

# 2025 SADDLESEAT HORSE DIVISION

## Contents

General Rules

Saddleseat Division Classes

Saddleseat Equitation Scoring

### *Classes*

Showmanship

Three-Gaited Show Pleasure

Three-Gaited Country Pleasure

Pleasure Equitation

### **Walk/Trot Classes (not eligible for High Point)**

Walk and Trot Pleasure

Walk/Trot Equitation

OI Ground Handling: open to all breeds and disciplines. Rules are posted separately.

**All 4-H'ers riding or driving horses at 4-H events or activities are required to wear an ASTM-SEI Equestrian Helmet at all times.**

## **GENERAL RULES**

All 4-H'ers riding or driving horses and/or ponies at 4-H events or activities are required to wear an ASTM-SEI Equestrian helmet at all times.

Cruelty, abuse or inhumane treatment of any horse in the show ring or in the stable area will not be tolerated by the show management, and the offender will be barred from the show area for the duration of the show.

Evidence of any inhumane treatment to a horse including but not limited to blood, whip marks that raise welts or abusive whipping, in or out of the show ring, shall result in disqualification of that horse and that exhibitor for the entire show and shall result in the forfeiture of all ribbons, awards and points won.

## **SADDLESEAT DIVISION CLASSES**

**SHOWMANSHIP** - Exhibitors must be between the ages of 9-18 years old as of January 1 of the current year (see #10 of General Rules). Class judged on appointments, fitting and grooming and method of showing (See Standards for Showmanship below).

**WALK AND TROT PLEASURE** - Entries must show in a flat, cutback English saddle with full bridle, pelham, or snaffle. Use of a standing martingale, bosal, mechanical hackamore, draw reins and/or tie down is prohibited. However, the use of a running or German martingale with only a single snaffle or work snaffle bridle is acceptable. Entries may be plain shod or have pads that may be of any thickness, and must have full manes that are long enough to lie over or longer, and have a full tail. Horses and ponies showing in this division may not wear tail sets or bustles on the showgrounds, and may not show with the tail gingered, tied or braced. Unset tails will not be penalized. Class judged on appointments, basic position and class routine. This is a walk/trot pleasure class and entries will not be asked to canter, perform a pattern, to mount or dismount, or be required to back. The contestants will dress in Saddleseat attire; boots, jod pants, long sleeve shirt, tie, vest and gloves. No coat permitted. Spurs, bats, short whips, crops and similar equipment are all optional.

**THREE-GAITED SHOW PLEASURE** - Registered and grade mares and geldings of any size. Horse and ponies must be shown in a flat, cutback English saddle with a full bridle or pelham. Use of a single snaffle, single curb, bosal, mechanical hackamore, martingale, draw reins and/or tie down is prohibited. Horses and ponies may wear pads that may be of any thickness and must have full manes that are long enough to lay over or longer, and may be braided, and must have a full tail. Horses and ponies showing in this division may not wear tail sets or bustles on the showgrounds, and may not show with the tail gingered, tied or braced. Unset tails will not be penalized. Riders must wear neat, clean, appropriate Saddleseat attire. Academy attire is allowed. Spurs, bats, short whips, crops and similar equipment are all optional. Class judged on the horse's or pony's manners and ability to give a pleasurable ride with light contact on the mouth at the flat walk, square trot and canter both ways of the ring with moderately animated action. Horses and ponies may be asked to reverse at the walk only and will be penalized for wrong leads, excessive

speed and/or breaking gaits. Horses and ponies should back readily and stand quietly. Judges may ask for additional work and/or ask questions of the riders in cases of extremely close performances.

**THREE-GAITED COUNTRY PLEASURE** - Registered and grade mares and geldings of any size. Horses and ponies must be shown in a flat, cutback English saddle with a full bridle or pelham. Use of a single snaffle, single curb, bosal, mechanical hackamore, martingale, draw reins and/or tie downs is prohibited. Horses and ponies must be plain shod. Rim pads are optional. Horses and ponies must have full manes that are long enough to lie over or longer, and shall NOT be braided, and must have a full tail. Horses and ponies showing in this division may not wear tail sets or bustles on the showgrounds, and may not show with the tail gingered, tied or braced. Unset tails will not be penalized. Riders must wear neat, clean, appropriate Saddleseat attire. Academy attire is allowed. Spurs, bats, short whips, crops and similar equipment are all optional. Class judged on the horse's or pony's manners and ability to give a pleasurable ride with light contact on the mouth at the flat walk, square trot, extended trot, canter, and halt (standing quietly on the rail) both ways of the ring. It is imperative that the horse give the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride and display a pleasurable attitude. All gaits must be performed with willingness and obvious ease, cadence, balance and smoothness. Horses and ponies may be asked to reverse at the walk only and will be penalized for wrong leads, excessive speed and/or breaking gaits. Horses and ponies should back readily and stand quietly. Judges may ask for additional work and/or ask questions of the rider's cases of extremely close performances.

**WALK/TROT EQUITATION** - Exhibitors must be between the ages of 9-18 as of January 1 of the current year, eligibility for this class is consistent with general show rules regarding walk/trot classes, with special consideration for special needs children. If the 4-H member shows in this class, he or she cannot show in any other class that calls for a canter. Entries must show in a flat, cutback English saddle with full bridle, pelham, or snaffle. Use of a standing martingale, bosal, mechanical hackamore, draw reins and/or tie down is prohibited. However, the use of a running or German martingale with only a single snaffle or work snaffle bridle is acceptable. Entries may be plain shod or have pads that may be of any thickness, and must have full manes that are long enough to lie over or longer, and have a full tail. Horses and ponies showing in this division may not wear tail sets or bustles on the showgrounds, and may not show with the tail gingered, tied or braced. Unset tails will not be penalized. Class judged on appointments, basic position and class routine. This is a walk/trot equitation class and entries will not be asked to canter, perform a pattern, to mount or dismount, or be required to back. The contestants will dress in Saddleseat attire; boots, jod pants, long sleeve shirt, tie, vest and gloves. An ASTM-SEI Equestrian Helmet is required. No coat permitted. Spurs, bats, short whips, crops and similar equipment are all optional.

**PLEASURE EQUITATION** - Class judged on appointments, basic position and class routine. Pattern is required. Riders will not be asked to mount or dismount. Riders must wear appropriate Saddleseat attire, including Academy attire. Exhibitors will be asked to walk, trot and canter.

## PLEASURE EQUITATION SCORING

**Appointments:** Riders should have a neat, clean and well-groomed appearance. Riders must wear neat Saddleseat suit attire or Academy attire. Conservative colors are recommended (i.e. herringbone, pinstripes and other combinations of colors that appear to be solid). Solid colors include black, blue, grey, dark burgundy, dark green, beige or brown jacket with matching jod pants, jod boots, coordinating vest, tie and gloves. All 4-Hers riding or driving horses at the District and State 4-H Horse Shows are required to wear an ASTM-SEI Equestrian Helmet at all times. Horses must be shown in a flat, cutback English saddle with a full bridle or pelham. Spurs, crops, short whips, bats and similar equipment are optional. However, use of a single snaffle, single curb, bosal, mechanical hackamore, martingale, draw reins and/or tie down is prohibited except as noted in the walk/trot classes. Horses may be plain shod or have pads and must have full manes that are long enough to lie over or longer. Horses and ponies showing in this division may not wear tail sets or bustles on the showgrounds, and may not show with the tail gingered, tied or braced. Unset tails will not be penalized.

**Basic Position:** Riders should sit comfortably in the saddle and find their center of gravity by sitting with a slight bend to the knees without the use of their stirrups. While in this position, the stirrup leathers should be adjusted so that the irons will be under the balls of the feet with even pressure on the entire width of the soles in the center or outside of the irons. Rolling the knees and thighs in with heels slightly lower than toes will permit the position to become comfortable and natural. Hands should be held over the withers, parallel with the horse's shoulders and should show sympathy, adaptability and control. Height of hands will depend on how the horse carries its head. The method of holding the reins is optional; however, the reins should be picked up at the same time and held with both hands with the bight of the reins falling to the off side.

**Class Routine:** Riders should maintain the basic position conveying the impression of being in complete control at all times. All cues and aids should be applied as inconspicuously as possible. Exhibitors may be asked to work individually, and in a group. Entries will be scored on cleanliness and neatness of rider, horse and equipment, the basic position and the techniques used by the rider in executing maneuvers in order to obtain the desired performance. Overall, the horse/pony and rider should work as a team in order to show the horse to its best advantage.

## STANDARDS FOR SHOWMANSHIP

The real purpose of showmanship is to learn the best way to fit and train a horse or pony so that the best attributes of the horse/pony can be seen by the judge or potential buyer. Showmen are reminded that they are being judged on the fitting, training and showing of their horse/pony. The horse/pony's conformation is not to be considered in the judging of this class. Showmen must wear the appropriate attire for the division in which they are participating.

The procedure for judging large classes and the pattern to be used will be left to the discretion of the judge.

## **SCORING FOR SHOWMANSHIP CLASS**

### **I. Appointments - 25%**

- **Personal Appearance:** Youth should be neat, clean, well groomed, attentive, courteous and wearing appropriate attire for the type of horse being shown.
- **Saddleseat:** Appropriate Saddleseat attire, to include; boots, jod pants, long sleeve shirt, tie, vest and gloves. In the Saddleseat division, no coat is worn for showmanship. Exhibitors may wear a derby or their helmet.
- **Equipment:** Clean and properly adjusted equipment should be used. Horses/ponies must be shown in an English bridle in the Saddleseat Division. Youth may carry a whip or crop which is no more than thirty-six (36) inches in length, only in the Saddleseat (Trotting) Division. The use of the whip or crop will only be as an extension of the showman's arm to alert, signal and/or direct the horse/pony. Youth are not permitted to touch any part of the horse/pony with the whip or the crop.
- When a double or full bridle is used, youth may show with either both reins down or with the snaffle rein secured at the withers and the curb rein down.

### **II. Horse and Pony (fitting and grooming) - 25%**

- The horse or pony should be clean and well groomed. Fitting for show is a year-round job. Daily grooming and good nutrition are very important to the hair coat and fitness of the horse/pony. Just before entering the ring, the showman should rub the horse/pony down with a grooming cloth to remove any dust which may have accumulated since brushing. Avoid using an oily grooming cloth since oil will attract dust. Wipe the ears, around the eyes, nostrils, lip, sheath and anus with a damp cloth or sponge; or with a cloth that has a small amount of baby oil or Vaseline on it to add luster to these areas.
- Horses and ponies should be clipped approximately one week before showing to allow for some regrowth to cover up any minor mistakes. The long hairs inside the ears, around the muzzle, under the chin and jaw, on the bridle path, fetlocks and lower legs should be clipped.
- Horses or ponies must be shown with a full mane that is either braided or unbraided according to recognized practices for that breed. Horses and ponies showing in this division may not wear tail sets or bustles on the showgrounds, and may not show with the tail gingered, tied or braced. Unset tails will not be penalized.

### **III. Method of showing - 50%**

- **Leading:** Youth must be able to walk, trot, turn, stop and back as directed by the pattern or ring officials. Always lead from the left side at an alert walk following the judge's direction, never in front of the horse/pony. The horse/pony's head should be about even or slightly in front of your shoulder. The horse/pony should travel willingly with his body in a straight line in the same direction being traveled. Youth must have the right hand on the reins when leading their horse/pony. The left hand will contain the remainder of the reins in a loosely coiled loop or in a figure eight and the youth should never switch hand position on the reins. The youth should walk in a brisk, alert manner and give the appearance that you and your horse or pony are a team.

- Run by the left side of the horse/pony when you are showing him at trot. The horse/pony should be traveling alertly and willingly with his head up (not too high). The youth should run with good posture and vitality.
- The horse/pony should always be reversed by turning to the right. Turn in as small an area as possible and attempt to keep his hind legs in one place while turning (this allows you to keep the horse/pony lined up with the judge). Any turn requiring more than 90 degrees should also be made to the right.
- Always move your horse/pony directly toward or away from the judge unless specific instructions are otherwise given by the judge.
- **Working the Judge:** When setting up your horse/pony, stand out diagonally from the horse/pony's shoulder but never directly in front of the horse/pony. Always be in a position where you can observe your horse/pony and the judge at the same time. As the judge moves around the horse, the youth must respond accordingly. When the judge is in front of the horse/pony the youth should be on the opposite side away from the judge, so as not to block the judge's view. When the judge moves down one side of the horse/pony and passes the middle of the withers the youth should cross over in front of the horse/pony so that he/she is now on the same side as the judge. This allows you to see your horse/pony and continue to have eye contact with the judge. As the judge passes behind the horse/pony and crosses over to the other side, the youth should cross in front of the horse/pony to remain on the same side with the judge. Once again when the judge approaches you and crosses the middle of the withers the youth should cross over to be on the opposite side from the judge, so as not to obstruct his/her vision of the horse/pony. This procedure allows the judge an unobstructed view of the horse/pony and allows the youth to show their horses/ponies to the best of their ability. It also will allow youth to keep an eye on their horse/pony and the judge without having to look through, under or over their horse/pony.
- **Stance of the horse/pony:** Horses/ponies in the Saddleseat Division can be set up differently depending on the breed. Saddlebred and Morgan horses should always be parked while Arabian horses should be set with their front feet square and their rear feet slightly offset. Parked horses/ponies may be either lead up or backed out of the stretch before being asked to move.

IV. Keep your position in line and allow reasonable space between your horse/pony and others. Never allow your horse/pony to interfere with other horses/ponies.

V. If asked to change positions in line, back your horse/pony out of line and approach the new position from the rear. Be careful when walking up behind other horses/ponies and allow yourself plenty of room to enter.

VI. Quickly recognize and correct any faults in your horse/pony. All communication between the youth and the horse/pony shall be through the reins which may be accompanied by subtle voice commands. Youth cannot directly touch any part of their horse/pony unless the judge touches (i.e. disturbs the mane or moves the bridle) the horse in front of the shoulder. At such time, the youth should correct the disarray created by the judge.

VII. Remember - Move quickly, quietly and with confidence when showing your horse or pony. Remember the horse and handler working as a team is paramount, and breed and conformation is not to be considered part of the judge's scoring. Be courteous, respond promptly to directions and display good horsemanship at all times.

**When not specifically addressed in this rule book, exhibitors and judges will refer back to the USEF Rule Book.**