

Giving Welsh Awards at Events or for High-Score Awards - A Guide

Introduction

The Welsh breed is known for its versatility and success in many disciplines in open competitions. There have been many times when the WPCSA has been approached by members that want to promote the breed at specific events or for various types of high score awards. This is wonderful promotion for the breed and is an opportunity to give recognition to our Welsh ponies & cobs. This guide is provided to answer some common questions and give an outline of things to consider.

Background

One of the most successful examples of promotion of Welsh at an event is what a group of volunteers, led by Dr. Ruth Wilburn, have done at Pony Finals in Lexington, KY each year. Many of the topics in this guide were learned from the experiences at this event. Dr. Ruth and a small group of volunteers started promoting Welsh at PF in a very small way, without a computer and giving only a handful of ribbons. Over the years it was gradually expanded, with more volunteers and more awards, an informative booth, great photography documenting the Welsh and giving out sought-after prizes. The Welsh awards eventually became an integral part of Pony Finals lore and have been highlighted in major publications and social media. It has helped to promote having Welsh registration papers because the parents, trainers and most importantly, the kids, wanted to be able to compete for these awards. What an amazing promotion of the breed with hundreds of registered Welsh ponies participating.

Promoting Welsh ponies and cobs can also be done at much smaller venues or for high score awards. This is just as important! The options are as varied as the versatility of the Welsh ponies and cobs. Some possibilities are Dressage, Combined Driving, Western competitions, Trail, Endurance, Hunters, Eventing and Pleasure and can be awarded at a competition, for a series high point or for a year-end award.

Planning

- **Finances**

The first question that we get asked is if the WPCSA has any money available to sponsor these awards. Unfortunately, the Society does not have the funds to do so and any type of promotion is entirely funded by volunteers. Usually breeders and/or members interested in the particular discipline involved contribute to the award(s). Fund-raisers may be a possible option.

- **Organization**

A good leader with organizational skills is needed that can coordinate volunteers and work with the competition/organization management. The leader should have a good working knowledge of the discipline involved. For a simple award, such as the high-point Welsh pony at a

competition, only one person may be needed. For a large competition, such as Pony Finals, a group of 5-7 volunteers are needed.

- **Permission and contact to work with**

Once you've decided on an event or organization where you'd like to give an award, you must contact the person that's running the event/organization and start a good working relationship. Communication is key to ensuring that you both are on the same page and also to work out all of the details.

- **Scope and rules for award(s)**

Decide what award(s) will be given and how they will be scored. It's always best to start small. Although we now give six ribbons for each division at PF plus grand champions, at the Young Pony championships we only give one ribbon (Champion) per division. The guidelines for the award should be clearly written and shared with the organizer of the event/organization so that they can be shared with competitors. These instructions should clearly state that ponies must be registered with WPCSA and include our website and phone number for more information.

- **Determining if registered with WPCSA**

We encourage giving awards to animals that are currently registered with WPCSA so a plan must be made for how to verify this. For an event, it's easiest if something is in the prize list asking competitors to enter the Welsh registration number and the registered name of the pony. Someone can then look up that information in the WPCSA database for verification. For Pony Finals, we get the entries ahead of time and cross-check the USEF data with the WPCSA database to verify registrations.

- **Plan/purchase awards**

Well before the event, plan what ribbons and/or prizes will be given. If possible, get donations to help offset the cost. Ribbons can often be purchased for a small discount in the winter so planning ahead can be beneficial.

- **Event details**

- Plan how you'll tabulate points. Will you do it on a laptop? If so, set up spreadsheet ahead of time and be familiar with how you'll track points. Perhaps you'll rely on the show secretary for tracking points, but you'll need to give them a list of eligible animals ahead of time.

- If you're tracking the points, plan a location at show to do so. At Pony Finals we have a booth with electricity for a laptop. At Young Pony, we sit in a covered viewing area that has power available.
- Plan who will present the award(s) and when.
- If possible, have the registered Welsh name and sire and dam announced at the time the award(s) are presented.
- Photography is an important aspect of getting the most out of presenting awards. At a minimum, someone should photograph the award being presented. Photos of the animals in action also has obvious benefits. At Pony Finals many photos are taken of the ponies performing as well as getting their awards and these are invaluable for advertising and promotion.
- Well before the event, advertise and promote the award, including general rules about it. Photos of Welsh ponies and cobs bring your award to life. Social media, the prize list and possible emails can help generate excitement.

At a competition - checklist

- Arrive early and work with event staff
- Set up prizes
- Add any last-minute entries
- Answer any questions that competitors or event organizer may have.
- Keep up with scoring. It goes fast sometimes so it's helpful to have a helper.
- Present awards
- Photos for social media and advertising

At an Awards Banquet- checklist

- Must work with organization tabulating points ahead of time
- All Welsh must be identified before-hand
- Award must be sent ahead or brought in person
- Arrange someone to present award
- Get photos of winner(s)

After the competition/event

- Post photos on social media
- Submit photos/article to publications
- Plan for next year