

2025 EQUIFEST OPEN HORSE JUDGING CONTEST RULES

Sponsored by the Kansas Quarter Horse Association and Kansas Quarter Horse Youth Association in partnership with the Kansas Horse Council and K-State Research and Extension

MISSION

To provide a quality horse judging contest opportunity to introduce the next generation of horse show exhibitors and judges to current industry standards through the process of class evaluation and the oral reasons.

CONTESTANT ELIGIBILITY

- A. There will be two age divisions.
 - a. Intermediate contestants must be at least 7 years of age as of January 1, 2025, and not have reached 14 as of January 1, 2025.
 - b. Senior contestants must be 14 years of age but have not reached 19 years of age as of January 1, 2025.
- B. There will be two competition divisions
 - a. Advanced – Intermediate & Senior Divisions
 - i. Contestants will place all classes.
 - ii. Intermediate contestants will present 2 sets of reasons, Senior contestants will present 4 sets of reasons.
 - iii. Advanced division contestants may enter as an individual or as a member of a team.
 - b. Limited – All Ages
 - i. The Limited division allows youth with no to very limited judging experience or coaching to have an introduction to competitive horse judging.
 - ii. Contestants who have competed at a district, state, or national level 4-H, FFA, breed association or other similar competition where reasons were given and scored are not eligible for the Limited division.
 - iii. Contestants will judge as individuals only and are not eligible to be a team member.
- C. Two sets of five questions each will be given from the classes presented. An additional forty questions will come from pages 16 – 25 plus class descriptions and requirements including scoring from each class section in the AQHA judging manual: <https://www.aqha.com/news-and-publications/e-books/free-ebooks/competitive-horse-judging-manual1>
- D. Intermediate and Senior contestants may enter both the Open and 4-H divisions. Limited contestants may not enter the 4-H portion of the contest.
- E. Contestants do not have to be part of an FFA or 4-H program to compete in the Open division.
- F. If entering the 4-H division the contestant must meet the contestant eligibility criteria as outlined by Kansas 4-H.
- G. Withdrawal from the contest after the registration deadline will result in forfeiture of the registration fee.

ADVANCED DIVISION TEAM REQUIREMENTS

- A. Advanced division teams are to be made up of three or four members.
 - a. When four members are entered on a team, the three team members with the three highest overall scores will make up the team's score. When three team members are entered on a team, all three members' scores will be tabulated to make up the team score.
 - b. All individuals on the team must be in the same age division.
 - c. A team may not have Limited division contestants.
- B. Team member changes can be made the morning of the contest at check-in.

METHOD OF CONDUCT

- A. All contestants will check in the morning of the contest and receive placing cards. All contestants will remain with the assigned group throughout the contest. Reasons and official placings will be given at a location to be announced.
- B. Dress code is casual and industry appropriate (the arena is not heated or cooled).
- C. No talking between contestants or contestants and coaches is allowed during the contest. Questions from contestants are to be directed to the contest officials.
- D. Contestants may not use phones, smart watches, or other devices during the contest. Anyone caught with cell phone or electronic device will be disqualified.
- E. Contestants are responsible for their own writing instruments and notepads for the purpose of taking notes. A number 2 pencil is required to mark the placings card.
- F. Contestants may use clipboards and pre-printed scoresheets; however, both must be clean and free of any personal comments or marks.
- G. If a class is a pattern class, the pattern will be given to each contestant at check-in.
- H. Contestants are responsible for their belongings throughout the contest and are encouraged to always keep their belongings with them, except when specifically instructed otherwise by a contest official. Purses, bags, etc. should be kept by coaches/parents.

CONTEST FORMAT

- A. Contestants will evaluate 6 – 8 classes of four horses in each class. Classes will be a minimum of 2 halter and 4 performance classes.
 - a. The animals and showmen will be designated by numbers 1-2-3-4.
 - b. Halter classes may be represented by the following breeds and types including but not limited to: Quarter Horse, Conformation Hunter, Appaloosa, Arabian, Paint, Morgan, Miniature, and Draft breeds.
 - c. Performance classes may include western pleasure, western horsemanship, reining, hunter under saddle, hunt seat equitation, hunter hack, trail, ranch rail, ranch riding and may include a single breed and type or may include mixed breeds and types (see above listing).
 - d. Halter horses will be judged as sound. Performance as seen (unsoundness to be penalized accordingly).
 - e. Horses will not be handled by the contestants, but time will be provided in halter classes for close inspection and to observe the horses at a walk and trot.
 - f. The AQHA Handbook of Rules and Regulations will be used as the official class rules during the contest. AQHA Novice Amateur rules will be used in all performance classes. Questions regarding the rules must be directed to the contest moderator.
 - g. All tack and attire will be considered legal provided it is used properly.
- B. Advanced Senior division contestants will give 4 sets of oral reasons and Intermediate division contestants will give 2 sets of oral reasons to designated judges.
 - a. All classes will be considered potential reasons classes with at least one set of oral reasons coming from the halter classes. Contestants are advised to take notes on all classes.
 - b. Ten to fifteen minutes will be given to contestants for each class to make their observations, take notes, and fill out their placing cards. Reasons classes will be announced after all classes have concluded.
 - c. Two minutes will be allowed for each contestant to give oral reasons to the judge. Contestants going over two minutes or using notes will be severely penalized by an automatic 25-point deduction.
 - d. Notes may not be used when giving reasons.

- e. When contestants are finished giving reasons, the reasons judge will place the reason score on the reasons score card for tabulation. The reasons judge will hold all cards and turn the cards in as a set to the official scorer.
- C. In place of oral reasons, Limited division contestants will be given a test to include two sets of five questions from two classes judged (1 halter, 1 performance) plus questions from the AQHA judging manual linked above. All classes are possible question classes. Limited contestants will gather as a group and take the test using oral questions and written slides using the placings card to mark their answers.

OFFICIAL CLASS PLACINGS AND CUTS

- A. A qualified judge will place classes while contestants are working in the arena.
- B. The judges shall determine placings and cuts to be made following the National Horse Judging Team Coaches Association Handbook - <https://www.nhjtca.org/handbook/>
- C. Prior to awards the judge will talk each class to contestants.

DETERMINATION OF RATINGS – ADVANCED DIVISION

- A. Fifty points shall constitute a perfect mark on placings and fifty points shall constitute a perfect mark on reasons. The eight scores will be combined to determine the Overall awards.
- B. Priority order for breaking ties:
 - a. If tied for an award in *Placings*, the contestant/team having the highest reason score will be listed first.
 - b. If tied for an award in *Reasons*, the contestant/team with the highest placing score on the reason classes will be listed first.
 - c. If tied for an *Overall award*, the contestant/team having the highest overall reason score shall be listed first.
 - d. If still tied, the contestant/team with the highest overall placing score will be listed first.
 - e. If still tied, the contestant/team with the highest single class reasons score will be listed first.

DETERMINATION OF RATINGS – LIMITED DIVISION

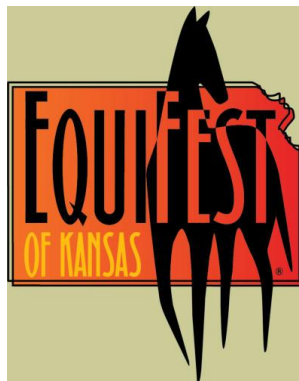
- A. Fifty points shall constitute a perfect mark on placings and fifty points shall constitute a perfect mark on written test. The seven scores will be combined to determine the Overall awards.
- B. Priority order for breaking ties:
 - a. If tied for an award in *Placings*, the contestant having the highest test score will be listed first.
 - b. If tied for an award in *Test*, the contestant with the highest placing score on the reason classes will be listed first.
 - c. If tied for an *Overall award*, the contestant having the highest overall placing score shall be listed first.

AWARDS

- A. All contestants entered are eligible for individual and team awards if they are entered in the Advanced team division. Additional awards may be given at the committee's discretion.
- B. Division awards:
 - a. Advanced Intermediate division
 - i. Class Placings - top 5 Individuals, top team
 - ii. Reasons – top 5 individuals, top team
 - b. Advanced Senior division
 - i. Class Placings - top 5 Individuals, top team

- ii. Reasons – top 5 individuals, top team
 - c. Limited division
 - i. Class Placings – top 5 individuals
 - ii. Test – top 5 individuals
- C. Overall awards
 - a. Advanced division (class placings and reasons combined)
 - i. Top 10 Intermediate Individuals
 - ii. Top 10 Senior individuals
 - iii. Top 3 Intermediate teams
 - iv. Top 3 Senior teams
 - b. Limited division (class placings and test combined)
 - i. Top 10 individuals

The judging contest committee will have the final say in any situation not covered within the rules.



<https://equifestofks.com/>



<http://www.kqha.com>



<https://www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/contests/horse-judging/index.html>

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