

JUDGING CRITERIA & SCORING

SCORING YOUR EVENT

The spirit of ACTHA is to encourage trail riding in the form of casual competition. There may be circumstances where good judgment and common sense come into play. Judges have discretion within their obstacle, maintaining consistency and fairness for all riders.

1. Horse and rider team can score a maximum of 20 points for each obstacle. 10 points for the horse, 10 points for the rider.
2. SCORING: 10=Excellent, 9=Very Good, 8=Good, 7=Fairly Good, 6=Satisfactory, 5=Sufficient, 4=Insufficient, 3=Fairly Poor, 2=Very Poor, 1=Extremely Poor, 0=Not Executed
3. It should be understood that a rider and horse start off with a score of 10 points each per obstacle and are deducted when errors are made.
4. (+) Pluses are used at the judge's discretion and will help break ties. A plus can be given for a high level of communication, a superb performance or for an excellent try with a green horse, for example. Judge can award just one plus to horse and/or one plus to rider for any score range.
5. Judge or assistant is to ask rider to call out his/her number and division when approaching an obstacle. Judge can respond with calling out their name to ensure they have the correct rider.
6. All horses riding in ACTHA competitions will be judged on cadence, athleticism, confidence, attitude, trail ability and control (the ability to stop in balance with calm compliance).
7. Be consistent! If you are tough, be tough on every competitor & vice versa.
8. Extra points are NOT given in a CTC/AOC. Rider may not gain extra points by performing an obstacle in another manner. Rider is expected to perform the obstacle as written on their obstacle sheet in their division only.
9. Comments are to be given for 0's only, unless time allows. This is extremely helpful to know if a competitor timed out, or performed the obstacle incorrectly. You do not have time to write a comment for every rider and this cannot hold up the event.
10. Buddy riders do not perform the obstacles and are not judged. They should be asked to move down the trail if they attempt the obstacles. This will help move the ride along.
11. ACTHA prefers to have an obstacle completed correctly and calmly as opposed to fast. Judges are not to record the time it takes a rider to perform the obstacle.
12. Judges are not to allow riders to try and school their horse through an obstacle once their time is up.
13. Judges are to return to camp promptly after the safety rider has passed, and along with their assistant read their score card to the scorekeeper to input their scores.

GAITED HORSES

1. Gaited horses may gait as opposed to trotting or cantering.
2. Many gaited breeds carry a naturally high headset.
3. Many gaited riders sit back in their saddles, as this is traditional to their discipline.
4. A gait is generally a 4 beat lateral movement.
5. A gait may appear somewhat faster than a Quarter Horse trot or Canter, however, the horse should not appear out of control.
6. A head bob is natural to several gaited breeds, and does not indicate unsoundness.

POINT DEDUCTIONS

Judges are given discretion as to the amount of points deducted from each horse and rider score. If you are consistent, the format works beautifully! For example, if you deduct 2 points for nicking a log, deduct 2 points from all who nick the log.

1. Horse may lose points for backing away or side-stepping an obstacle.
2. Sniffing an obstacle is not a refusal, however if a horse demonstrates hesitation this shows a lack of bravery and the horse should receive point deduction(s).
3. Refinement will score higher than very obvious cues.
4. Horses opening their mouths and arguing with their riders will receive a lower score. For example, ears flat back, kicking out, bucking, or biting.
5. Riders should appear balanced and in control.
6. Leaning will be penalized.
7. Riders are to get off their horses back/loins going uphill by maintaining an up and forward position.
8. Give a partial score for a try at an obstacle. For example, a horse is asked to trot over a log, but walks instead.
9. Legitimate attempts will be given a partial score at judge's discretion if horse and rider team does not run out of time.
10. Any harsh use of bits or spurs will be penalized at the judge's discretion.
11. Horses should not rush obstacles; calmness will score higher than nervousness.
12. Nicking, or stepping on a pole will receive point deduction(s). Dislodging a pole will receive a higher point deduction. Stumbling will receive the most severe point deduction(s).
13. In a bog situation a judge may instruct a rider to dismount a struggling horse. In this instance a score may be given to the horse and rider team.
14. If a horse is wearing a snaffle bit or is ridden in an English bridle, 2 hands on the reins are appropriate. If a horse is in a shank bit, western style, one hand is appropriate.
15. Horse and rider should appear relaxed and natural for a high score.
16. A natural head set is very acceptable in a trail horse. A raised head may show a tense or nervous horse, judge discretion advised.
17. There is no penalty for grabbing the mane of a horse.

AWARDING ZEROES FOR A SCORE

The CTC course should be set in such a manner as to allow a good trail horse adequate time to maneuver an obstacle with time left over. The purpose of the time limit is to keep the trail moving along, therefore, there must be a set time for each obstacle, otherwise backups occur and that is no fun for anyone.

1. Obstacle must be completed in the time allowance. Failure to do so will result in a zero score.
 - The timer must be consistent with the location of the start and stop times to provide fairness to all riders.
 - Assistant may inform contestant when the time limit is at the half way point.
 - Inform rider if they timed out.
 - Rider/horse may still earn a plus (+) in this situation, if applicable.
2. A voluntary dismount for safety reasons is not a DQ, if within an obstacle, a zero is given.
3. Judges may only instruct a competitor in trouble. For example, 'please drop the rope or slicker'. A score of 0 will be given in this situation.
4. If a rider passes on an obstacle, their score for that obstacle is 0.
5. Going through the start and stop markers and being timed, but not actually attempting the obstacle, is considered a pass, where a score of 0 is given.
6. If a competitor goes off course they will receive a zero (this is a safety issue). Competitors need to enter through the entrance cones and exit through the exit cones.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. No tie-downs, standing martingales, running martingales, no training equipment of any kind that will restrict head movement.
2. Stallions must be double tied to a trailer and have a yellow ribbon in their tail.
3. No shorts or sneakers.
4. No bareback pads.
5. Fall of horse or rider. Horse is considered down if any point of the horse above the knee touches the ground.
6. Rider going off trail to create a short cut.
7. Very noticeable lameness or injury. For example, a severe girth gall, bleeding cut, or a horse in severe physical stress (tying up).
8. Judges have the right to disqualify any rider if they do not follow ACTHA rules. For example, a rider can be disqualified if they ride with a martingale. Hopefully, this will be caught before the rider starts the event, at which time you can ask the rider to remove it and continue on.
9. A Judge may DQ a rider for rudeness or non-horseman like conduct.

IN GENERAL.....

1. Keep competitor safety in mind at all times. You may move an obstacle if the conditions and footing become unsafe.
2. Judges are to be observant to dangerous situations and may excuse a competitor.
3. Judges are always to be polite to contestants, and be careful that contestants do not overhear their comments.
4. Judges are encouraged to have a fun attitude rather than be 'standoff-ish'. They may comment on an obstacle. For example, they may say "good job" or "good try".
5. Judges must conform to ride standards. For example, a centered balanced ride is preferred on a trail ride as opposed to a specific seat or hand position that may be used in a specific sport such as cutting or jumping.
6. Judges are not required to answer questions about a rider's individual performance.
7. Safety is foremost and a judge can stop any dangerous behavior or unsportsmanlike like conduct.
8. If an accident occurs at your obstacle, call management immediately. Do whatever is necessary to assist, however, do NOT move a back or head injury. Please do whatever is necessary to continue the event as soon as possible.

JUDGE ASSISTANT

1. Judge assistant will keep time for the riders in a consistent method by starting the timer at the same point the horse crosses the start marker and stopping the time at the point the horse crosses the stop marker. If there is no assistant, this is the responsibility of the judge.
2. Judge assistant (CTC) should welcome the contestant to the obstacle by stating 'Welcome to Obstacle #3'.
3. Assistant must understand their obstacle and may answer any questions from contestants regarding the instructions of the obstacle.
4. Assistant may ask contestants if they would like to be informed at the half way mark for their time.