



Washington Ladies Riding Club Association  
HANDBOOK

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## GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES

### EVENT PREPARATION:

- **Contract:** The contract is an agreement between the judge and the association sponsoring the event. It should clearly state expectation and obligations. Two copies should be signed: one for the Judge and one for the association.
  
- **Event Particulars:**  
The Judge should obtain the following well in advance of the event in order to allow enough time to review the material and clarify any questions:
  - Dates & Times
  - General Rules and/or Rule Book
  - Divisions, Classes, Etc..
  - Score Sheets & Judging Criteria
  - Facilities: Location and type – Indoor or Outdoor
  - Penalties, disqualifications, protest criteria that might apply to the judging process.
  - Travel Arrangements
  - Dress Code

### COMPETITION DAY:

- **Judge's Responsibilities:**
  - Arrive early and familiarize yourself with the facilities.
  - Check-in with the chairperson for updated information.
  - Choose your judging location & setup your 'area'.
  - Be prepared to stay long enough after the competition to answer questions.
  
- **Ethics:**
  - "A set of principles of right conduct."
  - A judge's actions may not only influence the outcome of the competition, but may affect the future of the sport of equestrian drill riding.
  - You must have an objective opinion. Do not go into a competition with preconceived perceptions or ideas. If you have had any professional contact (paid or unpaid) with any team competing, it might be wise to disqualify yourself from judging the event.
  - Public perception is very important. During the competition, limit contact. Be unemotional. Above all, be professional.



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- **Oral Critiques:**

The oral critique is used to inform the teams of observations made by the judge that may help them to understand the scoring.

- Introduce yourself. Give your name, the date, the drill being critiqued and name of the competition.
- Describe where you are positioned in the arena.
- Check to see that the machine is actually recording!
- Describe the maneuver being executed, even if it is all right.
- Describe the fault and ways to improve it.

- **Oral Critiques -Cont..d-:**

- Be specific on problem areas – for example: “The chestnut horse in the second pair is lagging behind” or “The spacing on the fourth pair from the front is too long when compared to the rest of the team.”
- Provide an overall impression – highlight good points and if comfortable, offer ways to improve problem areas.
- Try to offer comments on music, theme and costumes in a tactful manner, always remembering that your preferences may not be those of the team you are observing.



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## EXECUTION OF THE DRILL

**SPACING: Maintaining an even distance between horses, vertically and horizontally.**

- **Common Faults:**

- Irregular spacing between horses in line.
- Irregular spacing between horses side-to-side (Company Front or Abreast)
- Oblique not all spaced the same distance back, i.e.; not all nose-to-knee
- Not closing up the gap between lead riders in a circle and the last riders.

**ALIGNMENT: Keeping rider's bodies lined up side-to-side. Also in "tracking" following directly behind or in the same track as the rider in front.**

- **Common Faults:**

- Irregular side-to-side alignment in fours, full team lines, etc.
- Not "tracking" or following directly in line with the horse in front.
- Irregular alignment of the maneuver in the arena, i.e.; circles not centered, circles not round, wedding rings not the same size or not even in spacing in the arena, figure "8" circles not the same size.

**TIMING AND COORDINATION: In the right place at the right time AND looking good!**

- **Common Faults:**

- Missed holes in a thread maneuver.
- Collisions because of faulty spacing, etc.
- Awkward connections of maneuvers – jerky, not smooth.

**BRISKNESS: A general feeling of overall alertness and precise execution. Not to be confused with speed. An alert attitude of the whole team.**

### PERFORMANCE OF HORSES:

- **Common Faults:**

- Broken Gaits: trotting when the rest of the team is loping.
  - Dropping to a trot to turn a corner.
  - Trotting in a circle when all others are loping.
- Way of Going: The way the horse travels.
  - Should be the same "Style" as the rest of the team, if possible.
  - Easily controlled gaits.
  - No excessive pulling on reins, or frequent, unnecessary lead changes.

### MANNERS OF HORSES:

- No biting, kicking, bucking, etc..
- Easy to control and responsive to the rider's commands.