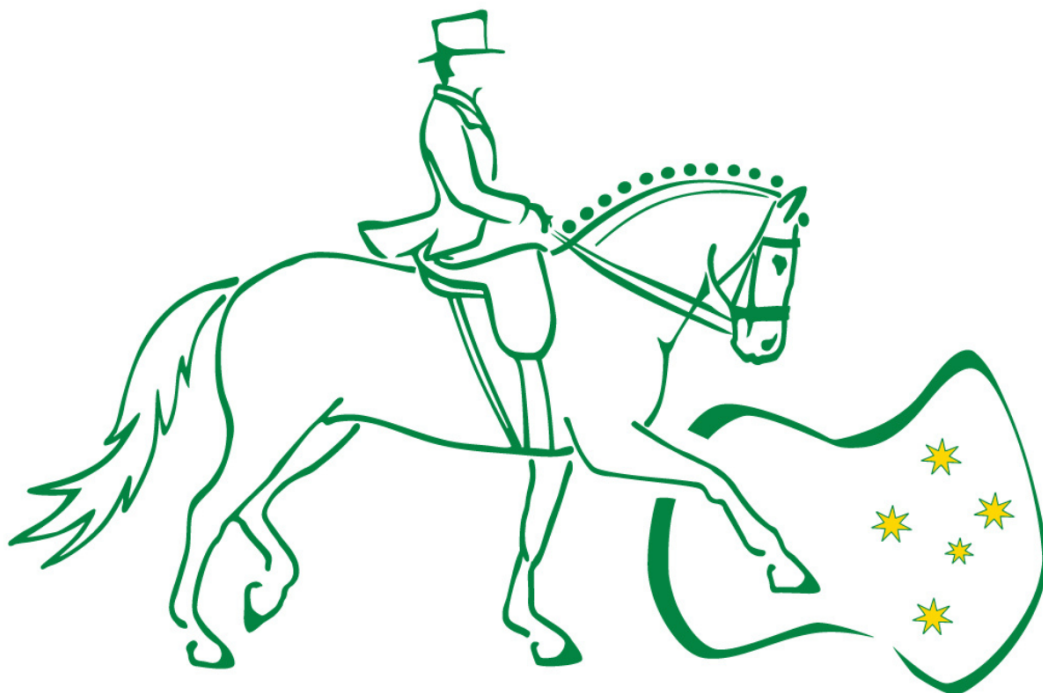

SIDE SADDLE AUSTRALIA

Showing & Judging Guidelines



SIDE SADDLE 

Australia

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1. PREFACE

These are the Showing Guidelines of Side Saddle Australia

The aim in producing these guidelines are to:

- Provide a general information resource for judges, competitors and anyone interested in the sport of side saddle and the showing of side saddle horses and ponies.
- Endeavour to bring consistency and uniformity in standards of events in the competition ring and in the judging of side saddle horses and riders.
- It is important to note that at shows or events other than Side Saddle Australia shows or events e.g. royal shows, the rules which apply may not agree with these guidelines. Competitors therefore should always read and abide by the rules contained in that particular event schedule.

2. JUDGING SIMPLIFIED

The mount should be judged on the following principles:

Quality and Presence: a well conformed horse, clean and well presented with eye catching appeal.

True and correct paces: the paces are even and regular. Constant irregular or hurried strides should be penalised. However, occasionally a few irregular steps may be noticed - this can be caused by tension or a distraction and may disappear when the horse settles.

Forward and straight: going forward on the one track ie. the hind legs following in the steps of the forefeet on all straight lines and curves.

Manners: a side saddle horse should be well mannered and obedient but never mechanical and boring. Minor errors such as a wrong lead immediately corrected, breaking whilst lengthening stride at trot, exuberance corrected, restlessness at the halt may be forgiven. Bad manners such as kicking, rearing or bolting must be penalised.

Outline: the horse goes forward in a rounded frame, not above or behind the bit or on the forehead.

Transitions: all transitions either upward or downward must be executed smoothly and progressively without resistance.

3. THE SHOW HORSE

Mounts generally compete in line with the following height divisions:

PONIES Not exceeding 14hh.

GALLOWAYS Over 14hh and not exceeding 15hh.

HORSES (Hacks) Over 15hh.

HACK/OPEN/SADDLE HORSE

The show hack should be a quality riding type of good conformation, soundness, movement and temperament. It need not be of any particular breed or colour, but should display the ideal characteristics of a good riding horse. In appearance and movement the show horse should be pleasing to the eye, with presence, elegance, balance and correctness. The show horse should show free, even, have ground covering action, display good manners and be willing to obey the rider with minimum effort. They should be well conformed, as good conformation goes together with soundness and movement. The more correct the conformation the easier it should be for the horse to attain good carriage, true movement, remain sound and produce a comfortable ride. In a hack class the type should be refined and very elegant.

SHOW HUNTER

Of middle weight and higher, powerfully built and combining quality with substance. The show hunter should have good substantial bone, a strong well-muscled back, the hindquarters lengthy, strong, well muscled and rounded; a deep girth and be well ribbed. The head must be in proportion to the body. It need not be as "refined" but should still be attractive, not common, with a kind, bold eye, with good air passages and well set onto the neck, which should have a good length of rein. The show hunter is not asked to jump. It should be sound in wind and limb; display the action and movement that would be expected of a horse capable of jumping in the field if necessary; some knee action is expected and an honourable lump can be overlooked. Show hunter competition continues to evolve in Australia and unfortunately, some think that a "fat" horse is a show hunter. That is not the case as quality, type manners and paces are paramount.

4. THE WORKOUT

A Judge should fully understand the degree of difficulty involved when planning and setting a workout. The workout should be set to suit the class he/she is judging.

Circle work and individual workout should ALWAYS be planned so that the first canter strikes off on the RIGHT rein. Championship workouts where a greater degree of horse or rider difficulty is required and should be displayed can have the canter strike off on either rein first, at the judges discretion based on the championship class being judged.

NOVICE OR NEWCOMER

Novice classes have a performance criteria while newcomer classes are for horses in their first calendar year or season (as applicable) of competition. Horses in either classes should only be asked to perform basic manoeuvres at walk, trot and optional canter with adequate time for progressive transitions. The purpose of these classes is to introduce the horse to competition. A novice or newcomer is not expected to be fully educated but should be of good type, athletic in movement and complete a basic workout in a reasonable manner. It is expected that a novice and definitely a newcomer, be shown in a snaffle bit.

HACK/OPEN/SADDLE HORSE

An open class should have a workout which allows the judge to consider the horse's paces, manners and athletic ability. The workout should be designed to show the judge how the horse can perform. A judge would be wise to set a flowing workout without any abrupt transitions taking in to account what rein the first canter of the workout will be performed on. The workout may include circles, serpentines, lengthening of stride at trot and walk through or trot through changes. Because for the degree of difficulty, lengthening of trot on a straight line is more suitable. Vary workouts - figure of eight workouts are very acceptable for hack classes but so are triangles and other manoeuvres such as two or three loop serpentines and lengthening diagonally at trot. At the conclusion of the workout, often a halt 20m away and walk back on a long rein followed by another halt is an interesting alternative. Where disobedience of a horse becomes dangerous behaviour safety issues come into play and this behaviour should be severely penalised. Try not to penalise a quality horse though for minor errors such as a wrong lead corrected, jog in walk, breaking in trot for a few strides etc. These should be taken into account but, all considered, the best horse on the day should trump.

SHOW HUNTER

Show hunters compete on the flat only and do not need to prove they can jump. The workout should be similar to that expected in an open class, but be kept simple and free flowing. It should include a hand gallop/in-hand canter. The horse must cover the ground in all paces, with the hand gallop/canter being well balanced and moving from the shoulders, with the hind legs under. The horse to come through downward transitions to the halt if requested, being calm and obedient and then standing still with no fidgeting. Flying changes and extended trot are not expected in a show hunter workout. Manners are extremely important and all misdemeanours should be penalised.

CHAMPIONSHIP WORKOUTS

Championship workouts need to be devised with the judge bearing in mind that horses of varying ages and experience will be contesting the championship. The workout should be set to provide sufficient opportunity for each exhibitor to present their mount to the best of their horse's ability. The format is usually for the winners of each class to be briefly assessed against each other in the ring prior to the individual workouts. The workout is but one factor that the judge will take into consideration in reaching their choice for champion. The reserve shall be decided from the second placegetter/s to the champion and the remaining class winners.

5. PRESENTATION

The art of showing is to produce and present the horse in the most visually attractive way possible. By highlighting the best features of the horse and disguising, by natural means, the horse's less appealing features, an illusion of better conformation or beauty can be created. The first impression of the horse on entering the ring is the important. A good coated, well conditioned horse presented immaculately will always catch the eye. A glossy, fine, healthy coat is the result of much effort in the feeding, exercising and grooming of the horse, while attention paid to rugging and stabling pays off in the overall look of well being in the horse.

Examples: the use of quarter marks, checker board or other patterns to enhance the hind quarter, leaving a narrow bridle path with the use of small plaits to create the impression of longer length of rein. The tail either plaited or pulled, then trimmed to a suitable length will improve a coarser outline and balance the hind quarter; false tails are widely used to enhance a horse's appearance.

In **Turnout Classes**, presentation to expected guidelines is taken into consideration. Simple is best in these classes with the emphasis being on more traditional style. See document on gear guidelines for what is expected in a turnout class.

Smartest On Parade classes usually allow the competitor to deviate from tradition and display more individuality and colour in their overall presentation. In presentation, the overall impression is paramount. Therefore the appearance of the rider should complement that of the horse by presenting a co-ordinated picture which will capture the Judge's eye.

6. RIDER CLASSES

When judging a riding class a judge should consider the ability of the rider to maintain a correct, well balanced, soft seat with the rider being in harmony with the horse. The rider should demonstrate the ability to apply the aids of the leg, hand, thigh and whip/cane accurately and effectively.

THE SEAT

The seat of the rider is very important. If the rider is not balanced and relaxed on the horse's back, the horse cannot be influenced correctly.

THE HEAD

The head of the rider should be carried well above the shoulders so that the weight flows straight down through the spine. Any movement of the head, either forward, backwards or sideways would effect the balance of both horse and rider.

THE SHOULDERS

The shoulders of the rider should be carried square and of even height left to right. To maintain this while riding side saddle, the opposite shoulder to that of the legs should be positioned slightly back (i.e. the right shoulder if riding near side).

THE UPPER BODY

The upper body of the rider should be carried tall and erect with the weight going straight down the spine. The rider should sit tall without becoming stiff and should maintain the suppleness of the lower back with her seat bone weight slightly more through the dominant seat bone for the direction in which she is riding (i.e. right seat bone if riding near side). The rider should not allow his/her body to tilt forward in front to the vertical as the weight would be removed from the dominant seat bone. Nor should the body lean back behind the vertical as this would place too much weight on the horse's back. The rider should maintain a vertical position and when viewed from behind should look no different to that of someone riding astride.

THE HANDS

The hands of the rider should be placed either side of the knee present on top of the saddle. Some mounts do preference a slightly higher than knee hand or slightly lower and wider. These are acceptable hand positions also. The thumbs should be held almost uppermost. The upper arm and elbow should be relaxed at the rider's side, with the upper arm, elbow and forearm almost forming a right angle. The hands should remain steady but supple and not rigid, always following the movements of the horse.

THE LEG & OPPOSING CUEING AID

The leg of the foot that resides in the stirrup should be in contact with the horse with the knee close against the saddle and the thigh relaxed under the leaping head/pommel, separated by a flat hands width. The rider should NOT be jammed up against the leaping head/pommel. The lower leg should maintain a light contact without gripping and should be allowed to do the job of feeling, communicating and creating impulsion. The ball of the foot or the toe residing in the stirrup should rest in the stirrup iron with the foot almost parallel to the ground. The heel is permitted to be slightly down but not forced downward. The uppermost leg and thigh should create a 90 degree angle with the upper body. The thigh should run parallel to the horses spine with the knee crossing over the spine just slightly at the wither to make contact with the fixed head/pommel. The thigh should maintain a close contact with the seat of the saddle with the thigh pressing against the fixed head/pommel and the calf against the horses shoulder. The calf should be making contact with the saddle and ensuring not to slide up the horses neck. The toe of that uppermost leg should be in a neutral to downwards position, not pointing upwards to the sky. The opposing cueing aid of the cane or whip if used should not be used to hit, beat or reprimand the horse. It is a direct replacement of the leg and should act as such, gently resting against the horses side with pressure applied and removed as the opposing leg aid is given.

COMMON FAULTS

- Collapsed left hip/seat bone.
- Drawing up of the leg in the stirrup to brace against the leaping head/lower pommel.
- Calf and foot of the uppermost (usually right) leg creeping up the horses neck.
- Upper body too rigid or slumped.
- Uneven shoulder height.
- Twisted upper body, especially on the left rein.
- Rider looking down.
- Rider round shouldered/hunching
- Leaning forward or back (in front or behind the vertical).
- Rider not in rhythm with the horse's movement.
- Hands too flat.