



# Blue Ribbon Handbook

A Quick Guide to Showing the  
American Saddlebred

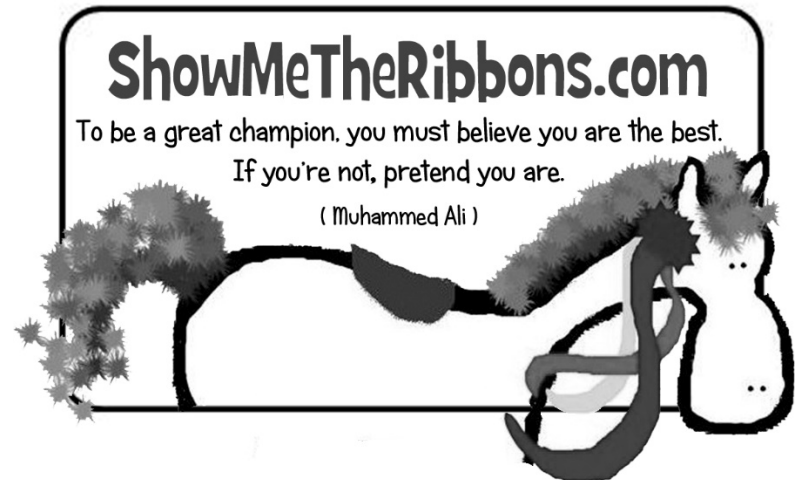


## The American Saddlebred

The American Saddlebred is the epitome of the show horse. He carries himself with an attitude that is elusive of description—some call it “class”, presence, quality, style, or charm. This superior air distinguishes his every movement. The characteristics that have contributed to the Saddlebred’s reputation as the “peacock of the show ring” also makes him a versatile horse. Smoothness of gaits, speed coupled with intelligence and powerful muscling enable him to do whatever is asked of him. Saddlebreds have excelled in the show ring as well as many non-traditional disciplines such as dressage, eventing, show jumping, combined driving, and endurance, as well as recreational and competitive trail riding. A Saddlebred is capable of almost any task he is asked to perform and will do it with extraordinary style!

## Winning Characteristics

Saddlebreds come in almost all colors, ranging in height from 14 to 17 hands and weigh between 800 and 1,200 pounds. The head and eye of the ideal Saddlebred suggest refinement and intelligence. Long, sloping pasterns give a spring to the stride, making Saddlebreds very comfortable to ride. High quality, smoothness and balanced proportions complete an overall picture of symmetry and style. Perhaps the breed’s most distinguishing trait is its mental acumen. Happy, alert and curious, American Saddlebreds possess that people-oriented quality called personality, endearing them to their admirers. They are truly America’s Spirited Beauty!



## **The American Saddlebred Horse Association (ASHA)**

The start of the American Saddlebred Horse Association began back in the late 1700s. By then, the American Saddlebred was being recognized as a unique and individual horse type, referred to as the "American Horse." With the continued addition of Thoroughbred blood to easy gaited horses, breeders saw they were creating a distinct breed. In the 1880s, breeders of this unique type of horse began to call for the formation of a breed association and registry. Charles F. Mills began compiling pedigrees and formulating rules for a registry.

Shortly thereafter, *The Farmers Home Journal*, a newspaper in Louisville, Kentucky, called for a meeting on April 7, 1891. Thus, on that day, the American Saddle-Horse Breeders' Association was established in Louisville, Kentucky. Under the leadership of the first Association President, John B. Castleman, the objectives of collecting, recording and preserving the pedigrees of saddle horses in America began. In 1908, after years of discussion, the Association formally acknowledged *Denmark F.S.* as the sole Foundation Sire of the American Saddle Horse. However, in 1991, after careful review of bloodlines, *Harrison Chief 1606* was also named a Foundation Sire for his contribution to the formation of the breed.

As time went on and the registry grew in numbers of horses and members, the name American Saddle-Horse Breeders' Association no longer reflected the expanding functions of the Association. Therefore, on April 22, 1980, the registry's name was changed to American Saddlebred Horse Association (ASHA).

In 1985, ASHA headquarters moved from Louisville, Kentucky, to the new American Saddle Horse Museum building, located at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. ASHA was the first breed registry to call the Kentucky Horse Park home.

Today the American Saddlebred Horse Association is made up of two branches, the Association itself and the American Saddlebred Registry. The Association is responsible for promoting and improving the breed, while the Registry is responsible for keeping the lineage and ownership records of all registered Saddlebreds all over the United States and the world!

## **ASHA's Mission Statement**

The mission of the **American Saddlebred Horse Association** is to promote, improve and protect the grace, intelligence and versatility of the American Saddlebred, and to provide programs and services supporting our members, while fostering public awareness of the breed.

## **ASR's Mission Statement**

The American Saddlebred Registry shall guarantee the purity of the breed through the establishment, maintenance and publication of an accurate register for the recording of pedigrees and the transfers of ownership of the American Saddlebred Horse. The Registry shall, in addition, administer the recognition and prize programs associated with the breed.

[Visit ASHA on the web at www.saddlebred.com](http://www.saddlebred.com)

## **The Colorado American Saddlebred Horse Association (CASHA)**

CASHA is a Charter Club of the National Saddlebred organization, the American Saddlebred Horse Association. The association promotes all activities involving the Colorado Saddlebred. Membership to CASHA includes automatic entry into our year end awards program which honor the high point Saddlebred horses and Saddlebred riders in competition throughout the show year at all skill levels. Merit Awards honor a lifetime achievement of success in the show ring to Saddlebreds showing in Colorado. A \$500 scholarship to the college of their choice is awarded to the high point juvenile rider during the competition year as well. Members are also eligible for special membership discounts in from our National organization, ASHA, as well as discounts from various corporate sponsors such as John Deere, Sherwin Williams, Office Max, Valvoline, Hertz, FarmVet, Sam's Club, and Choice Hotels. The Colorado High Steppers is the youth group affiliated with CASHA. Youth group activities are all about involving youth members with each other as well as the American Saddlebred. Emailed CASHA current events and topics, a newsletter, and an annual calendar keep our members informed about CASHA activities. Support the Colorado American Saddlebred and join today!!

[Visit CASHA on the web at  
www.coloradosaddlebred.com](http://www.coloradosaddlebred.com)

## **The United Professional Horsemen's Association (UPHA)**

Based in Lexington, KY, the UPHA is an association of professional horsemen and horsewomen who have united to improve the show horse industry and to define and clarify their professionalism within the industry. Since its inception in 1968, the UPHA has expanded into eighteen regional chapters that comprise all fifty states and Canada. In Colorado, our local UPHA Chapter is Chapter 19. The predominant breeds represented by UPHA members are the American Saddlebred, the Morgan Horse, the Hackney Pony and the National Show Horse. From the beginning, UPHA programs have benefited not only the individual horse person, but the entire horse show industry.

The UPHA regularly works with the United States Equestrian Federation, The American Horse Council and the various breed organizations to promote safety, ensure fairness, improve conditions, increase attendance and improve the overall horse show experience for owners, trainers, grooms, and spectators alike. In addition to its core programs, the UPHA seeks to foster communication and mutually beneficial relationships between all participants in the horse show industry.

For over forty years the United Professional Horsemen's Association has given a united voice to the individual trainer while recognizing his/her unique capabilities and talent. We invite you to learn more about UPHA's goals and programs, and would welcome your membership into the association.

[Visit UPHA on the web at www.uphaonline.com](http://www.uphaonline.com)

## **The United States Equestrian Federation (USEF)**

The United States Equestrian Federation serves as the National Governing Body for Equestrian Sport. The USEF is dedicated to uniting the equestrian community, honoring achievement, and serving as guardians of equestrian sport. Since its inception in 1917, the Federation has been dedicated to pursuing excellence and promoting growth, all while providing and maintaining a safe and level playing field for both its equine and human athletes. The USEF governs many horse shows in Colorado. They provide the general rules we all follow at USEF rated horse shows.

[Visit USEF on the web at www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)

## **Horse Shows, Here We Come!!**

Now that you have met the organizations involved with the American Saddlebred and horse shows across the country, we want to introduce you to some general rules and etiquette that you can follow when you are participating in a horse show.

### **A Few Traditions and Etiquette in the Show Ring**

- Horses enter the show ring at a trot unless otherwise instructed.
- Basic show attire is a riding suit, vest, tie, derby, and riding boots (helmets are acceptable).
- Academy class attire is riding pants, riding boots, white shirt, generally a sweater or vest, and helmet.
- At the end of each class, riders line their horses up next to each other in the middle of the show ring facing the ring steward (frequently referred to as the lineup). ALL horses must continue in a clockwise direction into the lineup (horses not in continuing in a clockwise direction should be penalized). Judges take a final look at the horses at this time and write down their decision for the winners. The number on the rider's back is written down in order of placing and given to the announcer on a blank card called a judge's card. The judge's card typically has the class name, class number (from the schedule), and the specifications for the class already printed on it.
- When in the lineup it is customary for the horses to "park out" or stretch out with front and rear feet even with each other. When "parked out" the front legs should be perpendicular to the ground, with the hind legs stretched out behind the horse at an angle.
- It is proper for men tip their hats to women judges during the final line up.
- Horses may be shown in any class with unset tails without penalty.

Riding is a great sport in which to learn to compete against yourself, to practice sportsmanship, and to develop confidence.

***Did you know?*** All horses have their birthday on January 1 of each year, no matter what date they were actually born.

***Also...***A rider's show age for any given year is determined by the age they were on December 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year.

## Description of Gaits

In the show ring, the Saddlebred is shown at the three natural gaits – in English classes these gaits are referred to as the walk, trot and canter. The walk is a relaxed four beat gait with each foot moving one at a time. Riders should be in good riding posture and in control of the horse.

The trot is a natural, two-beat diagonal gait, in which the front foot and the opposite hind foot take off from the ground in unison and land simultaneously. In classes where the rider is judged, the rider should post (posting is where a rider moves up and down in the saddle in rhythm with the horses legs) on the correct “diagonal” – rising from the saddle when the front outside (closest to the rail) leg of the horse moves forward. When a rider is on the incorrect diagonal, a trainer or coach commonly will tell the rider to “sit an extra bounce” or “change your diagonal.”

The canter is relatively slow, lofty and fluid, with a definite three-beat cadence. The inside (furthest from the rail) front leg of the horse should be leading or reaching forward with each stride. This gait is typically smooth so riders should sit tall and not bounce out of the saddle.

The five-gaited horse showcases the three natural gaits as well as two additional trained gaits – the slow gait and rack. The slow gait is a four-beat gait with each of the feet of the horse striking the ground separately. It is executed slowly but with true and distinct precision. The rack is a four beat gait which is highly animated and performed with great action and speed. This is also a very smooth gait, so the rider should not rise out of the saddle.

Corresponding Western gaits are the walk, jog, and lope. Each is slower than the English equivalent gait. Riders do not post (rise out of the saddle) at the jog. The reins should be a bit more relaxed, and sometimes loose, with the horse still controlled.

***Did you know?*** A horse and/or rider can only request ONE time out per class. If they ask for more than one, they are disqualified.

***Also...***losing a shoe is considered a time out. Replacing the shoe is timed. If the shoe is not replaced in the required time limit, the rider has the option to go back on the rail “as is” or be disqualified.

## What is a Division at a Horse Show?

Now that I know how the horses move, how do I know what type of class is in the ring?

American Saddlebreds compete in various categories, commonly referred to as *divisions* that further break down into classes (which we will cover shortly). The division a horse is shown in largely depends on the ability and suitability of the horse to the general rules and regulations for that division. Once a horse is shown in a particular Saddlebred specific division at a horse show that horse may not compete in a different Saddlebred specific division at the same show. This is commonly referred to as cross-entering. In these divisions, only the horse is being judged. The rider should not detract from the horse, but is not primarily focused on during the evaluation process.

Saddlebred Specific Divisions in the USEF rule book are as follows:

- Five-Gaited
- Three-Gaited
- Fine Harness
- Park
- Park Pleasure
- English Show Pleasure
- English Country Pleasure
- Hunter Country Pleasure
- Western
- In-Hand and Model
- Youth Showmanship In-Hand
- Carriage Pleasure Driving
- Golden
- Parade
- Roadster
- Ladies Side Saddle
- Saddlebred-Type Pony

Each horse show is not required to have classes for all of the divisions listed above. They can tailor the divisions offered based on popularity and demand. On the next few pages, you will find a general description of each Saddlebred Specific Division at a horse show. Find your favorite and learn all about it!

### Five-Gaited

The Five-Gaited American Saddlebred should possess beauty, brilliance, elegance and refinement but its energy should be directed toward speed in an animated form. Entries shall be shown with a full mane and tail with a single ribbon braid secured at the top of the mane. Tails are traditionally set.

A double bridle consisting of snaffle and curb bits is preferred and must suit the horse. The saddle should be flat, English-type with leather or web girth. Informal dress for riders is required in morning and afternoon classes. Dark colored habit (with collars and lapels of same color) and accessories are appropriate for evening. Gaudy colors should be avoided. Qualifying gaits are animated walk, trot, slow gait, rack and canter.



### Three-Gaited

The Three-Gaited American Saddlebred should be the epitome of beauty, brilliance, elegance, refinement and expression. Its gaits are collected and its energy directed toward animation and precision. It is shown with a roached mane and tail. Two-Year-Olds may be shown with a full mane and tail. Roached or full tails are permitted. Tails are traditionally set.

A double bridle consisting of snaffle and curb is preferred and must suit the horse. The saddle should be flat, English-type with leather or web girth. Informal dress for riders is required in morning and afternoon classes. Formal attire or dark colored habit (with collars and lapels of same color) and accessories are appropriate for evening. Gaudy colors should be avoided. To be shown at an animated walk, park trot and canter.



### Fine Harness

The Fine Harness horse should possess all of the elegance and refinement of the ideal American Saddlebred and its energy should be directed toward animation rather than speed. Entries shall be shown with a full mane and tail with a single ribbon braid secured at the top of the mane. Shown to an appropriate vehicle, preferably a small buggy with four wire wheels but without top. Light harness with blinkers, martingale, snaffle bit and over check are required. Horses generally wear a high tail crupper in these classes in order to set their tails. Qualifying gaits are animated walk, park trot, and “show your horse”.



## **Park**

Entries shall be shown with a full mane and tail with a single ribbon braid secured at the top of the mane. Often times, the horse's tails are set in these classes. In under saddle classes, a double bridle consisting of snaffle and curb is preferred and must suit the horse. The saddle should be flat, English-type with leather or web girth. In driving, horses are shown to an appropriate vehicle, preferable a small buggy with four wire wheels but without top. Light harness with martingale, blinkers, snaffle bit and over check are required.

Informal Saddle Seat attire for riders is required in morning and afternoon classes. Formal Saddle Seat attire or dark colored habit (with collars and lapels of same color) and accessories are appropriate for evening. Gaudy colors should be avoided. To be shown at an animated walk or flat walk, trot and canter. In Fine Harness Park classes the gaits will be park trot and animated walk. Horses to stand quietly.

## **Park Pleasure**

The American Saddlebred Park Pleasure Horse should be stylish with finish, quality and well mannered. The performance should be animated and graceful at all gaits. Entries shall be shown with a full mane and tail with a single ribbon braid secured at the top of the mane. Tails cannot be set in these classes.

This division is open to professionals and amateurs. Horses shown in any class of this division are ineligible to show in the American Saddlebred Performance Division (i.e. Three-Gaited, Five-Gaited, Fine Harness, and Park Horse) or the American Saddlebred Pleasure and Country Pleasure divisions at the same show except they may show in In-Hand or Model classes. Classes in the Park Pleasure division are open to mares and geldings only.

A full bridle and a flat English-type saddle are required. For the rider, informal attire with coat and hat or protective headgear is acceptable. Gaudy colors should be avoided.

To be judged on manners, performance, presence and quality and conformation. Park Pleasure horses are to be shown at a flat walk, trot and canter. Horses must stand quietly and back readily in the lineup.

## **English Show Pleasure**

The English Show Pleasure horse generally has less animation than the Three-Gaited, Five-Gaited and Fine Harness Performance horse but should be alert and responsive. High, natural, free-moving action is desirable. Laboring action due to excessive weight of shoes or length of foot is penalized. Professionals may not show these horses.

Entries shall be shown with a full mane and tail with a single ribbon braid secured at the top of the mane. Horses showing in the English Show Pleasure division may wear tail sets or bustles, but may not show with the tail gingered, tied or braced, and unset tails will not be penalized.

To be shown at a flat walk, trot and canter plus slow gait and rack in Five-Gaited Pleasure classes. In driving classes, the gaits are flat walk, trot and extended trot. Manners and suitability as a Pleasure mount are paramount. Transitions from one gait to another should be smooth and effortless. Light contact with the horse's mouth must be maintained. Special emphasis is placed on a true flat walk. Entries must stand quietly and back readily in the lineup. **TO BE PENALIZED:** Pulling, head tossing, laboring action, going sideways and tail-switching.



## **English Country Pleasure**

The English Country Pleasure horse may be less showy than the Show Pleasure horse but should still be typical of the breed. Easy, ground covering action is desired. As in all American Saddlebred sections, the best quality specimens of the breed should prevail.

English Country Pleasure horses must be plain shod or unshod, no pads are allowed. Quarter boots and bell boots are permitted only in Five-Gaited classes. Professionals may not show these horses.

Entries must be shown with full mane and tail. Tails must not be gingered or put in any device (i.e., tail set, bustle or brace) which alters their carriage while on the grounds. Braids and artificial manes are prohibited. Inconspicuously applied hair in the tail is permitted.

To be shown at a flat walk, trot, extended trot and canter; plus slow gait and rack in Five-Gaited classes. In driving classes, the gaits are a flat walk, trot and extended trot. Manners and suitability as a pleasure mount are paramount. Transitions from one gait to another should be smooth and effortless. Horses must be obedient with prompt transitions. Special emphasis is placed on a true, flat walk. Entries must be asked both ways of the ring to halt and stand quietly on the rail. Horses must stand quietly and back readily in the lineup. **TO BE PENALIZED:** Pulling, head tossing, laboring action, going sideways and tail-switching.

## **Hunter Country Pleasure**

The American Saddlebred Hunter Country Pleasure Horse must give the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride and display a pleasurable and relaxed attitude. It should be in a generally longer frame than that of other American Saddlebred Country Pleasure Horses. The neck should be carried lower and the head should be carried in a more relaxed manner with less bend at the poll. High headed horses and horses behind the vertical must be penalized. As in all American Saddlebred divisions, the best quality specimens of the breed should prevail.

Hunter Country Pleasure horses must be plain shod or unshod, no pads are allowed. Horses may show with a braided mane and tail. Horses may not be penalized for showing with a full, unbraided mane and tail. Tails must not be gingered or put in any device (i.e., tail set, bustle or brace) which alters their carriage while on the grounds. Artificial manes are prohibited. Inconspicuously applied hair in the tail is permitted.

Professionals may compete in the American Saddlebred division in Hunter Country Pleasure Prospect or Hunter Country Pleasure classes designated as open, provided two additional Hunter classes restricted to amateurs are offered at the same competition.

Hunter pleasure horses shall be shown with hunter-style equipment. Attire shall be traditional hunter-style jacket, breeches or hunter jodhpurs, dark hunting cap, derby or protective headgear and appropriate boots. Tall dress or tall field boots are preferred as traditional.

To be shown at a walk, trot, extended trot, canter and hand gallop both ways of the ring. For safety reasons the judge may limit the number of horses to hand gallop at one time. Entries must be asked both ways of the ring to halt and stand quietly on the rail.

Manners and suitability as a pleasure mount are paramount. Transitions from one gait to another should be smooth and effortless. Horses must be obedient with prompt transitions. Special emphasis is placed on a true, flat walk. Entries must be asked both ways of the ring to halt and stand quietly on the rail. Horses must stand quietly (Hunter horses are not to be stretched) and back readily in the line-up. **TO BE PENALIZED:** Pulling, head tossing, laboring action, going sideways and tail-switching.

## **Western**

In Western Equipment and Trail classes, a less elevated head carriage should not be penalized. The Western Equipment horse should have more substance, especially in the quarters, be close-coupled and have well-defined withers. As in all American Saddlebred divisions, the best quality specimens of the breed should prevail.

Western Country Pleasure horses must be plain shod or unshod and cannot wear any pads. Entries must be shown with full mane and tail. Tails must not be gingered or put in any device (i.e., tail set, bustle or brace) which alters their carriage while on the grounds. Braids and artificial manes are prohibited. Inconspicuously applied hair in the tail is permitted.

Professionals may compete in a Western Country Pleasure Prospect Class. In addition, professionals may compete in one designated Open Western Country Pleasure class provided two additional Western classes restricted to amateurs are offered at the same competition. Any such designated class must be scheduled prior to classes restricted to amateurs.

To be shown at a flat walk, jog-trot, and lope on a reasonably loose rein without undue restraint (ridden with one hand on reins). Horses should be shown in western tack and riders in western attire. Manners and suitability as a pleasure mount are paramount. Transitions from one gait to another should be smooth and effortless. Horses must be obedient with prompt transitions. Special emphasis is placed on a true, flat walk. Entries must be asked both ways of the ring to halt and stand quietly on the rail. Horses must stand quietly and back readily in the line-up. **TO BE PENALIZED:** Pulling, head tossing, laboring action, going sideways and tail-switching.



### **In-Hand and Model**

Entries to be led in the ring and shown in bridle or halter without quarter boots, blinkers, blindfolds or other appliances. **PROHIBITED:** Curb bits and tail sets on weanlings and yearlings.

Weanlings and yearlings must show with uncut, unset tails; tail sets and bustles worn on the competition grounds in preparation for the competition are expressly forbidden on weanlings. Bustles are permitted on yearlings.

Conformation and finish count 50% of the total score. All entries should be judged according to the standards for the ideal American Saddlebred type and conformation. Defects must be penalized. Way of going and natural action count 50% of the total score. All entries should be judged according to the standards for the walk and trot. Undesirable traits should be penalized.

### **Youth Showmanship In-Hand**

In Showmanship classes, the junior exhibitor is judged on his/her ability to present and show a horse in the ring to its greatest advantage in such a manner as to overcome any conformation faults. Judging is based on: 50%—Presentation of the horse and showmanship skills; 40%—Condition, grooming and fitting of the horse; 10%—Appearance and grooming of exhibitor.

Correct attire: Jodhpurs or neat, dark slacks, long-sleeved shirt, tie, boots and vest (of any material) or proper western or hunt dress; coats of any kind are prohibited; hats and gloves are optional. Clothes and person should be neat and clean.

Entries should enter the competition ring at the gait requested and lead in the direction indicated by the ringmaster until asked to line up the horse for inspection. A distance of at least ten feet (about two horse lengths) should be maintained between entries, both in circling the ring and in the line-up.

### **Carriage Pleasure Driving**

Carriage Pleasure Driving classes held in the American Saddlebred Division are to be conducted in accordance with the Carriage Pleasure Driving Division.

### **Golden**

Classes restricted to Golden American Saddlebred horses shall be shown and judged under the general rules of the American Saddlebred Division.

The ideal body coat color shall be that of a gold coin. Acceptable individuals may have color variations either lighter or darker. Purity of color is desirable. The mane and tail should be white and the presence of dark hairs will lower the color score. White markings permitted only on the face and legs.



## Parade

The Parade horse should exhibit all the good American Saddlebred conformation traits and be of sufficient size and substance to carry the rider's weight and Parade equipment easily. Entries may be of any color and are to be shown with a full mane and tail. Tail may be set.

Horses are to be shown with a western-type, decorative silver saddle and bridle. 75% performance, manners, quality and conformation; 25% appointments of horse and rider. Desired characteristics are action, collection and brilliance. Conformation must be considered in Championship Classes. To be shown and judged under the rules of the Parade Horse Division.

The Parade Horse is shown at an animated walk and a parade gait, maximum speed being 5 MPH. There should be enough difference between the animated walk and parade gait to distinguish two separate gaits. Horses may be asked to halt on the rail at any time during the performance part of the class to demonstrate willingness to stand. Excessive speed, bad manners, bad mouth, not standing quietly and irregular gaits are undesirable.



## Roadster

The Roadster should have good American Saddlebred conformation and be shown with a full mane and tail. Tails must not be gingered or put in a tail brace or any other device. Wagon Roadsters will have more scale and height than Bike Roadsters.

In Bike and Under Saddle classes, exhibitors shall wear stable colors, cap and jacket to match. In Wagon classes, exhibitors shall wear a business suit with a hat of choice. The exhibitor's number must be worn on the driver's back. Protective headgear may be worn without penalty.

Roadsters shall be shown to a bike (or wagon) of good appearance and stability. Harness with martingale, shall consist of bridles with square blinkers, snaffle bit and over check, breast collar with straight flaps, with traces made round with flat ends. Reins should be of tan leather and made round up to the hand pieces. Quarter boots are optional.

Roadsters must enter the ring clockwise at a jog-trot, then show at the road gait. On the reverse, to be shown at the jog-trot, road gait and then at speed. All three gaits must be considered. Horses shall be shown on the rail at all times except when passing and should go to the far end on every corner without side-reining; should be light mouthed, capable of being taken up at any time, willing to walk and stand quietly when being judged in the center of the ring. Judged on performance, speed, quality and manners.

## Ladies Side Saddle

The American Saddlebred Ladies Side Saddle horse should be typical of the American Saddlebred breed. Competitors enter the ring in a counterclockwise direction at the trot or jog-trot. The side saddle horse should give the distinct impression that it is a comfortable mount to ride. A good ground-covering walk, a comfortable trot or jog-trot, and easy flowing canter or lope is desirable. Transitions from one gait to another should be smooth and effortless. Riders may sit or post to the trot.

## Saddlebred-Type Pony

American Saddlebred-type ponies should resemble the American Saddlebred as closely as possible and have the graceful trot and easy canter typical of the breed. They need not be registered with the American

Saddlebred Registry. Classes shall follow the standards and specifications set forth in similar classes for American Saddlebred horses.

Ponies must be ridden by Junior Exhibitors; therefore, manners are paramount and the ponies should have agreeable attitudes. American Saddlebred-type Pony classes are restricted to mares and geldings 14.2 hands and under. The owner must possess a current USEF Measurement Card or a valid measurement form issued by the Federation.

Registered American Saddlebred ponies may cross enter into the American Saddlebred horse division only if there are no pony classes offered at that particular competition.

## **Types of Classes to Show In**

Now that you know all about the Saddlebred Specific Divisions, let's learn about the way these divisions can be split. When the divisions are divided into specific categories, we call these classes.

Divisions can be divided up based on many different criteria which include but are not limited to; the horse's age, the rider's age, the horse's sex, the rider's sex, the rider's riding ability, the horse's experience level, and height of the horse. One or more of these criteria can be used when forming a class at a horse show.

The division determines the gaits performed and type of Saddlebred that will be shown. The class title dictates how the class will be judged. The criteria for judging listed under each class type below is listed in order of importance. The criteria always considered are: performance, manners, presence, quality and conformation. The order of the criteria changes depending on the class title. For instance, a Ladies class has a judging criteria of manners, quality, presence, performance, and conformation. In this example, manners is the most important aspect of the class, followed by quality, presence, performance and confirmation. A horse that placed first in a class judged on performance, presence, quality, manners and conformation could justifiably be unplaced against the same horses if the class were judged on manners, presence, quality, performance and conformation.

Typical class titles and judging criteria include but are not limited to:

## **Open, Junior, Three Year Old, Two Year Old, Maiden, Novice, and Limit**

The open horse should be the ultimate representative of the breed. It should be as nearly perfect as possible; performing all gaits with animation, brilliance and extreme action at both ends. Performance is paramount in these classes. Classes are judged on performance, presence, quality, manners, and conformation.

## **Ladies**

A Lady's horse should be outstanding in refinement and elegance with suitability of horse to rider taken into consideration. Expression is important and quality is a prime consideration. The execution of gaits should be performed with brilliance on command. The horse should walk and stand quietly. Classes are judged on manners, quality, presence, performance, and conformation.

## **Junior Exhibitors or Juveniles (Riders 17 Years of Age and Under)**

The Junior Exhibitor's horse should be mannerly, willing, and expressive with balanced action. The execution of gaits should be performed with brilliance on command. The horse should walk and stand quietly. Classes are judged on manners, performance, presence, quality, and conformation.

## **Amateurs, Masters and Owners**

The Amateur's, Master's and Owner's horses can be a bit stronger and perform in a bolder manner. More action and animation are desired and less emphasis can be put on manners than in Ladies or Junior Exhibitor classes. Classes are judged on manners, performance, presence, quality, and conformation.

## **The Equitation Division**

Now that you are feeling pretty good about the classes where the horses are being evaluated, let's switch over to the classes where the riders are the primary focus. These classes are called equitation classes. In equitation, the rider is being judged and not the horse. The rider is evaluated on their posture in the saddle, among other things. The horse shown should be suitable for the rider, but should not be the primary focus. Any breed of horse is acceptable in the Equitation division.

The Equitation Division is divided into three sections: Hunter, Saddle and Western Seats. Judges officiating these sections shall be licensed accordingly. Separate classes can be offered for boys and girls; different age limits; or ribbons won. Medal classes are also included in this division.

Riders in these classes are typically junior exhibitors who have not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, however competitions are encouraged to offer Adult Equitation classes for amateur riders who have reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Equitation classes can require that riders perform a pattern (also called a work out or test) in addition to traditional rail work in a class. Patterns are typically performed one at a time and after the rail portion of the performance in the show ring. Specific tests are listed in the USEF rule book.



### **Appropriate Attire and Turnout in the Show Ring**

Not sure what you need to wear in a particular class? Does your suit fit properly? I'm here to tell you first impression is EVERYTHING! If you don't think your suit matters in a class, you are wrong! The total appearance of the horse and rider is paramount when showing. The horse should be clean, your tack should be clean and polished, the horse's mane and tail should be light, clean and flowing, and your suit should fit properly, should be cleaned and pressed, and your hat should be rolled.

For all Saddle Seat classes, day suits, or informal attire, is appropriate for all types of pleasure classes, and daytime classes for a horse in any division. A day suit has a coat, jodhpurs, a vest, shirt, tie and derby. Tie bars are a must to hold shirt collars down. Tie downs, or straps, on your jodhpurs should be tight so your pants don't ride up while you are riding your horse in the ring.

Tuxedos, or formal attire, is appropriate after 6 pm for three gaited, fine harness, park, or equitation classes ONLY. Formal attire consists of a tuxedo coat and jodhpurs, tux shirt, bow tie, cummerbund (or low cut vest), and a top hat. Equitation riders typically wear a white bow tie, cummerbund (or low cut vest), and white gloves.

Day coats, or different color coat from your jodhpurs, are acceptable in all classes EXCEPT equitation. One color suits are required in equitation classes. Loud or gaudy color suits in any class should be avoided.

Hunt Seat classes require traditional hunt attire, which include breeches, helmet, hunt coat, shirt and tall hunt style boots. Western classes require western attire complete with shirt, chaps, jodhpurs or colored jeans, tie or scarf, cowboy hat, and cowboy boots.

***Did you know?*** It is required that under saddle classes of 25 or more entries and harness classes of 16 or more entries be divided into separate sections.

### **Not Ready for a Horse Show?**

We have something for you too! It is called the Academy Division. The academy division is designed specifically for those riders who are in a lesson program at a barn and are just not ready to start showing a horse on the "big" circuit. Academy classes will give you the necessary experience to move on to a show horse in a short amount of time.

Each area has their own rules for the academy division. Our rules in Colorado are that riders in this division must be riding a horse designated as a "school" horse, a horse used REGULARLY in lesson program instruction. If riding in academy, riders may not enter any other division at that particular horse show. Acceptable attire is jodhpurs, breeches or

black pants, boots and dress shirt with a tie. Vests are acceptable as are sweaters in cool weather. Absolutely no derbies, cowboy hats, chaps, hunt or show coats. Safety helmets are the only acceptable headgear and are **REQUIRED** for all 17 & under classes and encouraged in all other classes. English classes may be saddle seat or hunt seat. All classes to be judged both ways of the ring at a walk, trot (or jog) and canter (or lope). Walk and trot (or jog) class to be judged at a walk and trot (or jog) only; a canter (or lope) will be penalized. Walk and trot participants must not have been judged in a class at a recognized or non-recognized show that required a canter (or lope).

Academy Equitation classes will be judged exclusively on the ability of the rider. Academy Pleasure classes will be judged on the horse and rider working together as a team, with a focus on horsemanship, showmanship and presenting the horse to the best of its ability while at the same time demonstrating a pleasurable ride. A complete set of rules is always available from the show secretary at the horse show.

If you do not wish to attend a larger show, you can always attend a schooling show. Schooling shows (also referred to as Winter Tournaments) allow new riders the opportunity to try showing. Sometimes, they also allow experienced riders the opportunity to show new mounts in a show environment - all in a relaxed atmosphere.



### **Want to Learn More About Showing?**

More detailed rules about Saddlebreds, Equitation and Horse Showing can be found on USEF's web site at [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org).

### **Do You Want to go to a Horse Show in Colorado?**

There are several horse shows in Colorado every year. There are all different styles of riding and all different breeds that are exhibited at horse shows throughout the year. For Saddlebreds there are five primary horse shows to participate in, as well as numerous schooling shows at local barns. Ask your trainer for more details on what show is right for you!

### **Colorado American Saddlebred Show Schedule**

#### **Colorado Classic Horse Show**

**Benefits Girl Scouts of Colorado**

Farra Baker, [farra@att.net](mailto:farra@att.net) or 303-355-7633

[www.showmetheribbons.com](http://www.showmetheribbons.com)

#### **UPHA Almost Summer Horse Show**

**Benefits Praying Hands Ranch**

Farra Baker, [farra@att.net](mailto:farra@att.net) or 303-355-7633

[www.showmetheribbons.com](http://www.showmetheribbons.com)

#### **Denver Queen City Horse Show**

#### **Colorado Saddlebred State Championships**

**Benefits The American Cancer Society**

Stacey Kipper-Perrelli, [Stacey0975@aol.com](mailto:Stacey0975@aol.com) or 303-619-8699

[www.coloradosaddlebred.com](http://www.coloradosaddlebred.com)

#### **Continental Divide Horse Show**

**Benefits Colorado Horse Care Food Bank**

At The Ranch in Loveland

Farra Baker. [farra@att.net](mailto:farra@att.net) or 303-355-7633

[www.showmetheribbons.com](http://www.showmetheribbons.com)

#### **Colorado Fall Charity Horse Show**

**Benefits Rocky Mountain Horse Rescue**

Anne Burton, [burtona@earthlink.net](mailto:burtona@earthlink.net) or 303-665-3307

[www.showmetheribbons.com](http://www.showmetheribbons.com)

### **Admission and Parking are FREE!!!**

All Shows (except Continental Divide) are located at the

**National Western Events Center**

1515 East 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80216