

# S.P.P.H.A.



## The Standardbred Pleasure & Performance Horse Association

of New South Wales Inc.

A.B.N. 11 407 812 669

### **GUIDELINES FOR SHOWING STANDARDBREDS**

#### **including STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE STANDARDBRED**

SPPHA NSW promotes the Standardbred as a successful and versatile horse that can excel in many disciplines outside their traditional role of harness racing. One of the ways we do this is to work with show societies to provide led and ridden classes at shows for Standardbreds. Shows are often the first avenue for new owners to present themselves and their horses in public.

Please remember that when presenting your horse in public, you are representing the Standardbred and the SPPHA. It is your responsibility to ensure that the condition, manners, training and overall presentation of yourself and your horse are a credit to the breed as a whole. The Standardbred has faced and continues to face considerable prejudice from the general equestrian community. One of the aims of showing is to display Standardbred horses **at their best** in terms of education, paces, manners and conformation.

Before venturing into the show ring yourself, it is advisable to attend several shows as a spectator only. Watch hack and other breed classes - observe the condition of the horses, the clothing and saddlery, plaiting, the way the horses are ridden, and the type and quality of ridden work that is required in the show ring. You need to understand how to correctly ride your horse on the bit at walk, trot and canter and to ensure that he has a solid foundation so that he is well-mannered when out in the excitement of the show environment.

#### **The Standardbred as a Show Horse**

A Show Horse is a quality, comfortable, well mannered and educated riding horse, being sound of wind and limb. The horse should be excellently presented and give the appearance of being a pleasure to handle, watch and ride. It is entirely up to the talent of the rider and those connected with the horse to prepare and show it in the way in which it looks and performs best.

The horse should work with a nicely rounded back, naturally elevated in front and head flexed at the poll. The contact should be light and even. Holding a horse in a shape with the use of brute strength or artificial gadgets is not truly getting a horse to accept and to come happily on to the bit.

A show horse must give the impression of covering the ground easily and fluently. The horse must be well balanced and work without any obvious effort by the rider or any untoward resistance from the horse. The whole picture should be pleasing to the eye.

He should go forward with controlled free forward movement, the correct bend and an even rhythm in all paces at a tempo chosen by his rider.

#### **Manners**

A show horse should be well mannered and obedient, but never mechanical. Exuberance may be forgiven but not bad manners, lack of schooling, biting, rearing or bolting.

#### **Presentation and saddlery**

Correctly fitted gear is the primary consideration.

Manes and Tails

Standardbreds in ridden classes must have manes plaited and tails plaited, pulled or shaved.

Standardbreds in led classes may have:

- a) manes and tails presented as for ridden classes OR
- b) bridle path plait – a small section of mane at the top of the neck is plaited. A discreet colour-coordinated ribbon may be incorporated into the plait. Tail is left unplaited. (Led Standardbred ONLY) OR
- c) both mane and tail unplaited. (Led Standardbred ONLY).

Coats and Hooves	Coat clean, with excess hair removed. Hooves oiled or blacked. Quarter marks are acceptable.
Saddle (incl girth, stirrups) and Saddlecloth	Saddle should be of good quality and be supple and clean with sound stitching. A straight flapped dressage or show saddle is to be used. All purpose saddles are acceptable. Stock saddles are not acceptable. A discreet saddle cloth is acceptable.
Bridle (incl bits and browbands)	Bridle should be the same colour as the saddle, supple, of good quality leather. Stitching on noseband and brow band optional. Coloured brow bands may be worn. It is preferred that a snaffle bit is used (jointed or straight bar).

The purpose of saddlery is to be functional. Selection should be based on this aspect with comfort of the horse and rider taken into consideration along with the above points.

Martingales, any kinds of gadgets (draw reins, side reins, balancing reins etc), any kind of boots or bandages, any form of blinkers **ARE FORBIDDEN**.

Gadgets are available and should be treated with caution and only used by experienced horse people. Most are meant to be used whilst the horse is lunged or in-hand NOT when being ridden and **DEFINITELY NOT** in the show ring.

Unsafe, cruel, ill-fitting or unsuitable gear or saddlery must be replaced or removed at the request of the Judge, Ringmaster or a member of the Ground Jury. Failure to comply with such a request will mean the horse is ineligible to compete.

### **Dress**

Jackets and waistcoats	Double, or single vent, straight cut, which fits impeccably, with optional vest/waistcoat in toning colour.
Hats and helmets	Approved safety helmets to be worn. Helmets and hunt caps should be covered by plain velvet in a dark colour which tones with the jacket, usually black, brown, navy or green. This is most important if the coat collar is also made of velvet.
Shirts and ties	A shirt with a proper collar in a tone which matches the jacket should be worn together with a plain or discreetly patterned matching tie. Alternatively a collarless shirt (known as 'ratcatcher') and cotton stock may be worn.
Jodhpurs	Jodhpurs should be fawn, beige, lemon or banana.
Boots	The rider's boots should be leather and either brown or black depending upon the colour scheme chosen. Adults wear full boots or jodhpur boots with leather gaiters.
Gloves	Must be worn. The colour of these should match the outfit.
Whips/canes	Are permitted.
Jewellery, hair, makeup	Hair should be neat and tidy, accessories should not be obtrusive, makeup should be tasteful.

## **Ridden Classes - Classification for Different Levels**

The ridden Standardbred should be judged as any hack presenting for a ridden class. Horses should be judged on their gaits, manners and athletic ability. Ideally, transitions should be clean with no evidence of pacing, but this may be dependent on the stage of training (refer to "Standard of Excellence for Standardbreds" for recommendations for specific levels). All horses should carry themselves in a nice outline, with a degree of rounding, not above or below the bit and not overbent, through all gaits. Horses should go forward with controlled free forward movement, the correct bend and an even rhythm in all paces at a tempo chosen by their rider.

See "Standard of Excellence for the Standardbred" for an example of the type of work required at each level. Note that individual Judges may have their own requirements for the workout. It is expected that all levels will be required to show calm and controlled gaits at walk, trot and canter. You may be required to demonstrate a number of movements, for example 20m circles, figures of eight, simple changes and lengthened strides. The judge may specify the workout, or may allow you to make up your own.

### Beginner

A Beginner Ridden Standardbred is defined as a horse that has won no more than 3 Beginner Ridden Standardbred classes against competition. Once a Beginner has won 3 Beginner classes against competition they can no longer compete in Beginner classes. However, where the horse is the only entrant in a class, winning the class does not count towards their eligibility. Beginner Ridden Standardbreds cannot enter Novice or Open Ridden Standardbred classes and are not eligible for Champion.

### Novice

A Novice Ridden Standardbred is defined as a horse that has won 3 Beginner Ridden Standardbred classes against competition and no more than 3 Novice Ridden Standardbred classes against competition. Once a Novice has won 3 Novice classes they can no longer compete in Novice. However, where the horse is the only entrant in a Novice class, winning the class does not count towards their eligibility. Novice Ridden Standardbreds may also enter Open Ridden Standardbred classes; however, if they win Open Ridden Standardbred they have attained Open Ridden Standardbred status and can no longer compete in Novice Ridden Standardbred classes.

A Novice Ridden Standardbred is eligible for Champion Ridden Standardbred classes. A Novice Ridden Standardbred that is awarded Champion or Reserve Champion has attained Open Ridden Standardbred status and can no longer compete in Novice Ridden Standardbred classes.

### Open

An Open Ridden Standardbred is defined as a horse that has won 3 Novice Ridden Standardbred classes against competition. Once a horse has attained Open Ridden Standardbred status they can no longer compete in Beginner or Novice classes. They are eligible for Champion Ridden Standardbred classes.

**NOTE:** there is no absolute requirement for a horse to compete in Beginner Ridden Standardbred at their first show. The horse can compete at their first show in either Novice or Open Ridden Standardbred. However, the horse cannot compete at a lower level at subsequent shows.

## **Champion and Reserve Champion - Protocol**

Where a Champion and Reserve Champion are awarded (whether Led or Ridden), the 1st prize winners of each eligible class present to the judge for the Champion Award. If your horse placed second to the horse that is awarded Champion, you can also then enter the ring to compete with the other horses for Reserve Champion (this is referred to as "challenge for Reserve").

## **Competitors' Protocol**

- It is up to the competitor to make sure they are eligible for the class they are entering. Mistakes do happen: admit to them before the class finishes so that placings can be rectified immediately.

- Treat officials, Judges, other competitors and spectators as you would like to be treated yourself. Bad language and unsportsmanlike behaviour is inappropriate.
- It is good manners and safer to enter, leave and move between rings at a walk.
- If stewards have asked you to line up in a certain area, do so. If your horse is unsettled, walking in a small circle behind the line is acceptable.
- It is protocol to take the left rein when entering the ring, unless asked to take the right rein.
- The Judge will usually allow for a period to warm up. Being asked to walk will signify that judging will commence.
- Ring layouts usually involve some type of markers or, in some instances, human markers, so care should be taken. Use your common-sense - don't make circles too small so as to crowd the Judge or make them too large so as to interfere with other rings.
- It is usual to wait for command of walk, trot, canter and change of rein - don't be a trend setter for the transitions.
- If your horse is misbehaving so badly that it is a danger or unsettling to other horses, it is polite to retire from the ring.
- If your horse is badly behaved in the workout and you feel it is best to retire, report back to the Judge and say so, or tip your hat and leave the ring.
- If you have a clash of events, advise the steward, who can confer with the judge and appropriate arrangements may be made to accommodate the clash. Some Show Regulations may not allow competitors to hold up rings for any reason.  
If permitted to do so, have your next mount ready at the side of the ring. It is up to you to provide a strapper to hold the horse in the designated area or Ring, not the steward's job to do so.
- In usual circumstances, the Judge selects competitors whilst they are cantering, so consider other competitors and officials as you are called in. Always come back to walk and if you are the first one called in, go to the position directed by the steward. If there is no direction from the steward, go to a position which is safe and allows other competitors to line up on your left hand side.
- For minor placings it is etiquette to line up in the order in which you are called in. If you are unsure of your positions, ask the steward. If the Judge calls everyone in, then line up to the left of the person taking the first position.
- While lined up, try and keep your horse standing still within the allocated space (do not allow your horse to kick, bite or lean on other competitors). As you are lining up, warn competitors next to you if your horse needs more space. It is extremely unsportsmanlike to pass remarks out loud about other competitors or yourself whilst judging is in progress.
- Accept your placing in good light. Always congratulate other competitors. Thank the Judge as the ribbon is being placed on your horse. A few words may be exchanged but not a long conversation as time is important to officials running a tight schedule.
- If you wish to know why you were placed in that position or not placed at all, you must be courteous to the Judge. Accept the Judge's reasons without any confrontation or giving your opinion. Thank the Judge, even though you may strongly disagree with the explanation.
- Under no circumstances must you threaten or verbally abuse the Judge in or out of the ring. The Judge's decision is final. The same goes for the stewards and officials. Be polite and diplomatic.

- If you are eligible to compete in an event such as a Champion, but do not wish or are not able to participate, it is polite to advise the steward beforehand. If you are a second placegetter, be prepared and ready to compete, if eligible, for Reserve Champion.
- It is etiquette for placegetters to follow the winner when leaving the ring, unless you are holding up another ring.
- It is etiquette for competitors to tip/nod their heads in acknowledgement when the Judge is speaking or awarding ribbons.
- If you wish to make officials aware of a competitor's ineligibility to compete in a class or for an award, you should go through the appropriate channels in lodging a protest. Refer to the Rules of the Show, approach the Ringmaster about your intentions and have any corroboration for your protest on hand.

## REFERENCES

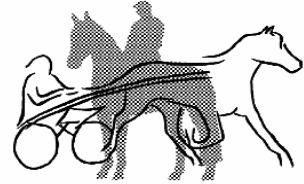
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The SPPHA NSW Inc. Guidelines for Showing Standardbreds is a guideline only. It is the responsibility of all competitors to make themselves aware of the Rules and Regulations governing their participation in any activity.

It is suggested that competitors consult references to standard showing presentation and procedure including, but not limited to, EFA Show Horse Rules and Regulations, the Show Horse Council of Australasia Inc "Showing Guidelines" and "Competition Rules" and the rules and regulations specific to a particular show.

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### STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE STANDARDBRED

#### INTRODUCTION

Standardbreds are registered with the appropriate harness racing body or Standardbred Pleasure and Performance Horse Association (any state). They are identifiable by the unique freezebrand on the offside upper neck. The breed ranges in height from 14hh to 17+hh, and body type can vary widely, from stocky to refined. Overall, a Standardbred should present the picture of a well-conformed, athletic horse that is well-suited to its versatility as a harness-racing horse and general pleasure riding horse.

#### LED

The Standardbred should be of good athletic type with a robust build. They should have strong, straight legs, a long sloping shoulder, a croup that may be as high as the wither, and broad, sloping hindquarters. The Standardbred should stand over a good amount of ground, and therefore tend to have some extra length to the back. They should also have a long underline, strong neck and a wide brow. The Standardbred should have a noble, honest head with a kind eye. There should be no height or colour bias when judging the Standardbred conformation.

The trot should be well-balanced, with strong movement from the shoulder required for pulling a racing sulky, and no visible evidence of forging or knee-knocking, as these are detrimental to the horse at racing speed. A strong, even length of stride with no wasted action, in front and behind, no paddle or extravagant knee lift, is preferred.

In judging the led Standardbred it is not uncommon to see horses pacing. Ideally, all horses should trot in their led classes, but this may not be possible for horses that are currently racing or recently retired and, therefore, horses should not be penalised for pacing. A pace should be judged with the same criteria as a trot – with a strong, even length of stride, a rhythmic action without rushing, and cleanness of gait. The pacing or square-gait trotting (i.e. race-trotting) Standardbred may demonstrate wide action behind.

Some horses may be in race condition and therefore should have a sleeker but well-muscled body shape. Do not hesitate to ask if the horse is currently in race training.

Bumps, injuries and scars may also be evident with horses that have raced and should not be discriminated against. As long as it is not a conformation or breeding fault, it should not go against them.

#### RIDDEN

*The following is presented as a guideline only. Note that individual judges may have their own requirements for the work required in ridden classes.*

The ridden Standardbred should be judged as any hack presenting for a ridden class. Horses should be judged on their gaits, manners and athletic ability. Ideally, transitions should be clean with no evidence of pacing, but this may be dependent on the stage of training (refer to

recommendations for specific levels below). All horses should carry themselves in a nice outline, with a degree of rounding, not above or below the bit and not overbent, through all gaits, and must be in the control of and obedient to the rider.

**Beginner:** Horses in Beginner Ridden classes walk and trot only and do not canter. A horse that paces in a beginner class should not be penalised for pacing during its workout.

**Novice:** Horses in Novice Ridden classes should be able to perform basic manoeuvres in walk, trot and canter, with adequate time for progressive transitions. Allowances can be made for a few pace strides occurring in the workout. The Novice is not expected to be fully educated, but should be able to complete a basic workout in a reasonable manner.

**Open:** Horses in Open Ridden classes are expected to demonstrate their ability at walk, trot and canter and are expected not to pace. More advanced movements, for example, serpentines, simple changes, lengthened strides, rein-back, may be requested as part of the workout.

## **PRESENTATION**

The Standardbred should be presented in a neat and tidy, workman-like manner. Horses should be in good condition, clean, well-groomed, with trimmed bridle-path, face and ears, and fetlocks/legs. Hooves should be blacked (a clear polish may be used on white hooves), and any white markings spotless. Make-up may be used sparingly. False tails are discouraged. Quarter marks are permitted. Manes and tails can be presented as follows:

- a) English plaits or rosettes for the mane; if mane is plaited, tail must be braided, pulled or shaved. If the horse is to compete in a Ridden Standardbred class, the horse **MUST** be presented plaited.
- b) Bridle path plait – a small section of mane at the top of the neck is plaited. A discreet colour-coordinated ribbon may be incorporated into the plait. Tail is left unplaited. (Led Standardbred **ONLY**)
- c) Both mane and tail unplaited. (Led Standardbred **ONLY**).

Handler/Rider Attire – at all times, clothing should be neat, tidy and appropriate for handling horses. For led Standardbred classes, smart casual attire is acceptable, including hat, vest or jacket, gloves and whip. For both led and ridden classes, standard rider attire is acceptable (see SPPHA Guidelines for Showing Standardbreds for specific requirements for Ridden attire).

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The SPPHA NSW Inc. Standard of Excellence is a guideline only. It is the responsibility of all competitors to make themselves aware of the Rules and Regulations governing their participation in any activity.

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