

Do's and Don'ts

Applies to Saddle Seat, Western Seat, Reining Seat, Western Horsemanship and Hunter Seat Classes

Be courteous at all times to fellow exhibitors, ring personnel, office workers, judges and the like. Sportsmanship is paramount in the field of equitation. Congratulate the winners. Your time will come some day and you would want the same courtesy extended to you. Also, be helpful to your fellow exhibitors. Point out, in a tactful manner, that their jod strap is undone or that their horse has slobbered on their chaps, etc.

Subtle verbal communication between rider and horse is encouraged in equitation classes; however, this communication should not be so loud as to be distracting to other exhibitors or ring personnel. A notable exception to this is when a rider is specifically addressing another rider, such as calling "rail." However, excessive yelling of "rail, rail" is very distracting and undignified and should be discouraged. The only time "rail" is appropriate is when another rider is cutting in dangerously close and collision is imminent. It is inappropriate for a rider to come up behind a rider already on the rail and force them off the rail. Riders should always be positioned so that they can go around those ahead of them on the inside (not the rail side), and should be penalized at the judge's discretion for not doing so.

Leave room in the lineup for the nervous horse or rider. In addition to being courteous and safety conscious, this will lessen the effect the other horse might have on your mount.

Show disciplined control of your mount, but never abuse it if it makes a mistake, either in the ring or after leaving the ring. The show arena and grounds are not proper places to "teach the horse a lesson." Emotions run high and a lot is at stake. Because of this, most mistakes are due to rider error for which the horse should not be punished.

Do not wear anything or put anything on the horse or rider that jiggles, flaps, or waves. This includes loose hair or hair ribbons, flapping ties or fringe and unpinned numbers. All of these are very distracting to the judge, especially not being able to read a rider's number. If a rider trims their number card, care should be taken to not reduce the size so that the judge can still easily read the number. Pinning numbers both top and bottom as well as from inside the shirt or jacket will make a smoother picture.

An exhibitor may wear protective headgear (ASTM/SEI or BSI/BS EN) and/or a protective safety vest, specifically designed for use in equestrian sport in any division or class without penalty from the judge. The federation recommends that the vest meet or surpass the current ASTM or BSI/BS EN standard or be certified by the Safety Equipment Institute.

Judges should appraise the ability and level of proficiency of the riders at the show before posting patterns. This can be accomplished by asking a member of show management. If

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they don't know the answer, they can easily find out by asking the steward to talk to the exhibitors. Both exhibitors and judges alike benefit from this little bit of advance planning. Those who want a challenge are given one, while those whose ability is not as advanced are given a test which they can perform, and the judge's decision is made simpler by this consistency. Judges should be prepared with more than one pattern for any given class so as to compensate for differences in the ability of the riders, ring sizes, weather conditions and the like. Judges should also be aware that in Reining Seat equitation, the 13 and Under riders are expected to be able to perform the same tests as the 14-18 riders — one of the current NRHA patterns.

Riders should enter the arena ready to show, displaying confidence and presence. Show that you are a rider and not just a passenger. Poise and consistency, even under adverse conditions, are necessary. Perfect the performance of your horse(s) to best reflect your equitation abilities. A ground-covering smooth walk should not be so strong that its lateral movement creates too much body motion in the rider. A smooth, cadenced jog or trot will be much more attractive than a bone-jarring concussive gait. Likewise, a smooth flowing canter or lope will enhance a rider's skill rather than the four-beat gait that shakes or vibrates the rider.

An exhibitor with a disability (other than hearing) will be provided reasonable accommodation upon submission of a written certification from a treating medical professional's office certifying the disability and identifying the accommodation necessary for the exhibitor to compete safely. The medical certification must be provided to the competition Steward within a reasonable time prior to competing, who shall then attach a copy to the Steward report.