

QUESTIONS WITH JUDGE Carla Jackson MacGregor



Carla Jackson MacGregor was raised on a dairy/grain farm east of Edmonton, Alberta. Her family bred and raised performance horses. She has been involved with Arabian horses since her childhood.

For the past 42 years she has shown Arabian horses successfully throughout Canada and United States exhibiting in both the english and western disciplines. Carla is an avid fan of both the Purebred and Half-Arabian. She has had the good fortune of working with many talented horses and trainers.

She is a recognized Equine Canada, United States Equestrian Federation, and Arabian Horse Association "r" recognized judge. Also was the past president of the Aurora Arabian Horse Association, a local club who encourages their membership to fully experience and enjoy Arabian and Half-Arabian horses for recreation, sport and companionship.

Carla operates as Jackson Place Inc. at a facility east of Edmonton, Alberta, which offers programs for beginners and experienced riders. Training and teaching will always be a passion for Carla.

On Friday, January 16, 2015 a excellent session took place where Carla spent some time with the Aurora Arabian Horse Youth Association discussing the responsibilities of a judge, good sources to find rules, and of course everyone got an opportunity to ask their questions. What a great evening and a big thank you to Carla!

RESPONSIBILITY OF A JUDGE:

“Good judging depends upon a correct observance of the fine points and the selection of best horses for the purpose described by the conditions of the class. A judge serves three interests: his own conscience, exhibitors and spectators. He should make it clear that the best horses win.”

- Much more exists to good judging than placing the best horse in the class.
- The Arabian judge must have integrity and knowledge.
- Webster defines integrity as honesty, sincerity and completeness.
- Horses must be judged by what you see in a specific class on a specific day. You must not be dazzled by the horses past performance, it's advertising, it's popularity or it's reputation.
- Neither should you be dazzled by the reputation of the trainer, the owner or the crowd's reaction to a particular entry.
- You must disregard past performances, reputation and handler. You must only judge the horse on its performance on the class on that day.

GOVERNING BODY FOR CANADIAN ARABIAN HORSE SHOWS

- Class A, Regional and National.
- Approved by Equine Canada and the Arabian Horse Association.

SOURCES FOR RULES

- Equine Canada Rule Book
http://equinecanada.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=98&Itemid=713&lang=en
- Arabian Horse Association Hand Book
http://www.arabianhorses.org/membership/membership_handbook.asp
- United States Equestrian Federation Rule Book
https://www.usef.org/_IFrames/RuleBook/rules.aspx
- Arabian Horse Association Equitation Manual
http://www.arabianhorses.org/competitions/j-s/docs/13_Equitation_Manual.pdf
- Ask the Show Steward

NOW SOME OF THE QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH



Let's say you are judging a pleasure class, both of the horses are in the top two and you can't decide which one, do you look at the tidiness of the rider as well even if you are not suppose to?

So we are to judge the horse no doubt. Overall pictures is huge, so is it in consideration ... yes it is. So if you have got them both and they are sitting right up here, and one has just really gone to the end to make a pretty picture, you know what ... you have to honour that.

What is your opinion on like "bling" for showmanship as in sparkly earrings, magnets and fancy pins?

So hunter and again reading the rule book is a classic look. So some judges are very offended by a lot of bling in hunter and I would tend to agree and not to go overboard with it. Tasteful is attractive.

So how do we dress for showmanship?

If you are in western attire, cowboy hats, cowboy boots whether it is tucked in or belted or jacket in the western, what are you wearing on that horse for appointments? Halter not braided. They seem to be very concerned that you "suit your horse" so if your horse is hunter and braided of course you are in hunter clothes. If he is a little high-headed you look like you are showing an english-type horse you dress in a saddle suit or a classic suit.

If I'm in hunter attire my appointments for my horse are hunter bridle with snaffle or kimberwick bit. Does he have to be braided, he doesn't have to be but if you want "brownie-points" he should be ... says you got up earlier than the other guy.

What is something that we can do to absolutely "blow away" the judge in showmanship?

Smooth grace and ease. Is there any one thing you can do ... it all has to be there. I think that when you

come in and you do that pattern, the respect that is exhibited to the judge is very important. Show your horse like it is the best horse there. When you make your movements around the judge, they have really frowned upon people who are bouncing up and down. Trotting away and to look back once and then exit the scene and back into the line. Cleanliness is a large part of it no doubt so the horse has to be clean and so do you.

Judges can only judge what they see, but can they?

I can't see behind but I can hear for the most part. So if I hear that horse going behind I hear this "thump, thump" maybe or I hear an irregular hoof beats I know that something has happened back there.

Now I want to say that if you get a class, maybe if there are only one, two or three horses in it ... well it is easy to follow you all away around. But if you are all in there, I'm only going to see you maybe 8 or 10 seconds at each gait. If there are 20 of you in there, it might be less. Think about it, if you stand in the middle and there are 20 horses going around and around you'll be lucky to pick everyone of you up sometimes like you might do say three laps depending on the gait you are doing. So there is a lot that is not seen.

So when you are thinking that you are having the ride from "somewhere else" ... don't let anybody know that, keep showing your horse, right because we will only catch this path, we can't watch you all the time because we have the other 19 riders that we have to pick up on. So there's a tip for you.

When you are showing in equitation and there is a horse and rider pair where the rider has really nice equitation but the horse is not being good but the rider is handling it well, and another that the equitation skills is not as great but the horse is being good. In that case which one?

Well, we are judging the rider aren't we. So I would hope to be able to credit the rider that can manage a difficult situation, but if they go right out of control and right off pattern ... you can't credit that. But if they manage something that's just difficult ... well good job, within reason you can credit them.

That's an excellent question and you see that happen lots. Sometimes the horse doesn't always give the rider the greatest opportunity to show their skill set and yet if you make the most of what you got ... you might be ok. Just don't go off pattern ... cause than your "toast".

NOW SOME QUESTIONS FROM A JUDGE

Where should you not position yourself in the halter showmanship?

On the other side of the horse where the judge could not see you and in front of a horse. Yes, that's a big no-no standing straight in front of them ... cause if they bolt, someone could get hurt.

Is this a legal bit in a hunter-pleasure junior horse class?



No, must be smooth and there is a real specific rule to that one. This is a definite question for your steward and they'll even at nationals go and check bits of all those entered in the hunter-pleasure junior horse class. You must have them measured as you do your hackamores to have them tested to see if there is any metal.

So that's something at regionals, you will have to have your bits checked for all junior horse classes and nationals. Is it legal for hunter pleasure amateur to ride or JOTR or open ... yes, anything goes in hunter pleasure in a snaffle.

Is it mandatory to wear gloves in hunter pleasure?

It isn't, does it look good ... yes. Western, they don't do it anymore. You can but does it look good, no.

What length of whip can I carry in the hunter pleasure?

Who said it, somebody said it 30" ... there is a rule on that one.

Is a rider disqualified if they have fallen off their horse?

Yes, they could not be placed or you wouldn't want to place them. Hunter over fences you cannot hit the ground you are out and you cannot fall down in reining in a western reining class.

When might a judge excuse a horse?

If it seems unsafe or it's bucking lots. If it is jeopardizing other people performance, sometimes things go a little sideways ... we have all been there, but if the rider can gather it up and get control.

Usually I would go to the rider and ask if you are going to be able to manage that horse and if you want to continue. Would assess the situation if this was a 13 and under class.

Do you have a gigantic pet peeve in equitation classes? Like riding around with their nose stuck in the air, smiling or no smiling?

I like to always see effortless effort. So and that's why I encourage you to always keep riding and even though you may think you have made a mistake and everybody saw you including all three judges and everyone in the stands and all your friends and your neighbors know but that's not the case.

When we sit on those horses and I speak from a person who shows horses, I speak from that very place. Your horse, you might mess up on one side and it might get missed and so you have to keep going.

Is there a real pet peeve out to see out there ... I would think overall that I love to watch those riders who can put forth a huge effort and make it look effortless. Doing their best for the moment for that situation ... that would make me feel good. I want to get a warm-fuzzy feeling when I see you out there dealing with a difficult situation can really give me that.

Is it ok to braid yard into your horse's mane?

At this point of time it is optional. I think at a national level and if you want to dress it up ... I think it's lovely. If your horse is gorgeous, I'm going to see through the yard or no yard. If your horse needs a little color, if he's solid chestnut and doesn't have any other color and you want to snap it up a little bit. I'm not offended by yarn; some of the "traditionalist" do not like yarn.

You had lots of good questions and if they come to you, your questions ... put in a word or two into the rule sources websites and see if you can pull some information up on that. Read about hunter pleasure, read about halter showmanship in those rule books because there's lots of really good information.

Thank you for inviting me, and good luck this year.