

JUDGING WORKING HUNTERS

A Standard of Reference for AQHA Judges



AMERICAN
QUARTER
HORSE
ASSOCIATION

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FORWARD

This manual is prepared and presented by the Judges Committee of the American Quarter Horse Association to improve the standards of judging working hunters in Quarter Horse competition. It is published complementary to The AQHA Official Handbook as a casebook and reference guide for evaluating hunters over fences.



THE CLASS

In Quarter horse show ring competition, there are few, if any, classes less understood - or more misunderstood - than working hunter.

The difference between a good western horse and a good working hunter is not that the former carries a stock saddle while the latter carries a flat saddle, not that the former has a long and flowing mane and tail and neck level while the latter's have been braided, not that the former carries its head and neck level while the latter carries its slightly elevated, not that the former jogs and lopes slowly while the latter trots cadenced and canters with a longer stride.

A working hunter is, ideally, a horse that could be ridden through fields and woods, over brush and fence, following hounds chasing a fox.

To do that requires a bold, athletic horse that responds willingly and obediently to its rider, one that uses its ears and meets each fence or obstacle squarely, and drives from behind with sufficient impulsion at the correct spot for a perfect takeoff and arc over it, with the forearms held parallel (or slightly higher) to its body and the front legs tucked neatly in front of the chest, the neck and back rounded, with the rhythm, pace and cadence suited to the course.

That is the ideal, and few horses or rounds are ideal. Rules cannot be written to cover everything and every situation. Judging is not absolute. It is exactly what it says it is: a matter of judgement. Judging should, however, be based on certain established criteria. But when in doubt, use logic. The rules specify faulting a horse for certain infractions - refusals, runouts, knockdowns - but beyond that, little is said. So which is worse, a horse that twists, or one that hangs a leg? A horse that jumps inverted, or one that shifts its hindquarter to one side? In all cases, the more dangerous faults should incur the heaviest penalties. Understand the event, know the criteria and use logic, and scoring the rounds will fall into place.



THE COURSE

Know Your Jumps

A judge is not a course designer. He is, however, responsible for the course, and therefore must know what obstacles are required and how they should be placed. After the course is designed and set, it is his responsibility to ensure that it is safe and correct.

Because working hunter classes stem from foxhunting, the obstacles used should look natural and conservative, the types of obstacles that might be encountered in the hunt field - gates, brush boxes, brick and stone walls, coops, embankments (which are simulated by rolltop obstacles), rails and logs and picket and ladder fences. The course should allow a horse to maintain an even pace, give a smooth ride and jump cleanly, calmly and safely.

Jumper Versus Hunter

The courses for working hunters differ from those for jumpers. Jumping classes are strictly show events, tests of jumping ability, strength, agility, courage and speed. Challenging and colorful obstacles are reserved for the jumper, with distances varied in order to further test horse and rider. Conservative fences are required for the hunter, with the distances measured on approximate 12-foot strides, and the obstacles placed to allow the fluid, flowing pace and jumping arc that characterizes a good hunter.

An Over View

The layout for a working hunter course should be basically simple, generally little more than two diagonal lines crossing in the middle, with another line around the outside. This figure-eight inside the circle provides the required change of direction and, therefore, of leads. Besides the obvious necessity of having the course conform to AQHA rules, however, there are a few other considerations necessary for designing a suitable course, such as the size of the arena, the location of the entrance and exit, and an estimate of the horses' and riders' abilities (whether it's a five-entry amateur class in the outback or the finals of a working hunter maturity at the Congress).

A course should fit the arena. A beautiful course that works well in a large arena may, with turns that are too sharp and lines that are too close, trap horses in the cramped spacing of a smaller ring. The course should be laid out with flowing curves that allow an even, fluid stride, rather than tight



turns that require shortening stride and breaking pace - and which are more difficult for a judge to score.

The Basics

The rules require at least four separate obstacles, and that each horse make eight jumps. With less than eight separate obstacles, a horse must repeat some of them to fulfill the required numbers of jumps. If an obstacle is to be jumped twice, and a horse knocks it down the first time, the jump must be rebuilt. The entry must stop while the jump crew resets the jump. If the entry is unaware obstacle needs to be reset, the judge must blow his whistle to signal the entry to stop. Upon completion of the obstacle, the judge will again whistle to signal the entry that the course is ready. (The judge should always carry a whistle.)

There are a number of types of fences, but the single most common are simply rails placed horizontally between upright standards. The post and rails can be placed to create vertical or spread fences. Verticals may be truly vertical from top to bottom, or they may incline, or slope, slightly in the direction of travel, that is, with the fence sloping away from the approach, though not to the point of being a ramp. An in-and-out can be created by placing two vertical fences 24 or 36 feet apart to create a one- or two-stride combination.

The rails used should be straight, either round or octagonal, and approximately four inches in diameter, with no more, than a nine-inch gap between the hung poles. Rails may be painted solid white, gray, green, brown, rust or blue, without stripes. Except for a simulated brick wall, red should not be used, as it does not commonly occur in the hunt field.

Rustic, natural-looking obstacles are the most appropriate for working hunters. Birch and cedar rails make good, rustic jumps, and may be left natural, with the bark on. If a pole is curved, it must be positioned in the cups with the curve downward.

Other rustic-looking obstacles, such as boxes filled with shrubs or loose cut fir branches, simulated brick and stone walls, and panels simulating gates, ladders and picket fences, make excellent jumps and add variety to a course. A low gate or brush box works especially well as the first jump on a course.

Place a pole over a gate when raising the height. This is best for safety and protects the gates from breakage. If a fence is damaged to the degree it



must be repaired or replaced it means potential danger to exhibitors and a difficulty for the show.

Other Things to Consider

Hunter courses typically increase in complexity from start to finish. The last line of fences can be made more challenging than the first, but bear in mind that a course designer may purposely create a problem that challenges expert riders on finished horses, but should not mistakenly trap amateur riders on green horses with short distances or tight curves.

The last obstacles on a course for working hunters is usually a spread, which should be placed at the end of a line.

As the name implies, spreads are relatively wide, up to three feet across, as measured from the front, or face, of the first element to the back of the second. The elements also should be measured from both ends, right to right and left to left, to ensure that the jumps are in line and parallel with each other.

Spreads may be made of single-unit jumps such as coops and rolltops, or by placing two verticals together to create a double-bar spread known as an oxer. In hunter competition, neither triple-bars nor square oxers are allowed. Oxers must ascend, with the front element three to six inches lower than the back.

More About Jumps

The obstacles are designed to fall when struck by a horse or rider, but ideally, only form a solid hit and not from a slight tick. Rails should be of the same diameter and weight. A fence that is top-heavy, with an extremely large pole placed over several thin ones, is deceiving. On the other hand, it is inappropriate to use lower poles of greater weight under a top pole so light this it is easily dislodged.

The rails and panels are held in cups. Holes for the cup pins are drilled every three inches on the upright posts of the standards, which allows a jump to be raised or lowered in three-inch increments. Whenever possible, the pins, which extend all the way through the post, should be inserted on side from which the horse approaches the obstacle. The only cups that should be on the standards are those that are holding the elements; any extra cups should be stored elsewhere, and, for that matter, extra poles should not be stored under a jump.



The single most important factor in constructing an obstacle is that it be solid-looking and well-defined so that the horse and rider can see and judge it properly. An airy jump, which does not touch the ground and has big open spaces between the rails, can be deceiving, as it may give a false perception of depth. Safety goes beyond mere looks and definition, however. Obstacles such as gates, picket fences and ladders should have the boards spaced either two or eight inches apart. In the event that a horse hits the fence, a two-inch spacing prevents a horse from hanging a leg in the element, while an eight-inch spacing is sufficient to allow a horse's leg to safely go in and come back out.

Although not required by the rules, standards with wings are highly recommended, as they provide a more substantial outline and encourage a horse to go to the middle of a jump.

Strides

Safety is a prime consideration for courses and obstacles. Properly measured lines, with the distances to approximate 12-foot strides, are most important. Unlike spreads, the lines are measured from the back of one fence to the face of the next.

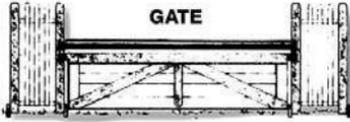
The aim of a working hunter class is to allow each horse to show to its best advantage. Unlike in jumping, hunter fences should not, under any circumstances, be set at distances or angles that trap horses, but should instead be set to allow a steady, even hunter pace at the hand gallop of 12-16 miles per hour. The horse should maintain the gait and pace that is required for distances between fences based on what is considered an average length of stride, or, in other words, multiples of 12 feet (24,36,48, etc.), even though a hunter should be able to condense or lengthen its stride.

When the distances are correct, a given number of strides between fences, or between elements of an in-and-out, are considered proper. For example, 48 feet between fences theoretically requires the hunter to land, take three strides and then jump; landing and taking off are comparable to half strides. However, landing and taking off are usually not considered when counting strides, and in common parlance, 48 feet is therefore considered a three-stride spacing; 36 feet is a two-stride canter; and 24, a one-stride.

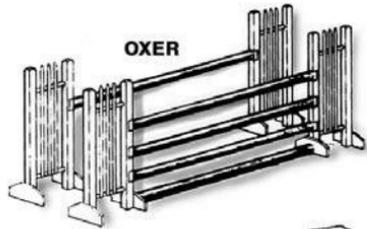
At times a horse will add a stride to a line. Size can be a contributing factor to this however large ponies 13.2 to 14.2 are expected to cover 12 foot strides in hunter competition. Assuming that a horse moves well, has good



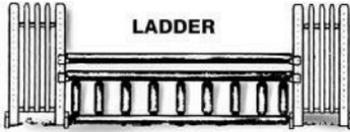
COMMON NAMES OF JUMPS



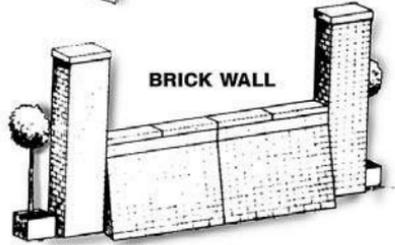
GATE



OXER



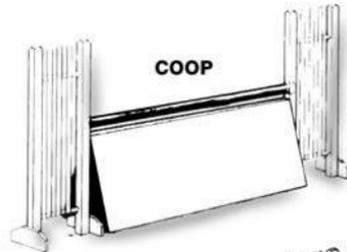
LADDER



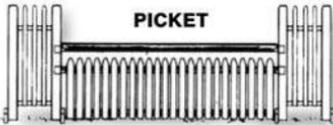
BRICK WALL



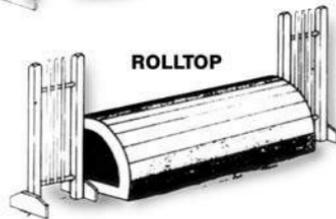
**VERTICAL POST
& RAIL**



COOP



PICKET



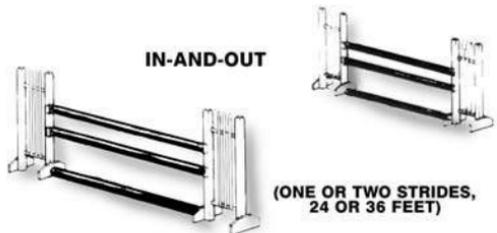
ROLLTOP



RIVIERA



BRUSH



IN-AND-OUT

(ONE OR TWO STRIDES,
24 OR 36 FEET)

form over fences and maintains a suitable pace for the size of obstacles, it should not be penalized for adding a stride. Strides should only be considered where elimination is otherwise impossible. However, if the horse should add in a one or two-stride combination known as an “in and out”, or adds more than one stride in a line, this is severely penalized. Leaving out strides is also a consideration for penalty and is usually characterized by a long forward pace and reckless jumps.

Distances are also related to rhythm and cadence. A hunter should sustain not only a steady pace, but should maintain a rhythmic cadence, moving freely, taking long, flowing strides, and stretching the forelegs for proper length, instead of taking short, choppy or high strides. As a hunter comes to a fence, it should maintain its pace, and take off from the ground with the same rhythm with which it approached the obstacle.

Ground Lines

Ground lines, usually a pole placed on the ground about six inches in front of the fence, are necessary for any obstacles that do not touch the ground. If there are a sufficient number to make it look solid when lined up behind the ground pole, potted flowers and shrubs, loose cut greenery such as fir branches, or flowers and shrubs in a box placed as a ground line not only make the jump look more substantial, but also enhance the appearance of the course.

Drawing And Posting Courses

Course patterns (such as the two sample courses that follow) must be posted at least one hour prior to the class. Although helpful, the types of obstacles and, except for in-and-outs, the distances between them, do not have to be shown on the pattern. Fences should be numbered in the order that they are to be taken, with arrows pointing the direction of travel, and the entrance and exit should also be marked. Though the pattern can be drawn on a piece of typing paper, it's better to use something larger, such as poster board, and place it high enough that someone standing at a distance or sitting on a horse can see the diagram.

Judges and arena workers in charge of course changes should have a copy of all courses for the days competition.

While it is not necessary to indicate distances on the course it is allowed. Riders may also walk the course prior to the class to determine the number



of strides and riding strategy. A warm-up area with schooling jumps should be provided. When possible, it is customary for warm-up time to be made available on the actual course.

A Final Look At The Course

When the entry comes in, it should face a course that looks inviting. In theory, at least, if the first jumps are simple and relatively low, the horse and rider gain the confidence to successfully complete the course. Horses tend to jump better when the first obstacle is placed so that it is approached and jumped while going toward the gate from which the horse entered.

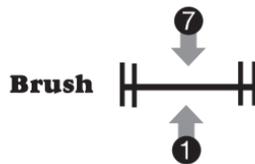
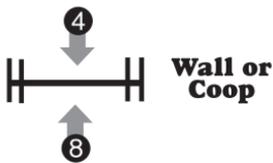
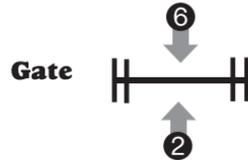
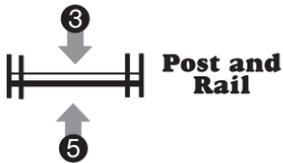
In any case, dark or natural-colored fences must be kept out of dark, or shadowed, areas in indoor arenas, and an obstacle such as a white gate back dropped against a white arena wall should be avoided. Outdoor arenas, too, can have poor lighting, such as when trees or buildings cast dark shadows across bright sand, or when a horse and rider have to face directly into a rising or setting sun when taking a jump.

Prior to the class a judge must examine and make sure that the obstacles and layout conform to AQHA rules, and that all conditions are correct. Common errors are sloping verticals that are inclined in the wrong direction - toward, rather than away from, the approach; square or misaligned oxers; a lack of ground lines, or ground lines set too close or too far from the jump; and airy or improperly designed fences. Check the footing - don't have a jump where the barrel racers have churned up and deepened the sand, for instance, or where the line between jumps traverses a wet or muddy spot, which causes most horses to at least shorten stride, if indeed they don't try to jump it altogether. Finally, check the heights on each and every fence, and the distances between them, and check the direction that the fences and wings are facing. Make sure all the pins are in correct position in the standards, with the ends coming out of the back, or landing side, and that all surplus cups and rails have been removed from the arena.

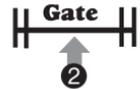
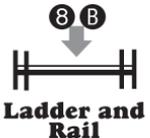
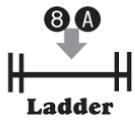
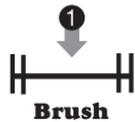
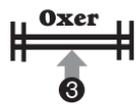
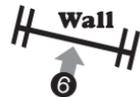
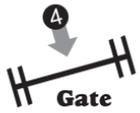


WORKING HUNTER - *Basic Course*

in-gate



WORKING HUNTER - *Modified Basic Course*



_____ in-gate _____

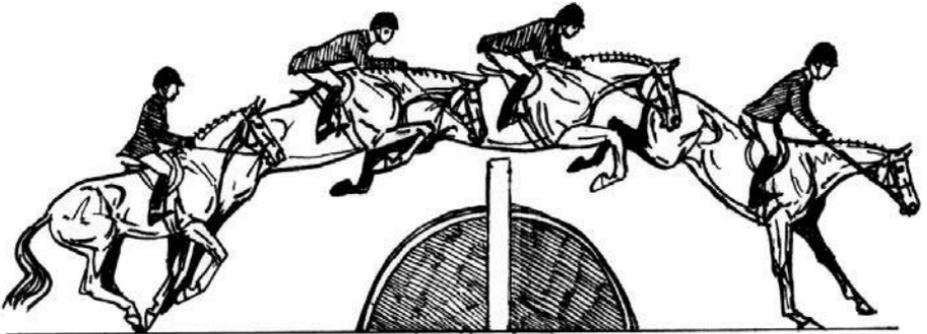
SCORING AND THE SCORING SYSTEM

Though a judge may use any fair and equitable system he chooses, working hunters are usually judged on a basis of 0-100, rather than the more common 60-80 point system of many other classes. The wider scale allows an expert judge the freedom and scope to differentiate the abilities of accomplished horses.

An Overview

The Horse's performance begins when he enters the ring, and ends when he leaves. If the class is outside and not in an arena, the start should be approximately 50 feet before the first fence and the finish about 50 feet beyond the last obstacle.

The worst errors occur when a hunter endangers itself and/or its rider, particularly when it refuses or knocks down a jump, or leaves the ground too far from or too close to an obstacle and risks crashing into it. Refusals and knockdowns are among the most dangerous of all faults, and under certain conditions, are grounds for elimination of a horse.



Good performance of horse & rider over a jump

Major Faults

A refusal is a willful disobedience, a mark of an unwilling, dishonest horse. Beyond that, it is the sort of thing that can put a rider in the hospital: If a horse comes into an obstacle at a gallop and suddenly stops at the takeoff point, with its rider already up and forward in a two-point position preparatory to jumping, the rider could be thrown into the fence.

Under the rules of the AQHA, a refusal occurs “when a horse stops in front of an obstacle (whether or not the obstacle is knocked down or altered)...unless the horse then immediately jumps the obstacle without backing even one step; but if the horse takes even one step backward, it is a refusal.” If the horse approaches a fence, stops and then jumps the obstacle without backing, it is not a refusal.

Three refusals require elimination. If a horse comes up to a fence, refuses and a rail falls down or the fence collapses, it is still a refusal, and not a knockdown. If a working hunter refuses while taking a combination, such as an in-and-out - the rider has the option of rejumping the whole combination or only the obstacle which he refuses (though in jumping and equitation over fences classes, the horse must rejump the entire combination).

If, after a refusal, the rider moves his horse forward to the fence without asking it to jump, the action constitutes showing an obstacle to a horse, and the entry is eliminated.

Bolting, an evasion of control, and running out, an evasion of the jump, are expressions of disobedience similar to refusing, with the third occurrence eliminating the entry. Any combination of three refusals, bolting runouts and/or showing a horse an obstacle, requires elimination.

Knockdowns: An obstacle is considered knocked down when any part of it is hit by the horse or rider, a rail falls, or the top element is lowered, even if the pole that falls comes to rest on a different support or other part of the same obstacle. Fences in the hunt field are not designed to collapse when an animal brushes them. Because of the very real possibility of a horse catching its front legs are more heavily penalized than faults made by the hindquarters, or behind the stifle.

Rubs, Touches And What IF’S

However, there are knockdowns and then there are elements that get knocked down. Ordinarily, a light tick by a front foot should not result in the collapse of a fence - indeed, light touches are not even considered except where competition is close and elimination difficult. The easy knock-down is not as severe as the bad refusal, and the first horse should place higher, all else being equal.

By the same token, hind knockdowns that are not the result of bad jumping should be scored comparatively to the performances of other horses - if one entry pulls down two top rails with a couple of light rubs by a hind hoof, another takes down two fences by twice catching the top rails at its stifle, and another knocks down an obstacle with its front legs, the judge must determine which errors were least dangerous or chancey, and place the horses accordingly.

An entry is eliminated from competition if it jumps an obstacle before it is reset, bolts from the ring, fails to keep proper course, jumps an obstacle not included in the course or if horse and/or rider falls.

Other Faults And Errors

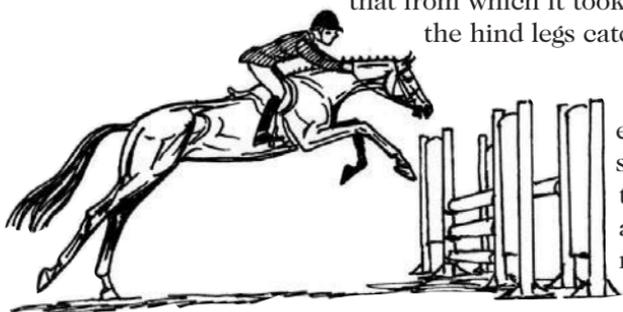
After disobedience, knockdowns and touches, the judge must consider faults not spelled out by specific rules. At first, a judge will not be able to distinguish all the many factors that come into play when a horse is jumping a fence, and will have to base his calls on only the more obvious and serious. As his eye improves, the judge will be able to differentiate between horses on the basis of more subtle infractions, such as errors that occur from improper takeoff and landing distances. Generally speaking, a hunter should take off and land from equidistant points on both sides of the fence, with the points being approximately six feet for obstacles of 3 _ feet or higher, and about five feet for lower obstacles.

Faults Due To Poor Jumping Style

When a horse leaves the ground too far from a jump, it may try to put its feet back down on the ground on the near side of the fence, and crash through it. Also, in an all-out effort to clear the jump, a horse may unfold its front legs and flail them in an effort to propel itself through the air, or it may stretch them far forward and try to dive over the obstacle. Diving, like the serious faults previously discussed, should keep a horse from placing in any class of depth and quality.

A less risky, but still dangerous, form of diving is reaching, in which the horse leaves the ground somewhat closer to - but still too far from - a fence, unfolds its legs and reaches over it. Another maneuver often employed in this

situation is cutting down, in which a horse clears the fence, immediately drops its front legs on the far side and lands at a point closer to the fence than that from which it took off, which often results in the hind legs catching a rail.



Cutting down may be evidence of a lack of scope (i.e., jumping ability, like working ability in a cutting horse), since a more athletic horse in the same situation would

leave from the longer distance, make its arc higher than necessary for the size of the fence (though appropriate to the distance), and land as far from the fence on the far side as it took off from on the near side. Assuming in both cases that no pole is dislodged, reaching should be penalized more heavily than cutting down because of the increased risk entailed by front-leg errors.

Faults result just as easily from taking off too close - propping and chipping in - as they do from taking off too far away. Propping generally occurs when a horse has approached an obstacle too fast, and it appears as if the horse is pushing away or setting back from the fence at the takeoff point, with its hind legs well up under itself and its front legs extended out, looking momentarily like a cow horse making a quick stop. A scopey, athletic horse can compensate for what is known as a deep, or close, spot and jump in otherwise good form by collecting itself, bringing its hocks well up under its body on takeoff stride and rocking backward slightly so that its legs will clear the rails.

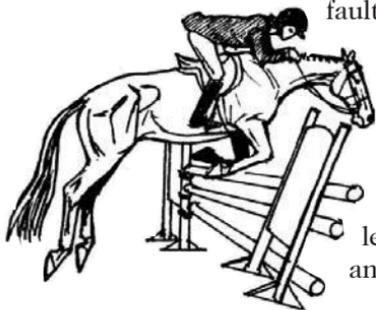
Chipping in is an extreme form of propping, occurring when a horse arrives at the jump with its strides off, and, in a split-second decision to adjust, throws in a short stride and often comes off on one hind leg instead of two.



Dangerous Fences

To sum up any of the style faults addresses above can produce various levels of what we consider Dangerous Jumps. In hunters dangerous jumps are heavily penalized. A really nice horse that puts in a very nice round with only one very dangerous fence would pin just above the refusals. Dangerous fences need to be assessed carefully and penalized accordingly.

Hanging



This style fault deserves its own sub title. It is a fault of style that occurs when the horse drops or partially unfolds its leg from the elbow down. Almost as bad as a knockdown or a refusal, hanging a leg in front of the fence is a dangerous fault that can result in severe injury: If a horse in a hunt field hangs a leg and hits a fence, he is inviting a fall. Horses often hang legs when they come in too close to an obstacle and do not fold their legs to avoid knockdowns.

A similar fault is dropping the shoulders, in which the shoulders and forearms of the horse are lowered toward the ground, almost behind the center point of the horse, even though the forearm, knee and cannon bone may be correctly folded.

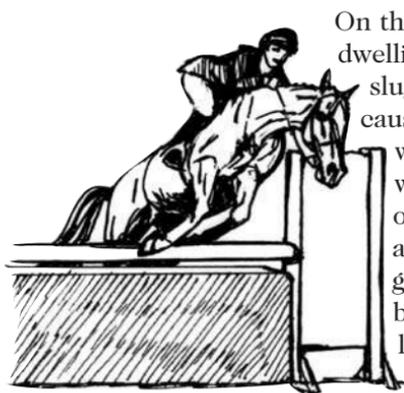
A horse with legs not folded tightly displays loose form (which is not to be confused with the much more dangerous fault of hanging a leg from the elbow or shoulder), and, all else being equal, should be placed lower than an athletic horse that is a good mover and does fold properly. Other form faults include carrying the legs too close together, so that the hooves cross, or so far apart that a wide expanse of chest is displayed. While neither fault is dangerous, both should result in lower placement than the horse that shows proper form.

More Style Problems To Consider

Overjumping occurs when the horse takes a fence higher or longer than necessary. Overjumping may be mark of a green, nervous or anxious horse, or it may be a result simply of exuberance.

Rhythm, the desired smooth continuity of a hunter, is often affected by a horse's temperament. Getting quick, in which a horse's front feet quickly

pat the ground immediately prior to takeoff, is a characteristic of high-strung or hot horses, and should be penalized like other actions and quirks of anxiety or nervousness.



On the other hand, dwelling off the ground and dwelling in the air may denote a green or sluggish horse. Dwelling off the ground may be caused by a lack of momentum before takeoff, when the horse doesn't come into a jump with an easy, free-flowing stride. It can also occur when the horse arrives in good style and stride, but is reluctant to come off the ground due to its own greenness; a lack of leg by the rider; a fear of pushing off; a fear of landing; or a fear of jumping into the rider's hands.

Dwelling in the air is something of an illusion; it is akin to throwing a ball in the air and watching it hang for a split second at the apex. When a horse dwells in the air, he seems to hang momentarily over fence, perhaps the result of jumping quick but with no forward impulsion, or of too slow a pace and a powerful take-off.

Straightness And Hunters

A horse should approach the middle of a fence in a straight line, and jump in an even, smooth arc, without wavering or drifting to either side of the line. While traveling over a fence, the horse should be attentive but relaxed, with its neck and back rounded. A flat, or inverted, topline is evidence of a lack of scope, or athletic ability, though it may be only a habitual style of jumping.

Drifting from the line occurs when a horse leaves the ground toward the middle of the jump, but then drifts to the side and lands off the center line. This can result in injury if the rider's leg catches a standard. Drifting may be lateral evasion of the rider's aids, but it could also indicate poor schooling or a rider's habit of either leaning to one side, riding on one rein or placing more weight in one iron, or stirrup. Less serious, but still to be penalized, is the horse that takes a jump straight, but not in the middle of the obstacle. However, jumping from an angle is permissible if it is necessary to maintain the flowing continuity of the course. This is most often seen on bending lines.

As a hunter goes over a fence, the horse should remain absolutely upright, without laying on its side, which is an extremely dangerous trait. This act can throw the rider off balance to the down side, or the horse may not be able to land safely on its feet. Less dangerous, but still to be penalized, is twisting, in which an upright horse shifts its front end or its hindquarters to the side in order to clear the jump.

Manners And Way Of Going

Hand in hand with proper form are manners and way of going; good manners and good moving don't guarantee proper form, but bad manners and/or poor movement almost certainly preclude it. A hunter should be ridden in hand - its placement and stride should be lightly guided by the rider's hands and legs, with subtle, sensitive movements that are essentially invisible to the observer.

There are, however, different forms of hand riding. The term can be a negative description when it is used to describe a horse that is always under restraint and never allowed to move freely, or, in other words, held tightly in a frame under hard-handed restraint, continually set and never allowed to go naturally into a jump. By the same token, some horses need a lot of encouragement to go forward. Use of a crop is permitted. Excessive use is to be severely penalized.

The Crop And It's Use

The lack of forward motion is often remedied by the use of a crop. Carrying a crop or a stick is allowed and considered a proper piece of the attire; however, its use must be penalized by the degree it is used. Use of a crop in hunters would be viewed much as if a western rider were to use the end of the reins in a pleasure or horsemanship class. Use of a crop in the Jumpers would be viewed much like the use in a barrel horse class. However, whenever a crop is used it is an indication of a problem or a potential difficulty.

Leads

Like all performance horses, a working hunter should be able to pick up the proper lead, preferably while going over a jump or coming into a turn.

If a horse in the right lead comes around a right turn into a jump that will be followed by a left turn, the horse should respond to aids, or cues, while in the air and land in the left lead, or he should be able to make a flying lead change prior to entering the left turn. As far as leads alone are concerned, a horse that makes flying changes at the proper places is preferred

to a horse that picks up the proper lead in front and then changes behind. That horse would be followed by a horse that counter-cantered, while a horse that cross cantered (moves disunited on opposite leads in front and back) should be penalized the heaviest, as it poses the greatest risk to itself and its rider. No extra credit should be given to a horse that lands on the correct lead over a horse that does a correct change.

Suggested Symbols for Descriptively Scoring Hunters

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | - Good fence; leaving in stride and making proper arc | <i>pg</i> | - Poor gaited or short-strided |
|  | - Propping | <i>ER</i> | - Erratic pace |
| <i> </i> | - Shortened Stride on approach | <i>sch</i> | - Not bending hocks and trailing hind legs out behind; storks |
|  | - Landing too close; cutting down | <i>smth</i> | - Smooth-looking; even pace; horse seemingly going on its own |
|  | - Standing off too far and creating chancey jumps; diving | <i>ru</i> | - Uneven performance or pace; either jumps don't match or going fast or slow |
|  | - Jumping hollow-backed; inverted |  | - Crash or dangerous |
|  | - Jumping flat with little use of back | <i>gk</i> | - Quick |
|  | - Not folding tightly enough; hanging knees, or leaving a leg | <i>tms</i> | - Tense |
|  | - Hanging legs | <i>str</i> | - Strong |
|  | - Twisting or laying on side | <i>✓✓</i> | - Overchecking by rider |
| <i>F</i> | - Weaving on approach or between jumps | <i>GM</i> | - Good mover |
| <i>x x</i> | - Cross-cantering | <i>FM</i> | - Fair mover |
|  | - Dwelling in air | <i>BM</i> | - Bad mover |
|  | - Extra stride through in-and-out | <i>GJ</i> | - Good jumper |
|  | - Hard rub | <i>FJ</i> | - Fair jumper |
|  | - Refusal or runout | <i>BJ</i> | - Bad Jumper |
|  | - Knockdown | | |
| <i>st</i> | - Rider using stick or crop on horse | | |
| <i>hh</i> | - High head | | |
| <i>ofl</i> | - Overflexed | | |
|  | - Bucks | | |
| <i>pl</i> | - Plays after fence or around corner | | |
| <i>sr</i> | - Sour-looking; pins ears in air | | |
| <i>nc</i> | - No scope | | |

THE SYMBOLS ARE OFTEN USED IN COMBINATIONS, SUCH AS:

-  - Good fence, but hard rub in front
-  - Good fence, but hard rub behind
- tw*  - Twisted, front knockdown
- |||*  - Shortened, then jumped flat
- EMM* - Weaving, then extra stride and propped over fence

AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE ASSOCIATION JUDGES CARD

WORKING HUNTER

CREDITS: EVEN HUNTER PACE
FREE FLOWING STRIDE
JUMPING FENCES WITHOUT BREAKING STRIDE
JUMPING IN THE CENTER OF THE FENCE
EVEN ARC OF TRAVEL, OVER THE FENCE
GOOD HUNTER CONFORMATION

SCORING: —SCORING SHALL BE ON A BASIS OF 0 TO 100, WITH AN APPROXIMATE BREAKDOWN AS FOLLOWS:
—90-100 AN EXCELLENT PERFORMER AND GOOD MOVER THAT JUMPS THE ENTIRE COURSE WITH CADENCE, BALANCE AND STYLE
—80-89 A GOOD PERFORMER THAT JUMPS ALL FENCES REASONABLY WELL; AN EXCELLENT PERFORMER THAT COMMITS ONE OR TWO MINOR FAULTS.
—70-79 THE AVERAGE, FAIR MOVER THAT MAKES NO SERIOUS FAULTS, BUT LACKS THE STYLE, CADENCE AND GOOD BALANCE OF THE SCORPER HORSES; THE GOOD PERFORMER THAT MAKES A FEW MINOR FAULTS.
—60-69 POOR MOVERS THAT MAKE MINOR MISTAKES; FAIR OR AVERAGE MOVERS THAT HAVE ONE OR TWO POOR FENCES BUT NO MAJOR FAULTS OR DISOBEDIENCES.
—50-59 A HORSE THAT COMMITS ONE MAJOR FAULT, SUCH AS A HIND KNOCKDOWN, REFUSAL, TROT, CROSS CANTER OR DROPS A LEG.
—30-49 A HORSE THAT COMMITS TWO OR MORE MAJOR FAULTS, INCLUDING FRONT KNOCKDOWNS AND REFUSALS, OR JUMPS IN A MANNER THAT OTHERWISE ENDANGERS THE HORSE AND/OR RIDER.
10-29 A HORSE THAT AVOIDS ELIMINATION BUT JUMPS IN SUCH AN UNSAFE AND DANGEROUS MANNER AS TO PRECLUDE A HIGHER SCORE.

ELIMINATIONS: —THIRD REFUSAL, RUNOUT, BOLTING ON COURSE, EXTRA CIRCLE, SHOW AN OBSTACLE TO A HORSE OR ANY COMBINATION OF THESE
—JUMPING AN OBSTACLE BEFORE IT IS RESET
—BOLTING FROM RING
—FAILURE TO KEEP PROPER COURSE
—JUMPING AN OBSTACLE NOT INCLUDED IN COURSE
—HORSE AND/OR RIDER FALLING IN COMPETITION (HORSE IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE FALLEN WHEN SHOULDER AND HAUNCH ON THE SAME SIDE TOUCH THE GROUND)

AWARDS	
1.	893
2.	275
3.	492
4.	375
5.	527
6.	745
7.	791
8.	317
9.	675
10.	
11.	

JUNIOR, AMATEUR AND YOUTH: - - MINIMUM HEIGHT - 3 FEET MAXIMUM HEIGHT - 3 FEET - 3 INCHES

ALL AGE: - MINIMUM HEIGHT - 3 FEET MAXIMUM HEIGHT - 3 FEET - 6 INCHES

SENIOR: - MINIMUM HEIGHT - 3 FEET - 3 INCHES MAXIMUM HEIGHT - 3 FEET - 9 INCHES

A VARIATION OF 3 INCHES IN FENCE HEIGHT, DOWN FROM OFFICIAL HEIGHTS LISTED, MAY BE INSTITUTED IF SHOW MANAGEMENT AND THE OFFICIAL JUDGES FEEL CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT, i.e., footing, weather, etc.;

	Brush	Gate	Over	Gate	Gate	Coop	In+Out	WAY OF GOING	COMMENTS	SCORE
1. 745								FM	Backed Off	50
2. 893								EM	Nice Horse	93
3. 791								FM	Hangs	45
4. 675								GM	Bad Pony!	29
5. 527								GM	gd horse/BdG	55
6. 317								FM	pull up	35
7. 275								GM	gd Jumper	80
8. 492								E+M	gd Jumper	70
9. 375								FM	Aver.	65
10.										
11.										
12.										
13.										
14.										
15.										

THE JUDGING SYSTEM

More On Dangerous Fences

All in all, there is much more to judging working hunters than merely watching the competitors circle the course and counting the number of downed rails and ticks. One rule reads, in part, that “judges shall emphasize unsafe jumping and bad form over fences, whether touched or untouched”, and this gets into the type of horse that the judge himself would want to ride in a hunt field. For example, say that one horse in a class had a super round, but on one fence, he came in too fast and had to scramble to stay out of trouble - the kind of jump that puts one’s heart in his throat. The next horse had an even, consistent go, but pulled down a rail on one fence with a light rub from a hind leg.

An unsafe or dangerous jump, whether touched or not, can easily end the career of both horse and rider - all it takes is one unsafe or dangerous fence. The second horse should place above the first, but before a horse is penalized, an understanding and knowledge of what constitutes an unsafe, dangerous fence is absolutely necessary.

Bookkeeping

Because of the multitude of occurrences each time an entry goes on course, it is incumbent up the judge to develop and use a bookkeeping system suitable for working hunters. The system must accurately place each horse relative to the others in the class, and, when done properly, should allow a judge to look back - years later, if need be - and tell exactly what each horse did over any fence in a given class. Because exhibitors can and do question a judge (whose decision is final), a good bookkeeping system that describes everything a horse did from the time he went on course until he was finished is an invaluable aid when the judge is asked to support his calls.

A scorecard for working hunters, such as the sample, should include a section with a numbered box representing each obstacle on the course, and another section for a numerical grade reflecting overall performance.

In addition to numbering the boxes, it’s a good idea to note the type of fence (brush, gate, oxer, etc.) As a jog to the memory when comparing close rounds, and again, at least in part, in case you are later questioned by an exhibitor. Each box is used to describe exactly what happened on the way to and at a given fence, whether the horse took the brush box in good form,

chipped in at the gate, knocked down the post-and-rail, refused the wall and then bolted and ran right through the oxer. Keeping up with all that on each fence - before the horse reaches the next one - requires a shorthand system, and example of which is given. The best bet is to keep your system simple at the beginning. When a judge first starts scoring hunters, he probably cannot see and note everything that happens at every fence, and so should rely on relatively few symbols to record major faults. As his skill and eye improves, and he catches more mistakes and problems, he will need more symbols to note them quickly.

General Observations

After the horse has completed its round, and each action has been noted in the boxes, a judge goes to the second section of the scorecard and makes any additional comments, rates the horse as to its manners and the judge's general impression of it, the horse's way of going and style of jumping, and then scores it numerically.

An excellent performer, a horse that's a good mover, cadenced, balanced, well-mannered and jumps well, falls into the 90s, the equivalent of receiving an A. A good performance, from a horse that does everything reasonably well but nothing particularly outstanding or particularly poor, gets a B, 80-89. The average horse, a fair mover, rates a C, 70-79. After that, things fall off quickly: into the 60s for poor performances by horses that make minor mistakes or are bad movers, perhaps a bit cloddy or clumsy; the 50s for a major fault such as a knockdown, trot or refusal; the 40s for two or more major faults, and zero for not completing the course or for being eliminated.

Where To Judge From And The Numbers

In order to make these judgements - the finer points, in particular - it is best for the judge to sit outside the arena, in an elevated position from which the majority of fences are viewed from the side and the horses can be seen in profile when jumping. When marking the horses, especially in large classes, keeping a running tally of the high-scoring rounds helps facilitate matters and avoids delay when it's time to pin the ribbons.

Bear in mind that everything a given horse does is relative to everything else done by every other entry, and the class must be judged as so. Ideally, a judge should have an objective standard to go by, but each entry has to be placed against other entries. If the judge has a round that he thinks is an 84, he should compare it with any others he has marked with 84, and then, if pos-

sible, give it an 83 or 85. Nevertheless, some standards don't bend: Even though a horse may jump all the fences cleanly, one that is only a fair mover cannot get in the 90s, and bad movers, regardless of how they jump, don't make the 80s. To reach the top, to get an A, the entry must be a good-moving horse that executes its fences properly - it must have style.

Numerical scoring is all relative. The winner of one class may only be a 65. Maybe it just wasn't a good class. In the next class with a strong group of horses your winner is an 86 and your last place horse is a 72. What matters is they place in the correct order.

Scoring System From Our Rulebook Under Working Hunter

Scoring shall be on a basis of 0-100, with an approximate breakdown as follows:

90-100: an excellent performer and good mover that jumps the entire course with cadence, balance and style.

80-89: a good performer that jumps all fences reasonably well; an excellent performer that commits one or two minor faults.

70-79: the average, fair mover that makes no serious faults, but lacks the style, cadence and good balance of the scoper horses; the good performer that makes a few minor faults.

60-69: poor movers that make minor mistakes; fair or average movers that have one or two poor fences but no major faults or disobediences.

50-59: a horse that commits one major fault, such as a hind knockdown, refusal, trot, cross canter or drops a leg.

30-49: a horse that commits two or more major faults, including front knockdowns and refusals, or jumps in a manner that otherwise endangers the horse and/or rider.

10-29: a horse that avoids elimination but jumps in such an unsafe and dangerous manner as to preclude a higher score.

CASES AND FAULTS

The following are examples of circumstances that may occur during working hunter classes, and how a judge should deal with them. Some of the rulings are based on what is written in the AQHA Handbook and others are based on common sense, practical experience and precedent.

In all of the examples, unless otherwise specified, assume that each horse's go was good, that no errors other than those cited were made, and that all other variable are equal.

A. General

When a horse makes two faults at one obstacle, only the major fault is counted. However, refusals are cumulative, and count in addition to other refusals.

1. Horse A had a front tick and a hind knockdown at the oxer, while B had a front knockdown and a hind tick at the same obstacle, and C had a front knockdown on the first element and a hind knockdown on the last element of the oxer.

RULING: *A scores higher than B & C.*

2. Horse A had a refusal at the gate, but circled back and jumped it cleanly. B had a front tick at a jump, and then knocked down the pole over it with a hind leg. C's rider touched the standard with his toe, and caused the top rail to fall.

RULING: *B scores higher than A & C.*

When an obstacle is composed of several elements in the same vertical plane, a fault at the top element is the only one penalized.

1. Horse A had a hard hind rub on a post-and-rail fence, which caused the second rail to fall. B slid into the jump and, though the top rail remained in place, the second and third rails fell, he then popped flat-footed over the obstacle and was clean.

***RULING:** A scores higher, B neither backed up (which would have constituted a refusal) nor displaced the top rail. However, A places over B at the fence, because of the awkward manner in which B handled the obstacle.*

2. Horse A slid into a gate with a rail over it, but managed to jump clean over the rail. B's left foreleg rattled the rail, which stayed up, but the gate fell off at the end. C had a front knockdown.

***RULING:** The placing would be B,A,C.*

3. Horse A hit a fence with its front legs, which caused the top rail to be displaced; it did not fall, because one end landed on the rail below and other remained in its original cup. B jumped from one corner over an obstacle, and its rider's toe hit the standard and caused the elements below the top rail to fall.

***RULING:** A places below B. Even though the rail did not fall to the ground, it was not in its original position. B receives no faults for contact of the standard by the rider. However, this touch should be considered in close competition.*

When an obstacle (such as an in-and-out) requires two or more fences, faults committed at each obstacle are considered separately. In case of a refusal or runout at one element, the entry may rejump the previous, and following, elements.

1. At the in-and-out, Horse A had a front knockdown on the first obstacle and a hind knockdown on the second. Horse B ran out on the first, circled back and jumped clean, and was clean on the second.

RULING: B places over A.

Judges shall emphasize unsafe jumping and bad form over fences, whether touched or untouched.

1. Horse A had a clean round, but on one fence, came in too fast and had to scramble, failing to fold both forelegs. B had an even, consistent go, but with a light rub, pulled down a jump with a hind leg.

RULING: An unsafe jump, whether touched or not, can end the career of both horse and rider, and it only has to happen once. Horse B, therefore, places above A.

2. Horse A touched, or skimmed, an obstacle with its belly, and had a front and hind rub on another obstacle. Horse B had two front ticks.

RULING: The skim with the belly is a major fault of form. B places over A.

3. Horse A had a clean round, but dangled its front legs on every fence, while B had three rubs but a very good style of jumping.

RULING: Bad or poor form can be dangerous, and dangling is worse than rubbing. Horse B places over A.

Incorrect leads or disuniting (cross-cantering) around the end or curves of the course are to be penalized.

Carrying a crop is optional. Use should be penalized.

1. Horse A's rider had to use the stick to urge his mount over several jumps, all of which he took cleanly. B had a hind knockdown on one obstacle.

***RULING:** B places over A, unless A had no loss of form. If A maintained form, it would place over B.*

In-and-outs (of one or two strides) are to be taken in the correct number of strides or be penalized.

B. Touches

Light touches are not to be considered, but when elimination is difficult, they may be scored in a comparative manner to other performances.

1. Horse A and B had virtually equal rounds, even to both having a rough fence. Horse A had a rub, however, B was clean.

***RULING:** With all other things equal, and elimination difficult, B gets the nod.*

2. Horse A rubbed a fence, but its pace, style and manners were very good. Though it went clean, B's pace was uneven, its style average and its manners only fair.

***RULING:** Because of its superior way of going, Horse A places above B.*

3. Horse A cleared the eighth obstacle, and then kicked back and made contact with the rail. At nine, A had a hind rub. B had a light front rub on an obstacle.

***RULING:** The lack of manners evidenced by A's kick would place B higher.*

4. Horse A had two hind rubs, while B had no faults but twisted badly over one obstacle.

***RULING:** Neither horse has any faults. However, the twist has to be penalized more than the rubs, and so should place B lower than A.*

5. Horse A had three front rubs and two hind rubs. B went clean, but was

very strong on the bridle, and made a move and a short stride at each fence.

RULING: A's manners and way of going easily place it above B.

C. Knockdowns

Knockdowns with any part of the horse's body behind the stifle, with any part in front of the stifle, of the standard or wing by any part of the horse, rider or equipment, of obstacle by touching a wing or post, according to the preceding.

1. Horse A had a clean round, and though clean on its last fence, kicked back and knocked off the top rail. B had a slight dragging rub with its hind legs, and pulled the top off a jump. C slipped on takeoff, and came down on top of a jump, catching the obstacle where the flank and stifle meet.

RULING: A and B both place higher than C.

2. Horse A had two hind knockdowns, while B had one front knockdown and C has six light front ticks.

RULING: C places above A and B. The cause of A's and B's knockdown has to be considered when placing the two horses - manners, style, a light rub, dropped leg, bad takeoff, etc. A dangerous or chancey fence may figure in, and the horse with the knockdowns closest to dangerous would place last.

3. Horse A knocked down the last element of an oxer with its front legs and pulled down the first element with its hind. B pulled down both the front and back elements with its hind legs.

RULING: *B places higher than A.*

4. Horse A drifted to the left over a jump, and its rider's foot touched and rocked the standard, causing the rails of an adjoining jump to fall. B stumbled in front of an obstacle, which caused it to twist into and over the jump; although awkward, he had only a rub. C had a light rub with a front foot.

RULING: *The class is placed C,A and B because of style of jumping.*

Hind knockdowns that are not the result of bad jumping shall not necessarily eliminate a horse from an award, but are scored comparatively with other horses.

1. Horse A had a rub with a hind fetlock and pulled down a rail. B had a rail down when he took off from too far back and caught the rail at its stifles. C had five light rubs.

RULING: *The placing should be C,A and B.*

2. Horse A had a light rub with its hind fetlocks, but pulled down a rail. B was clean, but on one jump its front legs were split, with a right front leg forward while the left front leg was dropped back at the knee. C came off the ground on one hind leg, had a light rub with that foot and pulled down a rail.

RULING: *The placing should be A,C and B. A had the least dangerous fence. C's awkward or chancey jump, when it came off the ground on one leg, was still less dangerous than the split-legged jump of B.*

When a horse touches an obstacle and causes the rail of an adjoining panel or wing to fall, it shall not be construed as a knockdown.

Disobedience

Riders are allowed a circle to establish stride and pace upon entering the arena, and must trot one small circle on a loose rein to demonstrate soundness upon finishing the course.

1. Horse A is sent into the ring by the paddock master while the ring crew is still resetting an obstacle; the rider makes three circles before the jump is reset and the judge has given the OK to proceed on course. B is sent into the ring, but noting that the judge is not ready, circles until the judge nods to begin. C enters, makes one circle, and goes on course after a signal from the judge.

***RULING:** Neither A nor B receive penalties; it is not the exhibitor's error when the paddock master is hustling in riders, or when a judge or jump crew is not ready. C's procedure is standard and correct.*

Refusals, runouts, bolting on course, showing a horse an obstacle, with any combination of three such disobedience resulting in elimination of the entry.

1. Horse A refused a post-and-rail; the rider immediately pulled it away, made a trotting circle tangent to the obstacle, circled again at the canter, and then the horse refused again. B refused the fence; the rider backed his horse 10 steps and immediately jumped clean. C refused, and the abrupt stop caused the rider to lose his stirrups; he held the horse in place while he regained the stirrups, immediately turned, circled, and then jumped clean.

***RULING:** A is eliminated. Though he didn't come to a halt, the tangent circle has to be considered showing the horse the obstacle. In any case, only one circle is allowed; the two refusals and the extra circle require elimination. B is charged for the refusal; circling the horse is not mandatory, and backing at the option of the rider is permissible. C receives the refusal, but stopping to regain his stirrup and obviously not addressing the obstacle is acceptable.*

Jumping an obstacle before it is reset, bolting from the ring, failing to maintain the proper course, jumping an obstacle not included on the course, and the horse/or rider falling, result in elimination of the entry.

1. Horse A entered the ring, in which four obstacles constitute the course. On the second fence, A had a knockdown, took fences three and four, and after changing direction, jumped fence five (which was fence two) prior to the top rail being reset.

RULING: *A is eliminated for jumping an obstacle before it is reset.*

2. Horse A stopped at a coop and rail, knocked down the rail with its nose, backed one step and then flat-footed the jump and continued on course.

RULING: *A is eliminated.*

3. Horse A had a front knockdown on the first part of an in-and-out and refused the second fence. The rider circled it, took the first element before it was reset, and then jumped out clean. B stopped at a vertical, demolished it, and the rider pulled up and waited for it to be reset. In the refusal, the top rail over an adjoining jump, a gate, was knocked down and fell on the landing side. The vertical was reset, B jumped and continued on course. The pole over the gate was not reset, but the obstacle appeared correct, and B jumped it clean.

RULING: *A is eliminated, but B should be whistled to a stop by the judge, the jump reset and B then sent on course again, starting with the gate.*

4. Horse A refused the oxer, and the rider then moved it forward, showed him the obstacle and jumped clean, and then ran out at the sixth fence. B had a refusal at the third fence, circled and jumped clean, had a runout at the fifth obstacle, circled and jumped clean through the remainder of the course.

RULING: *A is eliminated after the runout, B places.*

GLOSSARY

AIRY - An obstacle with large open spaces. Hunter fences should be made with plenty of material and appear solid; horses and riders both may have difficulty judging airy jumps. Airy may also refer to the horse itself, if it over jumps and there is a lot of air and space between it and the obstacle.

BASCULE - Good form; rounding the back while in arc over the fence.

CHIPPING IN - Taking off from a point too close to the fence, also called “too short”.

COURSE PATTERN - A circle taken by exhibitors prior to beginning the course to establish hunting gait and pace, and again upon completion of the course, to demonstrate soundness at the trot on a loose rein. In order to save time, a judge may restrict the circle to a mandatory line, in which case a dotted line must be included in the diagram and announced one hour prior to the class, and a marker showing where the circle is to begin and end must be provided in the arena.

CUTTING DOWN - Landing closer on the far side of the fence than the takeoff point on the near side.

DANGLING - Having one or more legs hanging down, rather than correctly folded, while jumping an obstacle.

DIVING- Stretching the front legs far forward in an effort to clear the rails. Usually the result of taking off too far from the fence or with too much speed, diving is a severe, and potentially dangerous, form of reaching.

DRIFTING - Moving to either side, away from the center, of the obstacle when jumping.

DROPPING A LEG - Not keeping both front or both back legs up and evenly together.

DWELLING IN THE AIR - Something of an illusion; it is akin to throwing a ball in the air and watching it hang for a split second at the apex. When a horse dwells in the air; he seems to hang momentarily over the fence, the result of greenness, jumping quick but with no forward impulsion, a fear of taking off or landing, or lack of help from the rider.

DWELLING OFF THE GROUND - Caused by a lack of momentum before takeoff, when the horse doesn't continue to the jump with an easy, free flowing stride.

ELEMENT - One of the parts or components of a jump or obstacle. For instance, the top rail of an obstacle is also known as the top element.

FOLDS CORRECTLY - Forearms parallel, or higher, to ground, with front legs flexed at knee, front feet close to elbows and hindquarters neatly flexed and folded at hocks.

FLAT BACK - Topline straight, rather than rounded; the horse doesn't use its back, head, neck or shoulders.

GOOD ARC - Takeoff and landing at points equidistant from the fence

GROUND LINE- a pole or rail placed on the ground approximately six inches in front of a jump. By further delineating the jump, a ground line helps the horse and rider judge the amount of effort required to clear the obstacle. Fillers such as brush boxes filled with shrubs or flowers are often used in lieu of a ground line.

HAND RIDDEN, RIDDEN IN HAND - Placed by rider's hands and legs, with stride and pace guided by subtle and sensitive aids from the rider.

HARD RUB - Hitting a fence or standard with either the front- or hind-quarters, and causing a loud knock or thud.

HEAD OUT - Carrying head to the outside and shoulder to the inside, instead of bending in the direction of travel.

HUNTER PACE - Usually 12-16 miles per hour, but depends on size of course.

IMPULSION - Thrust; related to collection and vertical motion, impulsion is created by the rider's legs asking the horse to go forward while his hands restrict the horse's speed.

IN-AND-OUT - A combination of two fences placed 24 or 36 feet apart, to be taken in either one or two strides. The first and second elements of an in-and-out are judged as two separate obstacles.

INVERTED - A fault of jumping form, in which the back is hollowed, rather than rounded, and the head and hindquarters are higher than the back.**OXER** - A spread fence not exceeding three feet in width and usually consisting of rail fences placed together, one behind the other. Oxers in working hunter classes consist of two elements, and are measured from the front of the first element to the back of the second. Oxers must ascend, with the front element three to six inches lower than the back. Square oxers, those with elements of the same height, are prohibited in hunter classes, and are used only for jumpers.

PROPPING - An appearance by the horse of pushing back from the fence at takeoff. Though it's often a result of taking off from a point too close to the obstacle, horses may prop from any distance. A scopey horse may compensate for a takeoff point too close to the jump, but it also may become habit in horses that are allowed to slow down when approaching a fence.

QUICK - Coming off the ground quickly on takeoff, or a short, rapid stride or strides immediately before takeoff.

REACHING - Front legs extend to clear the fence. Usually caused by taking off too far away from obstacle.

REFUSAL - Stopping in front of an obstacle, and then taking at least one step backward.

RUNOUT - Evading or passing by an obstacle to be jumped; jumping an obstacle outside the limiting markers; horse or rider knocking down a flag, standard, wing or other limiting marker without jumping the obstacle.

SAFE JUMP - Horse jumps clean and in stride, with good arc and legs folded correctly.

SCOPE - The athletic ability required for jumping. The word is used similar to the term "cow," or cow sense, in cutting horses, though scope relates to physical ability, while cow is more a matter of mental ability.

SHOWING THE HORSE AN OBSTACLE - Riding a horse up to an obstacle, without jumping it, in order to show the obstacle to the horse.

SKIMMING - Insufficient elevation. Also called "low belly," it is often associated with fast, flat jumps, or jumping with little effort.

SOFT - The rider is able to ease off on the reins before a fence and at the finish; related to hand- ridden. Soft may also refer to an easy, or “soft,” spot for takeoff.

SPLITTING - A horse having one leg forward and one back while jumping.

STRIDES - Theoretically based on 12-foot increments. Strides are counted as the distance between jumps. (For example, 60 feet counts four strides, as in “1,2,3,4, jump.”)

TAKE-OFF BOX - A box with small shrubs or flowers that is placed on the ground in front of a jump, and used as part of a ground line.

TWISTING - Body not traveling straight while going over fence, but instead twisting to either side in order for its legs to clear the obstacle.

UNSAFE JUMP - A style or form of jumping such that a fall could be the result.

Recommended reading:
“Judging Hunters and Hunt Seat Equitation,”
by Anna Jane White-Mullin
(copyright 1984 by Arco Publishing, Inc., New York); and

“Designing Courses & Obstacles,”
edited by John H. Fritz
(copyright 1978 by Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston).

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