

Blue Shadows Mounted Drill Team

Equitation Criteria

Opening Procedure

- Check numbers to ensure the class is complete. Do not start judging until all expected riders are in the arena.
- Set up short cuts – add horse's name/colors/markings to judge's sheet.
- All of this should be done at the walk.

Check Balance and Seat (this should be done at the jog or lope)

- The torso should be straight but not stiff with a vertical line running from the shoulder to hip to the back of the boot (full balanced seat – the line runs through the ankle).
- Small of back should be soft. Shoulders should be square not one behind the other.
- Seat should be moving with the horse.

Check Hands

- Reins held in the left hand with the hand held vertically or with a slight inward rotation (Up to 25 degrees).
- The rein hand should be slightly above and in front of the horn.
- The right hand should be closed and on the thigh in a natural position with the elbow next to the body and the upper arm held in line with the body.

Check Legs and Feet

- Heel lower than the toes (heels excessively lower than toes will be penalized)
- There should be a slight bend in knee and lower leg should be directly under the knee.
- Feet should be parallel to horse and flat in the stirrup.

Penalties

- Feet moving excessively at faster gaits.
- Reins should not be used for balance.
- Loss of balance, especially watch for this during gait change.
- Wrong leads (cued incorrectly or not noticed and no attempt to fix)
- Leaning forward to check leads.
- Looking down instead of forward where rider is going
- Cutting off or interfering with other riders, accidentally or on purpose, especially in the higher ranks where good control is expected.

Line Up

- Have horses back (look behind, back up straight).
- Walk behind horses to check level stirrups, feet position, shoulders should be back, level and square, head straight and chin level.

Considerations

- Someone should be designated to give hand signals to announcer.
- Ensure that the horses are always at a walk when judges are conferring.
- Do not extend the jog or lope for extended periods of time, just use it to check for rider balance and horse gaits.
- Keep your class safe for riders and horses (Typically: Troopers only walk/jog, TFC's also lope briefly but do not reverse at the Lope, Corporals may reverse at Lope if needed and all riders are secure and capable, Sergeants reverse at the Lope, Officers may lope without Stirrups but not required).
- View riders at each rank-appropriate gait going both directions before making a final decision but don't overtire the horses.
- Don't over score for smooth gaited horses or under score for rough gaited horses.
- Be aware that a horse may be unable to take both leads and judge on the rider's attempts.

Private Horse Class Additional Considerations

- Judging is based 40% on horse and 60% the equitation of the rider
- Horses
 - Horses must be properly cleaned and clipped.
 - Tack must be properly cleaned.
 - Horses 5 years or younger may use snaffle, hackamore, or shanked bit.
 - Horses 6 years or older must use shanked bit.
 - Reins should have light contact on horse's mouth.
 - Horse should track straight, freely, and at proper cadence.
 - Horse's gaits should be smooth and appropriate for the breed.
 - Horse should carry its head in a relaxed position appropriate for the breed.
 - Horse should always be on the proper lead.
 - Horse should be well-mannered.