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E. BREEDING CLASSES

1. Breed Standard and Common Faults

Breeding Classes are used to assess the CONFORMATION and TYPE of horses entered in this division. The ideal Saddle Horse personifies the meaning of a 'show' horse. Classic conformation, presence, athletic ability and quality characterize the breed.

The ideal horse presents a striking impression. The animal should show quality through proportion, condition, muscle and coat. Any colour is acceptable, except Albino. Average weight is between 455 and 545 kilograms and average height is between 15 and 16 'hands' (a 'hand' is 10.16 cm). Masculinity in stallions and femininity in mares are essential in breeding classes. Blindness is an automatic disqualification.

The following conformational points will be required of the ideal Saddlebred Horse:

HEAD – WELL SHAPED, CHISLED LOOK. Wide-set eyes, small sharp ears, set close together on top of the head. A vertical face line with proportionately fine muzzle, large nostrils and clean jaw line. Penalties will include a coarse or plain head, roman nose, heavy jaw, large and widely placed ears, lop ears, small eyes, parrot mouth

NECK – Long, arched, small throat latch flexed at the poll. The base of the neck comes out at a higher point in relation to the shoulder. Penalties include a short neck, kettle neck, heavy throat latch or a low set neck.

SHOULDERS – Sloping and deep. Straight and narrow shoulders are discriminated against.

WITHERS – Cleanly defined, prominent. A flat, fleshy wither will be penalized.

BACK – Strong and straight with well sprung rib. **A sway-back (low-back) is a disqualification.** A roached back is penalized.

CROUP - level and strong with high tail placement. A sloping croup and low tail placement or wry tail will be a discrimination.

LEGS front legs set well forward under the shoulder with well-muscled forearm, elbow free. Hind legs, while standing naturally, should show a vertical line from the pin bone to the edge of the cannon bone. Hindquarters well-muscled to the hock. Horses will be penalized for front legs set too far back, pinched elbows, sickle hocks, cow hocks. Lower legs should have a clean, flat bone and sharply defined,

clean tendons and sloping pasterns. Discriminations will include splayed feet, straight pasterns, pigeon toes, coarse or round bone, blemished joints, too wide or narrow stance. Blemished pasterns and tendons.

HOOVES – Moderately sized; good, sound quality, open at heel. Contracted heels, dished feet, poor quality hooves will be penalized. Always note that horses shown in breeding classes must be as close as possible to the IDEAL of the breed standard, displaying characteristics that breeders wish to develop and preserve within the breed. TYPE is of utmost importance in breeding classes.

2. Tack Requirements and Rules

The tack used in breeding classes is dictated by the age of the horse.

Bridles – WEANLINGS and YEARLINGS are shown in a headstall with coloured brow-band and lead rein. A smart, fine show chain that loops around the horse's nose and jaw to stabilize the horse, which extends to a lead rein, will be allowed.

TWO YEAR OLDS may be shown in a headstall with coloured brow-band and lead rein or single or double show bridle. When headstall is used, a smart, fine show chain that loops around the horse's nose and jaw to stabilize the horse, which extends to a lead rein, will be allowed.

THREE YEAR OLDS and OVER must be shown in a single or double show bridle with coloured brow-bands and noseband. Either a snaffle or curb bit or snaffle and curb bit may be used. (updated Sept 2026)

Boots – Quarter or bell boots are NOT used in breeding classes. Brushing boots and knee boots are prohibited. Taped hooves are prohibited.

Appliances – Training appliances such as chains, stretchers and draw reins are prohibited both in the collecting ring and show arena. Inappropriate bridles such as a hackamore are prohibited. Leg bandages are NOT allowed.

3. Turn-Out of Horse, Including Shoes

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

WEANLINGS will be shown with clipped mane and forelock and natural tail or full mane and forelock according to the preference of the exhibitor.

YEARLINGS – have full manes, may be clipped at poll and forelock, and natural tail.

TWO YEAR OLDS – full mane, clipped at poll, may have natural or set tail.

SENIOR HORSES – will be shown with full mane and tail. Three-Gaited horses shown in this division may have clipped manes and tails.

Ribbons – Horses shown In-Hand with a full mane will wear ribbons in their manes. Ribbons in the forelock or attached to the bridle are optional.

Tails – Tails should be clean and healthy. 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 short tail braces and switches are allowed. Show tails are prohibited. (updated Feb 2016)

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

Weanling foals younger than 1 year will be shown barefoot.

Yearlings (older than one year but under 2 years) may be shod with or without pads with an overall length limit of 115mm excluding the shoe. The pad may not exceed 5mm and the shoe not more than 8mm in thickness with a width not exceeding 20mm. Shoe clips will be allowed. When measuring the shoe it must be measured on the side of the shoe between two of the shoe nails.

Two Year Olds may be shod with pads according to their needs.

4. Dress Requirements and Rules for Handlers

There may be two handlers per entry. Handlers (men) must be neatly dressed in a solid colour/white dress shirt with tie and long pants, women may dress differently but in good taste. The handler at the tail may carry a whip with tassel only. Stud names may not be displayed on handlers clothing or on the entry in any way. No advertisement of stables/stud names/persons may be visible on clothes, aprons, caps ect. at any time in the arena.

Handler – Membership – At least one of the persons physically exhibiting a horse in a breeding class must be a paid up Member or Show Member of the Saddle Horse Breeders Society.

5. Classes, Age and Gender Divisions

Age – Horses are divided by age. The age of a horse is calculated as from the date of birth. At any show and the S.A. National Championship Show (Bloem Show) horses entered in the Breeding Classes (In Hand classes) will show according to the age they are on the first day of the show. The first day of the show is the first day the open classes begin and not the first day of any ESSASA Trials that may be held just prior to the National Championships.

Gender – Gender division is made according to sex of the horses. Senior horses are divided by stallions and mares. Junior classes are divided by fillies or colts. Geldings or rigs may not be shown in breeding classes.

Classes available in the Breeding Division are:

Champion Weanling Filly

Champion Weanling Colt

Champion Yearling Filly

Champion Yearling Colt

Champion Two Year Old Filly

Champion Two Year Old Colt

Champion Stallion (three years and over)

Champion Mare (three years and over)

6. Class Routine

Collecting Ring – Horses will assemble in the collecting ring.

Entrance – Entries shall enter the arena at a trot to the right and to the top end of the arena. Entries will line up to be inspected by the Judge/Judges. Ringmaster/Stewards will toss a coin to decide from which end of the line-up the entries will be called to the designated area for individual judging. At the request of the Ringmaster one entry at a time will proceed to the indicated area to stand and be judged for conformation. On completion of judging the horse shall flat walk or do an animated walk away from the Judges to the rail, turn and trot up the rail. The entry will then return to the line-up.

Front Line – When each entry has been judged individually the Steward can ask the Call-Judge for numbers for a Front Line. The chosen horses are then lined up against the rail for comparison. Once all the judges have indicated that they are done judging they will be allowed to assemble and discuss their placements of the participants. This must not be a long discussion as each judge will still hand in his own card.

The panel of Judges will decide on having a Front Line or not. If they decide not to have a front line, the above will still apply. AGM decision 2024

Head-To-Head – Two horses may be drawn out for comparison, head-to-head. If this is done the two horses must be shown again at the trot. At the Judges' discretion, any or all horses may be asked to lead again at the trot.

Relaxation – When the judging is complete, and Judges have handed their cards to the Stewards the horses may relax and wait for the awards to be presented

7. Basic Gaits and Common Faults

In-Hand Horses shown in Breeding Classes show at a FLAT WALK or ANIMATED WALK and then TROT.

Flat Walk – The natural or flat walk should be a smart four beat gait with good stride. Penalties will include winging or interference of any kind and stringhalt.

Animated Walk – The animated walk is highly collected with a snappy two beat or four beat action. It is performed with more style and the movement should be airy. **This gait must not degenerate into a common two beat jog.**

Trot – The trot is a two-beat diagonal gait performed in a collected manner with balance displaying straight true motion. Action should be coordinated with front legs moving from shoulder and flexing hocks carried close together and well placed under body of horse. Handlers must allow the horse to trot on a loose rein and horses must set according to the ideal of the breed. Penalties will include and deviation from a true and balanced trot, inability to set correctly.

Poor manners indicate attitude. A lack of manners that interferes with performance and general safety will be a discrimination that can lead to a disqualification.

Refer to General Showing rules in Section C.

7. General Administration Rules

Age, Foals – The age of horses and/or foals shown In Hand (Breeding Classes) at Regional Shows will be determined by their actual birth date. The age of horses and/or foals shown at the S.A. National Championship Show (Bloem Show) In Hand (Breeding Classes) will be whatever their actual age is on the first day of the show.

Inspection – Each year the Executive Board will nominate a breeder whose mares will be inspected.

Registration of Foals – All foals must be registered within 6 months of birth. A registration certificate will only be issued upon receipt of a parentage verification certificate. Parentage verification can be done either by blood or DNA-typing. Fines on birth notifications submitted later than 6 months after birth will be determined by the Executive Board.

Registration of Foals – Late – If there are applications to register foals born later in the season (April and later) a list of these will be compiled in the office and presented to the Executive Board. The Board will decide to do an inspection of one or all of the foals to confirm the age. Inspectors appointed within a Sub-Union will do random inspections on an annual basis to confirm birth dates at all the studs concerned.

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