



2023-2024 AEL Judge's Guidelines

Flat Phase

- Riders will enter the arena on the left rein, 6-7 competitors per class section. Riders will wear colored wristbands, one on each wrist. Riders will wear their assigned rider number on their right arm if the judge is outside of the arena.
- Write in the Class Section at the top right of the Flat scoresheet. Write in the rider numbers in the left column for each color.
- **Beginner: Walk and Rising Trot in both directions. Tests: Halt and Trot 2-point in one direction.**
- **Advanced Beginner: Walk, Rising Trot and Canter (judge to decide how many to canter at a time) in both directions. Tests: Halt and Trot 2-point in one direction.**
- **Novice: Walk, Rising Trot, and Canter in both directions. Tests: Halt and Trot 2 point in one direction.**
- **Intermediate: Walk, Rising Trot and Canter in both directions. Tests: Halt and Sitting Trot in one direction**
- **Open: Walk, Rising Trot and Canter in both directions. Tests: Halt and Hand Gallop in one direction.**
- Riders will be scored on the basics of Balance Seat, in other words, when the rider's center of gravity is as close as possible to the horse's center of gravity. The rider is in correct alignment when there is a straight, vertical line from the rider's ear to the shoulder to the point of the hip to the back of the heel. The eyes are forward, the back is straight, the seat bones are planted in the deepest part of the saddle, the legs are underneath the rider, not out in front, the ball of the foot is on the stirrup, and the toe is pointed up, with the heel down. **Rider's shoulders may be on or slightly in front of the vertical. Riders with shoulders on the vertical shall not be penalized.**
- The judge will score each athlete on a scale of 0 to 40 points. The judge can run the class according to their judging needs. In other words, if the judge can only watch 3 riders at a time perform the halt as one of the tests, they can ask the class to halt twice in one direction. Judges are encouraged to use the entire scale,

rewarding those riders who achieve a good Balance Seat as outlined above and also those riders who demonstrate an ability to ride an unfamiliar horse in a capable fashion. Judges should also penalize riders who are tight and tense and grab the reins for balance.

Incorrect diagonals, incorrect leads and loss of gait are circled on the bottom of the scoresheet and are subtracted from the total score accordingly.

- Riders will wear their assigned rider number on their right arm. Judges may ask riders to place their rider number on their left arm if they are judging from inside of the arena. Each rider in the flat class will also put on colored wristbands on both wrists prior to their class, and then remove it before their fences class. The wristband colors will correspond to the colors on the judge's flat score sheet, and will be assigned randomly: Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, Orange and Purple.
- The judge will have a scribe to mark down the judge's scoring and comments for each rider. Judges are encouraged to write as many comments as possible and watch the entire class and then mark their final score at the end of the class.
- **Riders are not scored against the others in the section, they are scored against the ideals on the bottom of the page. In other words, you do not "place" the class, you could possibly have identical scores for multiple riders. The riders will have their fences and practicum scores added to their flat total which will place the class.**
- **If a rider has all the "ideals" at one level of scoring but is weak in one area, the judge should mark them at the lower end of the higher scale**
- At the end of the class, all riders will be asked to leave the arena in order to prepare for their fences phase.
- Further testing is encouraged in one direction, but only those tests that are appropriate to the competitors' level as outlined in the class descriptions.
- In the Minis classes, Minis can be led with a lead rope attached or with the coach or other handler walking nearby. In addition, coaches are permitted to stand in the arena if they aren't directly leading their Minis

Fences Phase

- The flat class grouping will proceed directly to their fences phase, order to be determined by the competition committee. Riders will do their qualified fences level.
- Each level will perform their tasks according to their AEL Fences Phase Tests. Riders will walk into and out of the arena, and shall trot or canter (depending on the first task in their fences test) to their first element. Riders do not need to perform an opening and closing circle.
- **Beginner: Rising Trot, and Halt over ground poles in 2-point.**
- **Advanced Beginner: Rising Trot, Halt and Canter over ground poles in 2-point.**
- **Novice: Rising Trot, 2-point Trot, Halt, and Canter over cross-rail fences.**
- **Intermediate: Rising Trot, Sitting Trot, Halt and Canter over 2'-2'3" fences**
- **Open: Rising Trot, Halt, Hand Gallop and Canter over 2'3"-2'6" fences.**
- **The judge will score on a scale of 0-40. The judge should watch the entire test, making comments to the scribe on each task, and then determine a total score based on the AEL Fences scoring grid. The judge will circle -10 for the first refusal/run-out/break of gait and -20 for the second infraction. The judge does not "place" the class with their score, two or more riders could potentially have the same score. The athlete's Flat and Practicum scores will be added to their fences score which will place the class.**
- The judge will have a scribe to mark down the judge's scoring for each rider as they perform each task.
- When two jumps are scored as one "test" and the rider has a refusal/run-out at the second fence, the rider shall circle back and take the second fence only, not the entire line.
- If an athlete forgets their fences test or goes off course, the judge shall ring a bell or blow a whistle. The athlete can confer with their coach or the judge to get them going in the correct direction. The judge shall circle -10 at the bottom of the fences test for "first test error." If it happens again, same procedure but the judge shall circle -20 (the athlete will have a total of -30), if it happens a 3rd time, athlete is excused.
- In the Minis classes, Minis can be led with a lead rope attached or with the coach or other handler walking nearby. In addition, coaches are permitted to stand in the arena if they aren't directly leading their Mini. Minis are permitted to have their fences tests read to them.
- **For Minis and Beginners during a fences test while trotting over a line of two jumps in a row, posting diagonal is not to count since the riders are required to be in two-point over the poles.**

Practicum Phase

- The Practicum Judge should have a working knowledge of the Certified Horsemanship Association(CHA) Composite Manual. All Practicum tests are pulled from the CHA Manual.
- Each competitor will complete their Practicum Test at any time in the competition.
- Each competitor will be asked their questions and/or asked to demonstrate, if that is in their test.
- The Practicum judge shall have a master class scoresheet which they will mark the athlete's score. They will determine the athlete score by looking at the AEL Practicum tests which the show manager has run off for them, and write that score onto the master class scoresheet. The Practicum judge will provide the scores to the scorers, and let the announcer know who still needs to take their Practicum so that the Practicum runs in a timely manner.

Scoring

- Each competitor will be scored 40 points for Flat, 40 points for Fences and 20 points for Practicum.
- In the event of a tie for class placing, the tie shall be broken by the Athletes' Flat scores, if the tie still remains, the tie shall be broken by the Athletes' Fences scores. If the tie still remains, the tie shall be broken by the Athletes' combined Flat and Fences scores. If the tie still remains, the judge shall break the tie.