



Show Ring Etiquette

We are fortunate to have over 50 shows supporting the Standardbred classes throughout NSW each year.

It is important all SPPHA NSW members keep in mind the show ring etiquette whilst competing and supporting the breed.

A few show ring etiquette points from our guidelines for showing:

- 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 to crowd the Judge or make them too large 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

Guide to Showing. June 2013.

The Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc. www.showhorsecouncilaust.com.au

Competition Rules. June 2013.