

USHHC Judging Methods

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NOTE* Trail will not be added to the packet before USHHC 2025

Please read this packet carefully before the championships as it will guide you through how each round for each class will work and help to make your day run smoother! See you at the championships!

Show Jumping

How the Class is Judged

Show jumping at USHHC is judged FIRST according to the amount of faults the rider received from knocking down poles. And SECOND according to time.

The competitor with a clean round without any faults is more likely to get a higher placing than a rider with more faults but a faster time.

What the Rider Receives Faults For

- Knocking down a pole

Reasons for Disqualification

- Leaves the ring before finishing the course
- Forgets the course and does not return to the correct track within 10 seconds
- Two refusals
- Jumping the wrong course
- Jumps a jump the wrong way

Example Round

1. All competitors who signed up for show jumping will wait in line to go
2. The first rider will enter the ring and raise their hand when they are ready to begin their course
3. The judge will signal back to the competitor by ringing a bell when they are ready for the competitor to start their course
4. Once the rider crosses the starting line the judge will start the timer
5. The rider will jump the course
6. The judge will stop the timer once the competitor crosses the finish line
7. The competitor will wait for the results that will take place at the end of the class
8. If the competitor receives a placing they will queue for a victory lap around the arena

Dressage

How the Class is Judged

What the judge will be looking for when it comes to movements:

Walk (working) - Relaxed, balanced and even paced movement, soft steps (should not be loud steps) horse head is relaxed but not below horizontal

Trot (working) - Horse head is pointed straight forward and doesn't move, the legs work forward but do not rush

Canter (working) - Relaxed but strong, ridden forward but not rushing, legs move forward more than upwards

Collected Walk - Smooth graceful movement with pointed toes, the knees should lift higher in the collected gaits, horse's head should move up and down with the movement of the legs and be higher set than the working walk, same tempo but moving in shorter steps

Collected Trot - High controlled steps, still keeping a good tempo, horse's head should be high and stay still

Collected Canter - Neat flowy movements, pace should be even and balanced, upper body should be leaned back a bit and elbows need to be still (no pumping), horse's head moves up and down with each stride

Extended Walk - Long round steps, horse's head should extend forward with the movement but not below horizontal, legs should not be kicking forward uncontrollably, the gait should look relaxed and balanced.

Extended Trot - Covers a lot of ground, legs should stretch fully out, toes need to be pointed forward, rider should be leaned back, extended trot should have a nice balanced pace but not too fast (slower extended trot demonstrates more strength)

Extended Canter - Front leg extends forward (without feet kicking) while the back leg stays quiet, the rider should be leaned back, and the horse's head moves down and forward to fit the length of the gait

Piaffe - Legs should be at a 90 degree angle, from the front view the calf should be straight and the knees should not be caving inwards, toes should be pointed and the rider should hold the 90 degree angle before releasing to switch legs, movement is better slow than fast, rider should have elasticity when switching legs

Passage - Legs are held at a 90 degree angle and should be held still before moving forward at an even controlled pace, the rider should have bounce when moving to the next leg

Half Pass in Trot - Rider's upper body should stay facing straight and only the legs are moving sideways, the horse's head needs to be looking in the direction it is headed and the rider's legs should cross each step

Half Pass in Canter - Similarly to the trot half pass the legs should cross each step but not exaggerated, the horse should look in the direction

it is headed and the legs should have an open angle when stepping into the next cross-over
1 Tempi Changes - Changes switch the direction of the rider's leading leg, 1 tempi changes need to be changed every step, the reins

should switch every change, the rider should get some height and bounce when swapping leads

The performance section is judged on the overall elasticity and style of the rider as well as how the freestyle was choreographed. It will also be judged on technicalities such as the horse's head position, rein contact, direction changing, etc.

What the Rider Receives Faults For

- 5 or more seconds over or under the time requirements
- Forgetting their freestyle
- Forgetting required movement
- Horse bucking or misbehaving
- Rider walks out of the arena
- Sideline coaching

Reasons for Disqualification

- Leaves the ring
- Forgetting freestyle completely

Example Round

1. Competitors who qualified for Grand Prix Freestyle Dressage will wait in line for their turn
2. The first competitor will approach the judge and tell them their name, horse's name, and their music title
3. The rider will queue at the opposite end of the arena once the information was received by the judge
4. The judge will ring the bell when they are ready for the competitor to begin
5. The rider will either raise their hand or salute when they want their music to begin
6. The judge will start the music
7. The rider will ride their freestyle
8. When the competitor completes their freestyle they will salute and exit the ring
9. The competitor will wait for the results that will take place at the end of the class
10. If the competitor receives a placing they will queue for a victory lap around the arena

Hunter Jumper

How the Class is Judged

What the judge will be looking for in each part of the course:

Courtesy Circle - The rider may make the courtesy circle wherever they would like but it should not take up the entire arena, the circle must be performed at the canter but the rider may walk-trot-canter or go straight from a walk-canter (usually this is based on personal opinion by the judge depending on what they like)

Jumps - Each jump should be cleared without clipping any poles (knocking a pole down will result in a fault)

Jump style - Each rider jumps different, some riders jump with a closed form while others jump in an open form, both of which are acceptable in the hunter class, it is up to the opinion of the judge what they like to see

Pace - The pace needs to stay the same throughout the entirety of the course, the rider should ride in a balanced and even canter

Lead Changes - Lead changes may be performed over or after each fence (flying or simple are both allowed), but keep in mind that lead changes over the fences result in more points (the rider will lose points if the lead is changed after the jump). It is up to the judge's discretion for how they would like to see the style of the lead being changed

Canter - The rider MUST canter the entire course, galloping or trotting the course will result in faults

What the Rider Receives Faults For

- Refusal
- Knocks a jump
- Trots a jump
- Horse bucking or misbehaving
- Forgets the course
- Side coaching
- Falls down
- Failure to change lead

Reasons for Disqualification

- Leaves the ring before finishing the course
- Forgets the course and does not return to the correct track within 10 seconds
- Two refusals
- Jumping the wrong course
- Jumps a jump the wrong way

Example Round

1. Competitors who signed up for hunter jumper will wait in line to go
2. The first rider will enter the ring and raise their hand when they are ready
3. The judge will signal back by ringing the bell to signal that they are ready for the competitor to begin their course
4. Once the rider transitions to canter the rider is being judged
5. The rider will jump the course
6. After their round they will leave the arena
7. The competitor will wait for the results that will take place at the end of the class
8. If the competitor receives a placing they will queue for a victory lap around the arena

Flat

How the Class is Judged

What the judge will be looking for throughout the class from each rider:

- Rider-position
- Good even pace
- Graceful steps
- Endurance
- Well-behaved horse
- Good spatial awareness
- Changing reins to the inside
- Smooth circle to reverse

What the Rider Receives Faults For

Faults are not recorded in flat

Reasons for Disqualification

- **Horse Bucks/Misbehaves** - If a horse kicks/rears at another horse the rider whose horse kicked is disqualified and is told to leave the ring immediately, the rider's whose horse was kicked is not disqualified unless they kick/rear back
- **Horse bolts/is out of control** - If a rider's horse is out of control and is galloping around the ring the rider will be asked to leave the class

***Please note that these reasons for disqualification are for the safety of all of the competitors in the ring**

Example Round

1. The first group of competitors (in the first heat) will be called into the ring
2. The judge will announce that the class is "now being judged" once all riders are in the ring
3. The judge will go through the list of movements and announce the next movement they would like to see once all of the competitors have been judged on the past movement (Ex. Judge announces "RIDERS PLEASE DEMONSTRATE THE TROT" and everyone MUST trot)
4. Once all movements had been judged the judge will ask for "all competitors to exit the arena but to stay close as results are pending and will be announced in the next five minutes"
5. The competitors need to stay nearby to hear the callback announcement
6. The judge will announce the callback riders who will attend the championship flat

class for that age group

10 & Under has three heats

11 & 12 has six heats

13 & Over has three heats



Top two riders from each heat

will advance to the
championships for their age
group

*Please note that if you do not show up on time for your heat you will lose your spot in the class

Barrel Racing

How the Class is Judged

Barrel racing at USHHC is judged according to time and faults if the competitor knocks a barrel over.

The competitor with the fastest time wins.

What the Rider Receives Faults For

- Knocking down a barrel

Reasons for Disqualification

- Leaves the ring before finishing the pattern
- Forgets the pattern and does not return to the correct track within 10 seconds
- Rides the wrong pattern
- Turns around a barrel the wrong way

Example Round

1. All competitors who signed up for barrel racing will wait in line to go
2. The first competitor will enter the ring and raise their hand when they are ready to begin the pattern
3. The judge will signal back to the competitor by ringing a bell when they are ready for the competitor to start their course
4. The time starts when the rider crosses the starting line
5. The rider will run the pattern
6. The time will stop once the competitor crosses the finish line
7. The competitor will wait for the results that will take place at the end of the class
8. If the competitor receives a placing they will queue for a victory lap around the arena

Puissance

How the Class is Judged

Puissance at USHHC is judged based on the height the competitors jump

The competitor with the highest jump wins. If there is a tie, the rider with the least amount of knocked poles throughout the class wins.

What the Rider Receives Faults For

Knocking over the top pole

Reasons for Disqualification

- The competitor knocks the fence down twice in a row
- The rider decides to leave the arena

Example Round

1. All competitors who qualified for puissance earlier in the day will wait in line to jump
2. Once the competitor in front of you jumps you may start to canter towards the fence
3. If the fence is knocked over you receive one more try
4. If the rider knocks down the fence a second time the rider will be disqualified
5. The competitor will wait for the results that will take place at the end of the class
6. If the competitor receives a placing they will queue for a victory lap around the arena

How We Make USHHC Fair

We strive for fairness at every event we hold, as we believe that having a fair competition is one of the most important parts of holding one! Here are some steps we take to make sure that each event is as fair as it can be...

- Judges are NOT allowed to compete in the same class that they judge
- If part of the USHHC team is competing they MAY NOT setup the course they will be riding at the competition nor can they test ride the course
- In some of the more technically judged classes (such as dressage) there will be

two judges that judge each competitor separately from one another and at the end of the class a volunteer (not the judges) will tally everything up and average both of the scores from each judge. This ensures absolute certainty of the placings.

- The jumping courses and barrel racing pattern is tested by someone who is not competing in that class
- The judge must be able to watch the entire course or program that the competitor rides. To ensure that this happens one assistant per judge takes notes while the judge watches and comments on the riders performance
- In some of the more technical classes such as dressage the judges will video each round so that they can confirm if the rider received a fault and the judge will rewatch to give the best and most correct feedback possible.

If you have questions about these steps we take to ensure the fairness of our event please feel free to reach out to ushhcmal@gmail.com