

General Comments

Firstly, a big congratulations to all, organisers and competitors alike for a job well done! This has been a great effort with lots of work behind the scenes, collating videos, uploading, organising the programme and for competitors to get used to doing things at home and having themselves and their horses filmed.

It is a strange new world we live in, but I am pleased that the AHAA is taking this initiative, which could see a lot more people have access to competitions and judging without the hassle and expense of traveling.

Potential areas for improvement:

Video recording

1. Please remember that with online judging, the judge can only see what is presented on the video. We do not have the option to walk around the horse or put ourselves into a better position to the horse by walking around the arena. So it is important that you observe correct positioning of your horse to the camera and also ensure that you walk and trot toward or away from the camera at a very (!) straight line to the camera. If needed set our markers or cones in your arena to position the camera and then another cone in a straight line from the camera and then use those to ensure you will lead you horse ON THAT LINE.
2. All videos should be recorded in “landscape” format.
There were a few recorded in “portrait” format which even if viewed on full screen still makes it more difficult and at times cuts out part of the horse.
3. As the person recording, please watch out for light conditions, especially when recording in an indoor arena.
Ideally the person recording needs to stand between the horse and the light source. So make sure you have the sun behind you.
When recording a standing horse, do not walk around the horse to get the various views, if that means you end up filming into the sun. In that case, please turn the horse instead.
This is especially important for black and bay horses since they show a lot less definition on pictures and videos.
4. Framing: please ensure that the whole horse is in the frame. Try to avoid cutting off ears or feet.
If asked to zoom in on the head, also avoid to cut off ears or muzzle.
When asked to show the horse from the front or back, please put the whole horse into the frame. So: front view: show the horse from tip of the ears to bottom of feet.
Back view: top of the croup to bottom of the feet.
For the front view, make sure the horse has lifted its head enough so the judge can see all of the chest. You are allowed to lower the horse’s head and neck if you like, but please do that when recording the side-on view (not the front view)
5. Position of horse to camera: for side on view please ensure that horse is at proper right angle to the camera. If the horse stands on an angle it will distort body proportions which makes judging a lot harder.
6. Please ensure you record everything that is required, without missing things out.
Side view left and right

Front view (head elevated above chest)

Back View (with tail in natural position, and lifting tail out of view)

Walk, trot & canter (where age permits)

7. For judging of led classes: it would be preferable for the horse NOT to be in a bit because the purebred judge needs to assess the conformation of the muzzle area. A bit can distort this.

Also, please no mosqueros (other than in costume classes) or any extra rosettes etc on the presentation halters. A nice simple presentation halter is the best, because the purebred judge needs some detail in assessing the head conformation without gear in the way.

8. In hand movement judging for purebreds: this is a tricky area because ideally, the judge wants to see the horse MOVE. So unless you are quite an athletic agile person it is hard to trot your horse out to the requirements to positively show what your horse can do.

In Spain, in hand showing is often done by professionals and I know it takes a lot of training for both horse and handler. If you have the time and ability to teach your horse to lunge with a good contact so you can teach it to extend its steps a bit in trot and canter, it would greatly benefit the judging and your horse's marks.

I recall that in 2011 at the National in Sydney at SIEC the judge, Ignacio Bravo gave a clinic on how to teach your horse to move properly for in hand judging. Maybe someone who was there could put a helpful guide together for competitors.