

Awarding Ribbons Under the Danish System



- **Blue ribbon**

- Outstanding or excellent performance; perhaps one minor fault/penalty; aligns nicely with the standards for the class



- **Red ribbon**

- Good performance; minor and major faults and/or penalties; meets some standards for the class



- **White ribbon**

- Average to below average performance not meeting several standards for the class

****Keep in mind that “excellent” does not mean “perfect.”****

General Comments

- Give 4-H’ers the ribbon they deserve and earned. If you do not, that is not fair to them (or any of their competitors).
- Stress that a red or a white ribbon is not a bad thing, but actually a wonderful opportunity to show where the participant needs growth.
- Awards should be based on the “ideal” standard for the class as well as relative to the county level. This Danish system is not a comparison among participants in the class.

Showmanship

Class criteria: A well-groomed and conditioned horse completes maneuvers prescribed with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence; maintains balanced, functional and fundamentally correct body position

- **Blue** – The 4-H’er is an excellent showman, including body position and presentation of the horse. The 4-H’er completes the pattern accurately, quickly, smoothly and precisely, and demonstrates a high level of professionalism. The horse and rider provide a very good performance in execution of the pattern, as well as show correct showmanship and presentation of the horse. The rider and horse do an excellent pattern with one or two minor faults. They exhibit good/average pattern execution and average showmanship.
- **Red** – The 4-H’er has a fair pattern that lacks quickness or precision, with several minor faults and a few major faults. The horse has a consistently unwilling attitude or the handler has obvious position and/or presentation faults that prevent effective showmanship.
- **White** – The 4-H’er has incurred several minor, major and severe faults. The position of the 4-H’er precludes effective communication with the horse. The 4-H’er demonstrates a lack of handling ability and knowledge of correct body position. The 4-H’er received a disqualification.

Western Pleasure

Class criteria: Placings are based on brokenness, consistency and quality of movement. A good western pleasure horse has a free-flowing and rhythmical stride in keeping with its conformation. Ideally, the horse is balanced and has a flowing motion while exhibiting correct gaits of proper cadence.

- Blue – The horse shows cadence in all three gaits (walk, jog, lope), maintains a correct frame, and works on a relatively loose rein with minimal guidance from the rider. The horse demonstrates a gate that is good or average, as outlined in the rulebook. The horse is rhythmic in each gait. No major/severe faults occur, as outlined in the rulebook.
- Red – The horse lacks consistency, requires constant guidance from the rider and/or shows resistance to the rider. Cadence and rhythm in a gait are lacking. The horse lacks a consistent frame and/or head set. The horse may acquire multiple minor penalties. The horse exhibits a below-average gait, as outlined in the rulebook.
- White – The horse fails to meet the requirements of the class and/or commits several major faults.

Hunter Under Saddle

Class criteria: The purpose of the hunter under saddle class is to present or exhibit a horse with a bright, alert expression and whose gaits show potential for being a working hunter. Placings are based on brokenness, consistency and quality of movement. Gaits should be free flowing, ground covering and athletic.

- Blue – The horse shows cadence in all three gaits (walk, trot, canter), maintains a correct frame, and works on an appropriate contact of rein with minimal obvious guidance from the rider. The horse demonstrates a gate that is good or average, as outlined in the rulebook. The horse is rhythmic in each gait. No major/severe faults occur, as outlined in the rulebook.
- Red – The horse lacks consistency, requires a lot of guidance from the rider and/or shows resistance to the rider. Cadence and rhythm in a gait are lacking. The horse lacks a consistent frame and/or head set. The horse may acquire multiple minor penalties. The horse exhibits a below-average gait, as outlined in the rulebook.
- White – The horse fails to meet the requirements of the class and/or commits several major faults.

Western Horsemanship/English Equitation

Class criteria: This class is designed to evaluate the rider's ability to execute, in concert with the horse, a set of maneuvers prescribed by the judge with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence and maintaining a balanced functional and fundamentally correct body position. The communication between the horse and rider should be through subtle cues and aids that are not obvious.

- Blue – The 4-H'er shows excellent horsemanship/equitation, including body position and use of aids. The horse and rider complete the pattern accurately, quickly, smoothly and precisely, and demonstrate a high level of professionalism. A very good rider executes the pattern with correct equitation and use of aids. The contestant is an excellent or very good rider with one or two minor faults. The rider is a good/average rider with correct pattern execution and average horsemanship/equitation.
- Red – The 4-H'er has a fair pattern that lacks quickness or precision, with several minor faults and a few major faults. A rider has obvious position and/or the appearance of faults that prevent effective

horsemanship/equitation. The 4-H'er has a horse that presents an unwilling attitude with obvious position and/or presentation faults that prevent effective horsemanship/equitation.

- White – The 4-H'er has incurred several minor, major and severe faults. The position of the 4-H'er precludes effective communication with the horse. The 4-H'er demonstrates a lack of riding ability and knowledge of correct body position. The 4-H'er received a disqualification.

Trail, Reining, Ranch Riding

Class criteria: Scores are based on the ability to complete a pattern precisely, with minimal penalties and/or faults.

- Blue – The horse and rider provide a high-quality performance with minimal small penalty points (1 to 3) or minor faults. The horse is consistent, cadenced and rhythmical. The horse fits well within the class description of the ideal standards.
- Red – The horse and rider provide a good-quality performance, but multiple minor penalties occurred. Some larger penalties were incurred. Control might be questionable at times. The horse comes out of the frame at times. The horse and rider had several faults.
- White – The performance had several major penalties and the 4-H'er obviously was having trouble performing the class properly. Examples include failing to change leads, completing the class pattern in the wrong order, forgetting or adding maneuvers, or riding with two hands in a curb bit.

Timed Event Classes

Class criteria: Placings are based on the riders' ability to show a degree of difficulty and control.

- Blue – The rider has complete control of the horse's direction and speed; the horse expresses a willing attitude; the exhibitor uses proper aids to perform the class; a clean run is executed and the pattern is completed with the added difficulty of speed. In goat tying, the rider is quick and efficient, showing expert, very good or average skills.
- Red – The rider appears to understand the pattern but lacks speed. The contestant is an excellent rider who knocks only one to two poles/barrels. The horse shows ability but the rider lacks the horsemanship skills necessary to control the horse, with the added difficulty of speed, or lacks the necessary precision to obtain a blue. In goat tying, the rider may be a bit slower to tie and may have some smoothness of tying issues but still finishes and completes the tie.
- White – The effort results in an incompleteness of the pattern, disqualification, three or more poles/barrels knocked down, loss of forward motion, failure to follow the course, inability to maintain the gait, incurring of a no-time penalty, failure of the helmet to stay on top of the rider's head during the run or an extremely slow pattern. The rider shows little to no understanding of the skills required for the class. The horse is unwilling to work or anticipates the rider's cues. In goat tying, the rider fails to tie the goat.

Hunter Hack

Class criteria: Scores are on a scale of 0-100, with jumping 70% and flat work 30%. The purpose of the hunter hack class is to give horses an opportunity to show their expertise over low fences and on the flat. The hunter hack horse should move with the style and fluid movement of a working hunter. Judges should consider an even hunting pace, flat work, manners and way of going.

- Blue – The horse is a good to excellent jumper that completes the course with cadence, balance and style. A good performer jumps all fences reasonably well. The horse is an excellent performer that commits one or two minor faults. The horse shows cadence and style during flat work.
- Red – The horse is a good jumper that lacks the style, cadence and good balance of the scopier horses. The performer makes one major or multiple minor faults.
- White – The horse is a poor mover and poor jumper or a good jumper with multiple major faults. Examples of major faults include refusing a jump, knockdowns or running past a jump.

Equitation Over Fences

Class criteria: Scores are on a scale of 0-100; the purpose of this event is to evaluate the rider's correctness and ability over fences. The rider position and the ability of the rider to execute the jumps is critical, not the horse. Only the effect the rider has on a horse is to be considered. How a rider elects to ride the course, the pace and approach to the jumps are used to evaluate the rider's judgment and ability.

- Blue – The 4-H'er has excellent equitation, position and presentation. The horse meets all fences squarely and at the proper distance. The ride uses all options to the individual's advantage. The rider has very good equitation with some faults (long, weak distance, deep distance, one-step landing at counter-canter). The rider still maintains a good-quality ride.
- Red – The 4-H'er has average equitation and encounters a few problems with distance from fences. Equitation suffers (rounded shoulders, heels are not down, hands incorrect, lacks style and presence). The rider has one major fence problem (chip with a ride up the neck, or discreet swap out, jumping off one side of jump). The ride has no dangerous fences and is not a flowing course.
- White – The 4-H'er lacks proper body position and has multiple major faults. Examples of major faults include jumping obstacles in wrong order, breaking to a trot, knockdowns, dropping reins or is unable to control the horse on the course. The rider has loose legs and seat, fails to obtain or maintain a trot to a trot fence approach, counter canters or cross-canters at the ends of the arena, misses lead changes, loses iron, has an extra stride in combination, has a refusal or is eliminated. The ride seems dangerous.