



ROCKY MOUNTAIN HORSE®
ASSOCIATION

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SHOW JUDGING COMMITTEE RULES
& REGULATIONS

Show Judging Committee
Revised: March 2022

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HORSE ASSOCIATION SHOW JUDGING COMMITTEE RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following requirements, rules and regulations are set forth for all RMHA Judges to follow and enforce at all RMHA shows and the Annual International Rocky Mountain Horse Show.

I. General Requirements:

A. The qualifications for RMHA Judges are: (1) equine expertise; (2) a *thorough working knowledge of the current RMHA Show Rules and Regulations* (“Show Rules”) (3) personal, professional and ethical characteristics which, in the opinion of the RMHA, are necessary to carry out their duties; (4) a demonstration of support for the Rocky Mountain Horse with the *goal of promoting and preserving their natural characteristics*; (5) and, in relation to the foregoing, a commitment to maintaining a high quality of judging skills. The conduct of the judge must be exemplary. All judges are subject to continual review. The judge must be in compliance with these Rules and Regulations, the current RMHA Bylaws and RMHA Show Rules and Regulations.

B. Designation as an approved RMHA Judge is granted as a privilege. A judge’s status is subject to continual review by the Show Judging Committee (SJC). The SJC shall have the authority to designate status assigned to a judge. The status assigned to a judge may be:

- a. Apprentice Judge,
- b. Junior Judge, or
- c. Senior Judge.

The SJC shall have the authority to revoke or change the status of a judge after it is assigned. All action of the SJC in carrying out the foregoing shall be in accordance with procedures established by the SJC, and approved by the Board of Directors.

C. A licensed RMHA judge must notify the SJC Chair within 10 days after he/she has been hired to officiate at any show with RMHA classes. The judge shall notify the SJC Chair within 10 days after he/she has completed the contract of such completion. The form of such notifications shall be **in writing**.

D. A RMHA judge’s license will remain in effect until terminated in writing by the judge **or** the Show Judging Committee. Judges may be required to attend a RMHA Judge’s Clinic at the discretion of the Show Judging Committee or at a time frame not to exceed three years.

E. A RMHA licensed judge must be at least 21 years of age.

II. Apprentice Requirements:

A. Those applicants who successfully complete the RMHA Judges’ Clinic with an acceptable score in all categories of testing (including interview) may be considered for the Apprentice Judges’ Program.

B. An Apprentice Judge (“Apprentice”) must apprentice at two RMHA class “A,” or other SJC-approved shows, under two different qualified RMHA licensed Senior Judges before requesting advancement to Junior Judge status. In order for an Apprentice to have a show considered as meeting this requirement, the apprentice must be evaluated by the Senior Judge and complete a self-evaluation to be reviewed by the SJC who will determine whether the apprenticeship is satisfactory. The Apprentice must complete apprenticeship within two years following completion of their RMHA clinic. Only Senior Judges are qualified to evaluate Apprentices. Additional apprenticing experience may be recommended by the SJC upon reviews, or in the event the Apprentice desires more experience per his or her own written request.

C. The Apprentice must notify the SJC Chair of his/her intention to apprentice within 10 days after he/she has obtained approval from the Show Manager and the officiating Senior Judge to ensure credit is given for apprenticing a show. The Show Manager shall contact the Judge for approval for the Apprentice to apprentice. In the case of multiple Judges at one RMHA class “A” show, the Apprentice must only apprentice under the same Judge with whom the permission to apprentice had been granted.

D. No more than one (1) Apprentice may be approved to apprentice under each Senior Judge at an RMHA Class “A” show. It is the Apprentice’s responsibility to check with show management at the time permission is granted to apprentice, in order to ensure he/she is the only permitted Apprentice. In the event there is more than one Judge at the same show, there can only be one Apprentice per Senior Judge who can be granted permission to apprentice at that particular show.

E. Each Apprentice will have a Performance Evaluation Form completed and submitted by the Senior Judge with whom the Apprentice has worked, as well as a completed and submitted Self-Evaluation Form. The purpose of each evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the apprentice with regard to applying the Show Rules and with regard to his/her professionalism. Both the completed Self-evaluation Form and the Senior Judge’s Performance Evaluation Form are to be sent to the SJC Chair within 10 working days of the show apprenticed. At its next regular or specially called meeting, the SJC will review all pertinent data. The Apprentice will be notified within 10 working days after the SJC has met, if credit is being given or denied for the show apprenticed.

F. The Apprentice should not have any conversation with the Senior Judge until the Senior Judge’s score card for a particular class has been turned in. The Apprentice is not to influence the way classes are tied.

G. The manner of completing the score card used by the Apprentice must be comparable to the manner used by the officiating Senior Judge. An index card may be used as an acceptable form of score card for the Apprentice. Placings

are to be the opinion of the Apprentice as he/she sees best fitting of the rules and may or may not be comparable to the placings of the Senior Judge. Within 10 days of the completion of the show, the Apprentice should send his/her score cards to the SJC Chair.

H. Apprentices may not apprentice at the Annual International Rocky Mountain Horse Show.

I. Apprentices must follow the same rules as the officiating Judge with the exception of gaining approval to Apprentice.

III. Junior Judges:

A. Upon satisfactory completion of the required apprenticeship, the Apprentice Judge will be reviewed by the SJC for promotion of the apprentice to Junior Judge Status. Upon approval, the Junior Judge must successfully complete the judging of one class "A," or other SJC-approved show.

B. If the Junior Judge has demonstrated the required knowledge of the Show Rules, the Junior Judge may apply in writing to the SJC for review and approval for promotion to Senior Judge level.

C. If the Junior Judge has been denied advancement by the SJC, he/she will be required to officiate another RMHA class "A" shows before reapplying to the SJC for advancement.

D. Junior Judges may not officiate as a show ring judge at the annual International Rocky Mountain Horse Show nor may they oversee/evaluate Apprentice Judges.

IV. Senior Judges:

A. The title of Senior Judge may be granted to those individuals who have consistently demonstrated thorough knowledge of the Show Rules; and have

been consistent in presenting a professional and ethical image to the RMHA. The Senior Judge, including his/her status, is subject to continual review by the SJC.

B. In the event a Senior Judge is evaluating an Apprentice's performance at any RMHA class "A" show, the Show Manager shall return the Senior Judge's score cards to the SJC Chair within ten (10) working days of the show. The Senior Judge shall return the completed Apprentice Evaluation to the SJC Chair within ten (10) working days of the show officiated.

V. Judging Rules and Regulations:

(Applies to Apprentices, Junior and Senior Judges.)

A. A Judge shall not be included on the list of active Judges for A, B, or C shows for the calendar year if he/she participates in any RMHA show (including the International Rocky Mountain Horse Show) as Owner, Exhibitor or Trainer during that year. The SJC Chair should be notified, in writing, no later than January 1 of each year, by any Judge if such Judge's intention is to change status from "showing to judging" or "judging to showing" during such year. Likewise, an unlicensed judge may not participate in any RMHA show (including the International Rocky Mountain Horse Show) as Owner, Exhibitor, or Trainer during that year if they judge a B or C show.

B. A RMHA Judge shall not attend, as a spectator or otherwise, another RMHA sanctioned show within 72 (seventy-two) hours preceding any show he/she has contracted to Judge.

C. The Judge's decision is final. Once a class has been judged, it shall not be re-judged and once the Judge has marked his/her score card and placements of awards are made, there shall be no changing of the Judge's record, except in the case of clerical error. Changes in placements of awards may occur, however, in the case of rule violations and subsequent disqualifications that occur after a class has ended.

D. Failure of a Judge to attend a show to which he/she is committed to perform his/her duties and to officiate in the classes to which he/she is assigned shall constitute cause for administrative action. In cases of extreme emergency, a release may be obtained from the SJC Chair before the scheduled show.

E. When a Judge is officiating at a show, he/she is not to arrive on the show grounds more than one hour prior to show time.

F. In the show ring, the Judge generally should utilize the Ring Master to perform tasks requiring touching the horse/rider. e.g., check chin strap/chain for tightness, blood in mouth, illegal bit, etc. However, the judge may at his/her discretion, perform these and other verifications as necessary.

G. A judge may, at his/her discretion, speak with exhibitors in the lineup after the score card has been submitted, as a means of instructing and encouraging compliance with the RMHA show rules. Additionally, a judge may speak with exhibitors in designated Beginner's Classes before and after judging as a means of instructing and encouraging new participants.

H. It is the responsibility of the Judges to provide the SJC with their current address and phone number to be included in the contact list provided to the show managers.

I. Judges on break must be escorted to and from the ring. Judges are not to have any contact with exhibitors, spectators, owners, or any other persons except for specifically authorized and identified SJC personnel, either inside or outside of the show ring, from the time the Judge enters the show grounds until the Judge departs from the show ring of an RMHA sponsored or affiliated class, event, or show including the annual RMHA International Show. At the conclusion of the show, the show manager may request that the judge be available to answer questions from exhibitors/owners as outlined in the Show Rules

J. All judges must take and retain notes concerning their placement of classes for shows at which they officiate. These notes are to be retained for one year and may be requested by the SJC Chair as a means of verifying conformance to RMHA Rules, the quality of judging decisions, and auditing of show results.

VI. Judge's Responsibilities

- A. To be knowledgeable on the interpretation and application of the current Show Rules and Regulations of the RMHA.
- B. To understand the importance of their professional image and ethical conduct at all times as a RMHA licensed judge, whether officiating or as a member of the community.
- C. To make independent class placing decisions based upon their observations in accordance with the Show Rules and Regulations, and not being influenced by other sources.
- D. To carefully examine each horse upon entry into the show ring for compliance with the standard desirable image of the Rocky Mountain breed.
- E. To conduct a brief inspection of equipment during the line-up. A show ring Judge will be the final authority of enforcement of equipment violations whether or not an Equipment Steward/Judge is present. The Show Manager will notify the officiating Judge(s) prior to the start of the show if there is not an Equipment Steward/Judge.
- F. To excuse from the show ring unsound, unfit, unsafe horses, any infraction of the RMHA Show Rules. The elimination from judging is to be noted by the Judge on the judges score card which should include the name of show, class number, exhibitor number, and reason for elimination from judging.
- G. To excuse from the show ring horses that display blood, regardless of amount and location, in an effort to promote welfare of the horse. The elimination from judging is to be noted by the Judge on the judges score card which should include the name of show, class number, exhibitor number, and reason for elimination from judging.

- H. To report immediately any observed RMHA show rule violation to the SJC Chair and the Show Manager (who in turn forwards the complaint to the Show Advisory Committee (SAC) Chairperson.). Forms can be obtained from SJC Chair or Show Manager. If a form is not available at the time or date of violation, a detailed account should be documented and reported in the same manner on available paper. If information is incomplete, the SJC Chair will contact the Judge.
- I. To comply with the terms of their contract to officiate at a competition or event.
- J. To continue to advance their knowledge and skills through attendance at educational and professional improvement activities organized by RMHA.

VII. Judges Ethical Conduct

A. Definition and Discussion:

Conflict of Interest - a situation in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefits for themselves or individuals from their family and/or their business connections by actions or decisions made in their official capacity.

In an equestrian association, the span of conflict of interest can start with members of the Board of Directors to employees and representatives of the organization to members and officials serving the organization.

For the purpose of the equestrian organization, the primary area of conflict of interest lies in the relationship between competition officials and exhibitors participating in those competitions. The competition officials may range from the horse show organizers management team to staff including show secretary, ring steward(s), rules steward(s), horse show announcer, DQP, judges and many more.

The real targets of potential criticism of bias are those serving in the capacity of the official judge. Therefore, the horse show rules focusing on conflict of interest need to be structured in such a way to protect all individuals and the show itself. It is all about fairness, making sure that all individuals are treated equally, and if there is a potential for a claim(s) of conflict of interest on a judge's decisions, this be prevented and eliminated.

The judge's decisions can favor an individual competitor or conversely unfairly penalize a competitor, demonstrating favoritism either for or against a competitor. This means it is always in the best interest of the judge's good name and reputation to disclose any and all conflicts of interest at the time these may occur or become known to the judge.

One of the problems with the small pool of licensed judges within the Rocky Mountain Horse Association is the familiarity of the official judge to those competing. This familiarity can be

through face recognition or name and professional reputation. Either method is equal in its potential affect to create a bias for or against the competitor by the judge.

Although many are quick to blame a judge for whatever happens with show ring placings, it must be remembered, the exhibitor could be the initiator of unethical practices. The motivations could be everything from favoritism toward a specific horse or rider to remuneration and offering of discounts on stallion services and more.

To guide the process for clarifying conflict of interests, the RMHA will include the following section in its Show Rules and Regulations.

B. Exhibitor's Conflict of Interest

The following represent some examples of prohibited conduct by horse show exhibitors toward officials of competitions and events:

1. The members of the judge's family, domestic partners and their family members, business associates, employees, employer(s), and clients may not exhibit at any competition in which he/she is serving as an official judge for the event.
2. An exhibitor shall not present horses in classes in which said horses are currently owned, trained, leased or have been sold within 180 days of the competition or event by the judge.
3. An exhibitor shall not seek nor receive assistance from a judge at a competition or event in which the judge is serving as an official.
4. An exhibitor shall not present horses in a class in which the judge has assisted in the actual performance of the horse and/or the exhibitor within 180 days prior to or during the show to include instruction, boarding, training, farrier work, veterinarian services, or supplemental healthcare (such as, but not limited to, equine dentistry, massage, chiropractic care, therapy, etc).
5. An exhibitor shall not compete at a competition or event which is officiated by a judge with whom the exhibitor, their immediate family, guardian or instructor has had transactions (compensated or not) in connection with instruction, sales, purchase, lease, boarding, training, farrier work, veterinarian services, or supplemental healthcare (such as, but not limited to, equine dentistry, massage, chiropractic care, therapy, etc) for horses within the past 180 days.
6. An exhibitor shall not invite an official to attend a show exhibitor's party or any other activity connected with a competition or event commencing the day before the official competition through the day following the competition.
7. An exhibitor shall not invite the official judge(s) to the horse stabling area, with the intention to speak with owners, trainers, exhibitors or owner's representatives, nor to inspect or discuss any horse entered in the show before, during, and after the conclusion of the show, including each day of a multiple day show.

8. An exhibitor and/or their representative shall not contact a judge prior to the competition or event to solicit opinions, discussion on the purchase, leasing, breeding or any other type of transaction as a means of creating a bias favoring said exhibitor, their horse, their representative, and their affiliated owners and breeders.

C. Judge's Conflict of Interest

Grounds for removal of an individual from the RMHA list of approved and licensed judges shall include, but not limited to the following:

1. A judge shall at all times treat all exhibitors with mutual respect in all communications during their officiating of the competition and event.
2. A judge may not exhibit at any competition in which he/she is serving as an official judge for the event.
3. A judge may not judge, preside, over entries/exhibits presented by the judge's family members, domestic partners and their family members, business associates, employees, employer(s), and clients at a sanctioned RMHA competition.
4. A judge shall not attend a show exhibitor's party, or any other activity connected with a competition or event commencing the day before their official duties through the day following the competition.
5. A judge shall not visit the horse stabling area, nor speak with owners, trainers, exhibitors or owner's representatives, nor inspect or discuss any horse entered in the show before, during, nor following the official conclusion of the show. Once the official judging assignment is complete, the judge should immediately depart the showgrounds or facilities where the show/event was held.
6. A judge shall not review the show program with the listing of entries until after the judging is complete.
7. A judge must abide by the current official RMHA Show Rules and Regulations along with the terms of their contract while serving in an official capacity.
8. A judge shall not judge, preside, over classes in which horses he/she owns, trains, leases or has been sold within the past 180 days.
9. A judge shall not communicate with other judges or individuals while officiating at a competition or event using any media to discuss horses, exhibitors and/or their placings.
11. A judge shall not assist in the actual performance of the horse and/or the exhibitor within 180 days prior to or during the show to include instruction, boarding, training, farrier work, veterinarian services, or supplemental healthcare (such as, but not limited to, equine dentistry, massage, chiropractic care, therapy, etc).
12. A judge shall not officiate at a competition or event whereby an exhibitor, their immediate family, guardian, or instructor has had transactions (compensated or not) in connection with

instruction, sales, purchase, lease, boarding, training, farrier work, veterinarian services, or supplemental healthcare (such as, but not limited to, equine dentistry, massage, chiropractic care, therapy, etc) for horses within the past 180 days

13. A judge shall not discuss with an exhibitor the purchase, sale, or lease of any horse during a competition or event at which he/she is officiating.
14. A judge shall not fraternize with an exhibitor, nor seem to fraternize with exhibitors, either in the show ring or at any common place on the show grounds.
15. A judge shall not utilize any form of social media to communicate or provide their opinions of exhibitors, horses or combinations thereof at any time during the competition or event.
16. A judge shall not utilize any form of communication devices (mobile telephone, pager, etc) while in center ring serving as an official at a competition and event unless authorized by the show manager.
17. A judge shall report all contacts and communications from exhibitors or their representatives prior to officiating at a competition or event, after being formally announced and under contract as an official of that event. Reports should be made to the SJC Chair.