

# S.P.P.H.A.



## The Standardbred Pleasure & Performance Horse Association

of New South Wales Inc.

A.B.N. 11 407 812 669

### GUIDELINES FOR SHOWING STANDARDBREDS

#### including STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE STANDARDBRED

*SPPHA NSW Inc is not a show society and the SPPHA NSW Inc. Guidelines for Showing Standardbreds and Standard of Excellence are guidelines only.*

*Standardbred classes are run under the Rules and Regulations of the Show Committee/Society of the particular show. All decisions made are at the discretion of the judge on the day.*

*It is the responsibility of competitors to make themselves aware of the Rules and Regulations governing their participation in any activity.*

*It is suggested that competitors consult references to standard showing presentation and procedure including, but not limited to, EA National Show Horse Rules, the Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc "Showing Guidelines" and "Competition Rules" and the rules and regulations specific to a particular show.*

SPPHA NSW promotes the Standardbred as a successful and versatile horse that can excel in many disciplines outside their traditional role of harness racing. One of the ways we do this is to work with show societies to provide led and ridden classes at shows for Standardbreds. Shows are often the first avenue for new owners to present themselves and their horses in public.

Please remember that when presenting your horse in public, you are representing the Standardbred. It is your responsibility to ensure that the condition, manners, training and overall presentation of yourself and your horse are a credit to the breed as a whole. The Standardbred has faced and continues to face considerable prejudice from the general equestrian community. One of the aims of showing is to display Standardbred horses **at their best** in terms of education, paces, manners and conformation.

Before venturing into the show ring yourself, it is advisable to attend several shows as a spectator only. Watch hack and other breed classes - observe the condition of the horses, the clothing and saddlery, plaiting, the way the horses are ridden, and the type and quality of ridden work that is required in the show ring. You need to understand how to correctly ride your horse on the bit at walk, trot and canter and to ensure that he has a solid foundation so that he is well-mannered when out in the excitement of the show environment.

#### **The Show Horse** (as per "EA National Show Horse Rules" 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013)

A Show Horse is a quality, comfortable, well mannered and educated riding horse, being sound of wind and limb. The horse should be excellently presented and give the appearance of being a pleasure to handle, watch and ride. It is entirely up to the talent of the rider and those connected with the horse to prepare and show it in the way in which it looks and performs best.

The horse should work with a nicely rounded back, naturally elevated in front and head flexed at the poll. The contact should be light and even. Holding a horse in a shape with the use of brute strength or artificial gadgets is not truly getting a horse to accept and to come happily on to the bit.

A show horse must give the impression of covering the ground easily and fluently. The horse must be well balanced and work without any obvious effort by the rider or any untoward resistance from the horse. The whole picture should be pleasing to the eye.

He should go forward with controlled free forward movement, the correct bend and an even rhythm in all paces at a tempo chosen by his rider.

### **Manners**

A show horse should be well mannered and obedient, but never mechanical. Exuberance may be forgiven but not bad manners, lack of schooling, biting, rearing or bolting.

### **Presentation**

See References for guidelines to the presentation of horse and rider at a show.

Traditionally, Standardbreds may be shown with manes and tails unplaited or with a bridle-path plait. It is recommended that the Standardbred is presented to the highest possible standard. The competitor should check with the requirements of the Show Committee/Society running the show. Ultimately it is up to the decision of the judge on the day.

### **Saddlery**

Correctly fitted gear is the primary consideration. Please see the Rules and Regulations of the Show Committee/Society running the show for any requirements as well as any equipment that may be forbidden at shows or permitted during the warm up but not permitted in the show ring.

### **Dress**

*It is suggested that competitors refer to the EA National Show Horse Rules and Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc for advice on appropriate dress.*

Jackets and waistcoats	Double, or single vent, straight cut, which fits impeccably, with optional vest/waistcoat in toning colour.
Hats and helmets	Approved safety helmets to be worn. Helmets and hunt caps should be covered by plain velvet in a dark colour which tones with the jacket, usually black, brown, navy or green. This is most important if the coat collar is also made of velvet.
Shirts and ties	A shirt with a proper collar in a tone which matches the jacket should be worn together with a plain or discreetly patterned matching tie. Alternatively a collarless shirt (known as 'ratcatcher') and cotton stock may be worn.
Jodhpurs	Jodhpurs should be fawn, beige, lemon or banana.
Boots	The rider's boots should be leather and either brown or black depending upon the colour scheme chosen.
Gloves	Must be worn. The colour of these should match the outfit.
Whips/canes	Check requirements with the Show Committee/Society.
Jewellery, hair, makeup	Hair should be neat and tidy, accessories should not be obtrusive, makeup should be tasteful.

### **Ridden Classes**

SPPHA NSW has a program that it suggests to Show Committees/Societies. However, it is up to the Show Committee/Society and the judge on the day as to the exact requirements of each class.

It is recommended that the ridden Standardbred be judged as any hack presenting for a ridden class. Horses should be judged on their gaits, manners and athletic ability. Ideally, transitions should be clean with no evidence of pacing, but this may be dependent on the stage of training (refer to "Standard of Excellence for Standardbreds" for suggestions). All horses should carry themselves in a nice outline, with a degree of rounding, not above or below the bit and not overbent, through all gaits. Horses should go forward with controlled free forward movement, the correct bend and an even rhythm in all paces at a tempo chosen by their rider.

See "Standard of Excellence for the Standardbred" for suggestions of the type of work that might be appropriate at each level. *Note that individual Judges will have their own requirements for the workout.* It is expected that all levels will be required to show calm and controlled gaits at walk, trot and canter. You may be required to demonstrate a number of movements, for example 20m circles, figures of eight, simple changes and lengthened strides. The judge may specify the workout, or may allow you to make up your own.

Where other types of classes not mentioned in these guidelines are included in the show program (e.g. "Intermediate" or "Elementary" Ridden), the requirements should be defined by the Show Rules and Regulations. Where Show Rules and Regulations do not define requirements, the following may provide some guidance. It is the responsibility of the competitor to confirm their eligibility for any class. The workouts required for all classes are at the discretion of the judge on the day.

### Beginner

The intention of this class is to introduce the Standardbred to ridden classes in a show environment. "Beginner" refers primarily to the level of experience of the horse. It is suggested that once a Beginner Ridden Standardbred has won 3 Beginner classes against competition they can no longer compete in Beginner classes. The usual convention is that where the horse is the only entrant in a class, winning the class does not count towards their "eligibility".

It is suggested that Beginner Ridden Standardbreds should not enter Novice or Open Ridden Standardbred classes and should not be eligible for Champion. However, it is at the discretion of the judge whether the winner of the Beginner Ridden Standardbred class is eligible to compete in other classes and for Champion Ridden Standardbred.

### Novice

The definition of "Novice Ridden" varies between shows. The definition of "Novice" given by a Show Committee/Society at the particular show will apply to the Novice Ridden Standardbred class at the show. Where no definition of "Novice Ridden" is given, the following may provide guidance.

The intention of this class is to provide a more advanced level than Beginner, but not as advanced as Open. "Novice" refers primarily to the level of experience of the horse.

It is suggested that a Novice Ridden Standardbred may be defined as a horse that has won 3 Beginner Ridden Standardbred classes against competition and no more than 3 Novice Ridden Standardbred classes against competition. Once a Novice has won 3 Novice classes they should no longer compete in Novice. However, where the horse is the only entrant in a Novice class, the convention is usually that winning the class does not count towards their eligibility.

It is suggested that Novice Ridden Standardbreds may also enter Open Ridden Standardbred classes; however, if they win Open Ridden Standardbred it should be considered that they have attained Open Ridden Standardbred status and should no longer compete in Novice Ridden Standardbred classes.

A Novice Ridden Standardbred is eligible for Champion Ridden Standardbred classes. A Novice Ridden Standardbred that is awarded Champion or Reserve Champion should be considered to have attained Open Ridden Standardbred status and should not compete in Novice Ridden Standardbred classes.

### Open

The intention of this class is to provide for the most advanced level of ridden class.

An Open Ridden Standardbred may be defined as a horse that has won 3 Novice Ridden Standardbred classes against competition or has been awarded a Champion or Reserve Champion Ridden Standardbred after winning a Novice Ridden Standardbred class. Once a horse has attained Open Ridden Standardbred status they should no longer compete in Beginner or Novice classes. They are eligible for Champion Ridden Standardbred classes.

**NOTE:** there is no absolute requirement for a horse to compete in Beginner Ridden Standardbred at their first show. The horse can compete at their first show in either Novice or Open Ridden Standardbred. However, the horse should not compete at a lower level at subsequent shows.

### **Champion and Reserve Champion - Protocol**

Canter should be expected in the Champion Ridden Standardbred class.

Where a Champion and Reserve Champion are awarded (whether Led or Ridden), the 1st prize winners of each eligible class present to the judge for the Champion Award. If your horse placed second to the horse that is awarded Champion, you can also then enter the ring to compete with the other horses for Reserve Champion (this is referred to as "challenge for Reserve").

### **Competitors' Protocol**

- It is up to the competitor to make sure they are eligible for the class they are entering. Mistakes do happen: admit to them before the class finishes so that placings can be rectified immediately.
- Treat officials, Judges, other competitors and spectators as you would like to be treated yourself. Bad language and unsportsmanlike behaviour is inappropriate.
- It is good manners and safer to enter, leave and move between rings at a walk.
- If stewards have asked you to line up in a certain area, do so. If your horse is unsettled, walking in a small circle behind the line is acceptable.
- It is protocol to take the left rein when entering the ring, unless asked to take the right rein.
- The Judge will usually allow for a period to warm up. Being asked to walk will signify that judging will commence.
- Ring layouts usually involve some type of markers or, in some instances, human markers, so care should be taken. Use your common-sense - don't make circles too small so as to crowd the Judge or make them too large so as to interfere with other rings.
- It is usual to wait for command of walk, trot, canter and change of rein - don't be a trend setter for the transitions.
- If your horse is misbehaving so badly that it is a danger or unsettling to other horses, it is polite to retire from the ring.
- If your horse is badly behaved in the workout and you feel it is best to retire, report back to the Judge and say so, or tip your hat and leave the ring.
- If you have a clash of events, advise the steward, who can confer with the judge and appropriate arrangements may be made to accommodate the clash. Some Show Regulations may not allow competitors to hold up rings for any reason.  
If permitted to do so, have your next mount ready at the side of the ring. It is up to you to provide a strapper to hold the horse in the designated area or Ring, not the steward's job to do so.
- In usual circumstances, the Judge selects competitors whilst they are cantering, so consider other competitors and officials as you are called in. Always come back to walk and if you are the first one called in, go to the position directed by the steward. If there is no direction from the steward, go to a position which is safe and allows other competitors to line up on your left hand side.
- For minor placings it is etiquette to line up in the order in which you are called in. If you are unsure of your positions, ask the steward. If the Judge calls everyone in, then line up to the left of the person taking the first position.

- While lined up, try and keep your horse standing still within the allocated space (do not allow your horse to kick, bite or lean on other competitors). As you are lining up, warn competitors next to you if your horse needs more space. It is extremely unsportsmanlike to pass remarks out loud about other competitors or yourself whilst judging is in progress.
- Accept your placing in good light. Always congratulate other competitors. Thank the Judge as the ribbon is being placed on your horse. A few words may be exchanged but not a long conversation as time is important to officials running a tight schedule.
- If you wish to know why you were placed in that position or not placed at all, you must be courteous to the Judge. Accept the Judge's reasons without any confrontation or giving your opinion. Thank the Judge, even though you may strongly disagree with the explanation.
- Under no circumstances must you threaten or verbally abuse the Judge in or out of the ring. The Judge's decision is final. The same goes for the stewards and officials. Be polite and diplomatic.
- If you are eligible to compete in an event such as a Champion, but do not wish or are not able to participate, it is polite to advise the steward beforehand. If you are a second placegetter, be prepared and ready to compete, if eligible, for Reserve Champion.
- It is etiquette for placegetters to follow the winner when leaving the ring, unless you are holding up another ring.
- It is etiquette for competitors to tip/nod their heads in acknowledgement when the Judge is speaking or awarding ribbons.
- If you wish to make officials aware of a competitor's ineligibility to compete in a class or for an award, you should go through the appropriate channels in lodging a protest. Refer to the Rules of the Show, approach the Ringmaster about your intentions and have any corroboration for your protest on hand.

## REFERENCES

Show Horse Rules and Guidelines July 2013. Equestrian Australia. [www.equestrian.org.au](http://www.equestrian.org.au)

Guide to Showing. June 2013. The Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc.

[www.showhorsecouncilaust.com.au](http://www.showhorsecouncilaust.com.au)

Competition Rules. June 2013. The Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Standardbreds are registered with the appropriate harness racing body or Standardbred Pleasure and Performance Horse Association (any state). They are identifiable by the unique freezebrand on the offside upper neck\*. The breed ranges in height from 14hh to 17+hh and body type can vary widely, from stocky to refined. Overall, a Standardbred should present the picture of a well-conformed, athletic horse that is well-suited to its versatility as a harness-racing horse and general pleasure riding horse.

*\* Standardbreds are now being bred for non-racing purposes and may not be branded as described above. Such horses are expected to have papers available as proof of identity and 100% Standardbred bloodlines, to be shown on request by the Show Committee/Society or designee. It is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that all required paperwork, whether the horse is neck branded or not, is available on request.*

#### LED

The Standardbred should be of good athletic type with a robust build. They should have strong, straight legs, a long sloping shoulder, a croup that may be as high as the wither, and broad, sloping hindquarters. The Standardbred should stand over a good amount of ground, and therefore tend to have some extra length to the back. They should also have a long underline, strong neck and a wide brow. The Standardbred should have a noble, honest head with a kind eye. There should be no height or colour bias when judging the Standardbred conformation.

The trot should be well-balanced, with strong movement from the shoulder required for pulling a racing sulky, and no visible evidence of forging or knee-knocking, as these are detrimental to the horse at racing speed. A strong, even length of stride with no wasted action, in front and behind, no paddle or extravagant knee lift, is preferred.

In judging the led Standardbred it is not uncommon to see horses pacing. Ideally, all horses should trot in their led classes, but this may not be possible for horses that are currently racing or recently retired and, therefore, horses should not be penalised for pacing. A pace should be judged with the same criteria as a trot – with a strong, even length of stride, a rhythmic action without rushing, and cleanness of gait. The pacing or square-gait trotting (i.e. race-trotting) Standardbred may demonstrate wide action behind.

Some horses may be in race condition and therefore should have a sleeker but well-muscled body shape. Do not hesitate to ask if the horse is currently in race training.

Bumps, injuries and scars may also be evident with horses that have raced and should not be discriminated against. As long as it is not a conformation or breeding fault, it should not go against them.

## **RIDDEN**

*The following is presented as a guideline only. The workout required at any show is at the discretion of the judge on the day.*

The ridden Standardbred should be judged as any hack presenting for a ridden class. Horses should be judged on their gaits, manners and athletic ability. Ideally, transitions should be clean with no evidence of pacing, but this may be dependent on the stage of training (refer to recommendations for specific levels below). All horses should carry themselves in a nice outline, with a degree of rounding, not above or below the bit and not overbent, through all gaits, and must be in the control of and obedient to the rider.

Where other types of classes not mentioned in these guidelines are included in the show program (e.g. "Intermediate" or "Elementary" Ridden), the requirements will be as defined by the Show Rules and Regulations. Where Show Rules and Regulations do not define requirements, the following may provide some guidance. It is the responsibility of the competitor to confirm their eligibility for any class. The workouts required for all classes are at the discretion of the judge on the day.

**Beginner:** The intention of this class is to introduce the Standardbred to ridden classes in a show environment. It is recommended that horses in Beginner Ridden classes walk and trot only and do not canter. A horse that paces in a beginner class should not be penalised for pacing during its workout.

**Novice:** The definition of Novice will depend on the definition as per the Show Committee/Society Rules and Regulations. The intention of this class is to provide a more advanced level than Beginner, but not as advanced as Open. Horses in Novice Ridden classes should be able to perform basic manoeuvres in walk, trot and canter, with adequate time for progressive transitions. Allowances can be made for a few pace strides occurring in the workout. The Novice is not expected to be fully educated, but should be able to complete a basic workout in a reasonable manner.

**Open:** Horses in Open Ridden classes are expected to demonstrate their ability at walk, trot and canter and are expected not to pace. More advanced movements, for example, serpentines, simple changes, lengthened strides, rein-back, may be requested as part of the workout.

**Champion:** Canter is expected in the workout for Champion.

## **PRESENTATION**

The Standardbred should be presented in a neat and tidy, workman-like manner. Horses should be in good condition, clean, well-groomed, with trimmed bridle-path, face and ears, and fetlocks/legs. Hooves should be blacked (a clear polish may be used on white hooves) and any white markings spotless.

Traditionally, it is acceptable for Standardbreds to be shown with manes and tails unplaited or with a bridle-path plait. Fully plaited mane and the tail plaited, pulled or shaved is also acceptable.

Handler/Rider Attire – at all times, clothing should be neat, tidy and appropriate for handling horses. For led Standardbred classes, smart casual attire is acceptable, including hat, vest or jacket, gloves and whip. For both led and ridden classes, standard rider attire is acceptable (see SPPHA Guidelines for Showing Standardbreds for recommendations).