



## **WCHA 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**

- Must be a member in good standing of the World Conformation Horse Association.
- **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 Applicant must provide four (4) total references. (Family members, members of Judge's Committee or Executive Committee may not be used as references, committee members will be informed of inability to participate as a reference for judge applications.) Two (2) or more of the four references **MUST** be by either a founding or current Director of World Conformation Horse Association, any remaining references must come from a current member of WCHA in good standing.
- Judge's Application Form must have every question answered as well as signing of the Judge's Code of Ethics signifying compliance.
- All Judge's Applications will be reviewed by the WCHA Judge's Committee and a recommendation for approval or disapproval to test made to the Executive Committee for final review and approval.
- Judge's testing will consist of a written test, an interview and live judging.
- Upon favorable completion of testing process a judge may be approved as a Class A or Class AA WCHA Judge.

## **WCHA Judges Two -Tier Classification:**

After participation in WCHA's Judge Testing Program the WCHA Judge's Committee will make a recommendation of qualification to the WCHA Executive Committee based on test scores, interviews, ethics, experience with showing/breeding conformation horses and prior judging experience. If meeting the standards to be awarded credentials to be a WCHA Specialized Halter Judge the applicant can be awarded one of two classifications, A or AA. The Executive Committee will have the sole discretion to grant final approval.

- **"A" WCHA Judge Eligibility:**

- An "A" judge can judge any WCHA approved show with the exception of the following shows: The Halter Million/WCHA Breeder's Futurity, Big Money Futurity, WCHA Supreme Championship Show and the AQHA/APHA World Championship Shows.
- Examples of permissible shows include: The Yellow Rose Futurity, The East Coast Halter Futurity, any independent halter futurity or any state futurity.
- Furthermore, if a judge who is approved for WCHA "A" Classification Specialty Halter Card already has full judging credentials with another breed association they can judge any breed show when hired by that association with their existing breed card with that association.

- **"AA" WCHA Judge Eligibility:**

- Can apply for AQHA and APHA Specialty Halter Cards within these breed organizations.
- Can judge any WCHA sponsored/approved event and/or any Affiliate World Show.

- **Advancement In Rating** is at the recommendation of the WCHA Judges Committee upon satisfactory completion of Tier A advancement options with final approval from the WCHA Executive Committee.

- All applications for advancement are due March 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year, reviewed and decided at the first judge's committee meeting following the deadline.
- The Judge's Committee can encourage judges to apply for advancement in rating for judges they feel are deserving.
- Judge's Committee has the right to lower any judges rating based on conduct/performance with Executive Committee approval.

- **Two Avenues for advancement from an "A" WCHA Judge into "AA" WCHA Judge status:**

- **Option #1: Guest Judge**

- ✓ Any Class "A" WCHA Judge may turn in an application to the Judge's Committee to be selected as 1 of 6 possible guest judges annually that could then be permitted to guest judge along with hired judges at the WCHA Championship, Big Money

Futurities or The Supreme Championship Show. Any selected applicant would be required to pay \$250 to WCHA towards the expenses of hosting the guest judge within the show. (ring steward, tabulations, meals on the show grounds, etc.) The guest judge will be responsible for paying their own travel and hotel accommodations.

- ✓ Guest judges will judge a sufficient number of classes to test ability and gain judging experience where large numbers and quality of horses are at highest level of difficulty. Guest judges will turn in cards to a ring steward along-side the 4 “hired judges”. Only 1 guest judge will be used within each class, multiple guest judges at one event will be rotated within classes.
- ✓ The guest judge’s overall performance will then be evaluated after the event. WCHA will obtain review letters from each of the “hired judges” and submit to the WCHA Judge’s Committee. One review letter from show management is also required to evaluate ability to mark judge’s cards in timely manner without errors on the card and professionalism in working with show personnel. The placings and review letters will be evaluated for possible advancement to AA status by the judges committee with final approval of the Executive Committee.
- **Option #2: Alternate Option for Advancement**  
After holding a Class “A” WCHA judge’s card any “A” WCHA Judge may apply for a status change under the following criteria:
  - ✓ Judged a minimum of 3 breed shows or futurity shows prior to applying for advancement.
  - ✓ Within each of the 3 shows at least 1 halter class must have 10 entries or greater to be counted as one of the 3 shows.
  - ✓ Applicant will provide WCHA with the names of all AA WCHA Judges that they judged the required shows with, WCHA will then obtain review forms from all the applicable judges.
  - ✓ A minimum of 2 review letters from current AA WCHA judges who judged with the applicant plus at least 1 show management review form.
  - ✓ The applicant must attend a minimum of 1 WCHA Approved Judge’s Educational Seminar for conformation judging. These may include 1 or more from below:
    - Annual live Horse IQ Judging Seminar hosted by APHA
    - WCHA Judge’s Education Training Seminar
    - The Color Breed Judge’s Educational Seminar for halter
    - AQHA Judges live recertification in years where halter is presented
- The WCHA Judge’s Committee will then review the completed application and required references for possible advancement to AA rating with a recommendation to the

Executive Committee, final decision executed by the Executive Committee.

- The Guest Judge Option is also available To Any WCHA “AA” Judge who already has specialty halter credentials but wishes to gain experience and/or prove ability in judging large classes of quality horses. They must submit guest judge application within 30 days of event they wish to participate as a guest judge for consideration. Judges with an A rating will have preference in availability.
- The Judges Committee may also put forth a AAA Rating for judges who have shown they are capable of applying unbiased assessments while judging to the WCHA Conformation Standard. Those judges who can differentiate the application of minor and major faults in balance, structural correctness and movement, eye appeal, muscling, gender and breed characteristics.

### **Compliance 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, to 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 Judge’s Committee and the Executive Director of WCHA with approval by the Executive Committee. The Executive Director and the Chairman of the Judge’s Committee will gather all pertinent facts and information from the parties involved for the Judge’s 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 auxiliary 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 prior to an event the judge is hired to officiate 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 non-compliance 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 in conflict must report the conflict on his/her card. Show management will notify the Chairman of the Judge's 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.
- **With the exception of WCHA Futurity or Stakes classes where Special WCHA Rules apply for those classes or a specific futurity** a Judge shall not exhibit in which he or she is the officiating Judge or member of the officiating judges' panel, however, with 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.
- WCHA may also adopt a format for WCHA ONLY CLASSES where they use most qualified WCHA Judges available at that event to officiate with special rules of compliance for that event.
- Judges shall not: visit, socialize, or fraternize (including phone or text messaging) 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 within 48 hours prior to the start of the show. 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 judge, and the substitute judge had horses already entered in the show, he/she would be permitted to continue competition after his/her duties as substitute judge was complete. Show Management must inform, as soon as possible, the Executive Director of WCHA and/or the Chairman of the Judge's Committee, who will then inform the President of the Executive Committee at WCHA as to the change and reasons for the judging change.

- 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.
  - Judges must refrain from commenting on social media prior to, during or after an event that they judged regarding horses, owners, exhibitors, or other judges and show management who will participate or have participated within that show.
- 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.

### **Judge's 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 the 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 from the JHC will be made to the Executive Director and/or Executive Committee for 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.

### **Judge's 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/Executive 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.

### **Judge's Complaints**

- All complaints regarding a WCHA Judge must be filed 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 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 complaint will be conducted by the Judge's Committee. The Executive Director and the 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 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 and/or Executive Director within two weeks (14 days) of the date of the letter notifying the Judge of disciplinary action. Upon written request for 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.

### **Judge's 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 Judges Committee and/or Executive Director and the case will be reviewed by the JHC, whom will make a recommendation 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 of WCHA and the case will be heard by the Executive Committee for final review and decision.

