to the following: if horse and rider do not present unity as a team Horse appears resentful when asked to complete a task as cued by the rider. Heavy tail swishing, pinning of ears, when cued. Rider not as relaxed, not confident in either their or the horses ability. Incorrect leads, hesitation at obstacles. Heavy handed on the reins Excessive use of leg cues and rein cues. Gaping mouth as a result of heavy hands Rider not transitioning speed when warranted to safely execute an obstacle forcing a horse through the course, vs partnering with their horse
* **Incomplete obstacle after legitimate attempt** will result in a ***5 second*** time penalty **addition** to the overall time per obstacle. (legitimate attempt will be between 20 and 30 seconds)