



SECTION L

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L. SADDLE SEAT EQUITATION

1. Introduction

The purpose of Saddle Seat Equitation is to prove the aptitude of a rider to get the best possible performance from a horse through perfect form and control. Emphasis is on the over-all picture and 'ring generalship' or the ability of a rider to be one with the horse while taking charge of their complete performance.

The following pages have been compiled to convey the rules of Saddle Seat Equitation in South Africa. Although the basic position of the seat and movement of the horse is very briefly described this is not meant to be a teaching manual for equitation instruction or notes on judging.

The indisputable principles of horsemanship, rules pertaining to dress of riders, tack, turn-out of horse and, of course, decades of tradition, dictate the look that is accepted for Saddle Seat Equitation today. We trust that these few pages will facilitate your interest in Equitation.

2. Dress Requirements and Rules

Informal Attire

Riders of both Three-Gaited and Five-Gaited equitation horses wear informal riding wear both day and night.

Suit – A Kentucky riding suit of matching jacket and flared Jodhpur pants with an optional waistcoat. The waistcoat may be either matching or of a tasteful contrast. The suit must be of a conservative colour with any pattern being of a small design giving the appearance of a solid colour, (herringbone, pin stripe, conservative plaid). Note that a distinct, large tartan plaid or pattern will not be accepted in equitation classes. A shirt with a collar and tie are used.

Hat – A matching/contrasting and tasteful hat is worn, either a derby (bowler), snap-brim or homburg variety.

Gloves – men and women, boys and girls must wear gloves.

Boots – Solid coloured leather or patent leather Jodhpur boots of a low-heeled variety are worn.

Spurs – **Spurs are optional and may only be worn by children 11 years old or older. Spurs are prohibited in the 10 year, 9 year and 8 year old age groups. Spurs worn in the Equitation division must be of the un-rowelled, BLUNT type.**

Accessories – Any accessories such as flowers, small ribbons and pocket handkerchiefs must be matching, small and conservative. Small and conservative earrings, tie bars, tie pins and number tacks may be used.

Hair – All hair styles, both men and women, boys and girls, should be controlled and neat.

All competitors will conform to the accepted method of dressing for equitation or be eliminated. The emphasis is on neatness of appearance and taste in the traditional style accepted by several generations of Saddle Seat Equitation enthusiasts.

Formal Attire

Formal attire may be worn strictly after 6:00 PM (18h00) by competitors in the Three-Gaited equitation division only. Formal attire is not mandatory.

Suits – Tuxedo suits are worn with flared, Kentucky Jodhpur pants. The suits may be black, midnight blue, dark grey or dark brown with satin lapels and a satin stripe on the outsides of the Jodhpur pants. The linings may be the same colour as the suit or white.

Shirt- A white shirt with a wing collar is worn.

Cummerbund – The same colour as the suit or white is worn. A white formal waistcoat may be worn instead of a cummerbund.

Tie – A bow tie the same colour as the suit or white may be used.

Flower – A very small white boutonniere is optional.

Hat – Girls wear a silk top hat. Boys wear a homburg. Hats are the same colour as the suit.

Gloves – May be white, black or same colour as suit and **gloves must be worn.**

Boots – Black, navy or dark brown patent leather or ordinary leather Jodhpur boots may be worn.

Whips – Black or white whips are optional.

Spurs – **Spurs are optional and may only be worn by children 11 years old or older. Spurs are prohibited in the 10 year, 9 year and 8 year old age groups. Spurs worn in the Equitation division must be of the un-rowelled, BLUNT type.**

3. Turn-Out Requirements and Rules

Cleanliness and neatness are the foremost requirements regarding the turn-out of a horse.

Three Gaited Equitation Horses - Three-Gaited Equitation horses are traditionally shown with a trimmed (roached) mane and forelock and trimmed top tail. A full mane may be worn but must be ribboned.

Five-Gaited Equitation Horses - Five-Gaited Equitation horses are shown with a full mane and tail and must be ribboned.

Tails – Equitation horses are traditionally shown with set tails however, this is optional. Tail braces and switches may be used. Tails should be clean, long, healthy, picked and tied. Crooked tails do not make a good impression and every effort should be made to correct them.

Humane Tails – Humane tails may be used with the emphasis on neatness and taste. The loss of a humane tail, top tail or brace that becomes unsightly will be a disqualification. A belly string that snaps may be re-tied.

Leg Bandages – Leg bandages are only used in muddy conditions with permission of the show committee.

4. Tack Requirements and Rules

Bridles – Full double bridles with matching coloured brow bands and nose-bands are required. Plain leather nosebands may be used. A full bridle consists of a curb bit and a small snaffle known as a bridoon. The combination bit with a broken or solid mouthpiece and two reins attached to a single shank on each side is also acceptable.

Bridles - Walk and Trot - Exhibitors must use a snaffle bridle with a martingale or snaffle bridle with a German Martingale in the Walk and Trot Equitation, riders 8 years old and under class.

Saddles – An English type saddle with a cutback head is required. Some of these may have a deep or very flat seat which remains a matter of choice. Forward seat, Western side saddles or Australian Stock saddles are prohibited.

Girths – A white canvas or leather girth is used.

Quarterboots – May be worn by five-gaited equitation horses and may be re-buckled if they should work loose during a class. This may only be done with the permission of the Ringmaster. A time-out will only be permitted twice for

rebuckling, after which the class will not be called to relax and the exhibitor will use his/her own time.

Adjustments – Tack adjustments **are not allowed** during a class.

Breakages – Five minutes per entry is allowed to repair any breakage of equipment. The rider must get the permission of the Ringmaster to repair any breakage.

5. Age Divisions and Class Divisions for Saddle Seat Equitation

Age – Age is determined by a rider's actual age on the 1st day of January each year. If a rider has a birthday on the 2nd day of January he/she may still ride according to the age he/she was the previous day.

Gender – Equitation classes are no longer divided according to gender.

Champion or Champions – Three-Gaited and Five-Gaited – These divisions are open to anyone 18 years and under who is proficient enough to compete on the rail and do complex individual tests. Entries must be qualified at a Regional Show by being placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in an equitation class.

Classes at the National Championship Show:

Three-Gaited Equitation:

- **Three-Gaited Equitation, Ladies and Gentlemen, 19 years and over.**
- **Three-Gaited Equitation, Pleasure Horses, Girls and Boys, 18 years and under.**
- **Three-Gaited Equitation, Girls and Boys, 18 years and under.**
- **Three-Gaited Equitation, Girls and Boys, 16 years and under.**
- **Three-Gaited Equitation, Girls and Boys, 14 years and under.**
- **Three-Gaited Equitation, Girls and Boys, 12 years and under.**

Walk and Trot Equitation:

- **Walk/Trot Equitation Girls and Boys, 10 years old.**
- **Walk/Trot Equitation, Girls and Boys, 9 years old.**
- **Walk/Trot Equitation Girls and Boys, 8 years and under.**

Five-Gaited Equitation:

- **Five-Gaited Equitation, Ladies and Gentlemen, 19 years and over.**
- **Five-Gaited Equitation. Pleasure Horses, Girls and Boys, 18 years and under.**

- **Five-Gaited Equitation, Girls and Boys, 18 years and under.**
- **Five-Gaited Equitation, Girls and Boys, 14 years and under.**

Pleasure Horse Equitation:

- **Champion of Champions, Three-Gaited, Girls and Boys, 18 years and under.**
- **Three-Gaited Pleasure Horse Equitation, Boys and Girls, 18 years and under.**
- **Walk/Trot Pleasure Horse, Girls and Boys, 10 years and under.**
- **Champion of Champions, Five-Gaited, Girls and Boys, 18 years and under.**

6. Pleasure Horse Equitation Rules

All riders in this division must conform to both equitation rules and pleasure horse rules.

Stallions – While stallions are permitted in the Pleasure division, children are not permitted to show stallions and ladies are not permitted to show stallions in the Pleasure Equitation divisions.

Shoes – The maximum weight of a shoe is 567.5 grams. Shoeing of hind hooves will be optional, BOTH hind hooves must be shod or BOTH must be unshod. Loss of a hind shoe will be subject to the same rules as the loss of any shoe during a class.

Hooves – The length of hoof with or without pads is 12.5 cm, shoe excluded.

Pads – Pads are allowed.

Ribbons – **Pleasure Horses must have ribbons in their manes although the ribbons on the forelock or attached to the bridle are optional.**

Tail – Set or tied tails are not permitted in this division. However, a horse with a previously cut or set tail may participate. Pleasure horses are not allowed to wear tail sets on the show grounds.

Switches – Switches are permitted.

7. Class Routine

Entrance – All divisions enter the arena at a trot moving in a counter clockwise direction or the right hand direction through the gate.

Order of Gaits, Three-Gaited Equitation and Pleasure Equitation – See section G6, page 7 – Three-Gaited Division.

Order of Gaits, Walk and Trot Equitation and Pleasure Equitation Division, Under 8 and Under 10 years – See section G5, page 8 – Three-Gaited Division.

Order of Gaits, Five-Gaited Equitation Horses and Pleasure Equitation – See section F6, page 5 – Five-Gaited Division.

Line-Up – Riders must line-up as directed by the Judge through the announcer and/or Ringmaster. Enough space will be left for the Judges and Stewards to move freely between the horses.

Handlers – Handlers must attend the under 8 and under 10 riders.

Individual Tests – Individual Tests used in the Equitation Division must be taken from those published in this book or alternately from individual tests approved by ESSASA.

Scoring – Scoring is done according to the method developed by ESSASA. Please note this method on the diagrams of the individual workouts. Placings are made for the railwork and a score out of 100 is awarded to each rider placed.

Work-Out – While individual testing is the norm in Equitation Classes the Judge may ask for a work-out between two or three riders. This may be done on any or all of the gaits, one or both ways of the ring and need not necessarily include the first place rider.

Retire – Riders will retire to the side of the arena when asked to do so. There they will wait for the tabulation to be completed and prepare to receive their awards or be excused from the arena. If a rider wishes to retire from the class at any time before the end the permission of the Ringmaster must be asked.

Awards – Receiving awards should be done by the rider approaching the Sponsor safely in the direction designated by the Ringmaster or Steward. The rider should come to a full stop, preferable next to the rail (this helps the horse to stand when being approached by the Sponsors). The riders' full attention should be given to this exercise in the interest of the safety and particularly good manners towards the Sponsors. Horses and riders in all age divisions should be schooled to stop and stand for whatever length of time it may take to accept a prize. Handlers must assist the under 8 and under 10 riders to collect their prizes.

Victory Round – Winners will wait in the arena leaving enough space so that they may go out in the correct order. It is not good form for a lower placed horse to challenge a winner. If a problem occurs with a horse exiting the arena the others are to pass by politely.

8. Miscellaneous Rules and Relevant Information

Refer to General Rules and Showing Rules in section C.

Coaching – Coaching from the outside of the arena is strictly forbidden in the Champion of Champions Classes and in Provincial, National and International Events. It is tolerated during ordinary equitation classes but often brings more attention to the faults of the riders.

Diagonals - Diagonal is the word used to refer to a rider posting with either the horse's right or left leg at the trot to maintain correct balance. A rider is said to be riding the right diagonal when they are posting in unison with the right front leg or the left diagonal when they are posting with the horse's left front leg. Riding the correct diagonal, unless otherwise requested by a Judge, is a basic requirement in the Equitation division but not in the open divisions. The correct diagonal, when proceeding in a counter clockwise direction in the arena would be the right diagonal; when proceeding in a clockwise direction it would be the left diagonal.

Falls – Falls of a rider or horse do not necessarily disqualify the equitation rider from the class. The Judge/s and Ringmaster will use their discretion concerning the disqualification of a rider.

Falls, Extenuating Circumstances – Falls caused by slippery conditions, collision caused by another exhibitor, savaging or kicking by another horse, or outside interference will not result in disqualification.

Falls, Resulting in Disqualification – Falls caused by poor riding, a bad mannered horse, poor training or faulty performance of a horse will result in disqualification.

Gaits, Trueness of – All gaits should be pure and true. This is a direct reflection on the ability of a rider.

Position on Rail – Riders will position themselves safely and effectively. Methods used are circles, speed of gait, cutting across the arena, cutting corners etc. this should all be done judiciously as the abuse of these methods may be considered dangerous behaviour and result in the exhibitor being disqualified.

Shoes – Any horse casting a shoe will be excused from the class. Horses may only be re-shod when competing in a Provincial, National or International Team event. The time allowed for re-shoeing is at the discretion of the Ringmaster.

9. Basic Position

The Saddle Horse achieves its look and performance by driving hard from the hindquarter. To attain lofty front motion the weight of the rider is distributed to the rear by means of a flat, English type, cut-back saddle designed for this purpose. The basic position or seat in the saddle depends on each individual rider and the particular saddle used. Some of these saddles have a flatter or deeper seat and are a matter of choice. The cut-back saddle is placed behind, rather than on the wither of a horse.

With the correct English type, cut-back saddle that is the appropriate size for the rider and acceptable seat should be found in the following manner. To assume the correct position and find the centre of gravity the rider should sit comfortably, with buttocks well back into the depth of the saddle and without stirrups. While bending the knee slightly, the stirrup leathers are placed under the ball of the foot and stirrup leathers adjusted to this length. Even pressure of the ball of the foot should be maintained in the centre of the shoe (iron). Feet should be held in a natural and useful position (neither extremely in nor out) with the heel lower than the toe.

Lower legs and feet should be controlled at all times and the correct knee is always on the stirrup leather and pointing towards the ground as the result of steady contact with the inside thigh.

Once a rider finds a comfortable and correct position of seat, hands are the most important feature. Hands are held above the withers of a horse at a height determined by the horses' head carriage and length of neck. Hands are at a slight angle with rounded wrists. Hands should be useful, showing control and sympathy, adapting to any situation. Any necessary movement of hands is done subtly without obvious or snatching movements.

All reins of a double bridle must be used. The method of holding reins is optional. The height of the reins should fall to the off-side.

Equitation riders do not sit perfectly still in the saddle. Rhythm with the horse is necessary but **must never be exaggerated**. There is a slight motion with the horse at the walk, this is not bouncing but moving with the horse. Posting at the trot is controlled and co-ordinated. A close seat in rhythm with the canter is expected. A rider should have a steady seat at the slow-gait **without** twisting to the rhythm. Hands should always be placed suitably to the needs of the horse and used accordingly.

10. Basic Gaits and Movements

Walk – An alert, flat-footed walk is required. A bouncy, show walk is a discrimination.

Trot – A neat, two beat trot, with a horse driving forward off a well placed hock is required. Riders must use the correct diagonal unless otherwise specified in an individual test.

Diagonals – Diagonal is the word used to refer to a rider posting with either the horse's right or left leg at the trot to maintain correct balance. A rider is said to be riding the right diagonal when they are posting in unison with the right front leg or the left diagonal when they are posting with the horse's left front leg. Riding the correct diagonal, unless otherwise requested by a Judge, is a basic requirement in the Equitation division but not in the open divisions. The correct diagonal, when proceeding in a counter clockwise direction in the arena would be the right diagonal; when proceeding in a clockwise direction it would be the left diagonal.

Canter – Slow, three beat and rhythmical with correct leads, front and back, according to the direction unless otherwise specified in an individual test.

Slow-Gait – The slow-gait is not just a slow rack but a slow and showy four beat (with broken cadence) gait with hocks well under body of horse. While lateral legs move they do not move in unison so there is no tendency to pace.

Rack – In equitation precision at the rack rather than speed is more important. A rack must be a true and smooth four beat gait. Pacing is a disqualification. The tendency to pace indicates poor ability of the rider to make a horse perform at a true rack.

Pace – Pacing is the lateral movement of horse's legs in perfect unison where both hooves on one side on the horse are on the ground at the same time. This movement creates a bumpy and uneven ride for the rider as opposed to the smooth ride when a horse is racking true. Many horses have the tendency to pace and it is up to a skilled rider to correct this situation. Pacing continuously in a class is a disqualification and the tendency to pace is a severe discrimination.

Back – Horses are required to back on request. This is usually incorporated into an individual workout not should be done with a horse's neck flexed and chin in. If riders are asked to back from the line-up horses must take one step forward to insure that the horse is standing square on all four feet and then back the required number of steps.

Stop – The correct method to stop a horse should insure that the horse's neck is flexed and chin in with hindquarters under the body. Riders should sit heavily in the saddle when stopping a horse, taking back on the reins and immediately giving rein back to the horse. Horses taking the bit and thrusting their heads forward when asked to stop are indicating the poor hands or the rider.

Circles – Riders may have to circle horses to better place themselves on the rail or in an individual test. A circle should be executed correctly and carefully and with emphasis on bending the horse using hands, legs, seat and heel aids. Riders should turn their own heads in the direction they intend the horse to go.

Turn – Horses may be turned towards or away from the rail when asked to proceed in the opposite direction. Some riders may cut across the arena to better place themselves. A turn should be done using hand, seat and leg aids.

Position on Rail – Riders must be aware of their position on the rail during the class. Cutting across, circling, adjusting the speed of a gait are all methods used. However, constant and unnecessary change spoils the over-all performance. Any change should be done with a clear purpose.

11. General Information

A WORD TO THE JUDGE:

- 1) Individual testing is an aid to judges to sort out those riders who are merely passengers and to observe the finer points of horsemanship that enables horse and rider to execute a smooth and balanced performance.
- 2) An involved or difficult test does not aid a Judge but actually hinders his/her job. Judges that know what to look for can see good horsemanship by means of a simple test. Involved tests become boring to the public, embarrassing to the Judge and confusing for the riders.
- 3) When selecting a test take the standard and capabilities of the riders into consideration. The point is to have as many riders as possible perform a smooth test, not to eliminate riders by default.

BENDING THE HORSE:

A horse is only able to bend correctly around the curve of a circle with the aid of the rider using seat, weight, legs and hands.

LEG AIDS: A rider's outside leg moves behind the girth and bends the horse's hindquarters around the curve, this balances the horse. A rider's inside leg is on the girth and the horse bends around this leg. The inside leg also keeps the horse moving forward and stops him from falling into the curve.

HANDS AND REINS: The outside rein is the indirect or balancing rein. This rein must be held against the horse's neck to balance the front end of the horse around

a curve. The inside rein is the direct rein, used for direct steering around the curve. The inside hand must take and give on the rein as the horse bends around the curve.

SEAT AND WEIGHT: The rider's weight will shift to the inside seat bone as the horse bends. This is only possible if the rider is sitting around the horse and not stiff and exaggerated in the saddle. With the rider's weight to the inside it becomes easier for the horse to follow the curve, and the rider is able to bend and track correctly.

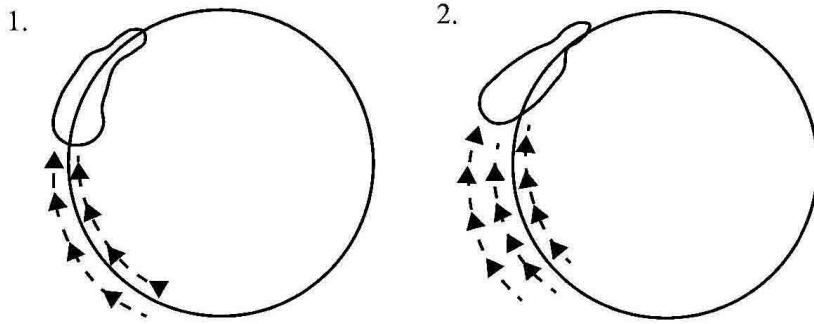
HEAD: A rider must look up around a turn, at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the pattern ahead. This will ensure the rider's weight is distributed correctly to aid the horse around the turn. With this slight turn of the rider's head their upper body and shoulders will follow the correct curve. This will also enable the rider to plan and perform the perfect pattern.

HORSE: TRACK AROUND A CURVE – The horse must step with front and hind hooves on the same two tracks around a turn.

FIGURE 1: The horse is bent around the curve: its spine follows the exact same line as the circle. The hocks follow in the same track as the two tracks made by the front feet.

FIGURE 2: This is incorrect. The horse's body is not bent on the curve but is straight, the hindquarters are swung out. The horse is on a three track: inside fore– own track; outside fore and inside back – same track; outside back – own track. This can get worse; a horse can also track on a four track if not aided correctly.

Figure 2 demonstrates a horse that is not schooled; a rider who is merely a passenger; no leg aids and use of reins to balance the horse; a rider that simply pulls the horse around the curve/pattern.



THE CORRECT FIGURE OF EIGHT:

Two circles of the exact same size in diameter, placed next to each other on a common centre point.

The horse must move in a straight line for 3 strides in the centre:

- The stride before the middle.
- The middle stride (change diagonal or stop for lead change).
- The stride before the horse bends in the second direction of the pattern.

These three strides ensure that the horse and rider can redistribute their weight and keep good balance. Both circles should be performed at the same speed to ensure the same size circles with the same number of strides of the same length. See figure 1.

Figure 1: Correct figure of eight.

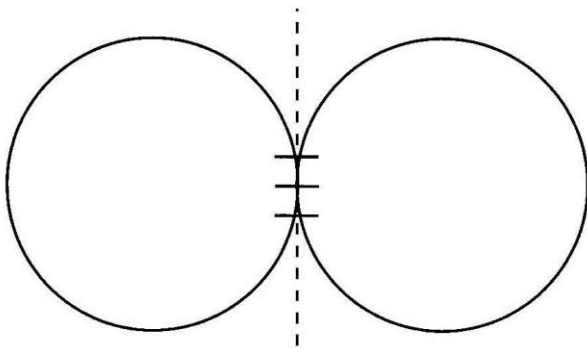
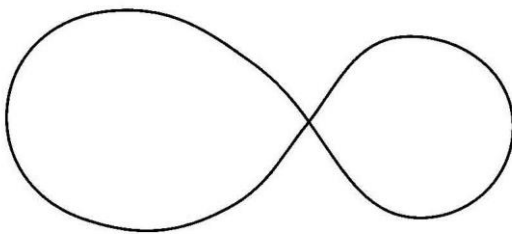


Figure 2: Incorrect figure of eight. This is an example of the pattern one would draw of an incorrect figure of eight. Note that the circles are not the same and there is no common starting point (middle line).



THE CORRECT SERPENTINE

Figure 1: A serpentine is a series of half (semi) circles executed along each side of an imaginary centre line. The serpentine must start and end on the imaginary line. Change of diagonal is also done on this line.

The rider must use legs and hands; seat and weight; to guide the horse around each semi circle (just as in bending).

The semi circles must be performed at the same speed with the same stride length. This will ensure that the curves are the same size.

Riders must look up to plan ahead and help distribute weight correctly.

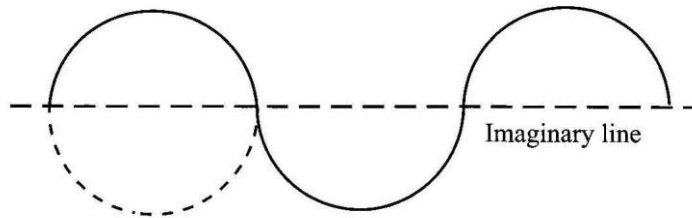
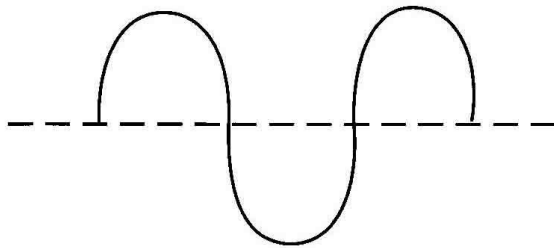


Figure 2: This is a sketch of an incorrect serpentine. Note that while there is a straight line the series of semi circles are uneven and will not demonstrate the ability of a horse to bend from one curve to the next.



MEDAL CLASSES:

Saddle Seat Medal Classes are open equitation classes that are sometimes offered at organized shows. They are usually privately sponsored and there is no age or gender limit. The dress code adheres to the normal equitation standard and the classes are judged on the rail with emphasis on the individual testing.

- Riders are scored 40% for rail work and 60% for the individual test or workout specified.
- The individual test is to be drawn from the selection recommended in this handbook. This is done by the Ringmaster and Judge/s.
- The test will be posted the day before the Medal Class takes place.
- The Collecting Ring Steward will inform contestants when and where the test will be posted.

Judging:

- Judges will be supplied with score sheets personalized for individual tests.
- The recommended tests or workouts are designed in sections to facilitate the Judge in scoring.
- Judges will keep their own scores and on Completion of the class will place contestants from the first place down.
- Judges cards will be handed to the Ringmaster and tabulated in the normal way.

Announcing and Administration:

The announcing and administration of a Medal Class is especially important for its success, particularly for the riders and for the involvement of the public.

- The Announcer must inform the public, giving a basic explanation of the test that has been drawn.
- The Secretary or assistant must draw numbers to establish the order of the riders for the individual test/workout.
- The numbers, in the correct order, are given to the Ringmaster if riders remain in the arena.

- If the riders are excused to wait in the collecting ring the list must be given to the Collecting Ring Steward so that he may call them individually. The Announcer calls the first rider by number to perform the test, at this time he calls the second rider to be on standby. The Collecting Ring Steward will repeat the announcement if necessary. This procedure is repeated until all riders have completed their tests. Riders on standby must always be informed.

- It is the responsibility of the Announcer to be sure that all Judges have finished marking their score sheets after each rider has completed their test BEFORE they call the next competitor. It is unfair to both Judge and rider to call the next entry before judging is completed on each individual performance.

CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS:

The Champion of Champions is an Equitation competition presented by the Professional American Saddle Horse Trainers Association and takes place each year at the SA National Saddle Horse Championship Show.

Eligibility:

1. To be eligible riders must have placed in the first three places in an Equitation or Medal Class at an Organized Show.
2. Boys and girls, 18 years and under may take part.
3. Entries are done on the Wednesday at Bloemfontein Show with a representative of the Professional Trainers Association.
4. The horse must be entered in other classes at Bloemfontein Show in order to procure a stable.

General:

1. The pre-selected individual tests are printed in the Bloemfontein Show Programme and are also available from the President of the Professional American Saddle Horse Trainers Association of South Africa.
2. The competition consists of two parts:
 - a. Individual railwork and a pre-selected test. All riders entered will perform railwork and pre-selected test individually.
 - b. The final competition consists of the top eight riders scoring the highest points, competing on the rail as in a normal class. They will then be called to perform a pre-selected individual test once again.

Judging:

1. Three judges will judge the Champion of Champions.
2. Judges are provided with a copy of the selected tests and the score sheets prior to the competition.
3. Part One: Individual score sheets are handed to the Judges for the scoring of each rider. At the end of each individual test the Judges submit their score sheets BEFORE judging the next contestant.

4. Part Two: Judges will score the riders on the rail and hand in their cards before the individual testing is called for by the Announcer. Judges will then submit their score sheets after each individual test in Part two and BEFORE judging the next contestant.
5. The tabulator will combine all scores for each rider.

INDIVIDUAL WORK-OUTS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST