



FITTING & SHOWMANSHIP

This manual is intended for 4-H use and
created for Maine 4-H members, leaders, extension agents and staff.

Cover:
Molly Sirois showing Gypsie
2007 show season

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WHY FITTING & SHOWMANSHIP CLASSES

To encourage 4-H'ers to maintain high standards of horse management and responsibility towards their 4-H project. A fit, well conditioned horse reflects continuous care that can not be achieved overnight. The class is designed to judge the exhibitor's ability to fit and show a horse to the best of its advantage. Performance consists of a poised, confident, neatly attired handler leading a well groomed, fitted and conditioned horse that efficiently performs the requested pattern with promptness, smoothness and precision.

The horse does not have to be the most beautifully built, the most expensive, nor the biggest. It should, however, be responsive, well groomed, fitted and conditioned.

Think of this class as a sale; you, the owner, are showing off the horse to the best of its ability to a potential buyer. You want the horse to look its best and be on its best behavior.

You have the power to decide how successful you'll be!!

This comes with practice, practice, practice.

HAVE FUN WITH THIS!

TERMS

Alignment - the act of forming a straight line.

Condition - the muscle tone of a horse.

Banding - making a series of unified ponytails in a horse's mane.

Braiding - weaving 3 clumps of hair into a form known as a braid.

Handler - the person working with or leading a horse.

Grooming - brushing, carding, washing - the act of cleaning a horse.

Pattern - a pre-designed course consisting of a series of moves for the horse and handler to maneuver.

Pivots - the act of turning a horse on one leg. Pivots may be 90, 180, 270 or 360 degrees. Unless otherwise, instructed pivots are executed to the right.

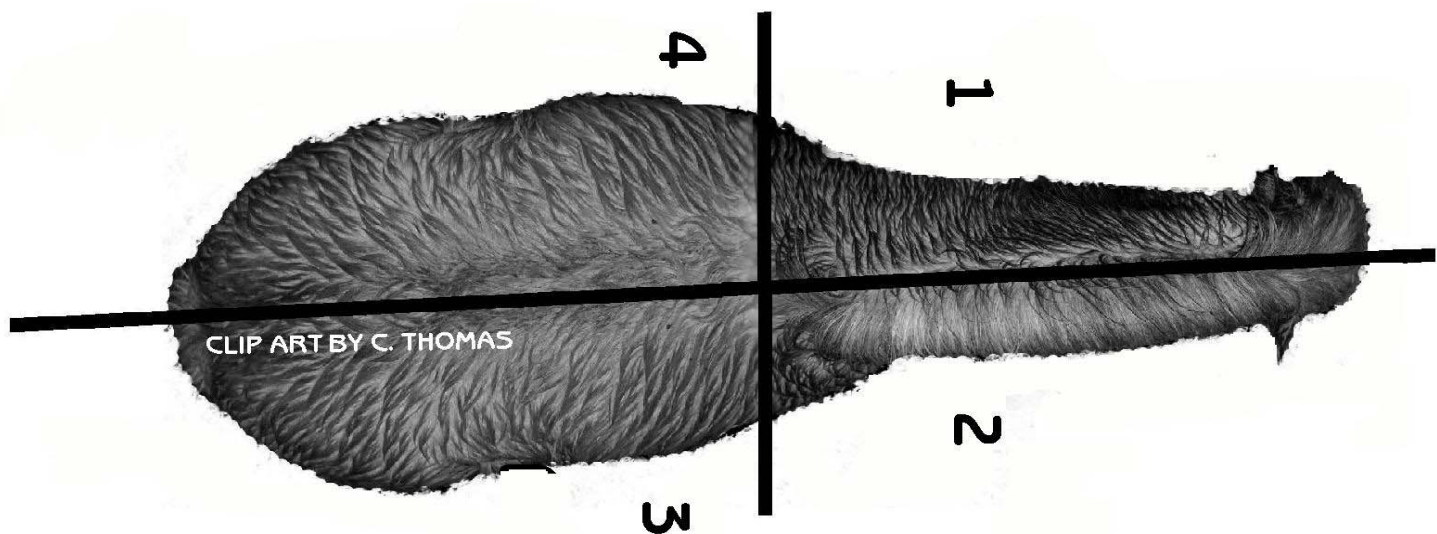
Pose - the position the handler or horse takes to balance his/her weight.

Quarter System - the imaginary lines that divide the horse into 4 sections.

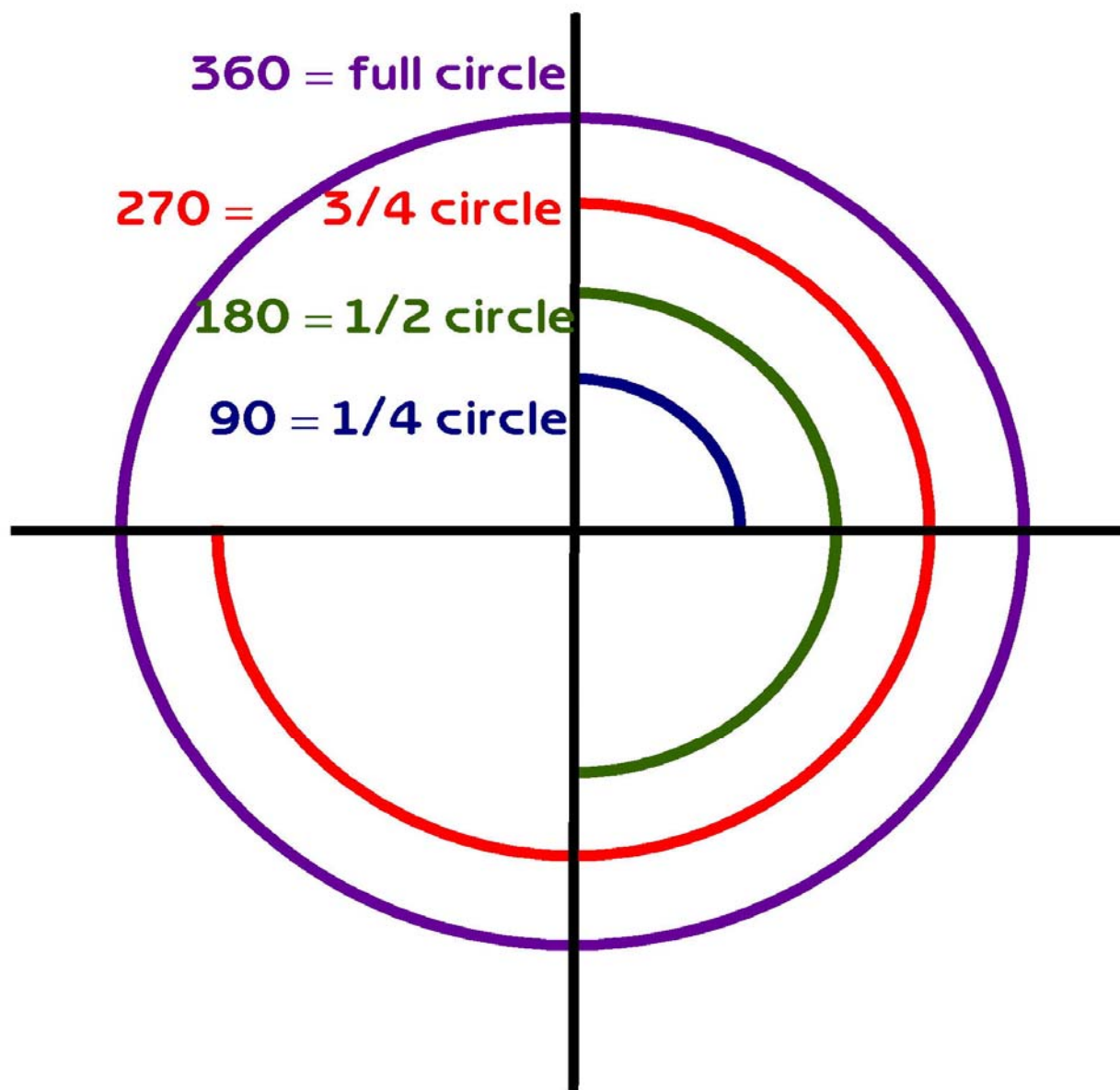
Set up or square up - the act of getting a horse to stand on 4 legs so that the front legs are under the shoulders and hind legs are under the hips - each leg should be positioned to appear as straight as possible.

Tack - the equipment used to lead, tie and ride a horse.

Trimming - cutting or clipping body hair.



QUARTERS



PIVOTS (to the right)

FITTING = 40 POINTS

Fitting – the act of getting a horse ready for show through good grooming, exercise and trimming.
Getting a horse ready for the ring is a job that starts
long before show day.

YOUR HORSE SHOULD BE:



IN GOOD CONDITION = 15PTS

- * Good, firm muscle tone
- * Usably sound
- * Sufficient flesh



SHOWING LONG TERM & GOOD GROOMING PRACTICES=15PTS

- * smooth, shiny & dust free coat free of stains,
- * mane & tail free of tangles
- * no dander in mane or tail or at bases of mane and tail
- * clean sheath or udder
- * clean under tail
- * showing regular farrier care
- * clean hooves, including hoof wall – fine sand paper is a good way to clean up a dirty hoof and smooth out any roughness.
Be careful as not to leave sanding marks
- * hoof polish optional
- * black hooves=use black hoof polish, white & striped hooves = use clear polish if applying polish do so with great care - nice straight lines from the coronet band to the toe of the hoof and back to the heel. A badly painted hoof draws more negative attention than a cleaned unpolished one. Be sure to remove polish after the show as it tends to dry out hoof
- * remove excess ergots & chestnuts
- * Show Sheen ergots, chestnuts, eyes, muzzle, ears – be aware of oils on sunny days as it may cause pink skin to burn and dust tends to cling to oil base products!! What ever you use be sure to apply it and then wipe it down as much as possible!! The Judge will not appreciate greasy hands !!
- * Bluing shampoo & “elbow grease” works great to whiten stained areas. White powders are sometimes used, however caution must be used, a Judge will not be impressed getting white stuff all over them after touching your horse!! If you choose to use such products as corn starch or baby powder rub it in and wipe it down; you do not want your horse to look like a walking dust cloud !! Apply BEFORE putting on hoof polish.



TRIMMING ACCORDING TO BREED = 5 PTS

► trimming includes

- * optional - banding, braiding or specialty braiding if it is done, do it neatly, uniformly and try to match elastics to mane color
- * clip legs = trim for a clean, neat leg from hock to hoof if your horse's leg does not need to be clipped, then just do long hairs clipping a white leg from hock to hoof may help remove stained hairs (against the hair grain for close trim and with the hair grain to blend) pay close attention to trimming fetlock and hair around the coronet band do not trim any hairs that may be breed specific (Frisians for example - its breed specific to have feathers at the fetlock)
- * clip long wispy hair from under the jaw and throat latch long wisps around the eyes. DO NOT CLIP EYELASHES.
- * shaved muzzle
- * ears can be shaved on inside (*before you start*, put cotton balls in base of ear to keep hairs from falling in) or if your horse is too sensitive, simply clip the long hairs in the ears and (baby) oil inside of ear to give a neat appearance
- * clip bridle path – be sure to check breed specs for length
- * if mount is not breed - specific general rule of thumb is cut bridle path the length of the ear (fold ear back to neck and mark the location of the tip of ear = clip from just behind the ear to marked point of ear length)
NOTE: clip 3-4 days before the show – this allows the clipper marks to grow out



TACK = 5 PTS

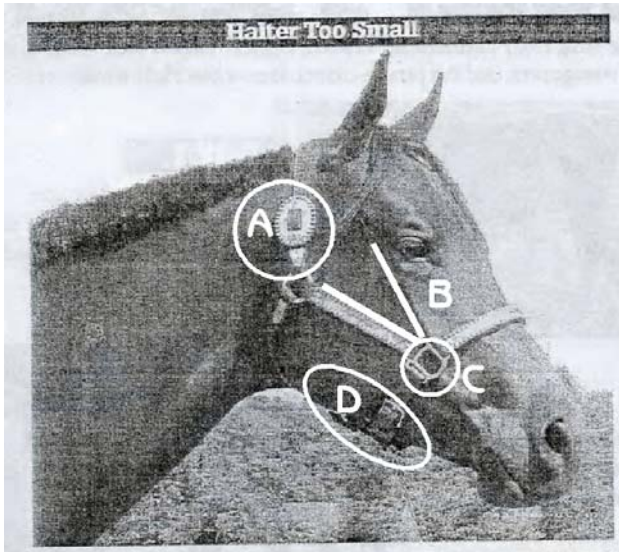
- * weanlings and yearlings shall be shown in halter to protect mouth
- * English riders shall turn mount out in well - fitted English bridle with regulation bit
- * Western riders shall turn mount out in well - fitted halter
- * Miniature horses shall be turned out in well - fitted halter

Halter Fitting

A correctly fitted and adjusted halter will enhance a horse's head
It does not need to be fancy nor expensive, but should show good care and be clean

(photos reprinted with permission from Horse & Rider)

Halter too small



A = STRAP IS LET ALL THE WAY OUT – NO ROOM FOR ADJUSTMENT

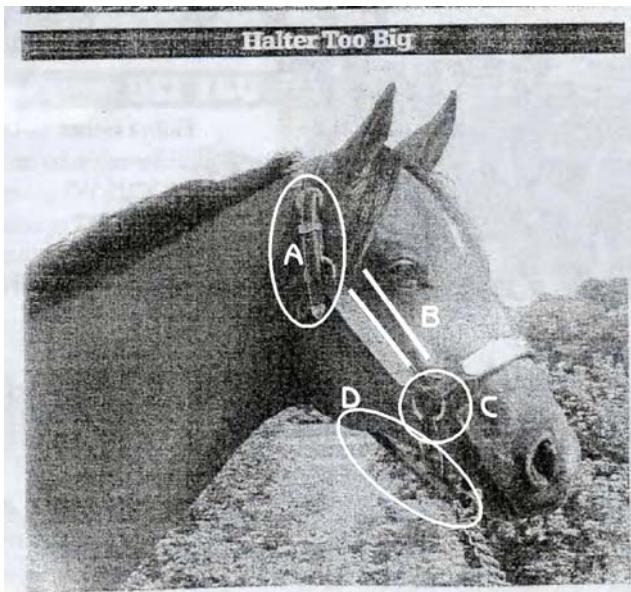
B = CHEEK PIECE OF HALTER DOES NOT RUN PARALLEL TO THE CHEEK BONE

C = CORNER HARDWARE OF HALTER IS TOO HIGH UP THE SIDE OF THE JAW, BECAUSE THE HEADSTALL STRAP IS LET ALL THE WAY OUT THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ADJUSTMENT

D = THE CHIN STRAP IS TOO HIGH UP THE JAW BONE AND IS ADJUSTED TO TIGHTLY

photographer: Roger Gollehon

Halter too big



A = STRAP IS AS FAR UP AS IT WILL GO

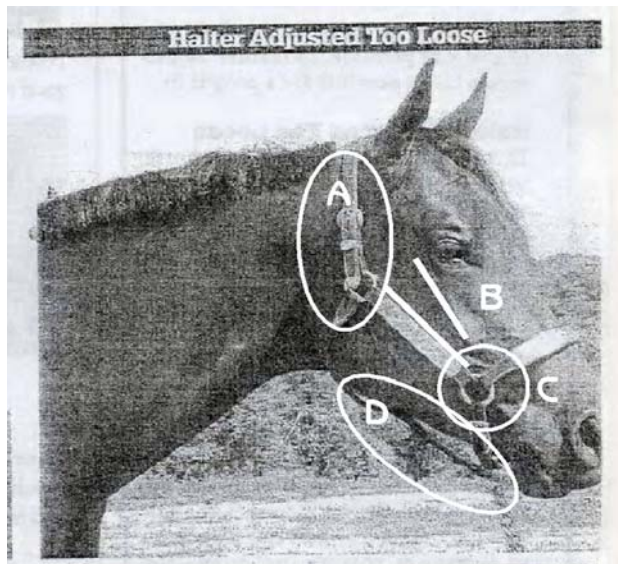
B = CHEEK PIECE OF HALTER RUNNING PARALLEL TO THE CHEEK BONE = GOOD

C = CORNER HARDWARE OF HALTER IS TOO LOW DOWN THE SIDE OF THE JAW, BECAUSE THE HEADSTALL STRAP IS ALL THE WAY UP THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ADJUSTMENT

D = THE CHIN STRAP SETS DOWN TOO LOW ON THE JAW BONE AND IS ADJUSTED TOO LOOSELY

photographer: Roger Gollehon

Halter too loose



Photographer: Roger Gollehon

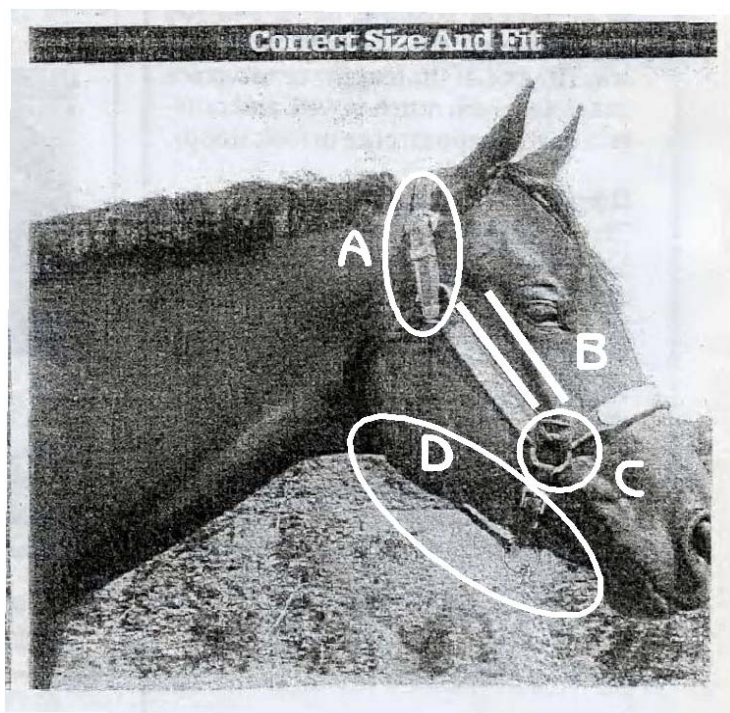
A = STRAP HAS ROOM FOR ADJUSTMENT AND SHOULD BE TIGHTENED JUST A BIT

B = ONCE ADJUSTED – IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE CHEEK PIECE WOULD RUN PARALLEL TO THE TO THE CHEEK BONE

C = CORNER HARDWARE OF HALTER IS TOO LOW ON SIDE OF THE JAW – AGAIN, ADJUSTMENT OF THE HEADSTALL WOULD SOLVE THIS

D = THE CHIN STRAP IS LOOSELY ADJUSTED BUT LOOKS AS THOUGH IF ADJUSTED WOULD BE FINE

Halter of correct size and fitted



photographer: Roger Gollehon

A = FITTED NICELY WITH ROOM FOR ADJUSTMENT

B = CHEEK PIECE OF HALTER RUNS PARALLEL TO THE CHEEK BONE

C = CORNER HARDWARE OF HALTER IS SETTING JUST BELOW THE CHEEK BONE LEAVING THE NOSE BAND SETTING CORRECTLY ON FACE

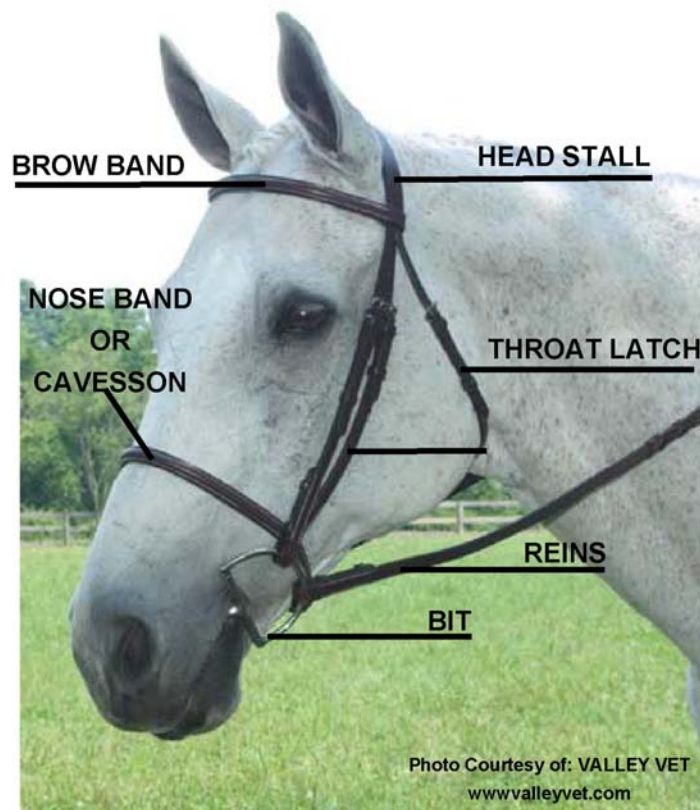
D = CHIN STRAP IS ADJUSTED WITH SLIGHT SNUGNESS LEAVING THE STRAP UNDER THE JAW WITH ROOM TO MOVE WITH MINIMUM "HANGING" EFFECTS

ALL TACK SHALL BE CLEAN INCLUDING CHROME, CHAINS & BUCKLES

BE SURE TO CLEAN THE **UNDER SIDE** OF ENTIRE HALTER & BRIDLE AS WELL AS TOP SIDE

CLEAN ALL WEAR MARKS

AND CORRECTLY FIT THE TACK



The brow band – a strap that rests on the forehead of the horse and prevents the headstall from being pulled or sliding down the horse's neck. It should be placed just below the base of the ear as not to pinch; snug to the forehead but not tight.

The nose band (or cavesson) is positioned just below the cheek bone and above the bit. It should be snug to the bridge of the nose allowing a finger or two between the band and horse's jaw. The placement of the nose band may vary depending on breed type.

The cheek piece – determines the level of communication between the bit and the reins. A loosely fitted cheek piece may allow the bit to jar on the teeth and tongue and allow misplacement of bar pressure. A cheek piece that is fitted too tightly may cause the bit to pinch the corners of the lips and cause the horse to “grab” the bit and attempt to push it forward. There are many different types of bits on the market – read instructions for particulars. General rule of thumb; if the mouth piece is “broken” or has a joint, a properly fitted cheek piece will create 1 - 2 *soft* wrinkles in the corners of the horse's mouth. This hinders the horse from getting his/her tongue up and over the mouth piece. If the mouth piece is solid (no joints) one *soft* wrinkle or the mouth piece fitting snugly to the corner of the mouth should be sufficient. After adjustment of the cheek piece you should be able to fit 2 fingers between the cheek piece and side of jaw. Look to see your horse play with the bit – if the cheek pieces bow way out check your adjustment.

The throat latch – keeps the headstall from being pulled off over the ears. If fitted too tightly it may stop the horse from a correct headset and constrict breathing. If its fitted too loosely it will not serve its function and runs the risk of getting caught on an object. Adjust the throat latch so that you are able to fit 3 fingers wide between throat latch and underside of jaw.

The reins - should be long enough to allow you to sit up in your saddle with elbows over your hips. Should be attached to bit under the head stall attachment.

The bit – mouth piece should fit the horse's mouth width as not to pinch the lips and should not be too long as to allow for pulling bit from side to side. The bit should be 1/8” wider than actual mouth. The thickness of the mouth piece should not be thicker than the horse's space between tongue and roof of mouth. The bit should not pinch, cut or rub any part of side of the mouth.

THE WHAT AND HOW ON SHOWMANSHIP = 60 POINTS

Showmanship is a test of precision. To score well you must demonstrate good presentation and nail the pattern. How you lead your horse and halt for inspection can make or break your performance.

APPEARANCE OF HANDLER = 10 PTS



SIDE SADDLE/SADDLE SEAT/HUNT SEAT/GENERAL ENGLISH DIVISION

- * Well fitted riding helmet
- * Boots with heels paddock, field or hunt boots
- * Conservative, clean clothing, neat and appropriate for seat of choice
- * Well fitting and coordinating clothing to include breeches, jodhpurs, shirt, tie, derby or soft hat (side and saddle seat only) preferred jacket, gloves there shall be no cross dressing – choose a seat and dress appropriately
- * Hair pulled back and away from face, no wispies



WESTERN DIVISION

- * Well fitted western hat – you do not want it to fall off during a class
- * Short sleeved shirt if wearing a jacket
- * Long sleeved shirt if not wearing a jacket
- * Western style pants or colored jeans (not blue jeans)
- * Heeled boots (western boots preferred)
- * Gloves (preferred)
- * Vests are optional – should be of western design

**It is not brand name clothing nor expensive hats & boots that gets a judge's attention
it is the respectful handler showing in clean & neat attire**

SHOWING IN THE RING = 50 PTS



LEADING = 15 PTS

The moment you enter the arena you are showing -

- * Lead with your right while the left hand is holding excess lead line – above the knees
- * Never switch hands
- * Your mount should readily walk & trot with alertness
- * Your ear/shoulder should be in line with the horse's ear while leading
- * The head set should be appropriate to horse type
- * When moving horse to & away from judge = lines (of the horse) should be in line with the judge
- * Be sure your horse is in alignment with the judge
- * Turns should be executed as pivots on right hind leg unless otherwise instructed by the judge
- * Never crowd another handler
- * Keep safe distance from horse in front of you = 8 – 10 feet
- * When lining up side by side be sure to leave ample spacing between your and your competitor's horse
- * Never lead your horse between the judge and the horse he/she is looking at
- * Always use the quarter system of moving around your horse even when you are in a line up and the judge is observing someone else (see quarter section for more information)
- * Never touch your horse – all commands are verbal and through leadline
- * Never touch the chain on your lead line -
- * Lead your horse with confidence, standing upright, looking up and smiling... look happy



POSING - 15 PTS

- *After posing or squaring up your horse for inspection, your toes and lower body are pointing towards the horse's left shoulder, while the upper body is focused on the judge. What you are saying to the judge is "I am ready to show my horse to you"
- *Pose your horse according to its breed type
- *While the judge is making his/her way around the horse, it is our responsibility to keep the horse still & quiet
- *The judge should never have to look over your horse's back to see you
- *Show your horse at all times.....
even when the judge does not appear to be looking at you this may be the tie breaker in a close placing
- *Remember you are showing your horse to the judge....not yourself
- *No undue fussing when setting up (squaring up) your horse set your horse up, nod to the judge you are ready and smile !!



SHOWING ANIMAL TO BEST ADVANTAGE – 10 PTS

- *As the handler of this horse it is up to you to know your horse's strengths & weaknesses
- *Show the horse to overcome the faults & showcase the strengths



POISE, ALERTNESS & ATTITUDE - 10 PTS

- *Do not be distracted by things outside the arena
- *Respond to all requests of the judge & show committee
- *Always be polite & courteous
- *Handler shall keep an eye on their horse's position and the judge's position
- *Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times –
regardless of your placement
- *Show your horse from the time you enter the arena
till the time you are excused
- *Speak to the judge ONLY when spoken to – in an extreme cases you have to interrupt the judge; say "Sir/Ma'am excuse me, may I speak to you?"
- *When asked a question, answer the question with a complete sentence
ie: Judge = "how old is your horse?"
incorrect response = "10 years old"
correct response = "my horse is 10 years old Sir / Ma'am "
- *When moving around your horse – stand straight, tall and confident
- *Make each step count – move with precision
- *Once excused = thank the judge "thank you" the judge is standing in the arena all day long... you are only standing in there for one class !!!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! HAVE FUN WITH FITTING & SHOWMANSHIP !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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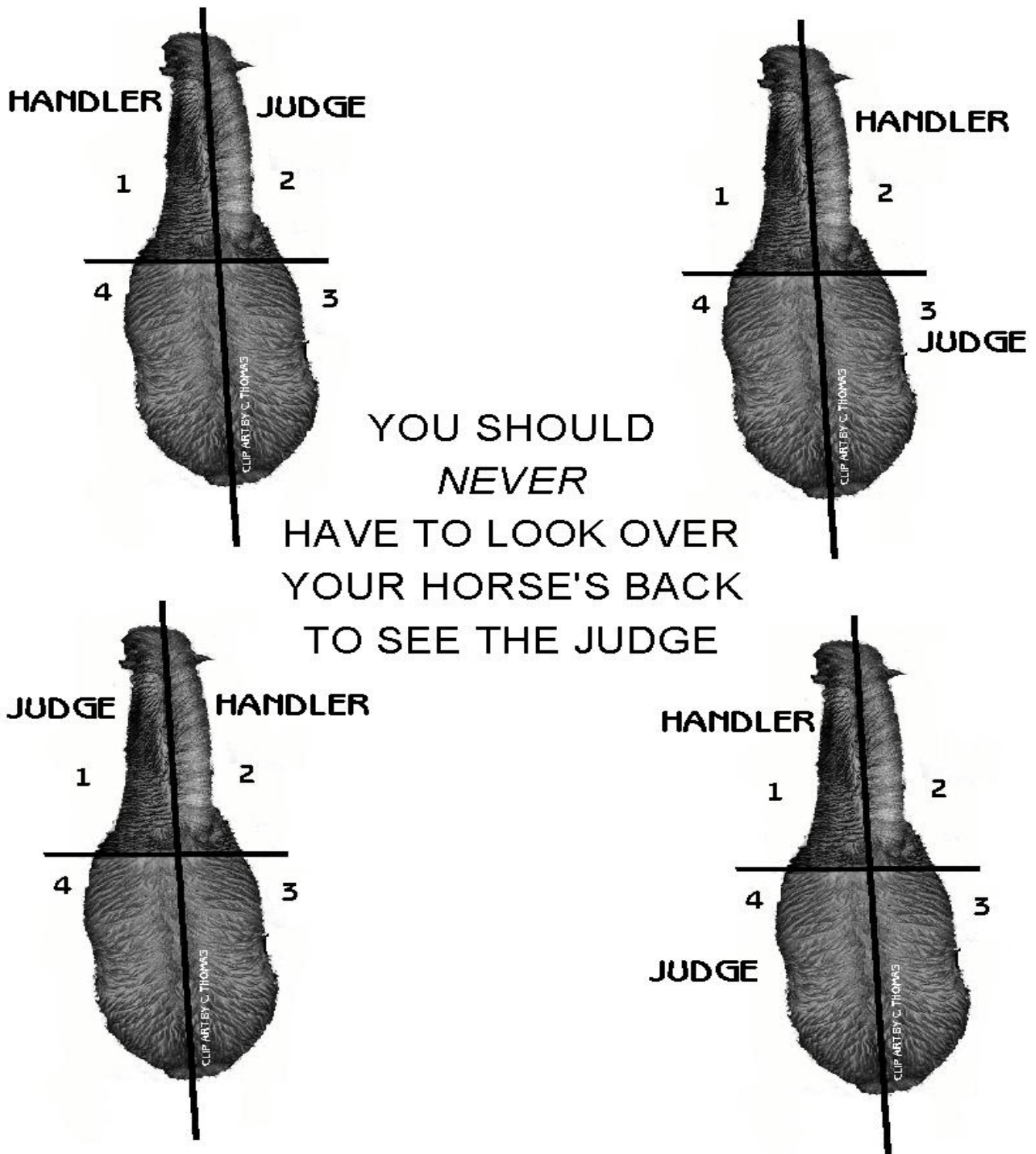
DEALING WITH QUARTERS (SQUARING OR SETTING UP)

Visualize your horse divided into 4 sections -
half from left to right (down the spinal column) & half from nose to tail (at the withers)

After you have set up for the judge - you are on the left front side of the horse

When the judge is in the front right quarter = you should be in the left front quarter

As the judge crosses over the right side of the wither line = you should be changing over to the right front quarter
 As the judge crosses over the spinal column line to the left hind quarter = you should be in the left front quarter
 As the judge crosses over the left wither line putting him/her in front left quarter = you should be in the right front quarter
 As the judge moves down the line to the next handler= you should still be practicing the quarters
 Remember, if you have to look over YOUR horse's back to see the judge = you are in the wrong quarter



POSTED PATTERN:

At the Judge's acknowledgement trot to the center of the arena
At the center walk to the Judge and set up (square up) for inspection
Once dismissed turn 180 degrees and trot back to line up
Turn 180 degrees and back into the line up



HINTS:

Trot *all the way* to the marker and stop (don't walk to trot or walk to stop)
Do not pick up the walk till *after* the horse's head passes the marker
Stop just arm's length way from Judge DO NOT CROWD JUDGE & square up in timely fashion
Acknowledge the Judge (look Judge in eye and nod) when you are ready for inspection
After inspection turn horse (away from you) 180 degrees...this turn is not timed -take your time do it right
check after completion of turn to be sure you re-aligned up with judge and your spot in line up
When trotting back to line up -do not stop your horse till his/her head is just at the beginning of the line up
this sets you up so you only have to back up a few steps to get back into line
Then carefully turn your horse 180 degrees and back into line up - without disturbing the other horses

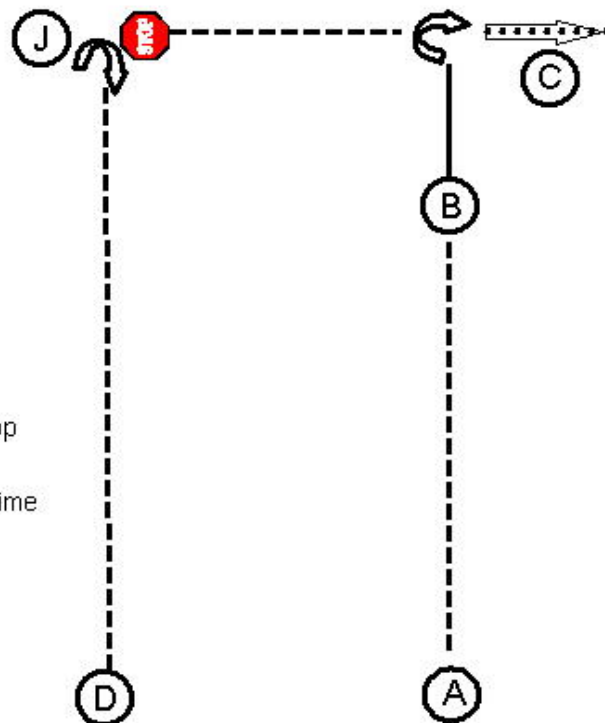
STRAIGHT LINES BOTH FORWARD AND BACKWARD, HALTING ON CUE, PIVOT TURNS, LINED UP WITH JUDGE, NO CROWDING, KEEP EYE ON JUDGE, **SHOW HORSE AT ALL TIMES**

POSTED PATTERN:

Trot from A cone to B cone
Walk from B to slightly pass C
Execute a 270 degree turn
Backup to C
Trot to Judge and set up
When dismissed execute a 270 degree turn
Trot to D cone

HINTS:

Trot *all the way* to marker B- do not walk to the trot or walk to the stop
Walk pass C enough so that when you turn, your horse
is lined up with the Judge (remember this is not timed!) take your time
Back up at least 3 steps in a straight line to C
Trot (straight line) to Judge and set up. (straight lines are key)
Look in Judges eyes and nod to acknowledge you are ready
for inspection
After you have been dismissed, turn 270 degrees away
from you and trot to D -remember to look over right
shoulder to check you are in line with Judge !
Once at D cone, stop, look over shoulder and wait
for Judge to dismiss you



!SMILE & HAVE SOME FUN WITH THIS CLASS - its the only one of its kind for the day !

! If you have started to move to your next quarter & realize you are moving too soon – follow through with the change - be poised and confident.

! When correcting your horse - do so without disturbing another horse – move out of line if need be.

!Never switch hands.

!Know the pattern – do not do what other people have done - they may not have done it correctly.

!If your horse messes up, go ahead & fix it = you have already lost the points anyway, so take this chance to teach your horse he/she needs to mind regardless of where he/she is.

!The only time it is acceptable to touch your horse is when a judge flips a mane over to check for dirt - after the judge is finished you may discretely fix it.

!Wait for acknowledgment from the judge before entering the ring or if you are already in the ring wait before starting your course. When you are finished with your pattern wait for judge to excuse you.

!When walking towards/away from the judge make sure its the HORSE (not you) that is in alignment with the judge.

!When leading away from judge, look back over right shoulder to check alignment.

!Turns should be tight and after your turn you should be lined up with the judge or the next obstacle.

!Patterns require planning – think ahead – judges are looking for straight lines, good turns and a responsive horse.

!Practice squaring up and standing quietly. **Practice** pivots. **Practice** trotting off from stand still. **Practice** getting your horse to respond to your body – not to pulling or dragging them into a walk or trot.

!Practice backing up in a straight line - remember when backing your horse you should still be at his/her shoulder not standing in front of the horse.

!Be aware of your body position to the horse. Do not get so close to the horse's shoulder that you find yourself backing up to move around his/her head.

!Be conscientious of your spacing – the judge needs to be able to see the horse in order to judge.

!Do not crowd the animal.

! Time your stopping for set up – stop your horse about an arm's length away from the judge.

!When walking or trotting towards the judge, DO NOT LOOK DOWN, look at the judge's hat this will make you keep your head and eyes up ! SMILE.. .. REMEMBER YOU ARE HAVING FUN WITH THIS !!!!!

! Develop some drills you can ask your horse to do before each ride ie: stop and square up, walking off from the stop, trotting off from the stop, turning a nice pivot, backing a straight line = challenge yourself and your mount = be one of those horse owners that can complete these steps WITHOUT a lead line !!

!There are all kinds of grooming tools out there to use... however, if the tools are dirty and crusty they will not be much help in getting your horse clean. Clean your grooming tools often !