

Appendix 6: Judging Specifics for the Spotted Saddle Horse

AP601 General

In order to be considered a spotted saddle horse, entries must be registered with either the Spotted Saddle Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association with the National Spotted Saddle Horse Association or with the American Spotted Horse Association. Although in the southern parts of the country, the spotted saddle classes have become almost a parody of walking horse competition, it is necessary to remember that spotted saddle horses may include a variety of gaited breeds that meet the color requirements of the registries and which present an intermediate gait other than a trot. Therefore in this category, horses will present gaits that are unique to their breeding and many different gaits or variations of gaits may be present in the same class. One type of gait is not to have preference over another. That is to say that a judge who is partial to the walking gait may not tie exclusively spotted saddle horses that exhibit a walking gait based solely on that partiality. Horse and rider teams are to be judged on the performance level of the particular gait that they have chosen to exhibit. One type of gait will not receive preference over another.

- In English classes, direct reining only is permissible.
- Other rules for biting, shoeing, tack and attire found in this Rule Book apply.
- In driving classes, the rules outlined elsewhere in this Rule Book for the conduct of the class and the appointments of the class apply. Pleasure driving is a two gait class.

Gaits of the Spotted Saddle Horse

AP602 The Show Walk This is a four beat flat footed walk to be executed naturally by the horse with the speed determined by both the rhythm and stride appropriate for the particular horse. There must be nothing artificial about the walk. It must be forward moving and appear to be generated by impulsion from the hind quarters. The horse's position on the rail should be on the track, neither quarters in or shoulder in. The four beat gaits such as the flat walk must be consistent and smooth. Evidence of jerky or choppy execution must be penalized.

AP603 The Show Gait The show gait is the spotted saddle horse's intermediate gait. The breed registries require a noticeable increase in what they define as "flashiness" and speed from the Show Walk. Any four beat gait is acceptable to include the fox trot, the running walk, the Paso Fino, the broken amble, the saddle gait, or single foot, the rack, and even the stepping pace. The hard pace is to be eliminated from contention as is any tendency to trot. The horse is required to exhibit an extremely smooth and consistent gait. The rider should appear to be motionless in the saddle and aids should be invisible. The horses are required to be shown with a light rein and a natural head carriage, appropriate to the conformation of the horse. Horses that are shown with a tight rein are to be severely penalized in the final judging.

AP604 The Lope or Canter The third gait of the spotted saddle horse is the lope or if shown in English saddle, which is rare, the canter. This third gait is not a fast gait but a collected, three beat execution. The horse must be on the bit and under complete control. He must exhibit the correct lead. Cross cantering is to result in elimination. Speed at this gait is to be severely penalized as is pumping of the reins.

AP605 Judging Considerations

- Judges must evaluate the transitions between gaits. Transitions must be gradual and smooth, appearing seamless. Abrupt transitions will be penalized.
- Horses are asked to back several steps while in the line up. Gaping mouths, and a failure to back willingly and on a straight track are to be penalized. A reinback executed simply by pulling back on the reins will be penalized.
- Horses must stand quietly in the line up.
- The manners of the horse while lined up may be taken into consideration in the final placings.
- Neck reining is required in Western spotted saddle classes. In Western classes, if a horse is 4 years or under, the horse may be ridden with 2 hands (direct rein) using a snaffle bit.