

Oklahoma 4-H Horse Project Member Self-Evaluation

Horse Shows: Understanding the Reining Class

4H-ANSI-420

The Reining class is designed for you to exhibit your horse through a pattern of advanced performance maneuvers. When done correctly, this class has a fairly high degree of difficulty because it requires speed, control, and precision while accurately completing a series of advanced maneuvers. You are evaluated on how well your horse performs each maneuver. As with any competitive event, success requires preparation, practice and self-evaluation. This 4-H member guide provides questions to answer about your knowledge of and ability to perform the reining class. Hopefully, you will have the chance to discuss your answers with others and identify some of the ways others prepare for and perform during shows. You will find that a rulebook will be needed, so ask your leader or parent for a copy before you work through the questions.

The Maneuver Score

Maneuver scores are summed and added or subtracted from a beginning score of 70 to provide a pattern score. In addition, commonly made errors are given penalties. The sum of the penalties is subtracted from the pattern score to obtain the overall score.

Maneuver scores are rated on the basis of: -1 1/2 as extremely poor, -1 as very poor, -1/2 as poor, 0 as correct, +1/2 as good, +1 as very good and +1 1/2 as excellent. First, the judge must ensure that the maneuver is within the limits of what is identified or allowed in the pattern. If not, you would be called off pattern, and receive a no score or 0 for the whole pattern which is similar to being disqualified. For example, if you completed three spins and the pattern stated four spins, you would be off pattern. If the maneuver is on pattern the judge then rates how correctly or how well the maneuver was performed.

Correctness is defined by guides that identify the specific way maneuvers are to be performed. Incorrect maneuvers will receive a negative maneuver score. If the maneuver is correct, a score of 0 to a positive score will be given. To receive a positive score, i.e. +1/2, +1 or +1 1/2, the maneuver must be performed correctly and with some degree of difficulty. Credit for degree of difficulty is given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness, authority and controlled speed while completing a correct maneuver. So, it is important to:

- 1st.** Complete the maneuver as identified in the rule book so you can receive a maneuver score
- 2nd.** Complete the maneuver with correctness and
- 3rd.** Add a degree of difficulty so to receive a positive score.

Thoughts and discussion: Can you describe what a poor stop might look like? How about a good stop? What about other maneuvers, i.e. a circle or spin?

'Evaluating Myself'

Being able to objectively evaluate your actions is an important skill for success. This guide contains a list of questions to help you develop self-evaluation skills. Some questions may not have a single, correct answer. Some follow-up questions for your own thought and possible group discussion are provided for each question.

By completing this guide you will learn more about yourself and your actions to help in future decision making. Completing this with a group will allow you to learn from others experiences. Group discussions should be positive, encouraging and non-judgmental, so you and others will feel comfortable speaking with one another. Remember, different methods and actions are not necessarily wrong, and there isn't necessarily only one right or wrong answer to all the questions.

Do you know the penalties?

The reining class has a very detailed scoring system that includes receiving deductions for making errors. These deductions are called penalties. Which of the following statements are true about penalties?

- a. Penalties range from as little as -1/2 to as much as -5
- b. Missed leads in a circle can be penalized as little as -1/2 for a single stride to as much as 4 total points if out of lead for an entire circle
- c. A break of gait is not as great a penalty as bucking
- d. A single maneuver can have more than one penalty

Thoughts and discussion: Can you list actions that would result in a no score or score of 0 for the entire pattern?

Rate your ability to perform the Stop and Back Up

Stops and back ups are included in one maneuver. Stops are the act of slowing the horse from a lope to a stop position by bringing the hind legs under the horse in a locked position and sliding on the hind feet. The horse should enter the stop position by bending the back, bringing the hind legs further under the body while maintaining forward motion, ground contact and cadence with the front legs. Throughout the stop, the horse should continue in a straight line while maintaining ground contact with the hind feet. A backup is a maneuver requiring the horse to be moved in a reverse motion in a straight line a required distance; at least 10 feet. Based on how maneuver scores are rated, would you rate your horse's best ability to stop and back up as poor or below (-1/2 to -1 1/2), correct (0), or correct with a plus for being correct with a degree of difficulty (+1/2 to +1 1/2)?

Rate your ability to perform the Spins

Spins are a series of 360-degree turns, executed over a stationary (inside) hind leg. Propulsion for the spin is supplied by the outside rear leg and front legs, and contact should be made with the ground and a front leg. The location of hindquarters should be fixed at the start of the spin and maintained throughout the spins. A judge should watch for the horse to remain in the same location, rather than watching for a stationary inside leg. This allows for easier focus on other elements of the spin (i.e., cadence, attitude, smoothness, finesse, and speed). Based on how maneuver scores are rated, would you rate your horse's best ability to spin as poor or below (-1/2 to -1 1/2), correct (0), or correct with a plus for being correct with a degree of difficulty (+1/2 to +1 1/2)?

Rate your ability to perform the Rollback

Rollbacks are the 180 degree reversal of forward motion completed by running to a stop, rolling (turning) the shoulders back to the opposite direction over the hocks and departing in a canter, as one continuous motion. The NRHA Handbook states no hesitation; however, a slight pause to regain footing or balance should not be deemed hesitation. The horse should not step ahead or backup prior to rolling back. Based on how maneuver scores are rated, would you rate your horse's best ability to rollback as poor or below (-1/2 to -1 1/2), correct (0), or correct with a plus for being correct with a degree of difficulty (+1/2 to +1 1/2)?

Rate your ability to perform the Circle and Lead Change

Circles and lead changes are included as one maneuver. Circles are maneuvers of designated size and speed, which demonstrate control, willingness to guide, and degree of difficulty in speed and speed changes. Circles must at all times be run in the geographical area of the arena specified in the pattern description and must have a common center point. There must be a clearly defined difference in the speed and size of a small, slow circle, and a large, fast circle. The speed and size of small, slow right circles should be similar to the small, slow left circles; and the speed and size of the large, fast right circles should be similar to the large, fast left circles. Lead changes are the act of changing the leading legs of the front and rear pairs of legs, at a lope, when changing the direction traveled. The lead change must be executed at a lope with no change of gait or speed and be performed in the exact geographical position in the arena specified in the pattern description. The change of front and rear leads must take place within the same stride to avoid penalty. Based on how maneuver scores are rated, would you rate your horse's best ability to circle and change leads as poor or below (-1/2 to -1 1/2), correct (0), or correct with a plus for being correct with a degree of difficulty (+1/2 to +1 1/2)?

Other elements listed in patterns

There are other elements listed in the patterns that are included as part of one of the other maneuvers. The walk-in brings the horse from the gate to the center of the arena to begin his pattern. The horse should appear relaxed and confident. Any action which may create the appearance of intimidation; including starting and stopping or checking is a fault which shall be marked down according to the severity in the first maneuver score. To hesitate is the act of demonstrating the horse's ability to stand in a relaxed manner at a designated time in a pattern. In a hesitation, the horse is required to remain motionless and relaxed. All patterns require a hesitation at the end of the patterns to demonstrate to the judge(s) the completion of the pattern. Run downs are runs through the middle of the arena, and runs along the side and ends of the arena. Run downs and run-arounds should demonstrate control and gradual increase in speed to the stop.

The National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) sets the standards and rules for judging the reining class. Descriptions of the maneuvers and scoring system are referenced from the NRHA Handbook.