



## **World Conformation Horse Association**

### **Judge's Qualifications and Guidelines**

A **World Conformation Horse Association (WCHA)** approved Judge is entrusted with maintaining the integrity of the association. The privilege of the designation bears the responsibility of maintaining continuity among peers, keeping a positive perception of the conformation horse, and most importantly a WCHA approved Judge must uphold the Conformation Standard set forth by the WCHA and objectively place the horses according to the Standard when judging competitive events. A WCHA Judge must also be of good character, held accountable of his/her actions and have unquestionable integrity.

#### **Membership**

- Be a member in good standing of WCHA
- Any Judge without a current membership in good standing for longer than 30 days will have their approved status revoked.

#### **Application, Testing, Approval and Re-Testing**

- Each Judge Applicant must have four (4) total references: two or more of the four references must be submitted by either Founding Members **or** Current Directors of the WCHA, the remaining references can come from WCHA members in Good Standing.
- Judges' applications must have every question answered as well as signing of the Judges Code of Ethics, signifying compliance.
- All Judges applications will be reviewed by the WCHA Judge's Committee and a recommendation for approval or disapproval made to the Executive Committee for final review and approval.
- Judges testing will consist of a written test, an interview, and live judging.
- Final Judge's qualification and approval will be a compilation of the application process, due diligence on "member in good standing" and "compliance with the Judges Code of Ethics" as well as the 3 phase testing results.

- The Judge's Committee will make a final recommendation of qualification and approval to the Executive Committee, who will maintain the sole discretion to grant final approval and qualification as a WCHA Judge of any applicant.
  - An applicant who is not a "member in good standing" or found to have violated the "Code of Ethics" for any period of time during the application and qualification process shall automatically be disqualified from further consideration.
- Judges re-testing or a "refresher" will take place every 2 to 4 years as determined by the Judge's Committee in conjunction with the Executive Director. Failure to participate in a required re-testing or refresher seminar is grounds for removal from WCHA approved judge's list and all affiliates will be notified of removal.

## **Guidelines**

A Judge's Hearing Sub-Committee (JHC) shall be formed in the event of a complaint that will consist of 5 members in total, which will include the Chair of the WCHA Judge's Committee and 4 members of the WCHA Judge's committee. All members of the JHC will be chosen on a case-by-case basis by the Chair of the Judges Committee and the Executive Director of the WCHA, with approval by the Executive Committee. The Executive Director and Chairman of the Judges Committee will gather all pertinent facts and information from the parties involved for the Judges Hearing Committee's review in each case.

- A Judge may not judge his or her parents, children, spouse, and spouse's parents, relatives of either the Judge or his or her spouse. A Judge may not judge anyone that lives in the Judge's household or an employee or employer. If a Judge cannot exercise an objective opinion, free from bias, prejudice or outside influence because of any above or below mentioned relationships, then in the case of multiple Judges he/she must remove themselves from the event/class in which the individual(s) presenting the conflict is exhibiting. Should there only be one Judge then the individual presenting the conflict shall not be allowed to exhibit in the competition.
- A horse may not be shown under a Judge if that Judge has received remuneration for, including, commission payments and reimbursement for related expenses, or has been an owner, exhibitor, trainer or agent of that horse within the previous three months.
  - Specific examples of disqualification to include, but not limited to: remuneration for riding; training; exhibiting; schooling, including instructing exhibitor on subject horse; or driving subject horse, etc.
  - Remuneration for ancillary services is not subject to disqualification. Specific examples to include, but not limited to: hauling fees; breeding fees and service charges; veterinary services; insurance fees; Sale Company commissions and related fees paid to the Sale Company, etc.
  - All questions regarding qualification or disqualification should be addressed to the Chairman of the Judge's Committee who will research in consultation with the WCHA Executive Director, other members of the Committee, Event Coordinator or Executive Committee as appropriate and provide guidance. All

questions should be raised well in advance of the competition event to be judged.

- Final interpretation and determination of qualification or disqualification will be up to the sole discretion of the WCHA Executive Committee.
- Should a conflict not be identified in advance of the competition, the Judge should notify the show representative or show management of the conflict at the first opportunity and in all cases prior to the class being placed. The exhibitor will be counted as an entry; however, the horse shall not be placed in the class or in the case of multiple Judges not be placed under that Judge. The Judge must report the conflict on his/her card. Show management will notify the Chairman of the Judges Committee and/or the WCHA Executive Director of any non-compliance of reporting a conflict. All parties involved including, but not limited to, the owner; exhibitor; and Judge will be held accountable in the event of non-compliance and subject to appropriate actions, as determined by the Executive Committee after review and recommendations are made to them from the JHC. These actions will be based on the severity of the infraction, including any disciplinary action.
- A Judge shall not exhibit at any WCHA event in which he or she is the officiating Judge or member of the officiating judges' panel, however,
  - At the approval of the Chairman of the Judge's Committee or the WCHA Executive Director, a Judge shall be permitted to substitute for the unplanned absence of another scheduled Judge in order to permit the show management to continue with the event.
- Judges shall not: go to stalling areas, nor visit with owners, trainers, exhibitors or owners' representatives, nor inspect or discuss any horse entered in the show before judging (including 48 hours prior to the contest). Nor should a judge visit stalling area nor visit with trainers or participants immediately following the event unless accompanied by show official, however;
  - In the event that a substitute judge was used for an unplanned absence of another scheduled judge, and the substitute judge had horses already entered in the show, he/she would be permitted to continue competition after his duties as substitute judge was complete. Show Management must contact, at their earliest convenience, the Executive Director of WCHA and/or the Chairman of the Judge's Committee, who will then contact the President of the Executive Committee at WCHA as to the change and reasons for the change.
- Judges shall not; visit, socialize or fraternize with any exhibitor of the show within 48 hours prior to the show.
- Judges must always act in the best interest of the WCHA and the welfare of the horse. To
- judge honestly, fairly and impartially each horse exhibited.
- Judges must adhere to the WCHA Judges Code of Ethics, to be courteous and judge with a positive attitude. To adhere to the professional standards of the WCHA and at all times act in a professional manner.

- In the event a Judge cannot fulfill his contractual agreement to judge an event he must contact show management as soon as possible to give show management ample time to hire a suitable replacement. The Judge must also notify the WCHA Judge's Committee Chairman and/or the WCHA Executive Director in writing as soon as possible or within a minimum of 10 days and give circumstances that prevented him/her from judging the show.

## **Judging Procedures**

- The first inspection of the horse will be movement. The horse will start at a marker and begin at the walk. One half the distance to the Judge, the Exhibitor will begin to trot their horse, trotting to and past the Judge to the marker and then continue to trot while making a left turn at the marker. The horse shall continue past the marker a sufficient distance for the judge to determine soundness. The exhibitor will be given 3 attempts to complete the described pattern before being disqualified. After trotting to one or all Judges, the Exhibitor will line up in a head to tail line. Any horse that is lame or has uncharacteristic movement shall be excused immediately; however, the horse will be counted as an entry.
- Second, the Judge will walk around each horse entirely, looking at both sides, front view and hind view.
  - Judges must agree to judge according to the Judging Conformation Handbook.
  - The Judge, or qualified show personnel, will inspect every stallion for the heritable traits of cryptorchidism and parrot mouth. Any stallion that exhibits either condition will be disqualified. A Judge, or qualified show representative, will inspect every mare for the heritable trait of parrot mouth; any mare that exhibits a parrot mouth will be disqualified.
  - The Judge will individually evaluate each horse in accordance with the conformation standard set forth by the WCHA.
  - The Judge may be asked to give oral reasons in a least one class at a WCHA sanctioned event justifying the placings of the class. The decision as to which class and how many classes the Judge will give oral reasons on will be at the discretion of the show management and the WCHA Judge's Committee.

## **Judges Compliance**

- WCHA shall reserve the right to take action, including disciplinary action up to and including loss of Judge's Card and removal of any individual from the Judge's List based on:
  - Inappropriate behavior while judging *or participating in* WCHA or affiliate sanctioned events, including the following but not limited to: abusive or foul language, blatant personal misconduct, public criticism of fellow WCHA Judges, showing favoritism to or discrimination against either an individual or horse.
  - Intimidating, or attempting to intimidate, a contestant, owner or fellow Judge while judging or participating in WCHA sanctioned events.

- Violation of the Judges Code of Ethics.
- Not being a member of WCHA in good standing for a period of longer than 30 days.
- Poor Performance of judging may be defined in a variety of ways, such as but not limited to: complaints and outcomes as determined by results of standard WCHA Judge's auditing procedures. In all cases, a review of the circumstances leading to the assertion of poor performance will occur. The Executive Director and Chairman of the Judge's Committee will gather all pertinent facts and information, with written statements of all parties involved, for review by the JHC. Recommendations will be made to the Executive Committee for a final determination of any potential action required. The Executive Committee retains the sole discretion to determine and implement appropriate actions.
- Individuals in question shall be required to pay their expenses incurred during the investigation and due diligence process leading to a determination and appropriate action.
- WCHA shall reserve the right to establish ratings for Judge's performance.

### **Judges Review**

- WCHA approved Judges will be reviewed at the discretion of the Judge's Committee based on their lifetime judging record. An individual's conduct as a member, exhibitor and Judge, must be exemplary; is subject to continual Judge's Committee review; and any such designation is revocable by the Judge's Committee with or without notice and formal hearing, subject only to ultimate review by the WCHA Executive Committee.

### **Judges Complaints**

- All complaints regarding a WCHA Judge must be filed in writing within 7 days after the conclusion of the event that the infraction occurred,(postmarked or hand delivered).
- All complaints must be in writing and filed with the Executive Director and/or Chairman of the WCHA Judge's Committee. Those complaints filed by a WCHA member must be accompanied by a money order, cashier's check, or personal check in the amount of \$100.
- A thorough review and investigation of the written complaint will be conducted by the JHGC. The Executive Director and Chairman of the Judge's Committee will gather all pertinent facts and information, with written statements of all parties involved, for review by the JHGC. Recommendations will be made to the Executive Committee for a final determination of any potential action required. The Executive Committee retains sole discretion to determine and implement any appropriate action needed.
- A Judge shall be notified in writing of the decisions of the Executive Committee, including any possible action being taken by the WCHA. The decision will be final, and

binding. An appeal may be filed in writing with the Chairman of the Judge's Committee or WCHA Executive Director within two weeks (14 days) of the date of the letter notifying the Judge of the disciplinary action. Upon written request for an appeal, the Judge may also request an in-person or virtual meeting to appeal in front of the Executive Committee.

- If a Judge is suspended by an affiliate association, that suspension may also become reciprocal with WCHA. The Executive Committee will have sole discretion to implement appropriate reciprocal actions.

### **Judges Grievance**

A grievance with another Judge and /or show management:

- A Judge or Judges must file a grievance against a fellow Judge and/or show management, in writing within 7 days after the conclusion of the event that the infraction occurred. Any written grievance must be filed with the Chairman of the WCHA Judge's Committee and/or Executive Director and the case will be submitted and reviewed by the JHGC, whom will make recommendations to the Executive Committee for final review and decision.

A grievance with an Exhibitor and/or someone who is not a Judge and/or show management:

- A Judge or Judges must file a grievance against an exhibitor and/or anyone who is not a fellow judge and/or show management, in writing within 7 days after the conclusion of the event that the infraction occurred. Any written grievance must be filed with the Executive Director and/or President and the case will be heard by the Executive Committee for final review and decision.