



Judging a Hunter Round

History of a Hunter

- ▶ The origin of the show ring hunter can be found in the sport of fox hunting where horse and rider galloped over natural terrain and jumping natural obstacles while pursuing game.
- ▶ During the off season of foxhunting, farmers and horseman gathered at county and state fairs to compete and show off their breeding and riding stock
- ▶ The first documented horse show was at the Upperville Colt & Horse show in 1853. The Devon Horse show was started in 1896.
- ▶ The American Horse Shows Association (AHSA) was established in 1917.
- ▶ The WPCSA was established in 1907, with importation dating back to the 1880's
- ▶ By the 1930's Welsh children's riding ponies were in high demand and by the 1970's Welsh pony hunters were highly sought after and the trend still continues.
- ▶ The Welsh Pony is a permanent fixture in the world of show hunters.

Judging Criteria

- ▶ Hunters are judged on an even hunting pace, jumping style, together with faults and way of moving over the course and manners. USEF.....HU136
- ▶ Performance, soundness, manners and suitability of an animal for the rider are to be emphasized in all classes. Extreme speed is to be penalized. Suitability is determined by the height and weight of the rider as related to the size of the animal. Judges must penalize, but not necessarily eliminate an entry not having such manners and suitability. WPCSA Article 114.1.6

Judging Criteria

- ▶ **Even hunting pace** is of the utmost importance. This is why lines are set at measured distances, based on an average horse stride. When a course is set with 12-foot increments it allows for an even pace and correct stride length
- ▶ **Jumping style and faults** are extremely important to the success of a hunter round. A well-balanced horse with superb jumping style is much safer to ride even when a rider makes mistakes. A horse that hangs or splits its front legs will be more likely to knock down a fence or even fall over a fence
- ▶ **Movement** is how a horse travels across the ground in between fences.
- ▶ **Manners** are vital. Horses should be pleasurable to ride when jumping. Strong, lazy, grumpy, spooky or disobedient are not desirable.

Ideal Pony Hunter



▶ Traits to Seek

- ▶ **Attitude-Expression & Personality**
- ▶ **Overall Quality**
- ▶ **Conformation-Beauty, Type**
- ▶ **Smooth Automatic changes**
- ▶ **Quality movement**
- ▶ **Big stride**
- ▶ **Quality and Stylish jump**
- ▶ **Top of its height section**
- ▶ **Safety**

▶ Traits to Avoid

- ▶ **Excessive speed and strong**
- ▶ **Poor jumping style**
- ▶ **Short strided**
- ▶ **Strong, uneducated or rude in the bridle**
- ▶ **Doesn't change leads or skips the changes**
- ▶ **Sour or Unhappiness or Crankiness**
 - ▶ **Gate sour/homebound, Chomping at the bit, Sulky, Impatient, Ears pinned, Wringing its tail**
- ▶ **Unsound**
 - ▶ **Overworked**
 - ▶ **Swapping leads on take off**
- ▶ **Dishonest-creates riders who lack confidence**

Bookkeeping

▶ Judges card

- ▶ Short-Hand or Hieroglyphics -- Have your own sheet of symbols
- ▶ Write your score with symbols and numerical scores
- ▶ On top of Judges card label each jump numerical in order of the course order AS WELL AS a description for each jump. Example 1-wall, 2 coop, 3 oxer
- ▶ Multiple cards- label each card by class name ex w/u, 1st hunter, 2nd hunter, eq.
 - ▶ When the horse enters the ring write the back number and a short describing on right hand side. Include color or pony, show coat, tack, anything that makes that entry stand out.
 - ▶ Right hand side use for first impression example good mover, above bit, wrong lead.
 - ▶ Keep a separate sheet of paper so you can sort the entries by over all scores and personal notes. All the 80's, 70's 60's. That way you can reference information quickly without shuffling cards.

The Judges Card



- ▶ **How many cards are comfortable holding at one time?**
 - ▶ Ideally judges should be able to organize and hold a minimum of 4 cards at one time.
Example: Warm up, Equitation, 1st round, 2nd round
 - ▶ Acknowledge and realize that you will need to keep cards open for different fence heights within a division
 - ▶ Acknowledge and realize Warm Up and Equitation are held open thru Sections A, B, C, D, and Half/Welsh-Partbred divisions
- ▶ **Setting Up a Card**
 - ▶ Write a description of each fence of the course above the fence numbers
 - ▶ Ex: 1st fence=Left lead vertical, 2nd fence=diagonal wall, 3rd fence=oxer
 - ▶ Label the top of each card with what round. (Warm-up, Round 1, Round 2, etc)
 - ▶ Mark your card as to how many participants are competing
 - ▶ Sign and or initial your judges card when you are finished judging the class
 - ▶ When you are finished judging the class, place your card on a separate clip board so show management can pick up without interrupting your judging

The Judges Card-#2

- ▶ Know your individual scoring symbols you have developed. Do you have your own?
- ▶ Consistency in your scoring is key!!
 - ▶ Example: trot change, dropped rail, break in gait, cross canter, wrong lead, no lead change will be scored the same for each exhibitor
- ▶ Know the numerical score for each possible major/minor fault
- ▶ Record pony's number as it enters the ring
- ▶ Make note of the pony's movement and quality
- ▶ Write a description in the comment box-color of the pony, jacket color, type of bit, tack, anything to differentiate and help you recall
- ▶ Watch the round and mark your card as the pony does its round. (Stagger)
- ▶ Record each type of jump, style of the jump, as well as take off and landing
- ▶ Record any flaws in between the jumps (in the middle of a line, corners, ends of the arena) in between the boxes on your score card
- ▶ Assign a numerical score for the round and place it in the appropriate numerical column
- ▶ Use the same system for every pony
- ▶ A system and consistency is key!

The Judges Card-#3



- ▶ **Scores are similar to grades in school**
 - ▶ **A- score in the 90's-Quality pony with a flawless round**
 - ▶ **B- score in the 80's-Quality pony with an average round**
 - ▶ **C-score in the 70's-Average pony with an average round**
 - ▶ **D-score in the 60's-Average pony with major/minor faults**
 - ▶ **F- any score below 60-Average pony with multiple major faults**

Over Fences Scoring

Score of 90-100

- ▶ This is reserved for the pony who exhibits exceptional talent, quality and scope. A pony who wears his ears forward-saying they enjoy their job, with no effort at all. Maintains an even, smooth pace, jumping high and round over the jumps, maintaining even forearms at all times. Must be scopey. This pony must be capable of winning the Under Saddle class in the best of company.

Score of 80-89

- ▶ This pony must still be in the excellent group of jumping style and attitude. Their jump may not be as crisp or high over all the jumps as in the 90's scorer. It is a well-ridden pony with less style but performs over and above their ability. Wears their ears well and enjoys their job. It should also be a good mover.

Over Fences Scoring



Scores 75-79

- ▶ This is the pony who is ridden well, jumps well, but moves average. It lacks height in their jump, tilts their front a bit or swings their butt off to the side occasionally. Also makes a couple of errors-a rub, a swap, a quiet jump, pace change or a little blah attitude or expression.

Scores 70-75

- ▶ These scores reflect minor faults and multiple errors. This is the most common score range. These ponies lacks a bit in jumping style, peeks at jumps, or is a below average mover. A pony who may be sour the entire round, wears a tight martingale or a long shank Pelham.
- ▶ The pony's rider creates changes in pace, late lead changes, cuts the corners, several quiet or deep distances. It could also be the pony who misses the lead change at the end of the round.

Over Fences Scoring

Scores 60-69

- ▶ Ponies in this score range may have several issues while on course. These issues include a lack of jumping style, losing a correct lead on course, cross cantering, a kick-out after a lead change or multiple swaps in front of a jump or on landing.
- ▶ Adding a stride in a line, bounces a rail out of a jump cup, or picks up the wrong lead in the opening courtesy circle and trots to fix it are other factors contributing to this score.

Scores 45-55

- ▶ This score reflects trotting anywhere on course, adding strides in lines, or the rider spanked them with a crop.
- ▶ Other contributing factors include long/weak jumps, jumping off three legs, forearms hanging, or is quick and aggressive and appears out of control-leaving a stride out of a line.

Over Fences Scoring



41-45

- ▶ Scores of 41-45 have resulted from a rail down on course.

40

- ▶ A score of 40 is from a refusal on course.

Below 40

- ▶ Any score below 40 is from multiple major faults.

Common Scores



- ▶ **Skip Change=Score 65**
- ▶ **No Lead Change=Score of 60**
 - ▶ This means that a skip change is better than no change, but no change is better than breaking for a lead change
- ▶ **Break of Gait=Score 55**
- ▶ **Kicking Out=Score 60**
 - ▶ The horse is “talking back” and reacting negatively to the rider's aids.
- ▶ **Rail Down=Score 45**
 - ▶ In Equitation it is scored as a 4-point deduction
- ▶ **Adding a stride in line=Score 60-65**
 - ▶ The reason this is such a serious fault is doing the correct number of strides between jumps is part of the test of the course-related distances
- ▶ **Leaving a stride out of a line=Score 50-60**
 - ▶ This is a more serious mistake depending on how scary it was!!
- ▶ **One refusal = Score 40**
- ▶ **Two Refusals =Score 30**
- ▶ **Three Refusals=Elimination**

Common Scores

- ▶ **Cross-Cantering Score=65**
 - ▶ Multiple strides at the end of the ring
- ▶ **Rider's use of the stick Score 60**
- ▶ **Pole out of a cup "Lipper" Score 65**
 - ▶ This is a major fault but does not score a 45 because the rail did not fall to the ground
- ▶ **Major Spook Score 65 or below** depending on severity
- ▶ **No lead change in the finishing circle-**
 - ▶ Some judges score 65 while other judges deduct 5 or 10 points

Elimination Scores

- ▶ Trotting in the gate
- ▶ Trotting out the gate
- ▶ Entering the ring and then exiting the ring
- ▶ Fall of animal and/or rider
 - ▶ Riders are not allowed to remount in the ring
 - ▶ May require health care professional to approve further competition
 - ▶ When a rider falls off-write on your card the time of the fall, did the rider walk out or did the EMT assist or taken out in ambulance
 - ▶ If a horse falls the Horse Show Steward must fill out the proper form
- ▶ Lamé
- ▶ Bolting
 - ▶ (depending on severity and judges discretion)
- ▶ Three refusals
- ▶ Off course
- ▶ Not being present for the jog and/or the conformation portion
- ▶ Stopping for loss of shoe or broken equipment

Conformation Percentages




- ▶ **75% is to be judged on performance, manners, movement and style**
- ▶ **25% is to be judged on breed type and conformation**
- ▶ **In each performance class the conformation of the pony is considered in relation to the pony ahead and behind them in that particular class**

Julie Winkel's

SCORING SYMBOLS FOR JUDGING

HUNTERS-(QUALITY-MOVEMENT-STYLE-PERFORMANCE)

 Good Jump	<i>sp</i> Spooked	 Light Rub
 Flat Jump	<i>Q</i> Quality	 Hard Rub
 Hollow Jump	<i>PQ</i> Poor Quality	 Rub front & Back
 Deep Distance	<i>NQ</i> No Quality	<i>NS</i> No scope
 Chip	<i>GM</i> Good Mover	<i>SS</i> Short-strided
 Long distance	<i>FM</i> Fair Mover	<i>ltd</i> Limited
 Jumps in a box	<i>PM</i> Poor mover	 Weak off ground
 Dangerous Jump	<i>GJ</i> Good jumper	<i>+</i> Even Pace
 Lands past arc	<i>FJ</i> Fair jumper	 Sped up
 Cuts down	<i>PJ</i> Poor Jumper	<i>...</i> Slowed down
<i>FE</i> Jumps off front end	 Refusal	 Erratic pace
<i>LOS</i> Lays on side	 Knockdown	 Checking
<i>TW</i> Twists hindend	 Trotting	 Cut Corner
 Reachy	 Lamé	 Bulged
 Dives	<i>om</i> Opens mouth	 Weaved
<i>o/e</i> Opens early	<i>tail</i> Swishes tail	<i>RC</i> Rough change
<i>o/s</i> Jumps over shoulder	<i>ears</i> Ears back	<i>LC</i> Late change
<i>s/o</i> Steps over jumps	<i>wl</i> Wrong lead	 No lead change
 Hang leg	<i>XX</i> Cross-canter	<i>SK</i> Skip Change

Dumped front end

Yk

Swap leads

se

Poor front end

PFE

EQUITATION (FORM-FUNCTION-FEEL)

- lll Loose lower leg
- ok On knee
- l← Leg swings back
- l Leg slips forward
- OT On toe
- +S Toilet Seat
- Ah Ahead of motion
- Beh Behind motion
- FB Falls Back in air
- FON Falls on Neck
- OM On mouth
- NR No release
- +h Over-releases
- h↑ Heels up
- hh High hands
- lh Low hands
- ld Looks down
- Rf Rough
- st Stiff
- GF Good feel
- o/e Opens early
- l Leans

Judges Score Card

JUDGES' SCORE CARD

Class No. 234 Adult Hunters 18-35

①

'33	'16	47	'59	'86
'13	'79	'80	'56	'91

Horse No.	near		Disg		Far S		Dors		near		10	11	12	13	14	60%	70%	80%	90%	Comments
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8												
86	—	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→						69				B pin polk.
97	—	—	—	→	→	→	→	→	→	→							75			Gr. FM kind
33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								86		Br. GJ cute
59	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→								72		CB sock polk. ears
13	+	—	—	—	+	+	+	+	+	+								67		Blk. Blaze man
91	—	(P)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				(P)				40		B G.M.T
56	→	—	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→				(K)				45		Gr. Hd s.H
16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—									83	small ch. GJ FM
79	—	—	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→								65		Br. P.M.E.T. polk.
80	—	—	(F)	→	→	→	→	→	→	→				(H)				55		Pt. G.M.E.T.

Class: _____

Score	Entry	Score	Entry	Score	Entry	Score	Entry	Score	Entry
		89.75		79.75		69.75			
		89.5		79.5		69.5			
		89.25		79.25		69.25			
		89		79		69			
98.75		88.75		78.75		68.75			
98.5		88.5		78.5		68.5		55	
98.25		88.25		78.25		68.25			
98		88		78		68			
97.75		87.75		77.75		67.75		50	
97.5		87.5		77.5		67.5			
97.25		87.25		77.25		67.25			
97		87		77		67			
96.75		86.75		76.75		66.75			
96.5		86.5		76.5		66.5			
96.25		86.25		76.25		66.25			
96		86		76		66		45	
95.75		85.75		75.75		65.75			
95.5		85.5		75.5		65.5			
95.25		85.25		75.25		65.25			
95		85		75		65		40	
94.75		84.75		74.75		64.75			
94.5		84.5		74.5		64.5			
94.25		84.25		74.25		64.25			
94		84		74		64			
93.75		83.75		73.75		63.75			
93.5		83.5		73.5		63.5			
93.25		83.25		73.25		63.25			
93		83		73		63			
92.75		82.75		72.75		62.75			
92.5		82.5		72.5		62.5			
92.25		82.25		72.25		62.25			
92		82		72		62			
91.75		81.75		71.75		61.75			
91.5		81.5		71.5		61.5			
91.25		81.25		71.25		61.25			
91		81		71		61			
90.75		80.75		70.75		60.75			
90.5		80.5		70.5		60.5			
90.25		80.25		70.25		60.25			
90		80		70		60			

Credit: John Barhet

Courses

- ▶ **Inspect the course**
 - ▶ Are the distances listed on the course board for the exhibitors? The distances should be marked on at least one course-preferably the first-class o/f. Are the distances listed on the judge's copy of the courses?
 - ▶ Have the courses been measured with a tape measure? 100' check for accuracy
 - ▶ Be sure the jumps are set at the correct height, ground lines are set for the correct direction, oxers are ramped (not square), set evenly (not higher on one side or the other)
 - ▶ Flow of course- does it make sense-Examples are in the rulebook
 - ▶ Legal -filler: ground lines, natural or painted poles, gates, picket fences, walls, brush boxes. Natural brush may be used with a ground line.
 - ▶ Illegal filler: striped poles or rails, targets, barrels, driving cones, or jumper-type jumps
 - ▶ Avoid jumping same obstacle more than than once on course due to lack of jump crew
 - ▶ Jump pins are in correctly....same as the way it is jumped. This is a safety issue.

USEF Distances

NOTE
This chart represents suggested distances under normal conditions. Judgement must be exercised regarding variations in footing, weather, terrain, stride length of horse, etc...

		Horse Distances							
		3'	3'6"	3'9"	4'				
1		25'6"	26'	26'6"	27"				
2		36'6"	37'	37'6"	38"				
		12'	12'3"	12'6"	12'9"	13'	13'3"	13'6"	13'9"
3	48'	49'	50'	51'	52'	53'	54'	55'	
4	60'	61'3"	62'6"	63'9"	65'	66'3"	67'6"	68'9"	
5	72'	73'6"	75'	76'6"	78'	79'6"	81'	82'6"	
6	84'	85'9"	87'6"	89'3"	91'	92'9"	94'6"	96'3"	
7	96'	98'	100'	102'	104'	106'	108'6"	110'	
8	108'	110'3"	112'6"	114'9"	117'	119'3"	121'6"	123'9"	

		Pony Distances									
		Small Ponies	Medium Ponies	Large Ponies							
1		19'/20'	21'/22'	23'/24'							
2		29'/30'	31'6"/32'	34'/34'6"							
		Small Steady	Small Normal	Small Flowing	Medium Steady	Medium Normal	Medium Flowing	Large Steady	Large Normal	Large Flowing	Large Forward
		9'9"	10'	10'3"	10'3"	10'6"	10'9"	11'	11'3"	11'6"	11'9"
3	39'	40'	41'	41'	42'	43'	44'	45'	46'	47'	
4	48'9"	50'	51'3"	51'3"	52'6"	53'9"	55'	56'3"	57'6"	58'9"	
5	58'6"	60'	61'6"	61'6"	63'	64'6"	66'	67'6"	69'	70'6"	
6	68'3"	70'	71'9"	71'9"	73'6"	75'3"	77'	78'9"	80'6"	82'3"	
7	78'	80'	82'	82'	84'	86'	88'	90'	92'	94'	
8	87'9"	90'	92'3"	92'3"	94'6"	96'9"	99'	101'3"	103'6"	105'9"	

MDC Corporation

All Rights Reserved © October 25, 1994 and © 2004 Registered with the Library of Congress, Copyright Office
 4444 Ocean Heights Ct, Seaside CA, 93955 - 831.393.0588 - mdc@mdccorporation.us

Judges Pet Peeves

Turnout & Performance Related

- ▶ Dirty Boots
- ▶ Twisted Reins
- ▶ Poor fitting tack
- ▶ Orange (non oiled tack)
- ▶ An untidy braid job
- ▶ Spurs sticking straight up instead of level
- ▶ Untucked Shirts and/or no belt
- ▶ Huge bows that obscure numbers
- ▶ Overly large fitted saddle pads
Square saddle pads in O/F
- ▶ Colored crops/whips and are too long
- ▶ Poor sportsmanship or temper
- ▶ Not knowing which class, you are supposed to be competing in
- ▶ Not being ready to jog & stand for conformation
- ▶ Twisting & pulling the inside rein in an attempt to land the lead
- ▶ Excessive speed
- ▶ An overworked, sore, sour or tired horse
- ▶ Cutting corners of the arena
- ▶ Posting the canter
- ▶ Excessive talking while competing
- ▶ Hunt coats and/or boots that are too large or too small

Food For Thought

- ▶ If Hunter over Fences is your weaker specialty or if you lack experience with judging hunters - practice makes perfect.
 - ▶ Watch prestigious horse shows online where the scores are posted at the end of each round. Example: Pony Finals, Devon, International Hunter Derby
 - ▶ Sit down with a score card and judge. You can compare your score with the posted score after each round. Practice!
 - ▶ Attend a local show and practice judging on your own. Compare your results with the awards at the end of the class.
 - ▶ Ask a knowledgeable hunter judge if you may learner judge with them at a schooling show or a smaller local unrated show.
 - ▶ Learn from others and take your assignment seriously-It is only fair to competitors that are exhibiting under you when you are the main judge.