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SC22.0 Sports Concepts - Saddle Seat Equitation Division

SC22.1 Saddle Seat Equitation - General

1. **Description:** Saddle Seat Equitation is a discipline within the equestrian world that emphasizes correct rider position, balance, and effective communication with the horse while riding in a specific saddle style. The class focuses on the precision and smoothness of the rider's performance.
2. **The objective** of the Saddle Seat Equitation class is to evaluate the rider's ability to maintain proper form, control, and communication with the horse while executing specific gaits and maneuvers.
3. **Judging Criteria** Rider Position: Evaluate the rider's posture, alignment, and overall position in the saddle. The rider should demonstrate a straight back, relaxed shoulders, and proper leg alignment.
4. **Balance and Control:** Assess the rider's ability to maintain balance and control at all gaits and transitions. The rider should demonstrate smooth, fluid movements and effective use of aids.
5. **Communication with the Horse:** Evaluate the rider's ability to communicate effectively with the horse through subtle cues and aids. Look for responsiveness, obedience, and harmony between horse and rider.
6. **Presentation:** Consider the overall presentation of the rider, including grooming, attire, and deportment in the ring.
7. **Required Maneuvers:** The class may include specific gaits and maneuvers such as walk, trot, canter as well as transitions between gaits. Riders may also be asked to perform individual tests or patterns at the judge's discretion.
8. **Disqualifications:** Riders may be disqualified for unsafe riding practices, excessive disobedience or resistance from the horse, or failure to adhere to class rules and guidelines.
9. **Scoring** is based on the judge's evaluation of the rider's performance according to the judging criteria. Points may be deducted for errors or faults in execution.
10. **Note:** This class specification is intended for general informational purposes and may be adapted or modified to suit specific event requirements or organizational rules.

SC22.2 Saddle Seat Equitation - Positions While In Motion

1. Walk: minor motion in saddle.
2. Trot: minor elevation in the saddle when posting on the correct diagonal; hips under body not mechanical up-and-down nor swinging forward and backward.
3. Canter: firmly seated, moving with horse, but not rocking
4. Slow Gait: steadily seated in saddle, intermittent calf pressure permissible, hands slightly raised, flexible contact.
5. Rack: seated smoothly in the saddle; legs down and slightly back, not thrust forward; hands low in motion with gait, but placement optional to individual rider and horse.

SC22.3 Saddle Seat Equitation - Class Execution Protocol

1. Each exhibitor is permitted to request a single 5 minute time-out per class.
2. It is the duty of the judge to remove any horse from the ring that displays unruly behavior or poses a danger to the rider, other exhibitors, or their entries.

SC22.4 Saddle Seat Equitation - Tack & Apparel

1. Maintaining a traditional appearance is essential for riders, following established customs. Judges are required to penalize or disqualify participants who do not adhere to these standards.
2. Informal riding attire includes a jacket and jodhpurs in a conservative color, paired with a collared shirt, tie, vest, gloves, jodhpur boots, and a derby or soft hat. Protective headgear is allowed without penalty.
3. Acceptable colors for casual suits are limited to black, blue, grey, burgundy, green, beige, or brown. Patterns such as herringbone and pin stripes are permitted, but other colors are not allowed and may result in penalties.
4. Only appropriate attire is permitted in specific equitation classes, regardless of the time of day.
5. Formal riding attire consists of a jacket, jodhpurs, formal shirt, bow tie, vest or cummerbund, and a top hat (for women) or soft hat (for men). Acceptable colors for formal attire include dark grey, dark brown, dark blue, or black.
6. The formal shirt must be white or off-white, with matching accessories. Any other colors may result in penalties.
Formal attire is only required after 6:00 p.m., and optional for certain classes.

7. Blunt spurs and riding crops are optional equipment, with specific guidelines regarding their design. Taping of rowelled spurs is prohibited.
8. Participants are required to showcase their entries using either full bridles (including curb and snaffle bits) or Pelham bits exclusively in all Saddle Seat equitation classes. The use of martingales or similar tie-downs is strictly forbidden.
9. Only flat English-type saddles are permitted for use. Saddles of the forward seat, Western, and side saddle varieties are not allowed.

SC22.5 Saddle Seat Equitation - Class Execution Protocol

1. Riders must enter the ring by turning to the right and proceeding counterclockwise.
2. All riders are required to perform in both directions of the ring at the designated gaits.
3. Penalties will be applied for incorrect diagonals and leads.
4. The order to reverse can be initiated by turning either towards or away from the rail.
5. Upon command, entries will line up, and riders may be asked to perform additional tests as specified for the class.
6. In all classes, judges must walk the lineup.
7. In National Finals classes, such as The Good Hands and Saddle Seat championships, judges must group competitors in batches of 20 or fewer.
8. For other Saddle Seat classes, if there are 20 or more entries, it is advisable to divide the class into separate sections, alternating the entries for trophies and ribbons.
9. If there are 25 or more entries, the class must be split, with notifications provided at least one hour before the start. The judge has the authority to determine the number of riders from each section in elimination classes.
10. Classes for Junior and Senior riders may be combined.
11. Any class requiring a workout must adhere to the specified guidelines for each class.
12. In classes with individual tests, the judge's evaluation is based on a balanced assessment of railwork and individual tests.
13. All entries selected for collective workouts must perform in both directions of the ring as requested.

14. Falls of horse or rider will not result in elimination but may be subject to penalties at the judge's discretion.
15. Prize money may not be offered in Equitation classes except for scholarship funds.
16. Rider numbers must be worn on the back and remain clearly visible during competition.
17. Attention-grabbing devices and noise-making items are prohibited in and around competition rings during scheduled sessions.
18. The use of explosives and fire extinguishers by exhibitors or competitors (except in the case of fire) is strictly prohibited on competition grounds at all times.

CS22.0 Saddle Seat Equitation - Class Specifications & Qualifications

Four age categories may be offered but may vary according to local conditions

1. **Juvenile riders 10** years of age and under
2. **Juvenile riders 11-13** years of age
3. **Juvenile riders 14-17** years of age
4. **Adult amateurs** 18 years of age and over
5. **Maiden, Novice, Limit.** Open to riders that have not won one/three/six first place ribbons respectively competing in equitation classes from the closing date of entries. One horse classes do not count toward the reckoning of status.
 - i. Blue ribbons won in the Hunter section will not affect a rider's status in the Saddle or Stock sections, etc. Ribbons won in classes restricted to a particular breed will affect a rider's status.
 - ii. Ribbons won as a Juvenile affect a rider's status when competing as an adult. Ribbons won in leadline classes and in classes where entries are not required to ride at all gaits will not affect Maiden, Novice, Limit and Intermediate status.
6. **Maiden class** is for a juvenile rider who has not won a first place ribbon. Skill Sets Low
7. **Novice class** is for a Juvenile rider who has not won three first place ribbons. Skill Sets Low & Medium

8. **Limit class** is for a Juvenile rider has not won six first place ribbons. Skill Sets Low & Medium
9. **Walk and Trot classes** are open to riders aged 10 and under. Evaluation takes place on the rail at a walking and trotting pace exclusively. Riders must not have participated in any class that required a canter wearing a full suit. It is advisable to divide classes with 12 or more entries. In the event of division, entries are typically split into two classes: one for riders aged 8 and under and another for riders aged 9 and 10. Headers are permitted in the lineup and will be called in by the announcer after the lineup is formed and before judging commences. No additional tests will be administered.
10. **11 TO 13.** For Juvenile riders who have reached their 11th but not their 14th birthday. Skill Sets Low to Medium.
11. **13 AND UNDER.** For riders who have not reached their 14th birthday. Skill Sets Low to Complex.
12. **14 TO 17.** For Juvenile riders who have reached their 14th but not their 18th birthday. Skill Sets Medium to High.
13. **OPEN.** For Juvenile riders who have not reached their 18th birthday. Skill Sets Medium to High. Selection by a judge should take into consideration riders abilities.

CS22.1 Saddle Seat Equitation - Pleasure Division

1. Juvenile riders are permitted to ride Pleasure horses with full mane and tail, displaying a natural carriage.
2. Classes may be categorized by the rider's sex and/or age.
3. If participating with American Saddlebreds, horses concurrently entered in the Country Pleasure division at the same event are prohibited from wearing tail sets or bustles while on the premises.
4. Riders engaged in these classes are restricted from competing in any other Saddle Seat Equitation classes at the same event, except for UPHA, The Good Hands, and American Saddlebred Pleasure Equitation Medallion Saddle Seat classes, specifically on Pleasure horses with full manes and tails and natural carriage.
5. Riders participating in Pleasure Equitation classes retain eligibility to compete in the Open Saddle Seat Equitation Championship solely on a Pleasure horse with a full mane and tail, maintaining natural carriage, provided a Pleasure Equitation Championship is not offered at that event.

CS22.2 Saddle Seat Equitation - Adult Riders

Open to amateur riders 18 years of age or older. Skill Sets Low to High.

CS22.3 Saddle Seat Equitation - Championships

1. The decision to restrict championships to ribbon winners lies with competition management.
2. Competition management is required to allow any class in the saddle seat sections (such as age groups, Challenge Cups, Medals, etc.) of the Equitation or Breed specific Divisions to count as qualifying classes for the open saddle seat equitation championship for riders 17 & under.
3. An Adult rider is only eligible to compete back in an Adult Saddle Seat Championship.
4. Judges must work a minimum number of riders per number of ribbons awarded (including classes with one entry) from any of the Saddle Seat Equitation Tests appropriate for the class.
5. Five Gaited Equitation/Horsemanship: Open to amateur riders of any age.

CS22.4a The Good Hands National Finals

The Mane Event Horse Show is host to the Good Hands National Finals.

1. The Good Hands Qualifying Classes: For juveniles who have not reached their 18th birthday. To be judged at a walk, trot, and canter. A minimum of two riders are required to individually execute a figure eight at a canter, trot to the judge, stop, and back. Afterward, Traditional Tests 1-15 may be called for. Judging is based 40% on railwork and 60% on individual workout. Only horsemanship counts. Proper Tack & Apparel is required for two competitors to fill a class. A rider must place first or second to qualify for The Good Hands Finals. Winning once eliminates the rider from further competition in this class for the remainder of the qualifying season.
2. The Good Hands Finals: Entries must have placed first or second in an official Good Hands qualifying class at an approved competition and must be properly certified by the competition's secretary. The winner of this championship is not eligible for further participation in this particular event. Open to Juvenile riders who have not reached their 18th birthday.
3. The finals consist of two sections: Preliminaries and the Championship class. The preliminary class(es) also serve as an elimination for the Championship class. In the preliminary, all eligible competitors are judged as a group at the walk, trot, and canter both ways of the ring, and then individually execute the mandatory workout. Judging is based 40% on railwork, 60% on individual workout. Judges select 10-15 contestants to compete in the Championship class.
4. In the final phase, all contestants are judged as a group at the walk, trot, and canter both ways of the ring. All contestants individually execute a prescribed workout. Further testing of any contestants may be requested at the judges' discretion. Judging is based on 40% railwork, 60% individual workout. A rider's performance in the preliminary has equal consideration as the performance in the final phase. In the event a horse becomes incapacitated, upon examination of the competition's veterinarian and a judge or steward, a substitution will be permitted.

CS22.4b UPHA Challenge Cup

For permission to offer UPHA Challenge Cup classes and complete details, contact the United Professional Horsemen's Association, 4059 Iron Works Parkway, Suite #2, Lexington, KY 40511, (859) 231-50702 info@uphaonline.com, www.uphaonline.com.

CS22.5 Saddle Seat Equitation - Instructions for Executing Skill Set Tests

1. All tests, whether performed individually or collectively, must adhere strictly to the specified guidelines. No other testing methods are permitted.
2. Instructions for each test must be publicly announced before they commence.
3. Ensure all circles and turns are executed on the correct diagonals and leads according to the horse's movement.
4. When riding on the left diagonal, the rider should rise out of the saddle when the horse's left front leg is in the air. Conversely, on the right diagonal, rise when the horse's right front leg is in the air.
5. On the left lead, the horse's left leg should extend further than the right; conversely, on the right lead, the right leg should reach further than the left.
6. All changes of lead must be executed through a simple change, where the horse transitions back to a halt or walk before restarting the canter on the opposite lead.
7. In Championship classes, individual workout instructions must be written down by the judge and submitted to the announcer at the beginning of the class.
8. The judge may choose to post instructions at their discretion, provided it's announced and displayed at least one hour prior to the relevant session.
9. The workout pattern for Championship classes must not be shared online or on social media before being displayed in the horse show office.
10. Competition organizers are encouraged to post the workout more than one hour in advance, if possible.
11. At World and National Championships and Finals, competitors must be given sufficient time to walk the posted workout in the competition arena, with a minimum recommendation of 30 minutes.
12. In classes requiring a workout, judges must work a minimum number of riders per ribbons awarded in the class.

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13. Judges have the authority to select which riders will undergo additional testing.
14. A judge must immediately excuse any horse that displays unruly behavior or poses a threat to the safety of the rider, handler, other exhibitors, or their entries.

CS22.6 Saddle Seat Equitation - Testing the Rider

1. Alternatively known as Traditional Tests 1-16, now arranged by Complexity Skill Sets going from Low to High.
2. Each pattern skill set has a recommended scoring range. When a judge is selecting a pattern, the skillset of the riders in the class should be heavily weighed. Dropping of stirrups must not be selected for 13& under and Adult riders.
3. It's recommended that complex skill sets be reserved for Championships and used with the more skilled riders. Judges may elect to combine multiple patterns from variable skill levels. Per pattern execution should not take more than 60-90 seconds per rider.
4. Judges must post patterns at least 2 hours before the start of the session if a pattern is going to be posted.
5. One pair of riders may be asked to exchange horses to execute patterns or perform rail work as a tie breaker.

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6. Traditional Tests 1-15 conversion chart to Skill Sets 1-15 with Minimum Age requirement to execute. Below chart are Skill Set testing instructions.

Traditional Test No.	Brief Description	Skill Set No.	Complexity by Minimum Age
Traditional Test 1	Trotting Circle	Skill Set M	Medium Complexity 11 & Over
Traditional Test 2	Line Trot	Skill Set L	Low Complexity 11 & Over
Traditional Test 3	Line Canter	Skill Set L	Low Complexity 11 & Over
Traditional Test 4	Ring Performance	Skill Set H	High Complexity 13 & Over
Traditional Test 5	Line Up Iron Drop	Skill Set L	Low Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 6	Diagonals Changes	Skill Set M	Medium Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 7	Trotting Serpentine	Skill Set M	Medium Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 8	Backup	Skill Set L	Low Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 9	Trotting Figure 8	Skill Set M	Medium Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 10	Cantering Circle	Skill Set M	High Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 11	Cantering Serpentine	Skill Set H	High Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 12	Cantering Figure 8	Skill Set H	High Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 13	Cantering Lead Changes	Skill Set H	High Complexity 11yo & Over
Traditional Test 14	Iron Recovery	Skill Set H	High Complexity 14yo & Over
Traditional Test 15	Rider Choice	Skill Set H	High Complexity 14yo & Over
Traditional Test 16	Exchange Horses	Skill Set H	Extreme Complexity

CS22.7 - Low Complexity Skill Sets - 11yo & Over

Possible Points: 1-5 performed in line up or straight line along rail no canter

1. **L1. Dropping of Irons in Lineup** - (Traditional Test 5) As instructed by judge or ringmaster each rider to disengage irons while in lineup. Then re-engage irons.
2. **L2. Backing Straight Line** - (Traditional Test 8) Riders can be asked to back in a straight line for no more than 8 steps. Must halt and stand quietly before returning to the starting point.
3. **L3. Straight Line Walk or Trot** - (Traditional Test 2) Should be executed down the long side on or off the rail on the correct diagonal.

CS22.8 - Medium Complexity Skill Sets - 13yo & Under

Possible Points: 5-10 trotting on or off the rail

1. **M1. Trotting Circle** - (Traditional Test 1) Circling clockwise (to the right) and posting to the left diagonal; going counter-clockwise (to the left) and posting to the right diagonal.
2. **M2. Changing Diagonals** - (Traditional Test 6) Judge specifies the number of diagonal changes to be executed on or off the rail. Judge also to specify the beginning diagonal to start the pattern. No less than 2 diagonal changes are required per pattern/rider.
3. **M3. Trotting Serpentine** - (Traditional Test 7) Riders to execute a series of left and right half circles down one long side. Change of at least three (3) diagonals at the top of each half circle.
4. **M4. Trotting Figure Eight** - (Traditional Test 9) Riders to demonstrate at least 2 changes of diagonal. If starting the figure eight facing the center ring, it must be started from the halt.

CS22.9 High Complexity Skill Sets

Possible Points: 10-20 cantering patterns, dropping of irons while performing.

1. **H1. Canter Straight Line** - (Traditional Test 3) Canter a straight line on the correct lead.
2. **H2. Ring Performance & Showmanship** - (Traditional Test 4) Executed at a walk, trot, or canter, using the correct leads and diagonals. Each rider executes individually, and no more than two trips around the ring.
3. **H2. Canter Simple Lead Changes** - (Traditional Test 13) Canter a straight line down the arena long side. Judge may specify number of simple lead changes and/or the starting lead.

Riders who execute the pattern off the rail successfully should be awarded a higher working score.

4. **H3. Cantering a Circle** - (Traditional Test 10) If going clockwise (to the right), horse should be on the right lead. When going counterclockwise (to the left), horse should be on the left lead. Demonstrating a starting and stopping point to each circle.
5. **H4. Cantering a Serpentine** - (Traditional Test 11) Riders to execute at least two half circles down the long side of one rail. Judge to designate the starting canter lead, and may ask for change of leads at the top of each half circle.
6. **H5. Figure Eight at Canter.** (Traditional Test 12) Riders demonstrate at least 2 changes of leads. If starting the figure eight facing the center ring, it must be started from the halt. If starting the figure eight facing outward, it should be started at the canter and conclude with the halt in the center.
7. **H6. Recovery of Irons** - (Traditional Test 14) Riders may be asked to drop, then ride and finally re-engage irons from any gait. However, not more than 60 seconds at the trot.
8. **H7. Riders Design** - (Traditional Test 15) Riders can be asked to demonstrate a 60-90 second work-out of their design by choosing one or combining several skill sets above. Rider must advise judge which skill sets will be performed and their order of execution. Rider must provide two copies of the skills design; one for the judge and one for the announcer. Rider will have no more than 60-90 seconds to complete. Judging of the rider must stop at 90 seconds, but rider is not penalized for finishing. Riders Design demonstrations should only be used in Championship or Medal classes.
9. **H8 Exchange Horses** - (Traditional Test 16) This examination is intended solely for implementation after four or more of the leading riders have undergone testing. Only a single pair of riders is permitted to swap horses, except in the scenario of a three-way deadlock. The substitution of saddles is permissible. Each horse's attendant involved in the exchange is granted access to the arena solely to facilitate the transition. The aim of this assessment is to resolve a tie. The swapping of horses may be employed to resolve a three-way tie in an Equitation Championship or Final. In such instances, horses will be exchanged based on the placements indicated on the call judge's card. The rider in first place will switch to the horse of the rider in second place, the second-place rider will switch to the horse of the rider in third place, and the rider in third place will switch to the horse of the rider in first place.