



## Horse Judging

Georgia 4-H Horse Judging is a 4-H program which develops self-motivation, self-esteem and responsibility. Students have the opportunity to strengthen their communication and leadership skills in an environment which allows contribution to group effort; encourages teamwork and promotes acceptance of differences! This guide provides County Agents and Staff examples for getting started with horse judging teams.

### Description of Project:

Cloverleaf, Junior and Senior 4-H members are eligible to compete in Horse Judging. There are Junior and Senior divisions; Cloverleaf 4-H'ers who are at least ten years old may compete in the Junior division. The main components of the contest are placing a class of horses (either in-hand, conformation, or performance classes) and then justifying their placing decision through a set of oral reasons. Participants compare their opinion of an animal against the ideal as specified by industry experts, and learn organizational skills as they compose their thoughts into a cohesive set of reasons justifying their decision. Competing as team members assists youth with the development of social skills, cooperation and managing feelings, as they become comfortable with working alongside others toward a common goal; integrity, sportsmanship, decision-making abilities and public speaking skills are also strengthened through the Horse Judging experience.

### Overview:

- ⇒ Horse judging
- ⇒ Breakdown of contest:
  - Conformation
  - Performance
  - Reasons
- ⇒ Preparation Activities
- ⇒ Special Considerations
- ⇒ Recommended Resources
- ⇒ Who do you call

### Break down of the contest:

- Each contestant will judge four conformation classes and four performance classes.
- Conformation classes are basically how the horse is built.
- Performance classes are the riding classes. Classes are usually announced upon arrival at the contest. All types of riding classes are options for the contest including but not limited to: Western Pleasure, Hunter Hack, Equitation, Hunter under Saddle, Reining, etc.
- After the judging, contestants will have lunch and an allotted time to prepare oral reasons.
- Oral Reasons are the contestant opportunity to tell the reasons judge why they placed a class a certain way. Juniors will give two sets of reasons, usually one conformation and one performance class. Seniors will give four sets of reasons, usually two conformation and two performance classes.
- However, the coach will need to let the contestants know to listen during the contest announcements for which classes they will give reasons on that day.

## Preparation Activities:

- Each coach can determine the number of practices held during the judging season. Ideal practices last one hour to 1 ½ hours. You can have one to two practices a week. Teams can practice year round for a couple of months before the contest.
- Practices should include live farm visits and classroom lessons.
- Live visits are great, weather and light permitting. All classes at the contest will have four horses, so if you can make a live class with four horses that is helpful. Otherwise, have 4-H'er evaluate a pair of horses or even one horse at a time.
- Classroom activities can include:
  - have students bring in a picture of a horse and tell the class about that horse using the correct terms
  - create games to play like horse jeopardy
  - have PowerPoints and/or videos to show 4-H'ers what they need to know
- Dedicate at least one lesson to teaching reasons format:
  - Opening statement
  - Comparing pairs (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>)
  - Concluding statement
  - Don't forget about transitions (Furthermore, in addition, moving to my middle pair, etc)
- Try to make learning reasons easier by starting with an easy topic. Have 4-H'ers rank their four top television shows, favorite four desserts, or other area of interest to learn how to start.
- To get to the state contest, look for emails from the state office on registration deadlines.
- Encourage them that this is a fun way to learn about horses especially if you don't have one.
- Don't forget the snacks at practice!

## Recommended Resources:

UGA Conformation Publication  
<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1400>

Georgia 4-H website  
[http://georgia4h.org/livestock/horse/horse\\_judging\\_hippology.htm](http://georgia4h.org/livestock/horse/horse_judging_hippology.htm)

Judging 101  
[www.judging101.com](http://www.judging101.com)

Kansas Youth Horse Judging Manual  
[http://www.kansas4h.org/events-activities/contests/horse-judging/docs/Kansas\\_Horse\\_Judging\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.kansas4h.org/events-activities/contests/horse-judging/docs/Kansas_Horse_Judging_Manual.pdf)

Website page list of resources  
<https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/HorseJudgingResources.pdf>

Local Equine businesses

## Special Considerations:

- If staying overnight, be sure to plan in advance since some UGA activities may have hotels fill up quickly.
- Be sure to plan for meals or snacks for after the contest. 4-H'ers may not eat when preparing reasons.
- Materials needed for horse judging are minimal.
- Some recommended resources are free while other may have a fee.
- When looking for local farms, you can look at the trainer directory for breed associations or riding associations.

## Who do you call?

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*Pending Peer Review*

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[http://georgia4h.org/livestock/horse/horse\\_judging\\_hippology.htm](http://georgia4h.org/livestock/horse/horse_judging_hippology.htm)