



SECTION G

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G. THREE-GAITED DIVISION

1. **Brief ‘Type’ Standard and Common Faults**

The Saddle Horse selected for the Three-Gaited division must be refined and elegant. This horse should have great expression and the athletic aptitude to perform its’ gaits with animated collection and precision. Coarser horses or horses that require speed to achieve motion are not suitable for this division. Weediness is not to be confused with refinement in assessing the Three-gaited type.

Horses are judged on:

- Performance
- Presence
- Quality
- Conformation

In Ladies’, Amateur and Children’s classes primary emphasis is placed on manners.

Three-Gaited Park Horses

Three-Gaited Park Horses are performance horses that are presented with emphasis on manners, style, over-all finish and quality. A Park Horse’s performance is to be animated and graceful at all gaits.

Park Horses are judged on the following traits in the following order:

- Performance
- Manners
- Presence
- Quality
- Conformation

2. **Tack Requirements and Rules**

Both Three-Gaited Horses and Park Horses are subject to the same tack requirements.

Appliances – Training appliances such as chains, stretchers and draw reins are prohibited in the collecting ring and in the show arena.

Boots – Quarter or bell bots are not used in the Three-Gaited division. Brushing boots and knee boots are prohibited. Taped hooves are prohibited.

Bridles – A double reined bridle is required. A full bridle consists of a curb bit and a small snaffle known as a bridoon. A combination bit with a broken mouthpiece or solid mouthpiece with single shanks where double reins are attached is acceptable. The bridle and bits must suit each horse. Coloured brow-bands and nose-bands or plain leather nose-bands are allowed.

Bridles – Walk and Trot –

Walk/Trot - riders 8 years and under

Walk/Trot Equitation - riders 8 years and under

Walk/Trot Pleasure Horses - riders 10 years and under

Walk/Trot Pleasure Horse Equitation - riders 10 years and under

Exhibitors must use ---

A. a Snaffle bridle with a running martingale or German martingale.

or

B. a Bridle with a Pelham bit. Split reins and Rein connectors and the use of a running martingale with the Pelham bit will be optional.

- A Pelham bit has a broken or solid mouthpiece with two reins attached to a single shank, not longer than 10cm, on each side or one rein when a Rein connector is used. The shank must be measured from the mouthpiece to the end of the shank, the rings excluded



- Walk/Trot – riders 9 years old
- Walk/Trot – riders 10 years old
- Walk/Trot Park Horse – Riders 10 years and under

Exhibitors must use:

A. a Full double bridle for performance – as well as Equitation classes.

or

B. a Bridle with a combination bit.

For the latter:

A full double bridle has a curb bit and a small snaffle known as a bridoon. A bridle with a combination bit that has a broken or solid mouthpiece, and two reins attached to a single shank on each side.

See Section C, General Showing Rules, as well as Section K, Pleasure Horses for more information regarding Walk and Trot classes.

Saddles – An English type saddle with a cutback head is required. Western saddles, side saddles or Australian Stock saddles are prohibited. The use of Saddlecloths or numnahs are optional with the understanding that it will be well concealed when used.

3. Turn-Out of Horse, Including Shoes

Cleanliness and neatness are the foremost requirements regarding the turn-out of a horse.

Hooves – For all classes that do not have a specific hoof length, the maximum length must not be longer than 15cm. This includes the pads, but excludes the shoe.

Manes – Park Horses MAY NOT be shown with an artificial mane. Park Horses are to be shown with a full (natural) mane and a full tail or humane braced tail

Three-Gaited Park Horses that have entered for the Three-Gaited Grand Championship at a Regional Show are required to show with a full (natural) mane. (may only enter Three-Gaited- if no Park Championship is available)

Three-Gaited performance horses of all ages must be shown with a trimmed (roached) mane and forelock at the National Championship Show, as well as at Regional Shows. (AGM decision Aug 2026)

Mane – 3year old - Trimming of the mane of a 3year old in the 3 Gaited division is compulsory at all shows; horses with full manes should be shown in Park- and Natural Mane and Tail classes. (AGM decision Aug 2026)

Ribbons – Horses shown with a full mane must be shown with ribbons in their manes. Ribbons in the forelock or attached to the bridle are optional. Park Horses are shown with a full mane and must have ribbons in their manes. Ribbons in the forelock or attached to the bridle are optional.

Shoes – Horses may be shod with pads and/or wedges according to their needs.

Shoeing of hind hooves will be optional, BOTH hind hooves must be shod or BOTH must be unshod. Loss of a hind shoe will be subject to the same rules as the loss of any shoe during a class.

Tails – Tails should be clean, long, healthy, picked and tied. Crooked tails do not make a good impression and every effort should be made to correct them.

Unsightly, sore tails will result in disqualification. Inconspicuous tail braces and switches are allowed.

Dress Requirements of Riders

Both Three-Gaited and Park Horse riders are subject to the same rules regarding their attire.

Informal Attire

Informal riding wear is correct for both day and night.

Boots – Solid coloured leather or patent leather Jodhpur boots of a low-heeled variety are worn.

Gloves – Gloves may be worn.

Hat – A tasteful hat is worn, either a bowler (derby), snap-brim, (felt or straw) or the homburg variety. Silk hats are inappropriate before 6:00 PM.

Spurs – All exhibitors, including ladies and children 11 years and over may use spurs. Spurs in equitation must be blunt and unrowelled. The obvious use of spurs is a severe discrimination and the abusive use of spurs will be a disqualification. Spurs are prohibited in the 10 years old, 9 years old and 8 years old classes.

Suits – A Kentucky riding suit of matching jacket and flared Jodhpur pants with a waistcoat. The waistcoat may be either matching or of a tasteful contrast. The suit must be of a conservative colour with any pattern being of small design giving the appearance of a solid colour (herringbone, pin stripe, conservative plaid). A shirt with a collar and tie is used. As an alternative, exhibitors may wear coloured coats with dark jodhpurs.

Riding-Crop – use of a Riding-Crop is optional.

Formal Attire

Formal or Semi-Formal attire may be worn after 6:00 PM. Such attire is not mandatory.

Suits, Formal – Tuxedo suits are worn with flared, Kentucky Jodhpur pants. A wing collared shirt with a bow tie and cummerbund is worn.

Semi-Formal – Light or coloured jackets with dark coloured tuxedo Jodhpur pants. A collared shirt is worn with a bow tie and optional cummerbund.

Boots – Black, navy or brown patent or ordinary leather Jodhpur boots of the low-heeled variety may be worn.

Gloves - Gloves are optional.

Hat – Either a silk top hat or homburg is worn.

Spurs – All exhibitors, including ladies and children 11 years and over may use spurs. Spurs in equitation must be blunt and unrowelled. The obvious use of spurs is a severe discrimination and the abusive use of spurs will be a disqualification. Spurs are prohibited in the 10 year old, 9 year old and 8 year old classes.

Riding-Crop – use of a Riding-Crop is optional.

4. Classes, Age, Size, Gender and Status Divisions

Classes are divided according to age, size, gender and status. Emphasis is placed on certain aspects or criteria in different divisions.

Age – Horses are divided according to age. Children are divided according to age.

Gender – Gender division is made according to the gender of horses and riders.

Classes for stallions, mares and geldings divide the horses. The Ladies and Gentlemen's divisions provide additional classes. The children's divisions are not divided by gender.

Height – The size of horses also creates additional classes. There is a class for horses measuring 15.2 hands (157.48 cm) and under.

(See General Showing Rules page 16)

Status – Status divisions are made between Novice (beginner) and experienced horses; Park Horses; Amateur riders or Professional Trainers, Professional Trainers are not allowed to compete in the Amateur divisions or Pleasure Horse classes.

Classes available in the Three-Gaited division are:

Age Divisions:

- Three-year-old stallion, mare or gelding.
- Four-year-old stallion, mare or gelding.
- Five-year-old stallion, mare or gelding.
- Limit Class for Five-year-old (horses that are still under six years) stallion, mare or gelding.

Gender Divisions:

- Ladies division (stallion, mares or geldings).
- Gentlemen's division (stallion, mares, or geldings).
- Gentlemen's division (stallion, mares, or geldings) rider 40 years or over.
- Geldings (five years and over).
- Mares (five years and older).
- Stallion/Geldings (five years and older).

Height Divisions:

- 15.2 hands and under, (stallions, mares, or geldings).

Status Divisions:

- Amateur Horse presented by a lady. Stallion, mare or gelding.
- Amateur Horse presented by a gentleman. Stallion, mare or gelding.
- Amateur (stallion, mare or gelding).
- Amateur (stallion, mare or gelding) presented by a lady or gentleman under 40 years of age.
- Amateur Grand Championship.
- Amateur Park Horse (stallion, mare or gelding).
- Natural Mane and Tail Horses Three-Gaited division, 5 years and over.
- Novice Horses, (stallions, mares or geldings)
- Park Horse Open, stallions, mares or geldings.
- Park Horse, four-year-old and under.
- Park Horse Open Grand Championship.
- Open Three-Gaited Grand Championship.

Children's Classes:

- Child's Riding Horse, Walk and Trot, (mare/gelding, rider 8 years/under).
- Child's Riding Horse, Walk and Trot, (mare or gelding, rider 9 years old)
- Child's Riding Horse Walk and Trot, (mare or gelding, rider 10 years old).
- Child's Riding Horse (mare or gelding, rider 11 years old).
- Child's Riding Horse (mare or gelding, rider 12 years old).
- Child's Riding Horse (mare or gelding, rider 14 years and under).
- Child's Riding Horse (mare or gelding, rider 16 years and under).
- Child's Riding Horse (mare or gelding, rider 18 years and under).
- Child's Park Horse (mare or gelding, rider 18 years and under).
- Child's Riding Horse, Grand Championship, (mare or gelding, rider 12 to 18 years).
- Child's Park Horse, rider 18 years and under.

Qualification for Championships – Horses qualifying in any of the above classes except the Children's classes are eligible to show in the Three-Gaited Grand Championship Class at the South African National Championships. Exhibitors wishing to show backing the Three-Gaited Grand Championship Class at the National Championship Show after having 'Bad Luck' in the qualifying class will be required to remain in the line-up if possible, request the permission of the Ringmaster to enter the Grand Championship and pay the equivalent of the eighth place prize money. See 'Bad Luck' in General Show Rules.

Cross-Entries – There shall be no cross-entries between Three-Gaited and Five-Gaited classes.

Cross-Entries-Park Horses – There shall be no cross-entries between Park Horses and any other Three-Gaited performance divisions, Pleasure Horse divisions or Five-Gaited Classes. If no Grand Championship class is offered for Park Horses at Regional Shows, then Park Horses may enter the Three-Gaited Grand Championship.

Park Horses may cross enter in either the Fine Harness division OR the Single Harness division and they may enter the relevant In Hand division.

Park Horses may cross enter in the Three-Gaited Natural Mane and Tail classes if the horse's tail has never been cut or set in any way.

Park Horses that have entered the Three-Gaited Grand Championship at a Regional Show are required to show with a full mane and set/humane braced full tail.

Pleasure Horses – For information regarding Three-Gaited Pleasure horses see section J.

5. Class Routine

Entrance – All divisions enter the arena at a trot moving in a counter clockwise direction or the right hand direction through the gate.

Order of Gaits – Three Gaited: Horses enter the arena at a trot then walk, canter, walk, turn around and repeat. Horses will change gaits according to the request of the Judge through the announcer. Some Judges request another trot after the last walk; this is considered acceptable if the circumstances warrant it. All gaits are judged each time they are performed.

Order of Gaits – Walk and Trot Division, under 8, 9 and 10 years: Horses enter the arena at a trot then flat-foot walk, turn around and flat-foot walk, then trot, flat-foot walk and line-up when requested to do so.

It is suggested that the music be played all the time for the duration of the class, but the volume be tuned down.

The round of honour will be done the same way the horses entered the ring OR as requested by the announcer. The safety of the riders to be taken into consideration in the decision for exit.

The gate will remain closed until all the riders are at the out gate and it is safe to open the gate for them to exit.

Handlers – Handlers must attend exhibitors in the line-up in all the Walk and Trot Classes, as well as the Walk and Trot Pleasure Horse classes for riders 8 years old and under, 9 years old and 10 years old.

Handlers – Dress – Men must wear a solid colour dress shirt, tie and neat pants, woman must be neatly dressed and in good taste.

Line-Up – Horses will come in and line-up, when requested to do so by the Judge through the announcer. The Ringmaster will designate the position of the line-up. When exhibitors are asked to line up at the conclusion of a class, work-out or re-ride they must proceed to the line in the same direction as the horses are moving when the announcer calls for the line-up. Any ‘last pass’ that an exhibitor wishes to make at the end of a class must be made in the direction the horses are moving when the line-up is called.

Any exhibitor who changes direction will be disqualified. This is an important safety measure to prevent collisions as the horses proceed to the line-up. Exhibitors will remain standing until requested to retire and await results.

Refer to Section C, Page 10, General Showing rules.

6. Basic Gaits and Common Faults

Flat-footed Walk - Walk and Trot classes – Horses shown in the Walk and Trot divisions are required to do a flat-footed walk.

Walk – The walk in the Three-Gaited division is an animated four beat gait. It is highly collected and slow and performed with great style. It must not degenerate into a common jog.

Trot – The trot is a two-beat gait performed with collection. It is characterized by the horse’s ability to drive forward off from a well-placed hock with balance and motion, but not speed. Any loss of form, over-reaching, going wide behind, dragging hocks, mixing gaits, and shackled way of going is not acceptable and will be discriminated against. Continuous bumping instead of posting at the trot is a disqualification.

Canter – A three beat gait, highly collected and rhythmical. Horses must use the correct lead and retain the correct head setting. Incorrect leads, excessive speed, pounding action, loss of balance and hanging in the bridle are not acceptable and will be discriminated against.

Transitions – Poor or rough transitions from one gait to another will be discriminated against.

Refer to section C, General Rules and Showing Rules.