

# THE SHOW HORSE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALASIA INC.

Presents



**A Handbook for Judges and Competitors**



[www.showhorscouncilaust.com.au](http://www.showhorscouncilaust.com.au)

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## Bibliography

- \* "Introducing The Show Hunter" – David Ross
- \* "Hunter Pony Stud Book Register" - United Kingdom
- \* S.H.C. Competition Rules
- \* S.H.C. Risk Management Policy
- \* S.H.C. Duty Statements
- \* S.H.C. Measuring Scheme
- \* AHHA "Working Hunter Rules" & "Guidelines for Competitors and Judges" – Samantha Watson

## Abbreviation:

S.H.C. or Council                      Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc.

Visit the S.H.C. Website [www.showhorsecouncilaust.com.au](http://www.showhorsecouncilaust.com.au) to source a variety of documentation and information pertinent to the operations of the Council.

## THE COUNCIL

The Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc. is an administrative body originally formed in 1982; operating as The Hack Council of N.S.W. Inc until registration of change of name on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1999 to its current name. The Council consists of the elected delegates from each of its Affiliates within N.S.W (incorporating the A.C.T.) and its Interstate Constituent Affiliates.

The functions of the Show Horse Council are:

- To promote the sport of showing Saddle Horses, Show Hunters, Riding Competitions, Turnout Classes and to also formulate Rules and Regulations for the advancement of the sport.
- To encourage the formation of Show Horse and Hack Associations which shall conduct activities associated with Showing for the benefit of their members and the sport of Hacking.
- To encourage Show Horse and Hack Associations to support local Agricultural Show Societies and assist where possible in matters relating to the showing of horses.
- To support Royal Show Societies in their conduct of Show Horse and Rider events.
- To conduct the N.S.W. Horse of the Year Show and the S.H.C. Grand National Championships as Annual events.

- To administer the National Saddle Horse Registration Scheme.
- To administer the Show Horse Council Measuring Scheme.
- To administer the Show Horse Council Judges Scheme and Lists.

The aims of the Council in producing this Handbook are to:

- Provide a general information resource for Judges, Competitors and anyone interested in the sport of Hacking and the Showing of Horses.
- Endeavour to bring about consistency and uniformity in standards of Competition in the Show Ring and in the Judging of Show Horses and Riders.
- Provide a reference point to be used for the examination of Applicants seeking to be included on the S.H.C. Official Judges and Trainees Lists.
- It is important to note that at Shows other than SHC Shows e.g. Royal Shows, the Rules which apply may not agree with these Guidelines. Competitors therefore should always read and abide by the Rules contained in that Show Schedule.

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# **SECTION 1 - THE SHOW HORSE**

## **1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO SHOWING**

The acquisition of a horse for the Show Ring will start you on a journey that will be challenging and rewarding. Your priority will be to produce a healthy horse that can go forward with its education to achieve success in competition.

### **SELECTION**

There are many things to consider when making a purchase. Among these are: Suitability for purpose required, temperament, size, conformation, soundness, age, ease of handling and floating, health history, past performance, price etc. If the buyer is inexperienced it is a good idea to have a reputable horse person accompany the buyer during inspection and/or to have a Veterinary check done before completing the purchase.

### **DIET**

Apart from traditional natural produce there is an abundance of horse feed products that have been scientifically designed to suit your horse's particular needs. Product information should be sourced and evaluated keeping in mind that the aim is to provide your horse with a suitable nutritional diet to enable it to maintain physical health, well being and to perform at the level you require. Any feed or additive that has the tendency to 'heat' the horse should be well monitored.

Fresh quality produce should be fed in sufficient amounts to provide for the welfare, workload and/or growth expected of the horse. As creatures of habit, horses do best when fed to a particular routine of at least two to three times a day. Any changes introduced to the horse's diet should be made so as to allow the horse to become gradually adjusted to the new feed regime.

Feeding grains and additives may effect both temperament and the physical well being of the horse. Tolerance levels can change according to the season of year and may vary from one horse to another. The horse should be regularly monitored for signs of any deficiency or over supply to its dietary requirements.

### **MANAGEMENT**

A horse needs to be kept in a safe enclosure; either a stable and/or yard and/or paddock (with access to shelter) and have a good supply of clean water at all times. Intake can vary between 25 litres to 40 litres of water a day depending on exercise, moisture content of the feed, temperature and humidity.

Particular care should be taken to maintain clean feed and water containers and to carry out the regular removal of manure and wet, soiled bedding.

A regime should be in place for the horse's worming, shoeing and dental maintenance with details and dates kept; along with a record of any Veterinary or other treatment of the horse.

Rugs and hoods etc. are used on most Show Horses; their use should be according to the season, i.e. in summer to protect but not overheat and in winter using sufficient layers of rugs to keep the horse warm and the coat down. Protecting the legs is good practice when training, travelling or even if out in the paddock, while use of deep bedding in the stable will provide comfort and also protection. These are some practices that will assist in keeping your horse in show condition.

Supervision should be a constant process. Be on the lookout for torn or dislodged rugs or hoods, an injury, lameness, any change in the horse's normal manner or a change in food intake that may signal a problem, or anything else out of the ordinary.

## RECORDS

Care should be taken to have all Horse Registrations, Measuring Certificate, Performance Cards and Memberships up to date as copies will be required when entering major S.H.C. Competitions. The original Registration and/or Height certificates may also need to be provided and/or sighted at major Shows such as Royals.

## COMPETITION

Traditional values and practices form the basis for showing, while the areas of breeding, training and competition continue to evolve as the sport progresses. The Council and its Affiliates are always happy to provide information and guidance to newcomers in the sport and to service their local areas with Shows, Training Days and other activities.

There is a wide cross section of exhibitors ranging from newcomers and the more established horses and riders, to the serious top end of exhibitors who compete with success at Royal/National level and the "professional" teams who produce not only for themselves but also for clients.

The formula for judging is comprehensive but does allow for individual preference to prevail, therefore results can and do vary. The philosophy that there is always another Show is a good one, taking what you can from your performance on the day (be it good or disappointing) and working towards your next outing.

## **1.2 DEFINITION OF THE HACK**

### HISTORY

The definition of the word "HACK" according to most dictionaries is: "a horse kept for common hire or adapted for general work, especially for ordinary riding".

The word "hack" is essentially British in origin and denotes a refined riding horse. In days gone by, a hack was a horse used for hire and later was used as a mount by the English gentry as a status symbol when riding to a hunt or social gathering.

It is from this origin that today's "show hack" (also commonly referred to as Saddle Pony – Saddle Galloway – Saddle Horse or Show Horse) has developed. All terms are considered acceptable.

Hacks compete in line with the following Height Divisions:

#### PONIES

"Not exceeding 12.2hh" and "Over 12.2hh and not exceeding 14hh."

#### GALLOWAYS (or Light Hacks)

"Over 14hh and not exceeding 15hh."

#### HORSES (Hacks)

"Over 15 hh".

These Divisions are then further broken up into Classes (See SHC Competition Rules).

## **1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN SHOW HORSE**

### DEFINITION

The Show Horse /Hack should be a quality riding type, of good conformation, soundness, movement and temperament. It need not be of any particular breed or colour, but should display the ideal characteristics of a good riding horse.

In appearance and movement the Show Horse should be pleasing to the eye, with presence, elegance, balance and correctness. The Show Horse should show free, even, ground covering action, display good manners and be willing to obey the rider with minimum effort.

The Show Horse should be well conformed, as good conformation goes together with soundness and movement. The more correct the conformation, the easier it should be for the horse to attain good carriage, true movement, remain sound and produce a comfortable ride. In a Hack class the type should be refined and very elegant befitting a Show Hack.

### HEAD

The horse should have a quality head that is in proportion, well set on to the neck, defined features, a broad forehead, a clean jaw line tapering to a finer muzzle, with large open nostrils. The eyes should be clear and large, showing a kind and intelligent expression. The ears well shaped, not too large and carried alertly forward.

### NECK

A ridden horse should have a good length of rein, the neck should be in proportion, supple and form a natural arch from the withers to the poll, well set on from the shoulders blending onto the head with a clean gullet. The neck should not be too straight, short or thick nor give the appearance of being upside-down.

### SHOULDERS

Should be sloping and well laid back to the wither; they should be reasonably flat, not too bulky, loaded or straight. A straight shoulder usually leads to a short stride and not a comfortable ride. A well defined, but not too prominent, wither is desirable.

## CHEST

Should be well developed, not too narrow or overly wide.

## BACK & BODY

The horse should have a good, strong topline, the wither should be slightly higher than the croup. The girth should be deep, with well sprung ribs and adequate depth of barrel. The back should be relatively short and strong, not hollowed, dipped or roached. The loins well coupled, with a reasonable length from the croup to the tail.

## HINDQUARTERS

Should be well developed, rounded, and generously muscled with a strong second thigh. Hips should be square when viewed from behind, with plenty of length from the hip to the hock. The tail well set on, not too high or low, with a natural carriage.

## LIMBS

The horse should bear its weight evenly, on strong, clean, well set legs that suit the size of the horse. The legs should be free from any puffiness, faults or deviations, with correct angulation and length of bones and joints.

The legs should not be too wide apart, nor too close together and should not turn in or out. When moving, the action of the legs should be straight.

## FORELEGS

From front on the legs should be straight, not off set. The elbows defined and clear of the body, not tied in. The forearm well muscled. From front on the knees, to be broad, the side view a nice flat front surface: standing back or over at the knees is a fault. The cannons should be short, of good flat bone that is wider when viewed from the side, not tied in or cut away under the knee, nor too round in the bone. The tendons well defined and clean. The fetlocks clean and when viewed from the side, wide. The pasterns of medium length and sloping to a near 45 degree angle, not short and upright nor too long and dropped.

## HINDLEGS

Viewed from behind, the legs should be straight, the hocks should not turn in or out. Viewed side on the gaskins should be well muscled, the hocks should be well let down, wide, strong and free from any sign of curb or spavin. The hind leg should follow a vertical line from the point of the buttock to the point of the hock to the back of the fetlock; the angle of leg should not be too acute or sickle hocked, nor too straight or standing away.

## HOOVES

Should be in proportion to the size of the horse, round, regular in size and shape, with the hoof wall following the same line as the pastern. The heels strong and wide, the sole concave, with a well developed, firm frog.

When assessing the conformation of a horse, it would be the exception to find the perfect specimen. The basic requirement is for the horse to be in proportion and suitable for the purpose of being ridden. Consider the good qualities, take the faults into account, and then contemplate with care any apparent or predisposing condition that a fault may cause. It is the comparison of the good with the bad that challenges all Judges; the essence of good judging is for the balance to tip in favour of good, the tolerance of faults is personal preference.

## **SECTION 2 - CONFORMATION AND SOUNDNESS**

### **2.1 GENERAL ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES**

Judges are expected to have a good knowledge of common conformation faults, be able to recognise seats of unsoundness and an unevenness of gait.

Whenever possible horses should be assessed standing. A brief inspection prior to workout will usually suffice to provide the Judge a closer look at any obvious conformation fault (paying particular attention to the legs and feet) which may affect the soundness, performance and therefore the placing of the horse.

Blemishes, if only taking away from the overall appearance of the horse, should not be penalised but if necessary, because of depth of competition, be taken into account by the Judge .

Inspection and assessment is to be carried out visually. It is not considered correct protocol to feel a bump, draw undue attention to a horse's problem or express a 'medical' opinion.

A Judge should not make a diagnosis; he/she can only interpret to the best of his/her ability whether the horse is correct or, in his/her opinion, has faults which will take away from its overall appearance, function and performance.

In order to identify conformation faults during the workout, the Judge should be placed in such a position as to observe the tracking of the horse both going away and coming back from the workout. The overall outline of the horse and the correctness of movement should also be considered by the Judge in reaching a decision.

In higher competition it is not unusual to see horses standing head to tail for final assessment prior to Awards being made, or indeed to see horses being stripped of the saddle and led out for complete assessment.

While time does not normally allow this depth of inspection, the importance of conformation and soundness in judging the Show Horse is vital and a good proportion of the Judge's mark for the horse should be based on this aspect.

There are many excellent publications that can serve as reference points on conformation and soundness. A good understanding of the physiology and anatomy of the horse will assist in raising standards in the Show Ring.

## 2.2 CONFORMATION AND SOUNDNESS

*The material in Section 2.2 is taken from "Confirmation & Soundness" by John R.Kohnke BVSc. RDA, which appeared in Talking Horses Newsletter, Issue 8 (February – April 2006).*

Conformation, or the structural development of the limbs, size and body proportions of an individual horse can influence its balance, limb alignment, loading stress pathways and movement during exercise. Its conformation, in turn, which also **influences limb structure and alignment, can directly affect its overall skeletal strength and soundness in the long term.** Conformation and soundness are interrelated in influencing the movement, performance and overall quality and ability of a horse to function during its competitive lifetime. **Soundness** is a term that is often used to describe a horse's freedom from lameness. However, it can also relate to the horse's athletic structure and strength, as well as long-term suitability for a particular **purpose**, such as eventing, jumping, polocrosse, and hack and dressage competition. **Soundness for purpose** can include other measures of "soundness" such as **boldness, strength, willingness and temperament.** In a broodmare, "soundness" for breeding is also commonly evaluated by veterinarians

**Soundness** of the musculo-skeletal system can also be influenced by such factors as the **type of working surface, shoeing and hoof balance, dietary adequacy, body weight and the exercise program, especially as a horse ages.** Accidental injuries, such as lower limb lacerations, excessive bone modelling responses and abnormal hoof growth with long toes, low heels and imbalanced hooves, can all influence the relative soundness of a horse. A horse with a minor joint or tendon injury, for example, may not be suitable for upper level equestrian sports, but its "soundness" for lighter hack or led in competition will not be compromised. However, a horse with 'offset' cannon bones may remain sound for light exercise, but this type of conformation 'defect' is considered a potential 'unsoundness' in the show ring because of the likelihood of causing 'high splints' and is therefore a potential weakness and not a desirable feature. As a horse ages, natural 'wear and tear' and other degenerative changes, that are not always related or influenced by conformation, can occur and restrict its suitability for long-term training and competition.

The majority of splints located on the inside of the upper cannon area which appear to blend into the knee outline, are caused by underlying "offset cannon" bones as a conformational fault. The risk of 'high splints' in a young horse less than 5 years of age is influenced by the **degree of 'offset' in the cannon bones, the bulk of the shoulders and neck, the weight of the rider, and the amount of concussive exercise or deep surface work** the animal is given. Lower splints on the cannon can be considered a minor 'blemish', but high splints in the knee region, or those found close to tendons, should be appraised in relation to limb conformation and risk of interfering with tendon or knee joint soundness.

### IDEAL CONFORMATION

Most breed societies have 'standard' or 'ideal' conformation guidelines for judging the breed, particularly relating to proportion, head size and shape and overall body size and 'silhouette' that characterize a particular breed. Some bloodlines within a breed, such as Arabians, have certain desired conformation relating to head characteristics, which sets them aside from other Arabian bloodlines.

**NOTE: In this review, limb conformation relating to soundness is highlighted, rather than the desired conformation relative to each breed. Structural skeletal problems are a common cause of unsoundness, but even a strongly conformed horse can become unsound due to working on a hard concussive surface, excess body weight or onset of laminitis on spring pastures, or accidental injuries, such as a fall or paddock injury that results in joint sprain or tendon strain due to sudden overload. Nutritional influences, such as an imbalanced diet in a young growing horse, can increase the risk of joint and skeletal weakness in an otherwise well conformed horse.**

Many crossbreds have characteristics inherited from each breed, depending on the ‘dominant’ genes or characteristics. A Warmblood-Thoroughbred cross may inherit the Warmblood parents’ body size, temperament and movement, but the Thoroughbred parents’ finer lower limbs, which although well conformed, may be considered a “weak” limb structure to carry the higher body weight and muscle required to withstand a long term dressage career

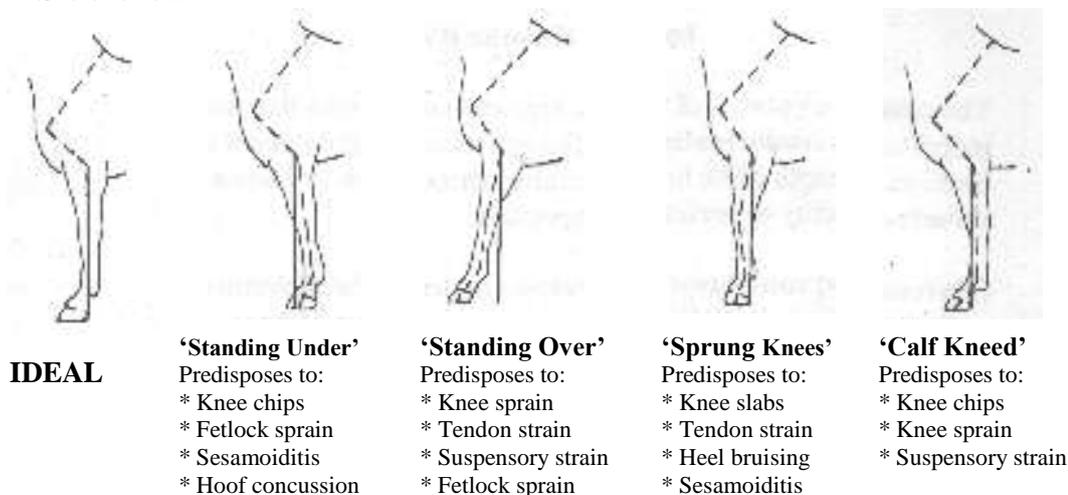
### A DEFINITIVE GUIDELINE

When assessing the ‘soundness’ against breed guidelines for judging, or prior to purchase in relation to structural soundness for exercise or purpose, or to correct weaknesses in a breeding horse by selecting a mate with strong conformation, a horse has to be viewed for balance, limb alignment, proportion and overall ‘trueness’ to breed standard or musculo-skeletal strength for athletic purpose.

The lower limbs, the shoulder and rear limb ‘angle’ all need to be carefully assessed, comparing each side with the other in relation to the ‘ideal’ conformation for a particular breed or purpose. For example, a strongly built, otherwise sound and well conformed, athletic Galloway with slightly ‘sickle’ hocks may make a suitable polo pony, as it will be able to turn on its rear limbs more easily. An otherwise sound horse with a thin weak hock structure, may be suitable for pleasure riding, but be unsuitable for long term dressage training, because the hock joints are subjected to high loading and movement when a horse is asked to work collected and with impulsion.

## Front Limb Conformation

### Side View



**Editors Note:** Conformation that shifts weight and loading forces to the rear of the limb and tendons increases tendon strain and knee and fetlock joint sprain in exercising horses, especially heavy, straight-shouldered horses used for jumping, eventing and Polocrosse.

## Side View Knees



**IDEAL**



**Open Knees**  
(Immature)  
Slight epiphysitis  
– may need more  
time to mature



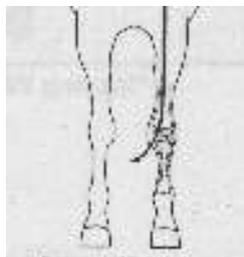
**'Cut out in Front'**  
Predisposes to:  
\* Knee chips  
\* Fetlock sprain  
\* Hoof concussion



**'Cut in Behind'**  
Predisposes to:  
\* Tendon strain  
\* Fetlock sprain

**Editors Note:** Weak knees are a major structural fault in heavy shouldered horses, especially those training for eventing, showjumping and dressage competition on hard, concussive surfaces.

## Front View

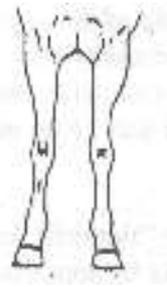


**Offset Cannon Bones**  
Predisposes to:  
\* High splints  
\* Knee weakness  
\* Hoof concussion

Varying degrees of 'offset' cannon bones are the most common conformation fault, which shifts upper limb weight onto the inside splint bone on the front limbs, with risk of high splints in young, heavy horses worked on a hard, concussive surface or lunged on a tight circle.

**IDEAL**





**Base wide-toe out**

Predisposes to:  
 \* Knee sprains  
 \* Fetlock sprain  
 \* Heel and inside hoof concussion



**Base narrow-toe out**

Predisposes to:  
 \* Knee sprains  
 \* Fetlock sprains  
 \* Tendon strain  
 \* Hoof concussion



**Base wide-toe in (pigeon-toed)**

Predisposes to:  
 \* Knee sprain  
 \* Fetlock sprain  
 \* 'Brushing'



**Base narrow-toe in (pigeon-toed)**

Predisposes to:  
 \* Knee chips  
 \* Tendon strain  
 \* Fetlock sprain  
 \* Hoof concussion

**Editors Note:** An imaginary line drawn down the middle of the knee and fetlock joints helps to evaluate toe-out or toe-in conformation on one or both legs. Narrow chested horses often have toe-out alignment, wide chested horses are often pigeon-toed.

## Hindlimb Conformation

### Side View



**IDEAL**



**'Sickle Hocks'**

Predisposes to:  
 \* Back sprain  
 \* Hock sprain  
 \* Curb ligament strain



**'Standing Away'**

Predisposes to:  
 \* Front limb overload  
 \* Short, choppy gait

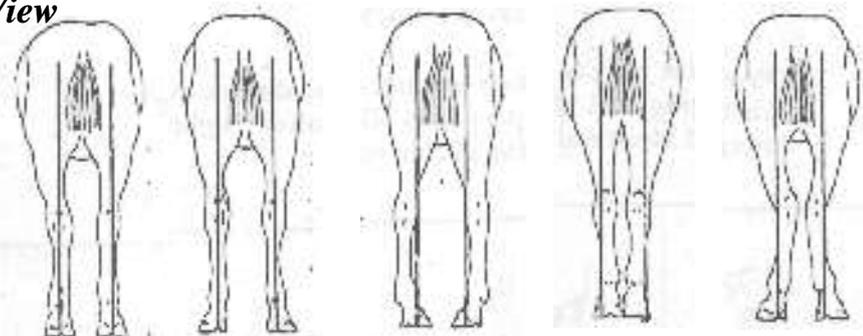


**'Straight Hocks'**

Predisposes to:  
 \* Bog Spavin – joint filling  
 \* Bone Spavin with age  
 \* Locking patella

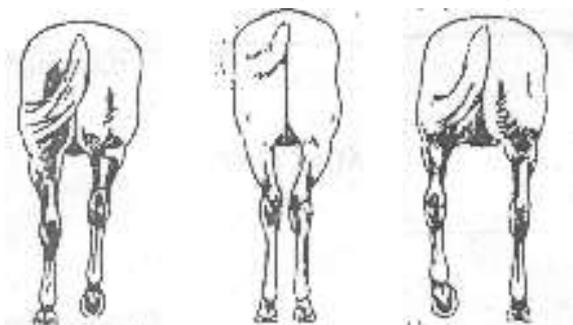
**Editors Note:** A strong, well-boned Hindlimb conformation is desirable for dressage and jumping horses where impulsion is required for movement. Very straight hind limb angles increase hock concussion and risk of patella locking. Weak, sickled ('standing under' hocks) often result in lower back and sacro-iliac ligament sprain in horses worked in heavy sand, especially heavy hindquarter horses.

### Rear View



**IDEAL** 'Stands Wide' 'Bow-legged' 'Close-split up behind' 'Cow Hocks'

### At the Walk (from rear)



'Straight Mover' 'Moving Narrow Behind' 'Moving Wide Behind'

**Editors Note:** Moving narrow behind (cow hocks) increases the risk of brushing and instability when turning. Wide behind alignment can result in transfer of weight to the front limbs.

### Pastern Angles



**Normal Pastern Angle**



**'Short-upright pastern'**  
 Predisposes to:  
 \* Joint concussion  
 \* Navicular disease  
 Accentuated by high heels and contracted tendons



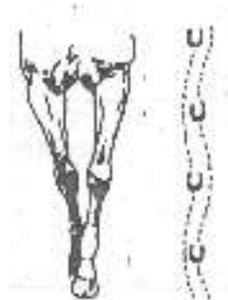
**Long upright pasterns and sloping pasterns**  
 Predisposes to:  
 \* Tendon strain  
 \* Fetlock sprain  
 Accentuated by low heels

**Editors Note:** Pastern length is influenced by genetics, but pastern angle can be influenced by toe length, heel height and tendon strength. Upright pasterns on the front limbs increase concussive injuries to fetlock and knee joints.

### Limb Alignment



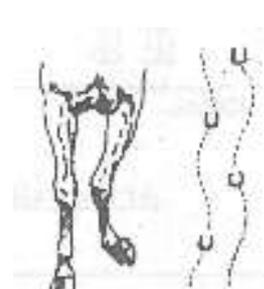
'Winging'



'Plaiting'



'Paddling'



'Dishing'

**Editors Note:** Working or trotting the horse over 20-30 metres away from and towards you will highlight any front limb alignment deviations – ‘dishing’ is commonly caused by inward deviation of the knee joints.

### **Disclaimer**

The information and recommendations in this newsletter have been presented as a guideline based on the veterinary experience and knowledge by the author, Dr. John Kohnke BVSc RDA. Whilst all care, diligence and years of practical experience have been combined to produce this information, the author/editor, Dr. John Kohnke, accepts no responsibility or liability for unforeseen consequences resulting from the hints and advice given in this newsletter.

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## **SECTION 3 - MANNERS, EDUCATION AND PACES**

The Show Horse should be obedient and well mannered, however, over exuberance or disobedience for a few strides may be forgiven. A hack should always display a willingness to go forward, be controlled, bright and interested in its work.

The Show Horse is not expected to perform any “true” collected movements such as collected walk, trot or canter, nor expected to perform advanced movements such as multiple flying changes etc.

### **PACES**

The hack should display good forward movement. It is essential for all paces to be regular and even. Any form of irregularity should be penalised. All paces should be straight and true without any noticeable deviations.

#### *THE WALK*

Natural and ground covering, regular even four beat gait. The hind feet should at least cover or ideally overstep the print of the front feet. The action should be loose, the sequence being lateral.

#### *WALK ON A LONG REIN*

The sequence and action stay the same as the walk. However a longer contact being given on the reins allows the horse to lower the head, lengthening the frame and the stride.

#### *THE TROT*

The trot is a rhythmical two beat gait. The limbs should move in a diagonal sequence separated by a moment of suspension. The trot should be well balanced, the horse should move forward with impulsion, the steps light, with good hock action.

### *LENGTHEN TROT*

The rhythm and sequence should remain the same as the trot. The frame of the horse should lower and lengthen allowing more reach from the shoulders and impulsion from behind. The moment of suspension increases, producing a distinct lengthening of stride.

### *THE CANTER*

The canter is a three beat gait, where at canter to the right for instance, the footfalls follow one another eg. left hind, left diagonal (ie left fore and right hind), right fore followed by a moment of suspension of all four feet in the air before the next stride begins. The horse should go freely forward with balanced light steps with obvious impulsion coming from the hindquarters.

### *LENGTHEN CANTER*

The horse goes forward covering more ground but maintaining the same rhythm. The strides should be long and even and the movement well balanced. The horse may reach a little more forward with the neck and be a little more in front of the vertical.

### *THE GALLOP*

The gallop is a four beat gait in which the horse must cover plenty of ground with great impulsion from the hindquarters. Whether it be a full or hand gallop, it should always be controlled. At its conclusion, the downward transition should be light and easy.

## CHANGES OF LEAD

### *SIMPLE CHANGE*

This is a movement where the horse is brought back immediately to walk and after two or three steps is re-started into canter with the other leg leading. A simple change may also be performed through the trot.

### *FLYING CHANGE*

The flying change of leg is executed in close connection with the moment of suspension which follows each stride of the canter. The horse should remain calm and straight, maintaining the same rhythm. A Judge should only request this movement if he/she is fully conversant with its execution.

## THE REIN BACK

This is a movement where the feet are raised and set down almost simultaneously by diagonal pairs ie left fore, right hind etc. The horse should be straight and any resistance to or evasion of the hand or deviation of the quarters from the line should be penalised. Three to four steps are normally required, with the horse immediately walking forward to regain ground.

## THE HALT

The horse should stand attentive, motionless and straight with the weight evenly distributed over all four legs. The neck should be raised with the poll high and the head slightly in front of the vertical.

## ON THE BIT

In all its work, even at the halt, the horse must be on the bit. A horse is said to be “on the bit” when the neck is raised and arched, according to the degree of training and the extension of the pace. The head should remain just slightly in front of the vertical and flexed at the poll. The horse should accept the bridle with a light soft contact.

## ACCEPTANCE OF THE BRIDLE

The horse must accept the bridle, whether it be a snaffle or a simple double bridle. It should go forward without resistance, accepting a soft contact. The horse may lightly “champ” the bit but the mouth should not be open or the tongue over the bit.

## ON THE LINE

The horse is moving on the correct line when it is perfectly straight from the tip of the nose to the tail when going forward on a straight line and is flexed through the poll and bent through the body when on a curve or when on a circle.

## SUMMARY

The saddle horse should be judged on the following principles:

- Quality and Presence - a well conformed horse, clean and well presented with eye catching appeal.
- True and correct paces - the paces are even and regular. Constant irregular or hurried strides should be penalised. However, occasionally a few irregular steps may be noticed - this can be caused by tension or a distraction and may disappear when the horse settles.
- Forward and straight - going forward on the one track ie. the hind legs following in the steps of the forefeet on all straight lines and curves.
- Manners - a hack should be well mannered and obedient but never mechanical and boring. Minor errors such as a wrong lead immediately corrected, breaking whilst lengthening stride at trot, exuberance corrected, restlessness at the halt may be forgiven. Bad manners such as kicking, rearing or bolting must be penalised.
- Outline - the horse goes forward in a rounded frame, not above the bit or on the forehead.
- Transitions - all transitions either upward or downward must be executed smoothly and progressively without resistance.

- Athletic Ability - is the ability to perform various movements whilst maintaining balance and self carriage
- .Acceptance of the Aids - the horse is going forward “happy” to accept the rider’s aids and responding well to any command.

## **SECTION 4 - HACK CLASS WORKOUTS**

A Judge should fully understand the degree of difficulty involved when planning and setting a workout. The workout should be set to suit the class he/she is judging.

### **NOVICE AND NEWCOMER**

Novice Classes have a performance criteria while Newcomer Classes are for horses in their first calendar year or season (as applicable) of competition.

Horses in either Classes should only be asked to perform basic manoeuvres at walk, trot and canter with adequate time for progressive transitions. The purpose of these Classes is to introduce the horse to Competition. A Novice or Newcomer is not expected to be fully educated but should be of good type, athletic in movement and complete a basic workout in a reasonable manner. It is expected that a Novice and definitely a Newcomer, be shown in a snaffle bit.

### **OPEN HACK**

An Open Hack Class should have a workout which allows the Judge to consider the horse’s paces, manners and athletic ability. The workout should be designed to show the Judge how the horse can perform. A Judge would be wise to set a flowing workout without any abrupt transitions.

The workout may include circles, serpentines, lengthening of stride at trot and canter and walk through or trot through changes. Because for the degree of difficulty, lengthening of trot on a straight line is more suitable.

Long and intricate workouts may not only provide a poor display but may also show a Judge to be inexperienced.

Vary workouts - figure of eight workouts are very acceptable for hack classes but so are triangles and other manoeuvres such as two or three loop serpentines and lengthening diagonally at trot and canter. At the conclusion of the workout, often a halt 20m away and walk back on a long rein followed by another halt is an interesting alternative.

Where disobedience of a horse becomes dangerous behaviour safety issues come into play and this behaviour should be severely penalised. Try not to penalise a quality horse though for minor errors such as a wrong lead corrected, jog in walk, breaking in trot for a few strides etc. These should be taken into account but, all considered, the best horse on the day should win! Due consideration should also be given to the effect of any outside distraction (ie woodchop, show jumping, trots etc). Look for the positive qualities you like about a horse you are judging rather than just counting all of its errors.

## LADY'S HACK

A Lady's Hack should be of a good type and, to suit a lady rider, it would be expected to show more impeccable manners without any displays of exuberance. A Lady's Hack must be able to stand still at the end of the workout or may even be requested to stand for 5 seconds at some time during the workout.

## CHILDS EQUESTRIAN HACK

A Childs Equestrian Hack should be of a good type and suitable for a rider under 17 years. It would be expected to go forward freely and lightly in the hand and be responsive to the aids of its young rider. Good temperament and obedience are desirable attributes, with the height of the mount being suitable for the age and size of the rider.

## SPECIAL EVENT WORKOUTS

Special Event workouts may at times be set by Show Societies and a Judge is expected to accede to any requirements in this regard.

## CHAMPIONSHIP WORKOUTS

Championship workouts need to be devised with the Judge bearing in mind that horses of varying ages and experience will be contesting the Championship. The workout should be set to provide sufficient opportunity for each exhibitor to present his/her "Show" to the best of his/her horse's ability.

The format is usually for the winners of each Class to be briefly assessed against each other on the Ring prior to the individual workouts. The workout is but one factor that the Judge will take into consideration in reaching his/her choice for Champion. The Reserve shall be decided from the second placegetter/s to the Champion and the remaining Class winners.

Care should be taken by the Judge to ensure all exhibitors in a Class receive the same instructions and that they fully understand what is required. The Judge should be able to separate the quality and standard of the entries without the workout being too involved. An overly intricate workout will only confuse the young or inexperienced and may put the horse the Judge really likes out of contention.

How the actual Champion Awards take place will depend on the type of Show. For example at Agricultural or Official S.H.C. Shows Champions are usually brought forward and sashed first; those eligible to contest Reserve are then brought into the Ring for further assessment. At Royals the winner is chosen but kept in line while second place getter/s number/s are called. After both Awards are decided results are announced and the Sashes go on.

At Horse Of The Year Shows there is usually a scoring system in place for assessing the Finalists; with the Runner-Up usually named and sashed prior to naming of the Winner. This certainly builds the atmosphere in the lead up to the main Award.

## **SECTION 5 - THE AUSTRALIAN SHOW HUNTER & WORKING HUNTER**

The Show Hunter has become a popular part of the Show scene in Australia, in the first instance due to the introduction of Show Hunter Ponies registered with the various Breed Societies. The popularity of these Classes has spilled over into the Open Rings as not all are eligible to compete in Breed Classes and owners have come to realise there are wonderful Show Hunter types that while not of the same refinement and movement as the Show Hack type, have other attributes that make them wonderful mounts with good temperament suitable for young riders as well as adults.

### **DEFINITION**

The Show Hunter should be of more substance than the Show Horse; of sound conformation, free from hereditary defects and unsoundness, provide a smooth, even ride and have a reliable temperament. The Show Hunter should have that “look at me” presence.

Height divisions are:

- **SHOW HUNTER PONIES:**  
Not exceeding 12.2hh, Over 12.2hh not exceeding 14 hh.
- **SHOW HUNTER GALLOWAYS (or Light Hacks)**  
Over 14 hh not exceeding 15 hh.
- **HORSES (Hacks):**  
Over 15 hh.

*The specification defined by Hunter Pony Stud Book Register in the U.K is*

- Correct conformation for riding and endurance.
- Substance without coarseness.
- Quality without fineness.
- Straightness and freedom of action in all paces.
- Natural balance.
- Boldness.
- Steady temperament.
- Colour immaterial.

This is comparable with the Australian standard except that strength and stamina are desired rather than endurance.

*“Introducing Show Hunters” by Mr David Ross is a source of reference when assessing Show Hunters, stating:*

“I believe the Judge should be looking for a definite Hunter type, and that their priorities should be: Type – Conformation – Action – Temperament”.

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SHOW HUNTER

Of middleweight, powerfully built, combining quality with substance. The Show Hunter should have good substantial bone, a strong well-muscled back, the hindquarters lengthy, strong, well muscled and rounded; a deep girth and be well ribbed.

The head must be in proportion to the body. It need not be as “refined” but should still be attractive, not common, with a kind, bold eye, with good air passages and well set onto the neck, which should have a good length of rein. The shoulder should slope back to well defined withers, strong but not coarse, the chest neither too narrow nor too wide.

Feet, as with all other parts of the body, should be in proportion. To provide sound footing hooves should not be too flat, too wide or too upright. Pasterns neither too short nor too long, fetlocks again in proportion, short cannon bones for strength and action, The knee to be flat not rounded, the hocks clean and strong, the upper leg muscle to have strong natural development.

The Show Hunter is not asked to jump. It should be sound in wind and limb; display the action and movement that would be expected of a horse capable of jumping in the field if necessary; some knee action is expected and an honourable lump can be overlooked.

Show Hunter Competition continues to evolve in Australia and unfortunately, some think that a common or coarse type of horse is a Show Hunter. That is not the case as quality and type are paramount. The Show Hunter being a more exuberant type does bring freshness to the Show Ring making it enjoyable to ride or watch.

## WORKOUT

Show Hunters compete on the flat only and do not need to prove they can jump. The workout should be similar to that expected in an Open Hack Class, but be kept simple and free flowing; it should include a hand gallop and a change of rein at the canter.

The horse must cover the ground in all paces, with the hand gallop being well balanced and moving from the shoulders, with the hind legs under. The horse to come through downward transitions to the Halt, being calm and obedient and then standing still with no fidgeting. A flat and stilted action is unacceptable. Contrary to some opinions, flying changes and extended trot are not expected in a Show Hunter workout. Manners are extremely important and all misdemeanours should be penalised.

## SADDLERY

- Should be clean, neat and well fitting, but may be more workmanlike than normal for an Open Hack Class.
- The Bridle should have a plain, flat Browband and Cavesson, (no raised or coloured Browbands)
- Bitting is optional.

## ATTIRE

- Hacking Jacket  
Tweed or similar, conservative colour.
- Shirt and Tie, Ratcatcher Shirt or Stock are also acceptable
- Breeches or Jodhpurs, Canary, fawn or banana in colour.
- Long Boots or Jodhpur Boots, Black or brown in colour
- Hard Hat or Helmet (meeting recognised Safety Standards).

## REFERENCE TEXTS

S.H.C. Competition Rules

“Introducing Show Hunters” by David Ross

## WORKING HUNTER SECTION

### DESCRIPTION

A working hunter should display the general characteristics of the show hunter and be a good, strong type of horse with true hunter conformation. He must display good manners at all times and is required to demonstrate good, bold jumping ability, whilst jumping smoothly and quietly. He should possess sound paces, appear to be a comfortable ride over long distances

It is expected that the rider should demonstrate control over their mount **at all times** and be able to turn and reduce pace smoothly and within a short time. This is because, on the hunt field, it is necessary for riders to be able to pull up quickly if there is an unforeseen hazard. The horse should give the appearance of being pleasant to ride.

### Evenness of pace:

- A fluid, smooth jumping round, ridden at a fair pace will earn high points for style, manners and presence.
- The jumping course should ideally be completed at a strong canter, but NOT a gallop.
- Excessive checking before fences should be marked down as this will alter the clarity and evenness of pace.
- Safety should always be taken into account in all phases of a working hunter class.

### Correct Jumping Style:

- Clean, clear and smooth jumping is the desirable base from which to Judge.
- Poor jumping style, propping into fences, lack of control etc. should receive low marks for jumping style.
- The aim of stylish jumping is to have the fence in the middle with takeoff and landing neither too far away or too close to the fence.
- Judges should look for a horse with good bascule over fences, balance, rhythm, impulsion, manners and safety of the ride;
- It should be considered a greater fault if a horse or pony raps a fence with its front feet as opposed to a rap with the hind feet.
- A Judge should severely penalise faults which may present a danger to horse and/or rider.

**Straight Jumping:**

A veering horse on the hunt field puts other horses and riders around it at risk and should be penalised.

**Leaving the Ring:**

Once competition commences, competitors and/or horses are **NOT permitted to leave the ring FOR ANY REASON**. Failure to comply will result in elimination.

**Manners:**

If at any stage the Judge feels a horse is **not under sufficient control** or if a horse refuses to stand or displays any mannerisms contrary to the conduct that is required of a hunter, it is at the Judge's discretion that the horse may be asked to leave the ring thus resulting in ELIMINATION from the event.

**PHASES**

There are three phases contained within the working hunter class.

- 1) Jumping Phase;
- 2) Flatwork Phase
- 3) Conformation Phase.

**These phases may be judged in three separate phases, or combined, depending on the preference of the Judge on the day.**

At the completion of the class, the total scores from all phases are added together to produce a mark out of one hundred. Places are awarded according to these final scores and as such, the competitor with the highest mark will be the eventual winner. In the event of equality of marks, the Judge will choose a winner from the two highest placed horses. The Judge's decision in all cases is final.

**Overall allocation of marks:**

Jumping: style and ability	50 points
Flatwork	30 points
Conformation	20 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

**JUMPING COURSE**

A full working hunter jumping course should include a minimum of two and a maximum of five jumping efforts.

Working hunter jumps should emulate obstacles which a rider would expect to encounter on the hunt field. Ground lines are essential and the course must be set in such a way as to encourage a free, flowing and forward round.

Jumps must be constructed with safety in mind. For example: jumps such as gates must be constructed in such a way that if a horse was to leave a foot between the rails, it can easily be withdrawn. The use of jump wings is to be encouraged.

There are many ways to set up a working hunter course. For example, jumps may be set out around the perimeter of the arena in a circle and may be jumped more than once (if required) in each competition. It is preferable, however, for jumps to be set also across the centre of the ring to allow the introduction of a figure of eight within the course. Regardless of size, each course should include a change of direction.

## **1. Jumping Phase**

Competitors are required to negotiate a ~~rustie~~ course comprising of no more than five jumping efforts, to be ridden at a controlled hunting pace. Competitors are permitted to walk the course on foot.

During competition, competitors should enter and present themselves to the Judge or the Steward in charge of the event to accept their starting orders. The Judge will alert the competitor, with a wave of the Judge's hand that they may begin their round. No jumps may be jumped prior to a competitor receiving instruction from the Judge.

A Judge may request that competitors show a gallop before, within or after their jumping round. This will be at the discretion of the Judge.

The fall of any jump rail (even if the top rail remains) or filler will be counted as a fault if it happens at the time that the horse is jumping the fence.

A fall of horse or rider in the Jumping Phases will result in elimination.

Riders must halt at the end of their round and acknowledge the Judge.

If there are more than 5 clear rounds in the Jumping Phase, only those with clear rounds are to progress to the Flatwork Phase.

### **Maximum Heights of Jumps**

Classes should be divided according to the heights of jumps.

Recommended jump heights are:

HORSES UNDER 12hh: 35cm

NOVICE WORKING HUNTER: 50cm

INTERMEDIATE WORKING HUNTER: 65cm

OPEN WORKING HUNTER: 80cm

### **Marks for the Jumping Phase:**

The Judge will mark each competitor's jump round out of (50).

This mark will be formulated not only on the basis of whether or not the competitor knocked any rails, but will also take into consideration manners, style, pace, control etc shown by each combination while jumping.

### **JUMPING FAULTS:**

The following marks are to be deducted as such:

1<sup>st</sup> Rail down or refusal                      10 POINTS

2<sup>nd</sup> Rail down or refusal                      20 POINTS

3<sup>rd</sup> Rail down                                      20 POINTS

3rd Refusal                                        Elimination

Note: Competitors eliminated in the Jumping Phase will not be required for the Flat work phase

## **2. Flat work**

For the Flatwork Phase of a working hunter class, a Judge will prescribe an individual more free flowing workout than that of a show horse class and/or may work competitors together on the ring with a change of rein. Show Hunter workouts are encouraged to be more straight lines and diagonals than circles.

### **Marks for the Flat work Phase**

A mark out of 30 will be given for the Flatwork based on the Judge's assessment of the horse's manners, movement and general impression (presentation/correct attire. A fall of horse or rider in this Phase will result in elimination.

### **3. Conformation Phase**

A Judge will assess the conformation of each horse keeping in mind the characteristics required in a true hunter type. In the judge's opinion, horses which are not of true hunter type, will not score well for conformation.

Where possible, and if time permits, a Judge should request that a horse be stripped of its tack to help conclude an accurate conformation mark, however, horses may be assessed on conformation under saddle, should time be a factor.

### **Marks for the Conformation Phase:**

The Judge will award a final mark out of 20 to each horse for their conformation and type.

### **ATTIRE**

- Hacking Jacket - Tweed or similar, conservative colour.
- Shirt and Tie, Ratcatcher Shirt or Stock are also acceptable
- Breeches or Jodhpurs Canary, fawn or banana in colour.
- Long Boots or Jodhpur Boots, Black or brown in colour
- Helmet (meeting recognised Safety Standards) with chin strap

### **SADDLERY & GEAR PROTOCOLS**

- Turnout for working hunter classes is similar to a show hunter class, however an all-purpose or jumping saddle may be worn.
- All horses/ponies are to be ridden in a simple biting such as a simple snaffle, double Pelham with either double or split reins (either is permissible especially for children.) Bits such as gags, tongue ties or any specialised types of biting for control are not permissible.
- Whips must be a maximum length of 75cm excluding the thong and/or lash if a hunt whip is carried.
- No bearing reins, side or running reins of any kind are permitted.  
A correctly fitted running martingale is allowed in the jumping section, (however it will be at the Judge's discretion whether this may or may not be marked down).
- Protective boots (horse) are permissible for the Jumping Phase ONLY.
- No change of saddlery is allowed between, or during, phases, except for the removal of boots and running martingale for the flatwork and Conformation Phases.  
Competitors should ensure a groom is on hand to remove these as quickly as possible.

**RECOGNITION:** The SHC expresses its appreciation to Mrs Samantha Watson as author, for permitting the SHC to largely base its Working Hunter Rules & Guidelines contained in this publication on her Documents (under copyright) as adopted by the Australian Hunter Horse Association for its competitions.

#### **REFERENCE TEXTS**

S.H.C. Competition Rules.

S.H.C. Rules, Schemes and Policies

## SECTION 6 - PRESENTATION

### 6.1 PRESENTATION

The art in showing is to produce and present the show horse in the most visually attractive way possible.

By highlighting the best features of the horse and disguising, by natural means, the horse's less appealing features, an illusion of better conformation or beauty can be created. Examples: the use of quarter marks, checker board or other patterns to enhance the hind quarter, leaving a narrow <sup>22</sup> bridle path with the use of small plaits to create the impression of longer length of rein; note that English style sewn plaits are now favoured for all levels of showing. The tail either plaited or pulled, then trimmed to a suitable length will improve a coarser outline and balance the hind quarter; false tails are widely used to enhance a horse's appearance.

The first impression of the horse on entering the Show Ring is the most important. A good coated, well conditioned horse presented immaculately will always catch the eye. A glossy, fine, healthy coat is the result of much effort in the feeding, exercising and grooming of the horse, while attention paid to rugging and stabling pays off in the overall look of well being in the horse. Commercial products can assist in dressing up the Show Horse but cannot replace the practical aspects of sound horse care.

In Turnout Classes, presentation is taken into consideration and points awarded. Simple is best in these classes with the emphasis being on more traditional style. See Section on Turnout Classes.

Smartest On Parade Classes allow the competitor to deviate from tradition and display more individuality and colour in their overall presentation. This is achieved by co-ordinating a coloured brow band to suit the horse and to complement the colour of the rider's attire and accessories.

Best Presented Classes are a feature at Breed Shows. Breed Societies can provide information on the particular requirements of this type of event in relation to their Breed.

In presentation, the overall impression is paramount. Therefore the appearance of the rider or handler should complement that of the horse by presenting a co-ordinated picture which will capture the Judge's eye.

### 6.2 IMPROVING 'TOP-LINE'

*The material in Section 6.2 is taken from " A Combo of Feeding and Exercise" by John R.Kohnke BVSc. RDA, which appeared in Talking Horses Newsletter, Issue 8 (February – April 2006).*

Many riders and owners of show or competition horses like to have their horses in a well-conditioned appearance, with a strong, rounded out 'topline' and rump. There are a number of

feeds, herbal mixes, and natural ‘hormones’ and combined supplements that claim to add ‘topline’ and build muscle.

**On a physiological basis, muscle tissue only develops in response to the combination of adequate protein and exercise to encourage muscle development and “bulk” as a basis for improved ‘topline’ and rump.**

Unfortunately, emphasis on “body builders” and feeds that ‘lift weight’ and condition, tend to add extra fat rather than muscle, often with a ‘podgy’ appearance and softness that looks out of place in a horse that needs hard “bulk” and topline rather than voluminous ‘gut’ and a thick rib covering.

The common belief that it is possible to put on “condition” (fat) and then change it to muscle (protein) by exercise and training is a myth as well – fat supplies aerobic energy for exercise, which can help to improve muscle endurance during exercise and ‘fatness’ indirectly, but muscle “bulk” requires a good quality protein base in a ration, as well as exercise to stimulate its development.

In years gone by, when ‘anabolic’ (steroid) hormones were commonplace, muscle bulk and strength, as well as “attitude” was a desirable outcome from anabolic use. However, muscle development still required a diet that was adequate in protein. Much of the increased muscle “bulk” or muscle size resulting from anabolic use, was, in fact, due to increased water retention in the muscles, which ‘melted away’ once the horse was taken off the anabolic ‘hormone’, fed a lower protein working diet, became dehydrated in hot weather, or was rested without regular exercise.

The natural rice-based hormone, ‘gamma-oryzanol’, given in feeds and supplements, has been ‘touted’ as a way of increasing muscle bulk quickly in the working horse. There is little research or trial based evidence in horses to suggest the degree of muscle building benefit in the time often claimed, although it appears that supplementation, combined with controlled body building exercises in humans and dogs, may have a benefit over time. It may help improve the appetite in horses in hard work.

## **SECTION 7 - IN HAND CLASSES**

Showing horses In Hand, whether in a specific Breed or Open Led Hack Class involves considerable preparation and training. Except where Breed requirements differ, horses should be presented as they would be for a ridden hack class - clean, well conditioned and well groomed with mane and forelock plaited, tail either pulled or plaited, with all the intricate details of grooming such as quarter marks etc being acceptable.

The attire of the handler can vary from standard riding habit to practical but attractive street clothing. However, at all times, clothing should be neat, tidy, suitable for handling and showing a horse and also in accordance with any dress requirements set by the Show Society.

Led Hack Classes are usually divided into the same height sections as the ridden hack classes (ie Pony, Galloway and Hack) including segregation of different sexes (mare, gelding, stallion). The classes can be contested by any breed or type of horse, however, in open led classes preference is normally for a horse or pony suitable for riding.

Correctness of conformation, movement, soundness and type are qualities assessed in a led class. Conformation faults are usually standard, regardless of breed. Some characteristics are relevant to height - a pony should display pony characteristics and should not look horsey, whereas a hack over 15hh should generally be of Thoroughbred type.

The riding attributes of other breeds can enhance the qualities required in the ideal hack. The galloway can display an influence from either end of the height scale or ideally show a balanced combination of both pony and Thoroughbred, while the world wide influence that the Arabian has made to most breeds of the riding horse should also be considered. Regardless of height, the Led Hack should display quality, substance, balance and be true to type.

Conformation and movement are of major consideration in assessing the led horse. Good judgement is important in assessing conformation and to what degree a fault may effect the soundness of a horse. Very few horses have perfect conformation but some have fewer faults than others. It is this comparison, together with the evaluation of good qualities that should determine a Judge's selections and consequent placing in a class.

Good conformation should produce good movement (Refer sections on Conformation and Paces) providing the horse is sound, although care should be taken not to prejudge conformation before studying the horse in motion.

The horse should parade in a Led Class in a tractable manner. The age of the horse can play a part in regard to behaviour, however bad manners are a fault and should be taken into consideration; after all, temperament plays a major role in the usefulness of any horse. In Led Classes, horses are required to walk, trot and stand. The method of conducting a led class can vary. Usually the entrants are required to parade clockwise around the ring where the Judge selects the entrants required for further selection, including a workout.

Workouts for Led Classes are fairly basic. The horse should be required to move away, across and towards the Judge to allow appraisal of movement and correctness of action. When standing, the horse should be observed from both sides, from the rear and the front.

In Breed Classes the Judge should be familiar with the standard for that particular Breed and take into account (with the exception of a gelding) they are judging an animal to be used for breeding purposes. Some Breeds do have characteristics and type particular to their Breed, some may be presented differently. Some Breeds do not require manes to be plaited or the horses are shown in a headstall instead of a bridle, although at all times suitable gear should be used to ensure the safe control of the horse. With some Breeds the attire of the handler may differ as with the Western Breeds etc.

Led Classes have always been a tradition in the hack ring. At most shows they are usually the first classes in the days program and can be an excellent avenue for introducing an inexperienced horse to the show ring. Led classes are enjoyable to Judge and offer a great deal of satisfaction to the competitor and anyone who enjoys the appraisal of a well conformed horse.

## **SECTION 8 – LEADING REIN & FIRST RIDDEN**

These are horse events not Rider events however both have height & age criteria applying.

Both Classes have proved very popular and are now included in most major Competitions including Horse Of The Year, The Grand National & its Qualifier Shows. These Classes can offer a safety conscious prestige competition for young riders and small Ponies, providing a transition into open ridden competition.

In Leading Rein Classes Criteria of age (3yrs & Under 8yrs), height of pony (n/e 12hh), dress and saddlery apply. At some Shows, apart from the normal award ribbons the remaining competitors may receive a special coloured ribbon or a small bag of sweets etc. as an encouragement.

The combination is expected to be able to safely parade on the Ring and carry out a simple set workout. The handler's contact should not cause the lead rein to be taut but to be slack (loopy) as the rider should have some influence on the control of the pony, a snaffle bit only may be used. (See Competition Rules) Suitability and manners are the main attributes and the combination should present a happy well balanced picture. The winner should always be selected in line with these priorities.

In First Ridden Classes the height of the Pony shall not exceed 12.2hh & the rider shall be under 12 years of age. The exhibitor is are expected to work on the Ring and perform a short simple workout; canter may be included providing the young rider is sufficiently confident and competent. If a canter is not performed it should not disadvantage the competitor providing the pony has worked calmly and obediently under the direction of the rider. In these Classes the pony should be quiet but attentive when standing.

## **SECTION 9 - RIDING CLASSES**

When judging a riding class a Judge should consider the ability of the rider to maintain a correct, well balanced, deep and supple seat, with the rider being in perfect harmony with the horse. The rider should demonstrate the ability to apply the aids of leg, hand and body accurately and effectively upon request.

### **THE SEAT**

The seat of the rider is very important. If the rider is not balanced and relaxed on the horse's back, the horse cannot be influenced correctly. The rider should sit well down in the deepest part of the saddle with the weight evenly distributed on both seat bones.

## THE HEAD

The head of the rider should be carried well above the shoulders so that the weight flows straight down through the spine. Any movement of the head, either forward or backwards or sideways, would effect the balance of both horse and rider.

## THE SHOULDERS

The shoulders of the rider should be carried square and parallel to the horse's shoulders. The rider should maintain a vertical position and, when viewed from the side, a line could be drawn from the rider's ear, shoulder, elbow, hip and heel to the ground.

## THE UPPER BODY

The upper body of the rider should be carried tall and erect with the weight going down the spine and evenly distributed on both seat bones. The rider should sit tall without becoming stiff and should maintain the suppleness of the lower back. The rider should not allow his/her body to tilt forward in front to the vertical as the weight would be removed from the seat bones. Nor should the body lean back behind the vertical as this would place too much weight on the horse's back.

## THE LOWER BACK & LOWER SPINE

The lower back and lower spine of the rider, together with the hips and loins play a very important role in riding as they act as a shock absorber and absorb the movements of the horse. If this part of the body is not supple, the rider will be quite uncomfortable on the horse, in both sitting trot and canter.

## THE HANDS

The hands of the rider should be held above the wither so they form a straight line from the horse's mouth to the rider's elbow. The thumbs should be held almost uppermost with the hands close together but not touching one another or the horse.

The upper arm and elbow should be relaxed at the rider's side, with the upper arm, elbow and forearm almost forming a right angle. The hands should remain steady but not rigid and they should always follow the movements of the horse.

## THE LEGS

The legs of the rider should be in contact with the horse, with the knees closed but relaxed and the lower leg stretched well down with the heels just below the toes.

The lower legs should maintain a light but permanent contact just behind the girth without gripping and they should be allowed to do their job of feeling, communicating and creating impulsion.

The ball of the foot or the toe should rest on the stirrup irons with the toe almost parallel to the horse's shoulder.

## COMMON FAULTS

- Collapsed hip
- Drawing up of the lower leg and knee

- Toes pointed downwards or out
- Upper body too stiff or slumped
- Leaning forward or back (in front or behind the vertical)
- Rider not in rhythm with the horse's movement
- Incorrect diagonals
- Gripping with the back of the calf
- Hands too flat
- Rider looking down
- Rider round shouldered

## WORKOUTS

Workouts should be suitable for the class. Consideration should be given to the standard of the competition and the experience and/or age of the competitors.

A Judge should be thoroughly conversant with the principles of the "correct riding position" and the workout should allow the Judge to assess the riders before him/her in accordance with those principles.

A Judge should be aware of how the various paces should be ridden:

### *RISING TROT*

The rider must ride on the correct diagonal - when the outside fore leg of the horse is on the ground the seat of the rider must be in the saddle. A change of direction is accompanied by a change of diagonal.

### *EXTENDED CANTER*

The rider must sit well down in the saddle and push the horse forward with seat and legs.

### *HAND GALLOP*

The rider should shorten the reins, take the weight out of the saddle into the forward seat, with slightly more contact with the knees.

Simple workouts are recommended for riders under 12 years of age.

Junior Riders 12-17 years should have developed a firmer seat and they should be capable of applying the aids more effectively. They should be expected to show several transitions, walk or trot through changes, sitting trot and lengthening of stride at trot and canter and a rein back.

Adult Riders should be able to perform any workout, including sitting trot, lengthening of stride at both trot and canter, extended canter, hand gallop, both walk and trot through changes and rein back. They should be able to ride circles, serpentines, straight lines with correct flexion and bend and should be capable of applying the aids correctly and effectively.

## SECTION 10 - TURNOUT

PLEASE NOTE: Wherever specific Dress requirements are included in the Rules applying to a Show, competitors are required to adhere to those regulations.

The Turnout Class is very much a traditional event where the complete picture of horse, rider, saddlery and clothing is judged. There is a long accepted standard as to what is traditional and expected as correct Turnout.

The horse is judged as in a hack class, the rider as in a rider class, with the horse and rider fastidiously groomed, clothing and saddlery correct, clean and well fitted, with all presenting an overall pleasing picture.

In judging Turnout Classes, points are usually allotted for the following categories:

- Conformation and Soundness
- Manners and Paces
- Riding Ability
- Costume of Rider
- Saddlery
- Overall General Appearance of Horse and Rider

At major shows, (ie Royals etc) the Turnout Classes are usually judged by more than one Judge, with each officiating in one or a combination of the above categories.

In recent times, points of view may differ regarding some minor Costume and Saddlery deviations from tradition. This depends on the Judge's personal opinion of what he/she considers is acceptable, without the competitor being penalised. However, both Judge and competitor should keep in mind the comfort of the horse and rider, along with tradition, when considering Turnout Classes.

There are several different categories of Turnout Classes - ie:

- Formal - Adults only
- Semi-Formal - also Adults only
- Informal - for Children and in some instances, Adults

The major difference in each of the above categories is the costume of the rider. In major events the rider's costume may be judged with the rider unmounted.

The traditional requirements for costume are:

**FORMAL - ADULTS ONLY:**

- A hard safety type black bowler. A lanyard is optional and if worn is to be correctly attached to the bowler and hooked inside the coat on a loop. A hairnet is appropriate for ladies. Royal Shows etc. have particular Rules which apply to their Competitions and may not include wearing of a bowler, Rules of the Show are to be consulted and adhered to.

- A collarless white shirt with stud holes at the front and back of the neck band. The studs connecting the neck of the shirt and the stock should be gold topped with the flat piece at the back, placed through the shirt hole and attached to the loop of the stock. The shirt cuffs should be doubled and lightly starched with holes for cuff links.
- Plain gold cuff links, preferably with a chain.
- White starched stock, preferably of Swiss Marcella fabric, neatly tied (not ready tied) in a hunting stock knot. The knot should be square with the flaps each side neat and fastened with gold safety pins to the shirt.
- Waistcoat, preferably of woollen Tattersalls check; must not have a false back and should be barely visible under the lapel of the coat, with all buttons above the waistline fastened.
- The riding coat should be of woollen Cavalry twill fabric, dark in colour (black is most popular although navy or dark grey is acceptable), single vent back, the lapel edges hand picked with a button hole in the lapel. In “Memorial” events, a flower, preferably white, should be worn on the lapel. The coat lining preferably black or discreetly matching the coat colour. All the buttons above the waistline should be fastened and a white handkerchief in the pocket.
- Breeches should be woollen cavalry twill (some Judges may consider wool blend or a good quality stretch fabric) beige, yellow or cream in colour with hand picked stitching along the thigh and knee seam, with matching suede or doe skin knee strapping. The breeches to have an opening below the knee, fastened by small buttons, with only three buttons visible above the top of the boot and the boot garter strap sitting between the second and third button.
- Black leather top boots with garter straps stitched and lined with a colour matching the breeches.
- Spurs should be plain stainless steel dummy type sitting level with the seam of the boots and black doubled and stitched straps with keeper and buckles matching the boot garter straps.
- Gloves fastened at the wrist by a small button, string cotton back and leather palms and matching the colour of the breeches.
- Hacking cane plaited or plain pigskin to match the colour of the saddlery.
- Both Formal and Semi-Formal are acceptable in Gentlemen's Turnout Classes.

#### SEMI-FORMAL - ADULTS ONLY

- Bowler, velvet covered Hunting cap or Helmet meeting recognised Safety standards..
- Collared shirt with cuff and tie - plain gold tie bar and cuff links.

All remaining attire the same as required for Formal classes.

#### INFORMAL AND CHILDREN

- Adults: Velvet covered Hunting cap or Helmet meeting recognised Safety standards in colour to blend with clothing.
- Children: Velvet covered Helmet meeting recognised Safety standards in colour to blend with clothing.
- Collared shirt with cuffs, preferably white or cream - plain gold cuff links.
- Tie of a plain colour to blend with the clothing, attached to shirt with plain gold tie bar.
- Waistcoat of discreet check or plain colour to match jodhpurs and barely visible underneath the lapel of the coat with all buttons above the waistline fastened.
- Riding coat of wool type tweed fabric or plain colour, although not too dark and not black, single vent.
- Jodhpurs should be woollen Cavalry twill, wool blend or good quality stretch fabric, beige, yellow or cream in colour with hand picked stitching along the thigh and knee seam, with matching suede or doe skin knee strapping. They should fasten on the outside of each ankle coming down over the top of the Jodhpur Boots.
- Boots: Adults as for formal attire
- Children: Jodhpur Boots - short leather, either brown or black.
- Gloves as for formal attire.
- Hacking cane as for formal attire.
- Spurs should be stainless steel dummy type with straps matching the colour of the boots. Spurs are not essential for riders under 12 years of age.

In assessing costume, it should be noted that jewellery should not be worn and loud colours avoided.

All clothing should be colour co-ordinated, fit well and be well made from good quality fabric.

#### GENERAL APPEARANCE

- The horse should be well presented as for a Hack class, well conditioned, clean and well groomed. A clipped coat is not recommended.
- The mane and forelock should be neatly plaited and stitched and the mane plaits an uneven number. The tail should be either pulled or plaited.
- The horse's makeup should be minimal; quarter marks such as checks or sharks teeth are NOT to be applied in Turnout events.
- False tails are optional - some Judges allow them and some do not.

- As well as presenting an overall correct, tidy and well groomed picture, the horse and rider should suit each other in relation to size and display a unified picture when in motion.

In summing up, the judging of and competing in Turnout Classes requires considerable expertise as there are many fine points to be considered.

The smallest of detail can win or lose a Turnout Class, however, the challenge of presenting a traditionally correct horse and rider combination in today's modern world makes the Turnout Class a prestigious and interesting event.

## SADDLERY FOR TURNOUT

- All saddlery must be clean, well cared for and in good condition.
- The saddle - quality supple leather, hacking or dressage style. All "D"s and studs covered. The stirrup leathers and girth should match the colour of the saddle.
- It must be a suitable size for the rider and fit the horse, sitting level and close to the horse whilst allowing the centre channel to be clear with no pressure over the horse's wither. The fit should be assessed with the rider mounted.
- Traditionally the turnout saddle should have three short girth points, however, in recent times, long points with a two buckle girth may be acceptable to some Judges.
- The saddle should be secured with a Fitzwilliam girth, buckling evenly on both sides, with sufficient holes to allow the girth to be loosened or tightened.
- Stirrup leathers must be supple with the end of the leather passing through the saddle flap keeper without extending beyond the saddle flap.
- The stirrup irons should be stainless steel, English style, with the stirrup bars roughened (no rubber treads).
- A sheepskin saddle cloth (numnah) is optional and should match the colour and shape of the saddle (brown or black), being unobtrusive as possible.
- The bridle - quality plain supple leather, finely stitched and matching the colour of the saddle. The width of the bridle straps may vary to suit the horse's head, however, the fit must be correct. The buckles attaching the head piece should be level with each other, sitting comfortably around or just above the horse's eye. All connections to the bits should be by stud billets.
- The bit, preferably a bit and bradoon, should fit the horse's mouth with the curb chain having adequate adjustment sitting flat in a block leather cover with lip strap.
- It is generally considered that the bridle should be of flat leather, however in Junior Turnout Classes a raised brow and nose band may be acceptable on a pony. Coloured or metal brow bands are not acceptable.

## SECTION 11 - SADDLERY

Important considerations when selecting saddlery are:

- Correctness of fit - ill fitting gear can create problems with the horse e.g. bridle too tight or small will exert uncomfortable pressure on the head of the horse while a saddle sitting too low on the wither or unevenly on the back will cause soreness.
- Purpose - style or type of saddlery will be determined by the proposed use eg: Led, Novice, Open, Turnout. If necessary be guided by a reputable person who understands your level of expertise and competition needs.
- Quality and care - careful selection of good quality saddlery followed by regular attention paid to the cleaning and dressing of the gear will determine the amount of use you will enjoy from your saddlery. The cleanliness, suppleness and good order of the gear is paramount when being assessed in competition. (See Turnout Section)
- Appearance - Saddlery for competition should be selected to be compatible with and complement the appearance of the horse eg: colour and style to add to the overall visual appeal.
- A flat brow band and cavesson noseband will neaten a not so dainty head while a plain headed horse can be improved by the use of decorative brow bands, studs etc.

Saddlery's purpose is more than anything else, functional. Selection should be based on this aspect with comfort of the horse and rider taken into consideration along with the points above.

Martingales, any kinds of gadgets (bearing reins, side, running balance reins etc), any kind of boots or bandages, any form of blinkers are forbidden.

Gadgets are available and should be treated with caution and only used by experienced horse people. Most are meant to be used whilst the horse is lunged or in hand NOT when being ridden and definitely NOT in the Show ring.

Unsafe, cruel, ill fitting or unsuitable gear or saddlery must be replaced or removed at the request of the Judge, Ringmaster or a member of the Ground Jury. Failure to comply with such a request will mean the horse is ineligible to compete.

## **SECTION 12 – DRESS & PROTOCOL**

### **JUDGES DRESS**

- It is expected that anyone judging at a Show be attired in a clean, neat and tidy fashion.
- Clothing should be practical, suitable, comfortable and appropriate for the prevailing weather.
- A Judge may dress in riding habit/costume or in suitable street clothes but should be smartly attired. Judges should not present themselves in mini skirts, jeans, shorts, see through attire, collarless shirts, tee shirts, wind cheaters, open shoes or joggers.
- A hat is important for its practical implications, however, a sensible approach is needed. The hat must fit well and be firmly secured. It should not be outlandish in size.
- Hair should be neat and tidy.
- It is wise to be prepared for changes in the weather. Remember to be covered sufficiently to avoid sunburn. Dress simply and practically so that you are comfortable and can enjoy your day.
- Shoes are to be comfortable and practical. High heels are impractical as they sink into the ground and restrict movement. Flat or very low heels are advisable.
- A man should wear a collar and tie, trousers and a coat. Moleskins are acceptable but not jeans.

### **MAJOR EVENTS**

There are now more opportunities for Judges to officiate at the highest level. Apart from the Royals, there are State Horse Of The Year Shows and Grand National Qualifying Shows. A Judge officiating at this level is expected to dress more formally befitting the occasion.

### **JUDGE'S PROTOCOL**

- Official Judges should make sure they keep up to date with the current trends of showing. They must also be aware of and abide by the current S.H.C. Competition Rules.
- An invitation to judge should be met with a prompt reply. This enables the Show organisers to know where they stand and will hopefully avoid the problem of acquiring a Judge at the last minute. Should a judging fee, travelling expenses or accommodation requirements need to be arranged, this is better discussed when a Judge is initially approached then confirmed in writing by the Show organisers.

- A judge should not accept an appointment if he/she has or will judge/d the same Section/s at a Show being held within the same ASC Boundary in a 3 month period. Refer to SHC Competition Rules applying to judging appointments at Grand National Qualifiers.
- Prior to accepting a Judging appointment, check the type of classes you will be required to judge and ensure you are competent to officiate in the classes before accepting.
- A Judge should ensure arrival at the Show approximately 30 minutes prior to the commencement time of the section they are to judge in order to make any necessary acquaintance with the organising Committee and your steward.
- Inform your steward of any requirements you have in conducting the classes and in turn allow the steward to carry out his/her duties. It is important your steward is kept aware of your requirements as competitors often approach the steward for clarification of a Judge's instructions.
- The Judge should be in control of his/her ring and has the prerogative to dismiss any exhibit considered unruly, dangerous or distressed. Dismissal may also apply to an exhibit incorrectly presented; this relates to either tack or attire.
- The Judge should ensure that the events they are judging are conducted in a safe and fair manner. Large classes should be split in accordance with Competition Rules.
- Should problems occur such as a loose horse or any occurrence that proves overly upsetting to the exhibits, then the class should be held until the problem subsides. Likewise, any problems that are evident and effect the suitability of the judging area should be brought to the notice of the Ringmaster,
- It is the responsibility of the Judge to check the nature of the class and the number of placings to be awarded and to call in the appropriate number of horses eg. the number of horses called in should exceed the number of placings by a minimum of two.
- Make every effort to assess each exhibit paraded in a class but alternatively be careful not to take too long in judging a class. Keep in mind there is normally a timetable for the Show. Check the program and the number of classes you have to judge to enable you to keep as near as possible to the timetable.
- While judging, position yourself to gain a clear view of the exhibits. The competitors are showing their exhibits to you, therefore you should keep within their view, especially during individual workouts.
- The spectators have come along to see the Show. A good Judge is one who makes the events interesting for the spectators as well as the competitors.
- Conversations between the Judge and the competitor should be cordial. Make sure your instructions to competitors are uniform and clearly understood. Any approach from a competitor for a Judge's opinion should be made through the ring steward. The Judge is not bound to express an opinion, however a brief reply at least shows you have the courage of your convictions. It is sometimes better to refer to the good points of the winner than expound the

faults of those further down the line. When all is said and done, the winner is your preference for that particular event.

- Be tactful with any remark to a competitor and where possible limit the conversation to the exhibit of the competitor. Be within hearing of the steward. Refer to Competition Rules.
- SHC Official List Judges officiating as a Judge at ANY Show are not permitted to use mobile phones or smoke whilst they are in the Ring.
- Any incident of abuse between a competitor, Judge or ring official should be reported to the Show Ringmaster or a member of the Organising Committee. This should be done at the completion of the class or as soon as possible following the incident. Any disruptive exhibitor may be dismissed from competition.

Judging can be a thankless task and there is quite often only one happy person after an event, ie the winner. However the love of showing makes most of those interested aspire to become a Judge.

When judging, you must evaluate the good qualities against the bad. Understanding the fundamentals of the horse's framework, composition and movement should enable the Judge to make the correct decisions. Remember it is only one person's opinion on the day; tomorrow another Judge may come up with a different outcome but that is what makes showing what it is. The important thing is that you go home, knowing in your mind you are happy with your decisions, which is all we can ask of any Judge.

## **STEWARD**

The importance of the Ring Steward's position is often underestimated. The efficiency of the Steward is a major factor in the smooth running of a Show.

- The Ring Steward is the representative of the Show Society in the ring and as such should be neatly attired, familiar with the competition rules together with the procedure that applies to conduct each class. A Steward should obtain the program for the Show and ensure he/she is familiar with the events that will be conducted. Check the starting time for the ring and make sure to arrive at the show with plenty of time to spare to meet the Judge and attend to any organisation expected of a Steward.
- A Steward should be pleasant to both the Judge and competitors at all times. Be aware of any requirements of the Judge and, in general, assist the Judge during the progress of each class.
- The duties of a Steward are many and varied. These may include verifying the entry of each competitor (ie collecting entry tickets or checking catalogue numbers), organising the competitors in the ring, relaying the Judge's requirements to competitors, organising presentation of ribbons and or awards, recording all placegetters and any relevant information required by Show Organisers, ensuring entrants compete within the rules while in the ring and, if necessary, advising the Judge and or the Show Committee of any competitor illegalities that may occur within the ring.

- The Steward should always be aware of any discussion between the Judge and competitors and at all times be aware of how the Judge wishes to conduct each class. The Steward's position is one of trust and a judge's remarks, made in confidence, should not be repeated after the Show.

For the success of any Show, the Ring Steward must be competent. A good Steward is often difficult to acquire and the position can be taken for granted. However, the position offers an excellent learning opportunity for any prospective Judge and for those who enjoy showing. Stewarding provides a better than ringside view of the classes being judged.

Coverage of Major Events by the print media is extensive and good presentation adds to the occasion. Stewards officiating at this level are expected to be attired accordingly, which could mean wearing clothing of a particular colour to fit with the Sponsors brand or the wearing of an uniform (e.g. Polo top) if provided.

## **COMPETITORS PROTOCOL**

- It is up to the competitors to make sure they are eligible for the class they are entering. Be familiar with the S.H.C. Competition Rules and the rules of the Show as some do vary. Mistakes do happen; admit them before the class finishes so that placings can be rectified immediately.
- Treat officials, Judges, other competitors and spectators as you would like to be treated yourself. Bad language and unsportsmanlike behaviour is inappropriate.
- It is good manners and safer to enter, leave and move between rings at a walk.
- If stewards have asked you to line up in a certain area, do so, unless your horse is fractious and then walking in a small circle, behind the line is acceptable.
- It is protocol to take the left rein on first entering the ring, unless asked to take the right rein.
- The Judge will usually allow for a period to warm up. Being asked to walk will signify that judging will commence.
- Ring layouts usually involve some type of markers or, in some instances, human markers so care should be taken. Use your common sense - don't make circles too small so as to crowd in on the Judge or make them too large so as to interfere with other rings.
- It is usual to wait for commands of walk, trot, canter and change of rein - don't be a trend setter for the transistions.
- If your horse is misbehaving so badly that it is a danger or unsettling to other horses, it is polite to retire from the ring.
- If your horse is badly behaved in the the workout and you feel it is best to retire, report back to the Judge and say so or tip your hat and leave the ring.

- If you have a clash of events, advise the steward, who can confer with the Judge and appropriate arrangements may be made to accommodate the clash. Some Show Regulations may not allow competitors to hold up rings for any reason.

If permitted to do so, have your next mount ready at the side of the ring. It is up to you to provide a strapper to hold the horse in the designated area or Ring, not the steward's job to do so.

- In usual circumstances, the Judge selects competitors whilst they are cantering so consider other competitors and officials as you are called in. Always come back to walk and if you are the first one called in, go to the position directed by the steward. If there is no direction from the steward, go to a position which is safe and allows other competitors to line up on your left hand side.

For minor placings it is etiquette to line up in the order in which you are called in. If you are unsure of your position, ask the steward. If the Judge calls everyone in, for example in Champion, then line up to the left of the person taking the first position.

- While lined up, try and keep your horse standing still within the allocated space (do not allow your horse to kick, bite or lean on other competitors). As you are lining up, warn competitors next to you if your horse needs more space. It is extremely unsportsmanlike to pass remarks out aloud about other competitors or yourself whilst judging is in progress.
- Accept your placing in good light. Always congratulate other competitors. Thank the Judge as the ribbon is being placed on your horse. A few words may be exchanged but not a long conversation as time is important to officials running a tight schedule.
- If you wish to know why you were placed in that position or not placed at all, you must be courteous to the Judge. Accept the Judge's reasons without any confrontation or giving your opinion. Thank the Judge, even though you may strongly disagree with the explanation.
- Under no circumstances must you threaten or verbally abuse the Judge in or out of the ring. The Judge's decision is final. The same goes for the stewards and officials. Be polite and diplomatic.
- If you are eligible to compete in an event such as a Champion, but do not wish or are not able to participate, it is polite to advise the steward beforehand. If you are a second placegetter, be prepared and ready to compete, if eligible, for Reserve Champion.
- It is etiquette for placegetters to follow the winner when leaving the ring, unless you are holding up another ring.
- It is etiquette for competitors to tip/nod their heads in acknowledgement when the Judge is speaking or awarding ribbons.
- If you wish to make officials aware of a competitor's ineligibility to compete in a class or for an award, you should go through the appropriate channels in lodging a protest. Refer to the Rules of the Show, approach the Ringmaster about your intentions and have any corroboration for your protest on hand.

## REFERENCE TEXTS

S.H.C. Competition Rules  
S.H.C. Duty Statements  
SHC Judges Scheme and Rules

## **SECTION 13 - SAFETY**

It is imperative in these times of litigation that safety practices are in place at all Council activities. The Council has a “duty of care” to ensure Competitors, Spectators, Officials and Volunteers participate in a risk free environment. To this end a S.H.C. Risk Management Policy is in place and it is incumbent on all in attendance at the Show to comply.

The Council and Agricultural Societies now require signed Waivers. This is to make sure the Exhibitor is aware of the danger of the Sport and to minimise the risk of litigation to the greatest extent allowed by law. Given that animals can be unpredictable, safety practices can and do avoid potential problems and the Council does have a proud record in this regard. The appointed Safety Officer will carry out an Assessment of the venue and identify potential hazards, taking action to avoid or minimise these.

- Ground surfaces should be level and obstacle free, while extreme muddy conditions could pose a danger and should be evaluated carefully before use. Depending on whether the venue allows, it is desirable that gates be tended.
- Rings should be set in such a way as to avoid crowding on the Ring or to avoid Competitors entering another Ring’s space.
- Ring Officials are to be counselled to keep Heat numbers within the required limit to avoid overcrowding in the Ring.
- In the event of a horse being out of control, the Ring should be halted until control is restored. At all times, the Safety Officer should work closely with the Ringmaster and the Mounted Steward.
- A Medical Officer (or First Aid Officer) is to be on hand throughout the day.

## REFERENCE TEXTS

S.H.C. Risk Management Policy  
S.H.C. Duty Statements

## **SECTION 14 - DRUG TESTING**

Random Drug Testing is now carried out at major shows throughout Australia. The rationale is that horses are expected to compete on their merits and free from the presence of any Prohibited &/or Banned substance.

It is difficult to carry out Drug Testing at smaller shows due to the costs involved, the necessary amenities not always being available and documentation requirements not in place at this level.

The S.H.C. has adopted Drug Testing Competition Rules that are constructed as “Absolute Liability”, meaning that there is no defence if an offence is proven as a result of detection of the presence of any Prohibited &/or Banned substance. Set Penalties apply to a breach of these Rules which have proved effective in all but eliminating this type of offence.

A Treatment Sheet is required at major events conducted by the Council for any horse receiving any substance or Treatment from 30 days prior to or during the Event. Veterinary advice will be sought by the Ground Jury, it will be dependent on the Veterinary advice as to whether the horse will be allowed to start.

The selection process of horses for testing is usually laid out by the Committee prior to the Event. The S.H.C. favours the drawing of a coloured ping pong ball from a number of white ones that equal the number in the line up; however it has also automatically tested section winners or other horses by a predetermined selection method.

The Official Drug Testing Steward will accompany the selected horse and the Responsible Officer/Witness to the designated swab area. A Drug Testing Information Sheet is available, this will inform him/her of the Sampling & Testing process followed.

The Testing is carried out by a qualified Veterinarian who follows the Laboratory Protocol during the entire process and the forwarding of samples to the Testing Laboratory. Samples taken are labelled A and B. If Sample A returns an irregularity the Reserve Sample will then be tested to obtain a confirmatory analysis. The result of this test will determine if there has been a breach of Rules.

### **REFERENCE TEXTS**

S.H.C. Competition Rules.

S.H.C. Drug Testing Information Sheet.

## SECTION 15 - NOTES FOR INTERNATIONAL JUDGES

Since 1992 the Show Horse Council has followed the practice of selecting U.K. Judges from the Official Accredited Judges List to officiate at the S.H.C. Grand National Championships. There has also been an increasing trend by Breed Societies and some Royals to use overseas Judges, particularly those from the U.K., to officiate at their major Shows throughout Australia.

The similarity between showing hacks in Australia and the United Kingdom is very favourable to the common use of Judges. After all, the assessment of good conformation and correct movement is of a relative standard world wide.

The opinion of an International Judge offers an excellent opportunity to gain a fresh point of view. The distance a Judge travels provides an ideal alternative when endeavouring to prevent the predictable forecasts regarding a Judge's decision.

The object of this chapter is provide the Judge with an overview to explain any differences there may be between the Australian Show Hack compared to the English counterpart. The comparison of differences should not be interpreted as implying any reflection on the quality of the Australian Show Horse or to the manner in which our hacks are shown. Showing hacks in Australia, in our own unique tradition, has been established over many years. This tradition is something to be proud of and should be protected. To compare differences does not indicate any need for change.

The Australian Show Hack encompasses equines of various breeds, types and heights from a 10 hand pony to a horse in excess of 17 hands; all can compete as a Show Hack. The age of our show horse can span from 3 years to 16 years sometimes more. Horses are shown without discrimination as long as they are sound and do not show physical signs of age.

In addition, the Show Hunter is now an integral part of the Australian Show scene providing an avenue for those types of more weight and bone density than the Show Hack. (See Section 5 – Definition of The Show Hunter).

For either Sections the overall height ranges are segregated into height Sections of:

- Ponies not exceeding 14 hands
- Galloways over 14 hands and not exceeding 15 hands
- Hacks over 15 hands with no upward height restriction.

Starting from the upper end of the height sections, our Show Hack (sometimes referred to as a Saddle Horse) is any horse over 15hh that that meets the criteria of “being a quality riding type horse, of good conformation, soundness, movement and temperament. It need not be of any particular breed or colour, but should display the ideal characteristics of a good riding horse.” (see Section 2 – Definition of The Australian Show Horse).

The Australian Show Hack is predominantly of Thoroughbred breeding, however, representatives from all the recognised riding type breeds have been successful. The hack height section usually comprises four height classes

- Over 15hh and not exceeding 15.2hh
- Over 15.2hh and not exceeding 16hh
- Over 16hh and not exceeding 16.2hh
- Over 16.2hh

The middle height section is the Galloway Hack

- For horses over 14hh and not exceeding 15hh.

In contrast to the Hacks and the Ponies, the Galloway section has weight as well as height classes (this section usually comprises four classes).

- The 14hh to 14.2hh Lightweight Galloway predominantly includes the taller pony type, the small light framed Thoroughbred or Arab or a cross of these. It should be refined, with light frame and bone (without sacrificing substance) - the English counterpart being the 14.2hh Riding Pony to the finer type of Show Hunter Pony.
- The 14.2hh to 15hh Lightweight Galloway should display similar characteristics and is comparable to the English Small Hack, being refined, elegant and an ideal Lady's mount.
- The 14hh to 14.2hh Heavyweight Galloway should, while maintaining quality, be heavier in both frame and bone than the lightweight and have sufficient substance to be capable of comfortably carrying an adult rider in work for a reasonable period. The horses in this class are often bred from the small Thoroughbred, the Quarter Horse, the heavier Pony or again a cross of these.
- The 14.2hh to 15hh Heavyweight Galloway should display similar characteristics and is comparable to the English Small Riding Horse.
- The Pony Hack in Australia can be any breed or cross, providing it does not exceed 14hh. Classes in this section are usually in 2 inch height sections, starting from under 11hh and increasing in height classes every two inches up to the not exceeding 14hh class.

Some shows do restrict the age of riders on Ponies but these can be and often are, ridden by adults. Many major shows have two Championships for Ponies, these are:

- Not exceeding 12.2hh
- Over 12.2hh and not exceeding 14hh.

*CHILDRENS CLASSES have been introduced throughout all Grand National Qualifiers; a whole day's Program is devoted to these classes at the Grand National Championships. They are judged on the Ring plus each exhibitor has an individual workout; they are not however stripped or ridden by the Judge.*

*These should be judged on suitability of mount for the rider in addition to the expected requisites of manners & paces, conformation & soundness, temperament & Presentation being taken into account*

Other differences that may be obvious with the Australian show scene, are in presentation. Plaiting of manes can be done in rosettes, usually sewn, which sit higher on the horse's neck. Saddlery differs as we usually use dressage type saddles even on ponies. Bridles not only have decorative coloured brow bands but brass harness type brow bands are also used.

Helmet regulations depend on the Rules of the Show. Riding attire may differ, either Shirt and Tie - Ratcatcher Shirt or Stock are acceptable; jodhpurs or breeches are always worn in ridden events (never trousers) while Riding jackets are now mainly English style. The aim is to present a tasteful but visually attractive riding outfit that will complement the horse .

Rules also vary greatly. Riders may change from one class to another without the express permission of the Judge, gear such as bits may be changed from one class to another or during the course of a day's competition.

A Judge should check the Australian Rules for the competition before dismissing a competitor for what would be considered a breach of a rule if the class was held in the U.K. as a breach of a rule may not in fact apply.

It is not always a prerequisite for the Judge to ride or strip the horses - this is done at the option of the Judge.

## RIDING CLASSES

Riding Classes in Australia are considered very prestigious and are hotly contested by both Children and Adults alike. Under S.H.C. Rules the following restriction on mounts apply:

- Children under 9 years are restricted to riding Ponies not exceeding 14 hh.
- Children 9 years and under 12 years are restricted to riding Ponies or Galloways not exceeding 15.00hh.
- If 12 years of age and over there is no height restriction on mount.

(Refer to Section 8 – RIDING CLASSES)

It is imperative that the judging format applying to the show is understood by the Judge, i.e. scoring if applicable, number of Finalists to be selected, fixed or open workout, stripping or riding the exhibits if applicable etc.

All considered, while there may be differences in Showing in Australia compared to the English Show scene, there are also many similarities. The adjudication and comparison of our horses by knowledgeable horsemen and horsewomen can only broaden all our points of view and advance the sport of showing horses world wide.