

Australasian Gypsy Horse Society

Drum Horse

Judges Guide

Judging is not absolute.
It is exactly what it says it is:
A matter of Judgement.



The Australasian Gypsy Horse Society have published this Judges Guide to offer judges, agricultural societies and show committees an in depth guide and advice to the "Drum Horse"

This guide includes:

- ❖ Drum Horse breed standard
- ❖ Drum Horse History
- ❖ Expectations of judging the Drum horse
- ❖ Presentation standard for exhibits
- ❖ Presentation standard for handlers
- ❖ Dress code for handlers and riders

THE CLASS

An "In hand" class is defined as a class where the horse is judged based upon its conformation. Conformation is defined as the physical appearance of an animal due to the arrangement of muscle, bone and other body tissue.

THE IDEAL DRUM HORSE

There is no perfectly conformed horse except in the eye of the artist. However, the Australasian Gypsy Horse Society has accepted the following "look" or image as its "ideal" from which to establish an in hand horse judging criteria.

The overall impression of the Drum Horse should be one of an elegant heavy horse of great strength and agility. The Drum Horse is a tall, heavy riding horse, and should therefore display the athleticism to allow for competitiveness in all ridden and driven disciplines. The Drum should be a large, well-muscled horse of medium to heavy weight, with good quality bone, an athletic body, a kind expression and abundant hair (including heavy "feather" on the legs).

A Drum Horse should be above all else a strong and willing partner, loyal and eager to please and display a very intelligent character. They should be manageable and mannerly, respectful, alert confident and even courageous.

PURPOSE OF THE CLASS

The purpose of the class is to help develop the Drum Horse by selecting individuals in the order of their resemblance to the breed standard and that are the most positive combination of balance, structural correctness, breed, sex characteristics, and muscling.

Type is defined as an overall body type and conformation that is unique to a specific breed

Australasian Gypsy Horse Society - Drum Horse breed standard

The purpose of the Drum Horse standard is to help develop the quintessential heavy riding and driving horse utilising the bloodlines of the Gypsy cob, Shire, and Clydesdale horses. The ideal Drum Horse displays the calm disposition, heavy bone, profuse feathering and parade animal presence of the Drum Horses in use by HRH the Queen of England's Cavalry. Animals adhering to this standard will also maintain the agility, movement and athleticism to ensure they can excel at a variety of ridden and driven disciplines.

Size: Minimum 16hh and upwards. Horses under 16hh are registered in the Appendix Drum Section.

General Appearance: The Drum Horse should

- ❖ Give the impression of intelligence, kindness, strength and agility.
- ❖ Be a large well-muscled horse of either medium weight or heavy weight
- ❖ Possess good quality bone, a sturdy body, kind expression and abundant hair.
- ❖ Display the athleticism to allow for a pleasant day of hunting, hacking or other ridden discipline. The Drum Horse is considered a heavy riding horse and should also excel at driving.

Head: The head should

- ❖ Be in proportion to the body neither too large nor too small
- ❖ Have a broad forehead,
- ❖ Have a generous jaw, square muzzle and even bite.
- ❖ Have ears that are cleanly shaped and well set on.
- ❖ The eyes should be large and set well apart with an intelligent, kind expression. Eyes can be any colour, and blue eyes shall not be penalised.
- ❖ Have a convex or straight profile, both of which are acceptable
- ❖ Have a masculine appearance to the head if they are a stallion or gelding
- ❖ Have a more feminine appearance for a mare

Neck: The neck should

- ❖ Be substantial and well-muscled with a defined arch
- ❖ Be clean through the throat, not too short, and tie in well at the shoulder and withers
- ❖ exhibit a masculine crest in proper relationship to the size and thickness of the neck in the case of a stallion

Chest: The chest should be

- ❖ Broad
- ❖ Significantly muscled

Shoulders: The shoulders should be

- ❖ Deep
- ❖ Powerful
- ❖ Of a correct slope to allow for ample, free movement

Withers: The withers should

- ❖ Be average in height, not too high
- ❖ Possess a generous layer of muscle

Back: The back should be

- ❖ Short
- ❖ Supple
- ❖ Well-muscled
- ❖ Tied in strongly at the loin

Body: The barrel should

- ❖ Be deep with well sprung ribs
- ❖ Have a solid covering of muscle
- ❖ Have a flank as deep as the girth
- ❖ Have a strong loin that ties into the croup with a smooth, well-muscled appearance

Legs: The legs should

- ❖ Be set squarely under the body
- ❖ Be straight
- ❖ Have clean joints
- ❖ Have plenty of dense, flat bone
- ❖ Have well-muscled forearms and thighs
- ❖ Have clean and well defined hocks on the hind legs that are broad, deep, flat and wide when viewed from the side
- ❖ Have pasterns long enough to allow for a proper slope of about 45 degrees from the hoof head to the fetlock joint
- ❖ Have sound hooves
- ❖ Have a generous and open heel
- ❖ The Drum Horse may or may not exhibit the influence of the draught horse hock-set.

Hindquarters: Hindquarters should

- ❖ Be smooth and rounded across a long croup
- ❖ Have a medium to high tail set
- ❖ Have a long hip with wide pelvis
- ❖ Have well-muscled thighs and buttocks

Hair: The hair should

- ❖ Be long, thick and Abundant
- ❖ Start at the knees and hocks, preferably with feather running down the front of the leg as well as the back
- ❖ Be soft and silky in the feather
- ❖ Be either straight or curling feather, and should cover the hoof

* Docking of tails is not permissible without a veterinary certificate.

Colour: The Drum Horses may be any colour,

- ❖ Pinto, Overo or Solid. Blue eyes are acceptable.

Movement: When in motion, the ideal Drum Horse should move with

- ❖ Action, power, grace and agility
- ❖ Head carriage and collection that appears natural, not overly exaggerated or forced
- ❖ Free, straight and square movement with ample impulsion

- ❖ Knee action that is somewhat snappy but displays a long, free moving shoulder which should allow the ability to reach forward in a classic extension
- ❖ The appearance of being up under itself with a smooth, powerful stride and should be light on the forehand

Disposition: The Drum Horse should be, above all else,

- ❖ A kind and willing partner
- ❖ Display an intelligent character and docile temperament
- ❖ Display a calm and sensible attitude.

The History of the Drum Horse:

A royal whim

In 1457, a petulant Ladislas V, King of Hungary, demanded horses for his entire retinue, including his drummers, before he would come to ask for the hand of Magdalena, daughter of Charles VII. He simply refused to present himself amidst a retinue muddied by French roads.

Charles VII complied and such was the innocuous beginnings of a breed destined to become a symbol of royalty and the mascot of the British army.

Once Charles VII saw the impact of the 'horse drummers', he commissioned his own retinue to contain a pair, where a young and impressionable King Henry VIII would later come to see them.

Unfortunately, the first pair of silver drums King Henry commissioned in 1545 were sunk with the Mary Rose, only being recovered when the ship was raised in 1982. Fortunately, he was not easily dissuaded! He was the first king to routinely use the 'Kettle Drummers' in parade and battle, and it was also he who first gave the Drum horses a military rank of 'Major' to ensure they were treated with due respect by the troops.

Throughout the intervening centuries, the appearance of the Drum Horse has changed little, and their job, even less. With the establishment of the modern British military under Charles II, honored units were given Drum Horses but, over time, more regiments used Drum horses until, by 1715, all 'Regiments of Horse' contained one.

The only exception to this rule is the Royal Dragoon's, whom King George II allowed a second Drum Horse when they presented him with two captured silver drums on the back of a 'pyeball' after the battle of Dettingen in 1743. This remains a point of pride to the Dragoon's to this day.

During the course of history, Drum Horses have captured the imagination of many a military man; perhaps the most notable being Churchill who served with the Queen's Own Hussars, Napoleon and Rudyard Kipling. Before Kipling wrote 'The Jungle Book', he dedicated a story to his regiment's Drum Horse in India and wrote "The very soul of the regiment lives in the Drum Horse, who carried the silver kettle-drums". Indeed, they were a mascot for many a regiment and even featured individually on trading cards, much like baseball players in our modern era.

Royal privilege

Today, the Drum Horses of the Blue and Royals and Lifeguards are used for all diplomatic parades, as well as prominent events, such as the recent Queen's Diamond Jubilee Parade.

The horses used, while selected by the regiment's riding master, are required to be approved for duty and 'officially' named by the reigning monarch. Although the horses still maintain stable or

pet names, they are officially named after Greek gods or heroes, with the current horses being named Mercury, Spartacus and Achilles.

Royal involvement does not stop at naming, however; the reigning monarch must be consulted about minor aspects of the Drum Horse's routine, such as royal permission being required before the mane or tail of the horse can be trimmed. They are truly beloved by the monarchs they serve.

In a commoner's world

It is no wonder that a horse who can capture the hearts of the royal family so completely can entrance the common folk as well.

King George showed remarkable foresight when he overturned a decision to put down a Drum Horse due to his advanced age and declared that all royal Drum Horses be retired after duty to live out their days as they may. This decision allowed an American couple to adopt a horse from the 'royal mews' called Galway Warrior.

He had been preceded into the United States by his son, Chewmill Guinness, by only a matter of months and it was these two stallions that began the transition of the Drum Horse from a job description to a recognised breed in the making.

The Australasian Gypsy Horse Society has created a registry for the breed, establishing registration rules to ensure future offspring have the best chance to match and exceed their breed standard.

With the dream of breeding Drum Horse to Drum Horse exclusively being generations away, the AGHS's guidelines define what animals can be bred to achieve the desired type of horse and to ensure, as much as is possible, that the resulting animal breeds true.

"The Drums, hear the Drums"



Judging the Drum Horse

In hand judging is a positive evaluation of balance, structural correctness, breed sex characteristics, and muscling. When judging, it is important to make a positive evaluation of each horse's resemblance to the ideal and to find the horse that best combines the traits listed above. It is easy to find what you don't like about any animal and eliminate horses on that basis. However, when a positive evaluation is used, it produces a consistent result that finds the most complete horse. All judging involves the ability to find those animals that most resemble the ideal and to rank them accordingly. In order to judge in hand horses it is important to have a thorough understanding of the traits used in the selection process. This process begins with balance.

Balance

Balance is the single most important characteristic in equine selection. It is determined by the skeletal framework of the animal being judged. When judging, it is important to attempt to visualise and evaluate the skeleton of the horse underneath its hair, feather, muscle and other tissues. Because it is sometimes difficult to visualise the skeletal framework of the animal being judged, there are several easy reference points to evaluate balance. Nothing is more critical to balance than slope of the shoulder. Slope of shoulder changes when the angle of the shoulder is increased or decreased. Not only does the top to bottom line ratio of the neck change, but the ratio of the length of back to length of underline also changes. It is ideal to have a short top line and a long underline of the body. A long back coincides with the short neck of the straight-shouldered horse. In addition to overall balance, slope of shoulder influences length of stride. The straight shouldered horse will also be shallow-hearted, as measured from the top of the withers to the chest floor. Unlike the balanced horse whose legs are approximately the same length as its depth of heart, the straight-shouldered horse's legs will be longer than its depth of heart.

Breed and sex characteristics

Drum horses shown in hand should exhibit breed characteristics, or type. Type is defined as the overall body style and conformation unique to a specific breed. In addition, mares should exhibit femininity and stallions should exhibit masculinity. Femininity and masculinity are most easily recognised in the head and throatlatch areas. They are qualities hard to define but easily recognised.

Structural correctness

Structural correctness of feet and legs is a major area of consideration in judging. When standing beside the horse, the judge drops an imaginary line from the point of the buttocks to the ground. Ideally, that line should touch the hocks, run parallel to the cannon bone and be slightly behind the heel. The horse with too much angle to his hocks is sickle-hocked, and the horse that is straight in his hocks is post-legged.

Ideally, when viewed from the rear, any horse should be widest from stifle to stifle. Another imaginary line from the point of the buttocks to the ground should bisect the gaskin, hock and hoof.

When viewed from the side the ideal should again stand on a straight column of bone with no deviation. A horse that is "over at the knees" is buck-kneed, and the horse that is "back at the knees" is calf-kneed. Obviously, calf-kneed is the most serious condition. When the horse is viewed

from the front, an imaginary line from the point of the shoulder to the toe should bisect the knee, canon bone and hoof. The hoof should point straight ahead. When a horse toes out, it is splay-footed and this horse will always wing-in. When a horse toes-in, it is pigeon-toed and that horse will always paddle out. The most serious of these is the horse that wings-in, because it has a tendency to interfere, i.e., strike its legs with the opposite hoof as it travels. If the cannon bone is off-centred to the outside, it is bench-kneed. The ideal has no deviation from these descriptions and it is essential for the judge to recognise structural defects.

Blemishes

It is also important that judges evaluate the cause for blemishes and abnormalities such as splints, ringbone, bowed tendons, and curbs. Are they the result of structural incorrectness or unrelated causes? Obviously, incorrect structure should be considered and penalised more than tissue changes that are not the result of any visible structural deviations.

In summary

In hand judging is a positive evaluation of balance, structural correctness, breed and sex characteristics. The ideal Drum Horse shown in hand is a horse that possesses the following characteristics.

The horse should possess eye appeal that is the result of a harmonious blending of:

- ❖ Attractive well-proportioned head
- ❖ Long sloping shoulder
- ❖ Long neck in proportion to the body
- ❖ Deep and broad chest
- ❖ Round, deep and well sprung ribs
- ❖ Short strong, supply back
- ❖ Strong loin and coupling

These characteristics should be combined with straight and structurally correct legs and feet that are free of defects.

An in hand horse judge has a responsibility to find the animal that is the best positive combination of the characteristics described in this handbook. This is a class that stands alone, a class where the horse is judged based upon its conformation and similarity to the Drum Horse breed standard as described by the AGHS—Australasian Gypsy Horse Society.



Presentation standards of the Drum horse

Trimming of the Drum horse can be a controversial practice, because the beards, moustaches, feather and full, luxurious manes and tails are breed characteristics of these horses.

- ❖ The Drum is generally shown untrimmed and unplaited including the head and face, mane and tail, however exhibitors should not be penalised for trimming or plaiting.
- ❖ Some trimming of the bridle path is accepted, especially for the ridden section.
- ❖ Manes and tails should be full and flowing. Feather should be full, curtaining the coronets and hooves. 'Consideration should be given when harsh Australian conditions cause unavoidable feather breakage - especially in hotter, drier climates.'
- ❖ Long hairs under the jaw and those protruding from the ears may be trimmed but exhibitors should not be penalised for not doing so.
- ❖ Whiskers should not be trimmed.
- ❖ The tail may be trimmed at the bottom if excessively long.
- ❖ No false hair, artificial colouring or make-up should be used.

Dress code for Handlers and riders

Handlers should be correctly attired for the class and compliment the horse. The emphasis should be on presentable, neat, clean and practical. Footwear must be closed in and suitable. Ladies should always tie hair back neatly

Ladies

- ❖ A good fitting pair of slacks, moleskins or a neat skirt.
- ❖ A shirt and tie or a neat well fitted shirt and jacket.
- ❖ Riding attire or a well fitted suit is also acceptable.
- ❖ Leather runners or lace up shoes with good grip to allow you to run.

Gentlemen

- ❖ A good fitting pair of moleskins, slacks or riding attire.
- ❖ A shirt and tie or a neat well fitted shirt and jacket.
- ❖ Riding attire or a well fitted suit is also acceptable.
- ❖ Leather runners or lace up shoes with good grip to allow you to run.

Optional

- ❖ Hats - can be very valuable for sun protection, it should not however be the centrepiece of the outfit.
- ❖ Gloves and Waistcoat.