

Saddle Seat

CLASS ROUTINE/PATTERNS & TESTS

In walk, trot, canter classes, riders enter the ring at a trot going to the right and continue counterclockwise. The trot should be performed at least one time around the ring. Then the riders are asked to walk. The judge should be attentive to the walking phase of the class. The riders are next asked to canter. Riders are then asked to walk and then reverse. They may reverse toward or away from the rail. Riders can be asked to reverse and trot and some may turn toward the rail and some may turn and pick up a trot across the ring “showing” their horse. Judges should consider the talent level of the class prior to deciding to make this call on the reverse. Riders are then asked to walk if they’ve been at the trot prior to calling for the canter. Riders then canter at least one time around the ring. Riders may then be called back to the trot or walk. Finally riders trot and are called to the lineup at the trot.

In walk trot classes, riders enter the ring at a walk going to the right and continue counterclockwise. The judge should be very attentive to the walking phase of the class. The riders are then asked to trot at least one time around the ring. Riders are called back to the walk and then reverse. They should always be asked to reverse and continue to walk. The reverse may be towards or away from the rail. After the walking phase, riders will be asked to trot at least one time around the ring. Riders are then asked to walk and come in to lineup at the walk. Headers are then allowed in the ring for safety of the riders. No tests or backing may be called.

1. If a pattern or workout is used in any given class, it is to count 50 percent of the final score. Too many judges score saddle seat classes on the workout alone and this is entirely improper. If judged correctly, it is very possible for a rider who was excellent on the rail, but who badly mishandled the pattern, to place above a rider who was below average on the rail and slightly above average on the pattern. **CONES OR MARKERS OF ANY KIND ARE NOT TO BE USED TO MARK POINTS OF A PATTERN IN A SADDLE SEAT EQUITATION CLASS.** How well a rider selects and uses points in a pattern should be taken into consideration by the judge in the overall scoring of each rider’s performance.
2. Unlike the terminology in other equitation seats, there is no such thing in saddle seat as being “off pattern.” This has caused much confusion among judges and exhibitors alike when they see riders who make obvious mistakes. Saddle seat classes are judged instead on a common sense system of rewards and penalties just like any other class. If judges would like to assign numbers to these rewards and penalties, this is their prerogative.

The fall of a horse or rider does NOT necessarily eliminate an entry from competition. The penalty in the saddle seat division for a fall is **AT THE JUDGE’S DISCRETION.**

A common question asked by judges and exhibitors alike is the proper number of exhibitors chosen to perform workouts in classes such as championships where entries are not required to do additional tests but the judge does ask for a pattern. If time permits and show management is agreeable, it is in the best interest of all exhibitors (particularly the young ones just getting started) to have all of them do the workout in order to gain

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experience in performing individually. If this is not feasible, however, a good rule of thumb to use for a minimum number to perform the workout in a large class is the number of ribbons to be awarded plus two reserve placings. For example, in a 25-rider saddle seat championship where eight ribbons are given, you should choose at least ten riders to ride the pattern. Please do not choose only ten riders out of a class of thirteen to do a workout. This can be embarrassing and humiliating for those not chosen. If time and conditions permit, it is preferable to have all riders exit the arena and return individually to perform the patterns, as this is the method used in Regional and National Championship classes. Judges should watch the entire pattern completely through to the finish and not begin writing notes as the riders approach the end of the workout.

Tests 1 – 12 are allowed for 13/under classes

Tests 1 – 15 are allowed for 14-18 classes

Tests 1 – 13, 15 are allowed for 19 and over

Test 16 is allowed only at National Level

The order of running a class in which a pattern is to be performed is to do the rail work first, followed by the lineup for inspection, reading of the pattern and any questions, and finally the pattern work. Judges are prohibited from conferring with riders individually in the lineup but they may answer questions regarding the pattern where the entire lineup can hear the question and the answer. Judges may not speak to any rider in the lineup even after they have turned in their cards. A rider may approach a judge after the show is over if they are interested in hearing the judge's thoughts or comments.

In the saddle seat equitation division, judges are encouraged to ask all contestants to perform two or more individual tests from the current *USEF/EC Rule Books*, Equitation Division, Saddle Seat Equitation Section. The Arabian division does not allow riders to exchange horses, except at the national level final.

UPHA: Judges and exhibitors should be aware of the UPHA rules. UPHA has a booklet that judges should bring with them to the show. The UPHA class has a mandatory workout for all qualifying classes. The pattern is as follows: Trot a serpentine, consisting of four half circles, to the opposite end of ring. Return down either rail at a show trot. You should also know if the class is an Arabian Breed or an Open Breed class. This should be stated in the premium list. The class is scored 60% on the rail work and 40% on the pattern. Any pattern with appropriate tests may be used at UPHA National finals. The serpentine pattern is only for qualifying classes. UPHA walk-trot classes **DO NOT** have any patterns. To obtain a booklet, write to: UPHA, 4059 Iron Works Parkway, Suite #2, Lexington, KY 40511, (859) 231-5070. UPHA also has a pattern book available with many excellent patterns in it.

Exhibitors are reminded to always refer to current *USEF/EC Rule Books* for specific rules regarding Saddle Seat patterns and tests. Exhibitors are reminded to refer to the current *AHA Handbook* for procedures.

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CREDITS

- Ring generalship — awareness of ring position in relation to other horses and riders as well as the judges. Presenting the horse and rider with courtesy to other entrants
- Showing the horse to its best advantage
- Keeping the horse in the open
- Seeing trouble spots ahead
- Knowing where the judge is
- Reversing to your best advantage
- Showing effective use of leg aids
- Showing sympathetic hands
- Proper foot position and pressure in the stirrup
- Strong leg position
- Strong seat and balance
- Confidence
- Utilizing the best speed for your particular horse
- Using proper rein length
- Showing the horse in a relaxed and effective manner, never rigid or posed
- Effective, smooth starts and stops in pattern
- Being able to come up on correct diagonal in pattern and rail
- Recognizing leads and diagonals
- Keeping both circles of a figure eight the same size
- Keeping straight line elements – straight
- Keeping serpentine loops equal and in a half circle form
- Keeping horse from drifting
- Not allowing horse to stop early when going to the wall
- Moving through the pattern at the pace appropriate for that particular horse, neither taking excessive time or rushing

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FAULTS

- Breaking out of any gait
- Taking a wrong diagonal
- Taking a wrong lead
- Interfering with the performance of others
- Going sideways on the rail
- Fall of horse or rider does not cause elimination but may be penalized at the judge's discretion
- Excessive speed at trot or canter that causes imbalance of the horse's gait
- Stiff riding position
- Knee behind the stirrup leather
- Knee too high on saddle (stirrups or saddle too short)
- Legs too straight (stirrups or saddle too long)
- Pivot turns that are walk turns
- Rider whose hand height does not take into consideration the horse's neck position
- Riders going too fast so as to put the horse out of a collected position and off balance
- Riding too close to the judge
- Horse cantering so slow as to create a four beat cadence
- Arched or rounded back
- Missed center point
- Line changes that are not straight
- Cross leads
- Failure to use proper aids
- Circles of figure eights that are uneven (count strides)
- Diagonals and lead changes that are not centered on the imaginary straight line of a serpentine
- An exaggerated or "perched" position in the lineup

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PATTERN CONSIDERATIONS

Tests may be performed either individually or collectively but no other tests may be used. Instructions must be publicly announced. All circles and turns must be performed on correct diagonals and leads. On left diagonal, rider should be out of saddle when horse's left front leg is in the air; on right diagonal, rider should be out of saddle when horse's right front leg is in the air. On left lead, horse's left leg reaches further than the right; on the right lead, horse's right leg reaches further than the left. All changes of lead must be a simple change whereby the horse is brought back into a halt or walk and restarted into the canter on the opposite lead. In Medal and Championship classes individual workout instructions must be written down by the judge and delivered to the announcer at the beginning of the class. Instructions can be posted at the judge's discretion provided it is announced and posted at least one hour prior to the session in which the class is held. Competition management is encouraged to post the workout more than one hour prior to the session if possible. At all World and National Championships and Finals, competitors must be allowed ample access to the competition arena in order to walk on foot the posted workout. A minimum of 1/2 hour is recommended. In Championship classes and any class where a workout is required, judge(s) must work a minimum number of riders per number of ribbons awarded in the class. The judge(s) determine which riders will be required to perform additional testing.

1. Circle at a trot. When circling clockwise, rider should be on left diagonal; when circling counterclockwise rider should be on right diagonal. The horse and rider should maintain a constant arc at a consistent and appropriate rate of speed. The circle should end in the same place it starts.
2. Walk or Trot on a straight line on or off the rail, using the correct diagonals.
3. Canter a straight line on the rail on the correct lead.
4. Performance around the ring at a walk, trot, or canter using the correct leads and diagonals only. Judges may ask for any gait or combination of gaits. All diagonals and leads must be correct. Riders must remain on the rail at all times.
5. Feet disengaged from stirrups. Feet engaged. In the line-up only. After disengaging, the rider must re-engage feet in the stirrups. The foot should enter the stirrup from the outside as the stirrup lies flat. Judges should observe the behavior of the horses in the lineup before asking for this test.
6. Change of diagonals on or off the rail. The judge must specify diagonal changes to be executed and the beginning diagonal. Judges must state the diagonal on which the rider is to start and the specific changes the rider is to demonstrate.
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7. Execute serpentine at a trot. A series of left and right half circles off imaginary line where correct diagonals must be shown. A series of left and right half circles off the center of an imaginary straight line where the rider must demonstrate correct diagonals. The half circles of a serpentine must be equal in size and proportion and should be true half circles, not too deep nor too shallow.
8. Back for not more than eight steps. The rider should back the horse in a quiet manner and in a straight line. The hindquarters of the horse should be controlled by effective leg aids. When simply asked to back, the rider should back at least three strides, but not more than eight.
9. Figure eight at trot demonstrating change of diagonals. Unless specified, it may be started either facing the center or away from the center. If started facing the center, it must be commenced from a halt. Both circles of a figure eight should be equal in size and proportion. The rider must make the change of diagonal at the same point at which they began the figure eight. This is referred to as the midpoint.
10. Circle at the canter. When circling clockwise, horse should be on right lead; when circling counterclockwise, horse should be on the left lead. The rider should keep the horse in a continuous arc and at a consistent and appropriate rate of speed. The circle should end in the same place where it started.
11. Execute serpentine at a canter. The half circles must be equal in size and proportion and should be true half circles, not too deep nor too shallow.
12. Figure eight at canter. Unless specified, it can be started either facing the center or away from the center. If started facing the center it must be commenced from a halt. Figures are commenced in center of two circles so that one lead change is shown. This is a change whereby the horse is brought back to a halt or walk and restarted into the canter on the opposite lead. Both circles of the figure eight should be equal in size and proportion. Special attention should be paid as to whether the lead change was executed at the center point. Riders should cross the center point at the time of the change of lead.
13. Canter a straight line, on or off the rail, using the correct diagonals, with or without demonstrating simple change of lead. The judge must specify lead changes to be executed and the beginning lead. For this test, the judge needs to watch for the use of leg aids and to observe whether the line is straight.

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14. Ride without stirrups for a brief period of time, at any gait requested (for not more than one minute at the trotting phase). Riders may be asked to disengage or engage stirrups at a halt or walk or any gait requested by the judge. (Exception: Adult Equitation riders must not be asked to perform without stirrups. See EQ117.9, EQ117.12e and EQ117.15f). This test may be asked for at any gait. However, at the trot the rider must not be asked to ride for more than one minute. You may ask the rider to disengage or engage stirrups at the halt or walk or any gait requested by the judge. Remember, adult equitation riders must not be asked to ride without stirrups. Before using this test, be confident the riders are experienced and can handle this test.
15. Demonstration ride of approximately one minute on own mount. Movements must be selected from Tests 1-14 above. Rider must advise judge beforehand what ride he plans to demonstrate. To be used only in Championship and/or Medal Classes. Riders must have with them two copies (one for judge and one for announcer) of a written one minute workout in case the judge asks for this test. The test must be stopped at the end of one minute but the rider will not be penalized for not completing it.
16. Exchange horses. This test is to be used only after four or more of the top riders have been tested. Only one pair of riders to exchange. Saddles can be exchanged. The attendant for each horse being exchanged must be allowed in the ring only to facilitate the change. The purpose of this test is to break a tie.