

Class Definitions



Rules #1- HAVE FUN!!!

Halter Class: Horses are shown in hand and judged on the horse's conformation, fitness, suitability, manners, handling and grooming. Horses are shown at the walk, jog and standing still. For specific rules on equipment & attire, please refer to the Michigan 4-H Rulebook.

Showmanship: The rider leads the horse in hand, wearing a halter or bridle, through a series of maneuvers called a pattern. The horse itself is not judged on its conformation. Rather, the exhibitor is judged on how well he or she exhibits the animal to its best advantage, with additional scoring for the grooming and presentation of both horse and handler. Patterns are provided by the judge and will be posted the morning of the show. For specific rules on equipment & attire, please refer to the Michigan 4-H Rulebook.

Equitation/Horsemanship- Equitation is the art or practice of horse riding or horsemanship. More specifically, equitation may refer to a rider's position while mounted, and encompasses a rider's ability to ride correctly and with effective aids. In horse show competition, the rider, rather than the horse is evaluated. Such classes go by different names, depending on region, including equitation classes, rider classes, or horsemanship classes. Judging criteria covers the rider's performance and control of the horse, use of riding aids, proper attire, correct form, and usually factor in rider poise and the cleanliness and polish of horse, rider and equipment. The performance of the horse is not judged per se, but a poorly performing horse is considered to reflect the ability of the rider. Equitation classes occur in the Hunt seat, Saddle seat, Dressage, and Western disciplines. A good equitation rider is always in balance with the horse, maintains a correct position in every gait, movement, or over a fence, and possesses a commanding, but relaxed, presence, able to direct the horse with nearly invisible aids.

Western Pleasure: The riders compete as a group at the same time, traveling around the outer edge of the arena. All contestants, at the command of the event's judge, are asked to have their horse walk, jog (a slow trot), and lope both directions in an arena, as well as to stand quietly and back up readily. Judge evaluates horses on manners and suitability of the horse for a relaxed but collected gait cadence and relatively slow speed of gait, along with calm and responsive disposition. The horse is to appear to be a "pleasure" to ride and very comfortable, while being very smooth. Horse conformation and temperament play a role in this event, and hence animals that are calm, quiet, have collected, soft gaits and the strong musculing required to sustain slow, controlled movement are the most competitive.

English Pleasure- The riders perform as a group, exhibiting the natural gaits of the walk, trot, and canter, and may also be asked to extend the trot or to perform a hand gallop. Horses are judged on their manners, performance, quality and conformation. The horse is to give the impression of being a pleasure to ride. The horse is usually ridden on contact with the rein, and the horse is penalized if it must be ridden on strong contact, gapes its mouth, does not respond willingly to light aids, or does not travel in balance. The horse should move straight, with a steady rhythm and a free and flowing stride. The horse should not come behind the bit, or travel too fast.

Showmanship Obstacle: Showmanship Trail Class is a combination of Showmanship maneuvers and trail obstacles. Exhibitors may be required to walk, trot, stop, turn, pivot, back and go through and over obstacles including poles, cones, gate, and bridge. Patterns are typically selected from the judges existing age group patterns and will have a few obstacles placed in the pattern.

Hands Free Showmanship: Exhibitors showing in Hands Free Showmanship will enter the arena one exhibitor at a time. The rider will lead their horse into the arena with halter and lead and get setup at the first cone. Once the horse is set at the cone, the exhibitor will tie the lead around the horse's neck in a simple loop and knot. Riders will not be disqualified for touching the lead during the pattern, however will be penalized accordingly.

No Blues Classes: The No-Blues Classes are sweepstakes format classes that are open to horse/rider combinations that have never won a first place in that particular class. The No-Blues classes are walk-trot-canter and are open to all ages and breeds. The object of this class is to level the playing field and give novice horse and riders a chance to earn sweepstakes monies.

Green Horse / Novice Horse / Novice Rider Classes: Open to any rider/ horse combination that is in their **FIRST YEAR of Canter/Loping** at a horse show. ShoMe's definition of NOVICE is NOT the same as Novice according to breed circuits. Novice horses and Novice Riders are truly beginners to cantering in the show ring. Training devices are not permitted.

Big Trotter: Open to all riders of all divisions. This is an English Pleasure Class that is judged only at the Trot. Horses will Trot in 1st direction, Reverse at the Trot, Trot second direction and Trot into the Line Up.

Easy Loper: Open to all riders of all divisions. This is an Western Pleasure Sweepstakes Class that is judged only at the Lope. Horses will walk in the ring, Lope down the Centerline, Lope first direction, reverse at the walk and Lope second direction and walk into the lineup.

Stupid Horse Tricks: Does your horse do a cool trick? Can he bow, say yes or count? Maybe he can drink soda! If so, enter your horse in Stupid Horse Tricks for a chance to the class entry monies!

Disciplined Rail Class- Can be shown English or Western unless specified on the showbill. This class tests the skills of both horse and rider, as they execute specific gaits, transitions and movements as requested by the judge. These actions include but are not limited to extensions of gaits (speeding up the walk, trot or jog, and canter or lope), pivot on the haunches or forehand (tight turn at stand still where the front or hind legs swing around the opposite legs, counter-canter or lope (cantering or loping on the incorrect lead), changing direction at any given gait, seeing if your horse will stand still for an extended amount of time, and the back up. The judge may call for more complex movements at his/her discretion.

Command Class: Similar to "Simon Says" Riders are directed by the judge to perform specific gaits and/or actions. If a rider fails to immediately show evidence of the specific action, he/she is called "out" and must pull up into the center of the ring. The last person called "out" is the winner and placings are according to the order in which they were called "out"

Egg & Spoon Class- Riders while mounted will be given plastic spoons with either real eggs or plastic sand filled eggs. Riders will be instructed to place the egg on the end of the spoon, holding only the farthest part of the handle in their hands. Riders will be asked to perform gaits according to their class such as walk, trot, canter, back up. Placings are considered 1st for the last rider to drop their egg and placed according to the reverse order in which they are called "out". Judges may request advanced riders to perform more difficult tasks such as switching hands, putting the spoon in their teeth or trading spoons with another rider.

Musical Muck buckets: Exhibitors will ride their horses in this class which is similar to musical chairs. However, your chair is the muck bucket. Riders must bring their own muck bucket or water bucket with them to the class. Music will be played in the style of musical chairs and stopped accordingly. When the music stops, the riders must go to the nearest bucket, dismount their horse and sit on the upside-down bucket. When the music starts, the riders must mount their horses and ride around the buckets. Riders are allowed to use the bucket as a mounting block. One bucket will be removed each time the music stops. The rider sitting on the last bucket wins!

Phone Book Challenge: Exhibitors will be provided a page number in the book and will run down to the book, rip out the page and return to the start/finish line. This is a timed event.

Mummy Pairs / TP Challenge: Exhibitors will team up and be literally wrapped in toilet paper. The horses may be required to walk/trot/canter in the class. The last pair with toilet paper connecting each other will win and placings are according to the order in which they were called "out"

Bobbing For Apples: This is a timed event. Exhibitors will ride their horse down to the "apple bucket" and dismount their horse. Once at the bucket, the rider will retrieve an apple with their mouth and return to the start/finish line. Riders have the option to either run alongside their horse or ride their horse back to the finish line. The rider must cross the finish line with their apple in their mouth in order to place. The fastest time wins.

Pumpkin Race: Riders will begin at the starting line. When the announcer calls "go" the riders run down to the finish line with their horse. Once at the finish line, they must dismount and gather pumpkins. Each pumpkin is assigned a point value. The rider with the most points wins and placings will be called in descending order from the top point earner. Riders keep their pumpkins.

Swap – A - Horse: Exhibitors will enter the arena together, tails to the rail. The judge will request exhibitors to exchange horses with each other. The exhibitors will have 1 minute become familiar with their new horse and/ or to exchange tips with each other. Riders/Horses will be judged according to the rules for the class which they are competing: showmanship, horsemanship or pleasure. Riders with Spur-Stop trained horses must disclose to the new rider that their horse is spur trained. Walk-Trot and Novice Riders not allowed.

Five Dollar No Holler Bareback: This is a traditional bareback class. Riders must bring their \$5 bill with them to the gate and hand to the ring steward. The judge/ring steward will place the bill under the rider's seat or leg. Riders will be required to walk/trot/canter. Each time the rider loses a bill, the rider will be called into the center. The last rider remaining with their bill will win the entire class monies!

Bridleless Pleasure and Bridleless Horsemanship: Exhibitors are required to use a neck strap for the bridleless riding classes. The strap may be either leather or rope and must be between 7/16" and 1" in diameter. The neck strap must be a closed loop and exhibitors will ride holding the strap. It is the exhibitor's discretion to ride either with one or two hands on the neck strap. Exhibitors will be given a short warm up period prior to the class to ensure that all horses and riders are safe and under control. Exhibitors that are deemed unsafe to compete in the class will be excused from the warm up and refunded their entry fee. Walk-Trot & Novice Riders not allowed.

Make It Up As You Go Pattern Classes: You will be provided the location of the markers and you make up the pattern. Showmanship pattern must contain walk, jog, stop, back and at least 1 turn. Equitation and Horsemanship patterns must contain all 3 gaits, stop and back.

English Pleasure & Western Pleasure Sweeps: This is a typical Sweepstakes format class and judged at the walk, trot, canter, reverse and backing up. Judges may require exhibitors to drop bridles at their discretion for an equipment check. Sweepstakes classes must have 4 entries to run the class and payback. If there are not enough exhibitors to run the class, the class will either be cancelled or run as a non-payback class and the difference in entry fee refunded. Sweepstakes classes are placed to 4th place, with the top 3 winning money prizes. Payment allocation for placing is as follows: 1st-55%, 2nd-25%, 3rd-20%. The prize pot is considered as 50% of the entry money. If additional money is added, it will be added to the prize pot directly. For example: \$10 entry, 20 Riders, \$0 Added money= \$100 total Pot, 1st \$55, 2nd \$25, 3rd-\$20. Using this example with \$100 added, \$10 Entry, 20 Riders. Total Pot is \$200. 1st - \$110, 2nd- \$50, 3rd- \$40. Prize Pots are calculated using the actual number of registered entries PAID in the class.